

WELL, OF COURSE

Holden asks:

They're just thinking of this now?

U.S.military intelligence officials are urgently assessing how securePakistan's nuclear weapons would be in the event President Gen. PervezMusharraf were replaced as the nation's leader, CNN has learned.

Key questions in the assessment include who would control Pakistan's nuclear weapons after a shift in power.

[snip]

The United States has full knowledge about the location of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, according to the U.S. assessment.

Butthe key questions, officials say, are what would happen and who wouldcontrol the weapons in the hours after any change in government in caseMusharraf were killed or overthrown.

Musharraf controls theloyalty of the commanders and senior officials in charge of the nuclearprogram, but those loyalties could shift at any point, officials say.

TheUnited States is not certain who might start controlling nuclear launchcodes and weapons if that shift in power were to happen.

There isalso a growing understanding according to the

U.S. analysis that Musharraf's control over the military remains limited to certain top commanders and units, raising worries about whether he can maintain control over the long term.

Well, of course, Holden. They've been otherwise occupied. Up until the end of June, after all, they were very busy looking for Iraq's WMDs.

Though, for a less snarky look at this issue, Arms Control Wonk discusses the difference between knowing where the nukes are and what will happen to them if anything should happen to Musharraf.