**HIGHLIGHTS:** <u>astrology</u> - <u>contests</u> - <u>movie times</u> - <u>savage love</u> - <u>NOW presents</u> - <u>restaurant guide</u> - <u>holiday guides</u> - <u>message boards</u>

<u>PAGE BACK</u> << <u>PAGE FORWARD</u> >>

CANADA'S NUKE TIE TO TALIBAN

FEAR GROWS THAT CANUCK ATOMIC EXPERTISE WILL FIND ITS WAY TO EXTREMISTS

LAST IN NEWS FEATURE:

City Circles Wagons [12-13-2001]

# BY ALEX ROSLIN

# **REVIEW 'N WIN!**

Read a review and think you can do better? Go for it! Write your best reviews for the BECK'S
EVERYONE'S A CRITIC contest and win!

Must be 19+ to participate.

## WEBSITE FEEDBACK

Our objective is to provide you, the reader, with the best experience possible. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions about the website we want to hear from you! We make a point of doing our best to respond to everyone. Let us know what you think.

## NOW READER FORUM

Check out our <u>new BBS</u>! Discuss the current issue or take part in <u>BECK'S</u> <u>EVERYONE'S A CRITIC</u> Contest!

the suicide bomb that exploded in New Delhi last week, triggering renewed tensions between India and Pakistan, has once again landed the latter country's nuclear arsenal at the top of international security concerns. Alarm about a possible nuclear meltdown in the subcontinent comes amid fears that rogue extremists in Pakistan could try to seize that country's nuclear arsenal and reports linking former and active Pakistani nuke scientists to al Qaeda.

According to the Washington Post, one of them, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood, a pioneer of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program and a vocal admirer of the Taliban, confessed he'd had several meetings with bin Laden before and after September 11 to discuss nuclear weapons.

But while nervous observers hope India's and Pakistan's Kashmiri spat won't lead to a radioactive showdown, many blame Canada and its all too promiscuous atomic expertise for turning the area into a powder keg.

Mahmood, for example, started his career helping run a Canuck-supplied Candu reactor, a path followed by many other Pakistani nuclear weapons specialists.

"Canadian expertise was vital for developing nuclear weapons," says Pervez Hoodbhoy, a physicist at Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad. "There is no clear line that separates (civilian from weapons) programs." And the know-how, says Duane Bratt of Alberta's Mount Royal College, a Candu expert, is more important than the trade in components. "This story is going to damage the Canadian nuclear program," he warns.

The Candu was Pakistan's first nuclear reactor, acquired in a deal heavily subsidized by the Canadian government's low-interest loans. The 137-megawatt Candu, named Kanupp (short for Karachi Nuclear Power Plant), was Pakistan's only such plant until last year, when a second, Chinese-built reactor came online. As Kanupp was being built in the 70s, up to 50 Pakistani scientists and engineers were brought to nuclear facilities in Ontario and New Brunswick to be trained to operate it.

On their return, many went into Pakistan's clandestine military nuclear program.

"Canada was absolutely indispensable. Without (its help) neither India nor Pakistan would have gotten nuclear weapons," says Zia Mian, a Princeton University nuclear physicist and leading proliferation expert. There has been, he says, a revolving door for personnel between Pakistan's civilian and military programs, which are both run by the same agency, the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.

Canadian cooperation continued quietly through several coups d'état, wars with nuclear rival India and even after Pakistan and India were slapped with international sanctions in 1998 because of a series of nuclear tests.

Such assistance continues to this day through Pakistan's associate membership in the Candu Owners Group, a consortium of Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. and three Canadian power utilities, confirms John Sommerville, the

Also in Newsfront this week:

Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor

News: Will U.S. aid Afghanistan?

News: Going
against the flow
Reggae maestros
say urban station
giving them no play

News: A slave to retail madness
Xmas forces me into pathetic job. Now, if only i could win the lottery

News: I'm hungry, but finally I'm free

News: <u>Bagels for</u> <u>Santa Claus</u>

News: Don
Wanagas City Hall:
It's a cover-up
Mel to seal
backroom deal in
contract scandal
when no one's
looking

News: Turn out the lights
U.S. traders angle for our electric wealth

Insight: Ken & Barbie's Sweatshop

group's president. The group sent several "expert missions" to Pakistan after 1998 to give advice on running the aging Kanupp safely, says Sommerville.

Asked if Canada played a role in helping Pakistan develop weapons, Sommerville says, "People did get trained. How much that contributed to the program I really don't know."

AECL spokesperson David Lisle denies that Canada facilitated arms development. Kanupp, he says, is subject to "stringent" international inspections to ensure that the byproducts of nuclear power generation are not diverted to nukes. Candus pump out spent fuel that contains highly radioactive plutonium, a prime ingredient in nuclear bombs.

Lisle says the inspections ensure that Kanupp "is not involved in any kind of proliferation issues."

But experts say the safeguards are full of loopholes because Canada was anxious to reap Candu sale profits and to reward allies in the Cold War. "Canada went along with Indian and Pakistani insistence on not having full safeguards that might have made sure weapons programs were not developed. The Canadian government didn't push it," says Princeton's Mian.

As early as 1993, the Nonproliferation Review, a journal of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, reported concerns that Pakistan was diverting plutonium from Kanupp into its weapons program. Canada, says Hoodbhoy, pretended not to notice because Pakistan helped fight the Soviet Union in the 80s. "They turned the other way to this monster. It was expedience and a lack of principles that brought them this gift," he says.

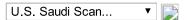
But, says Paul Leventhal, president of the Washington, D.C.-based Nuclear Control Institute and a former Senate staff proliferation expert, the world will experience the consequences of this opportunism. "The payback time," he says, "is right now."

PAGE BACK ¤ PAGE FORWARD ¤ PRINTABLE

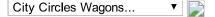
VERSION ¤ EMAIL THIS STORY

#### **ALSO BY ALEX ROSLIN:**

\* denotes articles in this issue



#### **RECENTLY IN NEWS FEATURE:**



contests | film times | savage love | news | the goods | classified | listings | web extras | virtueNOW.com | back issues | about NOW | site map | advertise with us | http://www.nowtoronto.com/about/careers.html | privacy policy

search tips

NOW Online Edition > Newsfront

comments about the site? Email <u>Jen & Nicci</u>