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## **Prolifération : Nuclear trafficking continues**

<https://tinyurl.com/qc6od> [Daily Times, Pakistan]

AQ Khan-esque N-trafficking continues : Jane's

By Khalid Hasan  
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[https://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006621story\\_21-6-2006\\_pg7\\_9](https://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006621story_21-6-2006_pg7_9)

WASHINGTON : Despite the break-up of Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan's nuclear smuggling operation, there have been several indications in the past two years that trafficking activities along similar lines continue, according to Jane's.

In a news report circulated on June 16, the generally authoritative British publication said that portions of the AQ Khan network appear to be intact. Several officials involved in investigating the network's activities said it now appears that parts of the organisation are yet to be uncovered and includes individuals who are more senior in the Khan network than previously believed. The officials were part of dozens of interviews that Jane's has conducted during the past year with people who have first hand knowledge of the issue - officials on four continents who are investigating the network, as well as some of Khan's associates who have been prosecuted or are under investigation and their attorneys.

The report said, "The argument that some senior people in the network are still at large runs counter to the officially stated position of the US and other important players, and remains highly controversial. Yet several officials have said that this dissenting view is gaining support and is given credibility by the fact that the Khan network was run as more of a decentralised white-collar criminal group than a top-down organisation solely under the direction of one person. Such a

decentralised structure could well have allowed participants in the network to remain undiscovered and to continue operating. Recent clues that have been uncovered by law enforcement officials, international nuclear inspectors and intelligence operatives support the contention. One major piece of evidence - that Iranian agents and to a lesser degree Pakistani ones have attempted numerous illicit nuclear-related purchases since 2003 - suggests that such a reconfiguration of suppliers is occurring and that atomic goods continue to be available for those with the means and desire to buy them. While these new suppliers cannot provide the one-stop-shopping that Khan offered, and are insufficient by themselves for moving a nuclear weapons programme very far forward, they point to the likelihood that some tentacles of the network have yet to be discovered.□

Jane's said that Germany recently halted or investigated a number of deals involving basic nuclear-related materials and dual-use goods, although these did not involve complete centrifuge designs, machines, or drawings as Khan had supplied. These activities, driven by the continued demand and the active procurement efforts of at least Iran and Pakistan, include some people and companies that once supplied Khan's enterprise. But they also include new or different nuclear technology brokers, many of whom use the same or similar methods as Khan's middlemen to evade international export controls intended to stop the flow of nuclear-related and dual-use goods. The ability to track the trade in this type of technology has long been one of the key tools to discovering who is doing what in regard to nuclear proliferation. In Vienna, some diplomatic officials argue that the explanation that the Khan network easily shuffled closely guarded nuclear goods to Libya, Iran and North Korea using only a small group of individuals acting on their own is not a believable one. Such a view runs counter to the official explanation that Khan and his close associates were able to offer one-stop-shopping for a nuclear weapons programme without additional backing. However, proponents of the alternate theory say they believe more powerful forces were at work behind the scenes than has previously been publicly stated.□

Jane's quoted German, EU and US officials as saying that Iran has built an equivalent, if not larger, network than Khan's to supply prohibited goods for its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. Tehran has principally been seeking material from European and Russian firms and has included some of the Khan middlemen in the process. In doing so, Iran's new network is exploiting many of the same weaknesses and loopholes of the system that Khan's associates used.