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## **Former CIA analyst alleges China-Saudi nuclear deal**

*By Jeff Stein*

A former CIA officer who managed intelligence reports on Saudi Arabia has sent an uncleared manuscript to congressional offices claiming that China supplied nuclear missiles to the kingdom early in the George W. Bush administration.

“I believe the People’s Republic of China delivered a turn-key nuclear ballistic missile system to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia over the course of several years beginning no later than December 2003,” writes Jonathan Scherck in a self-published book, “Patriot Lost,” which he provided to SpyTalk on Monday.

He also e-mailed copies to the offices of Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), who chairs the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-Mich.), ranking Republican on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Scherck, who became convinced that the White House was covering up the China-Saudi nuclear connection so as not to damage relations with a major U.S. ally and oil supplier, said he formed his conclusions while reading intelligence reports from Riyadh during his 18 months on “the Saudi account” in the Near East Division between 2005 and 2007, as well as talking with other CIA personnel in contact with the Bush White House.

“Based on the author’s knowledge of U.S. satellite imagery spanning this time period, along with first-hand accounts of revealing interactions between Cheney’s office and CIA management,” a press release says, “Patriot Lost details how -- out of political expediency amidst the war in Iraq -- the Bush White House opted not to intervene in an oil-for-nuclear weapons pact between the Chinese government and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This heavily shrouded deal and Washington’s shocking complicity constituted a flagrant violation of the long-standing but crippled Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty ratified decades ago under the Richard Nixon administration.”

But his manuscript provides little in the way of detailed evidence for his conclusions.

Scherck joined the CIA in 2004 but quit before finishing the agency's rigorous clandestine career training course, in November of that year. He then joined SpecTal, a Reston, Va.-based intelligence contractor, which assigned him to the CIA as a collection management officer on the Saudi desk. He supplied SpyTalk with corroboration of his agency employment and correspondence with the CIA's Publications Review Board over his manuscript.

Scherck also said he was fired "because of my continued interaction with the NGA" – the National Geospatial Agency, which provides spy satellite pictures to the CIA and other U.S. intelligence components.

He said he tired of the board's "foot dragging" on his manuscript, although he had submitted it only in April, the correspondence shows. Negotiations can drag on for several months.

Publishing the manuscript without the CIA's approval opens him to criminal prosecution.

CIA spokesmen were not readily available for comment. Spokesman for Feinstein and Hoekstra could not be reached. (*Update:* A Feinstein spokesman later said the office was "still digesting" the manuscript and would have no comment.)

"I was a contractor supporting America's intelligence community," Scherck writes.

"As a contractor working at CIA ... I served as a middleman between HUMINT [human intelligence] collectors in the field overseas and policymakers downtown at the White House and National Security Council. But in this role, I was one of only a few individuals in Washington with access to what was being said overseas at the time about Saudi Arabia's procurement of a new ballistic missile system from China. "

"I read things, I heard things, I saw things," he continued. "Admittedly, I did not see all—but I saw enough."

Over the years there have been constant reports on secret collaboration among China, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in nuclear and ballistic missile development.

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