FBI found documents on nuclear weapons at Mar-a-Lago, *Washington Post* claims

Patrick Martin
8 September 2022

A report by the *Washington Post*, published Tuesday night on the newspaper's website and then in its Wednesday print edition, provides additional details about the nuclear weapons information it previously claimed had been found during the FBI search of ex-President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate.

Under the headline "Material on foreign nation's nuclear capabilities seized at Trump's Mar-a-Lago," the article claimed: "A document describing a foreign government's military defenses, including its nuclear capabilities, was found by FBI agents who searched former president Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence and private club last month, according to people familiar with the matter, underscoring concerns among U.S. intelligence officials about classified material stashed in the Florida property."

The *Post* said that it had not been told what foreign country the information related to, and it is not clear whether this was a US ally like Israel, which possesses an unacknowledged nuclear arsenal of hundreds of weapons, as well as an anti-missile system, or whether it was a country targeted by US imperialism, such as Russia or China.

The article went on to claim: "Some of the seized documents detail top-secret U.S. operations so closely guarded that many senior national security officials are kept in the dark about them. Only the president, some members of his Cabinet or a near-Cabinet-level official could authorize other government officials to know details of these special-access programs …"

Like many such articles published by the *Post* and the *New York Times*, as part of the bitter conflict within the US ruling elite that has raged ever since Trump became the Republican candidate for president in 2016, there were no named sources of any kind. Only "people familiar with the matter" and "people familiar with the search"—all obviously people within the intelligence apparatus and the Justice Department—were said to have provided the information reported by the newspaper, and the *Post* said they "spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe sensitive details of an ongoing investigation."

Christopher Kise, hired by Trump to head the legal response to the Mar-a-Lago raid, said that the leaks about the case "continue with no respect for the process nor any regard for the real truth. This does not serve well the interests of justice." He complained that with no sources identified and no possibility of seeing the documents if they actually existed, because of their alleged highly secret character, he would be unable to rebut the claims made by the *Post*.

The *Post* claimed that investigators "grew alarmed … as they began to review documents retrieved from the club's storage closet, Trump's residence and his office in August. The team soon came upon records that are extremely restricted, so much so that even some of the senior-most national security officials in the Biden administration weren't authorized to review them. One government filing alluded to this information when it noted that counterintelligence FBI agents and prosecutors investigating the Mar-a-Lago documents were not authorized at first to review some of the material seized."

In addition to the information related to nuclear weapons, some of the documents were marked "HCS," which refers to government documents dealing with secret human sources for US intelligence agencies, as well as materials which were prohibited from being shared with foreign nations, including US allies.

The claim that some material seized at Mar-a-Lago is related to nuclear weapons has a particularly incendiary character. Whether true or not, the mere allegation serves to pit the entire US military-intelligence apparatus against Trump. As the WSWS noted in a perspective published August 16, the FBI raid on Mar-a-Lago "is the most significant political action taken against Trump since he emerged as a national political figure in 2015."

Ten weeks before a national midterm election in which pro-Trump candidates are prominent on the Republican ticket, the Justice Department has

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> determined that the interests of the Biden administration's global grand strategy—centered on the escalation of the US confrontation with Russia and China—require action against Trump at a level that goes far beyond its timid and indecisive response to his January 6, 2021 attempt to overthrow the results of the presidential election.
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> The documents taken by Trump to Mar-a-Lago concerned some of the most important information in the possession of the American military-intelligence apparatus. The American ruling class has developed elaborate procedures for safeguarding such state secrets, which are enforced ruthlessly.

This aspect of the conflict was emphasized in a column published by the *Washington Post* on the same day as its report claiming nuclear information was found at Mar-a-Lago, written by David Ignatius, who is a frequent conduit for top Pentagon and CIA officials.

Under the headline, "National security stakes in the Trump search," Ignatius denounces the decision by federal Judge Aileen Cannon to appoint a special master to review the documents taken in the August 8 raid on the grounds that she fails to recognize the seriousness of the potential breach of security.

He writes, "We've all seen the cryptic notations on these documents about special compartments and codeword protections for human and signals intelligence. These very high classifications are imposed when the lives of CIA agents are potentially at risk; or the National Security Agency's most sensitive techniques of intercepting and decrypting foreign communications might be compromised. These are the kinds of secrets for which spies risk their lives, and for which traitors are executed."

The suggestion that Trump could face the death penalty for removing the documents from the White House and storing them carelessly is extraordinary but no more so than the threats made by Trump and his supporters every day against their opponents in the Democratic Party. In remarks Monday night endorsing former state Representative Geoff Diehl for the Republican nomination for governor of Massachusetts, Trump said Diehl would fight back against "ultraliberal extremists," as he called the Democrats. As governor, Trump continued, Diehl would "rule your state with an iron fist, and he'll do what has to be done."

The unprecedented intensity of the conflict with the ruling elite and within the state is underscored by the document published Tuesday by the website "War on the Rocks," another conduit for the views of top military leaders.

Thirteen former Pentagon leaders—eight former secretaries of defense and five ex-chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—co-signed a statement warning against any effort to undermine civilian control of the military and warning of a deepening global crisis of American imperialism, made worse, although they do not use his name, by Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 elections.

Among the most significant of the 16 points emphasized in the letter are that "Military officers swear an oath to support and defend the Constitution, not an oath of fealty to an individual or to an office" and that "Ultimately, civilian control is wielded by the will of the American people as expressed through elections." During a presidential election, the statement declares, the voters, not the military, choose the next commander-in-chief.

The declaration is signed by every living Senate-confirmed defense secretary of the last 40 years, including James Mattis and Mark Esper, who were appointed by Trump, and by every chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the past 20 years. Equally significant is that Christopher Miller—who was named acting Secretary of Defense by Trump a week after the election and played a key role in the decision on January 6, 2021 to delay for more than three hours the dispatch of National Guard troops while the US Capitol was under attack—did not sign the statement.

Even more remarkable is the gloomy picture presented, in the opening paragraph of the statement, of the dire straits in which American imperialism now finds itself, including debacles in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, mounting conflict with Russia and China, the "pandemic and economic dislocations," and what the statement calls "an extremely adverse environment" for the military leadership, "characterized by the divisiveness of affective polarization that culminated in the first election in over a century when the peaceful transfer of political power was disrupted and in doubt."

The paragraph concludes: "Looking ahead, all of these factors could well get worse before they get better."

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