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New York Times
August 6, 2008
Pg. 10

Iran: Letter On Nuclear Program

By Helene Cooper

The Bush administration said Tuesday that Iran's response to an offer of incentives by six world powers seeking to rein in Tehran's nuclear ambitions was unacceptable, and American and European officials said their next step would be to go back to the United Nations Security Council to seek additional punitive sanctions.

In a short, two-paragraph letter sent by Iranian officials to the European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, in Brussels on Tuesday, Iran said it was "ready to provide a 'clear response'" to the recent proposal from the world powers, according to a copy of the letter obtained by The New York Times. But the letter also said that Iran was "simultaneously expecting to receive your 'clear response' to our questions and ambiguities as well."

European and American diplomats have dismissed the Iranian proposal, which ignored the main six-power demand for curbing Iran's enrichment of uranium and called for concessions from the other side. "As predicted, it basically says, 'Yes, we will give you an answer, but when you give us an answer,'" a European diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity under normal diplomatic rules, said of the letter.

Iran said in the letter that "a speedy and transparent negotiating process with a bright prospect" was possible, but it made no commitments on even the temporary suspension of uranium enrichment that the United States and Europe have said they would accept.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/06/world/middleeast/06briefs-LETTERONNUCL_BRF.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Iran%3A+Letter+On+Nuclear+Program&st=nyt&oref=slogin

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Washington Post
August 7, 2008
Pg. 1

Government Asserts Ivins Acted Alone

Officials Detail Evidence, but Questions Linger

By Carrie Johnson, Del Quentin Wilber and Dan Eggen, Washington Post Staff Writers

Government officials asserted yesterday that a troubled bioweapons scientist acted alone to perpetrate a terrorism scheme that killed five people, a case that centered on a near-perfect match of anthrax spores in his custody and a record of his late-night laboratory work just before the toxic letters were mailed.

Federal investigators uncovered e-mail messages written by bacteriologist Bruce E. Ivins describing an al-Qaeda threat that echoed language in the handwritten letters mailed to Senate offices and media organizations in September and October 2001. Ivins, who worked in high-security labs at Fort Detrick, Md., had a motive because of his work validating a controversial anthrax vaccine that had been suspended from production, authorities said.

Even as Justice Department officials declared the worst act of bioterrorism in U.S. history all but solved, scientists and legal experts noted that the evidence is far from foolproof. Investigators were unable to place Ivins in Princeton, N.J., on the days when the letters were dropped into a Nassau Street mailbox. They did not try to match his crabbed handwriting with the distinctive block print on the 2001 letters. And they did not silence congressional critics who wondered yesterday whether one man could have carried out the elaborate attacks.

Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) called for a "full-blown accounting" of the \$15 million investigation, which took nearly seven years and included multiple wrong turns. Rep. Rush D. Holt (D-N.J.), from whose district the letters were mailed, called for hearings to address questions such as "why investigators are so certain that Ivins acted alone."

Other congressional sources said that the FBI case was compelling but that doubts lingered in part because of the bureau's lengthy and ultimately fruitless pursuit of former Fort Detrick researcher Steven J. Hatfill. In June, the Justice Department agreed to pay Hatfill a \$5.8 million settlement to resolve his privacy lawsuit. The only veiled reference to the government's wrong focus came in a footnote in the documents, which said that tests to make a clear genetic link to a specific scientist did not exist in the early years of the investigation.

The task force first obtained court permission last winter to search Ivins's modest Frederick house, his cars and family van, his work locker, and his personal e-mail accounts.

Paul F. Kemp, an attorney for Ivins, said that prosecutors had carried out "an orchestrated dance of carefully worded statements, heaps of innuendo and a staggering lack of real evidence -- all contorted to create the illusion of guilt." Authorities replied that they were compelled to present their case against Ivins, who had been warned that he could face murder accusations but had not been charged, because of the "extraordinary public interest" after his death July 29 by suicide.

U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Taylor of the District called Ivins "the sole suspect," telling reporters that "we are confident that Dr. Ivins was the only person responsible for these attacks."

The airing of evidence, which followed briefings for lawmakers and relatives of victims, closed a painful chapter for many families.

Using sophisticated DNA techniques and gumshoe detective work, FBI agents and U.S. postal inspectors picked apart discrepancies in Ivins's accounts about the lethal bacteria he had cultured. Prosecutors say Ivins offered different stories about when and how he learned that the anthrax cultures in his lab genetically matched the powder in the letters. The FBI accused him of submitting "questionable" anthrax samples five years ago to keep investigators off his trail.

Investigators homed in on Ivins for several reasons, according to an Oct. 31, 2007, sworn statement from postal inspector Thomas F. Dellafera. That document appeared to serve as a blueprint for the government, laying out critical arguments against the scientist.

Dellafera said that Ivins could not justify his "late-night laboratory work," which peaked around the time of the mailings on Sept. 18 and Oct. 9, 2001. A chart submitted with the search warrant request showed that Ivins logged

long evening shifts from Sept. 14 through Sept. 16, with another spike in late nights in early October. During other periods, he typically left his lab before 5 p.m., Dellafera contended.

Ivins told investigators that he retreated to the lab "to escape" problems at home, the postal inspector said.

Authorities also referenced e-mails the scientist sent to a friend describing his rising stress, depression and feelings of "isolation -- and desolation" in 2000 and through the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The filing also cited an e-mail Ivins allegedly sent a few days before 9/11 warning that "Bin Laden terrorists for sure have anthrax and sarin gas" and have "just decreed death to all Jews and all Americans."

Documents released yesterday also offer some insight into possible motives for the anthrax attacks. The filing referenced e-mails from Ivins in June and July 2000 that describe his stress in an effort to resolve problems with an anthrax vaccine made by BioPort, a Michigan company, that had stopped production under federal order. The vaccine had been used to inoculate U.S. troops, as well as laboratory workers.

A spokeswoman for Emergent BioSolutions, the company formerly known as BioPort, said: "We have no idea what his motives may have been and are not going to speculate."

In June 2000 correspondence, Ivins worried that if the BioPort vaccine failed its potency tests, "the program will come to a halt. That's bad for everyone concerned, including us."

The next month, Ivins agreed to take part in a case study if it were anonymous. "Dr. Ivins indicated that he did not want to see a headline in the National Enquirer that read, 'Paranoid man works with deadly anthrax.'"

Another driving force in targeting victims, the documents said, may have been the political views of Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.) and former Senate Majority Leader Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.). The documents note that Ivins's wife was active in the antiabortion movement, and both senators had been publicized as abortion rights advocates.

After 9/11, Ivins wrote to a friend that he was reacting differently to the crisis than other members of his counseling group were. "Of course I don't talk about how I really feel with them -- it would just make them worse. Seeing how differently I reacted than they did to the recent events makes me really think about myself a lot. I just heard tonight that Bin Laden terrorists for sure have anthrax and sarin gas . . . [redacted]." He continued: "Osama Bin Laden has just decreed death to all Jews and all Americans." The postal inspector said the wording was "similar to the test of the anthrax letters postmarked two weeks later warning 'Death to America,' 'Death to Israel.'"

A forensic psychologist reviewed Ivins's insurance records for appointments and prescriptions and concluded that if Ivins had mailed the letters, "it is quite possible that Dr. Ivins retained some kind of souvenir or references to the mailing events."

At the news conference, U.S. Attorney Taylor said agents had seized 68 unsent letters addressed to media organizations and members of Congress in a search last year.

Investigators pointed to other odd behavior by Ivins in early June. He walked into his back yard in the rain at 10:30 p.m. and "was observed making a raking or digging motion" in "an untended area of grass and other vegetation."

The developments prompted a shift in direction by FBI and postal service investigators, who requested a new round of searches. In a July 12 search of Ivins's house, authorities seized four loaded bullet magazines and other ammunition of various calibers, gunpowder, a ballistic vest, one spent bullet and body armor described as "homemade" and "yellow with silver duct tape," the documents show. In total, more than 280 rounds of live ammunition were found in the house.

Authorities also found a carrying case for a Glock 27 pistol. But the records do not indicate that any guns were discovered in the July search. Two weeks later, Ivins was dead after taking an overdose of Tylenol, an event that brought him the public attention he had eluded for 62 years.

Staff writer Paul Kane contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/06/AR2008080601400.html>

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Washington Times

August 7, 2008

Pg. 18

Analysis

Threat Of Scud Attacks A Reality

By Martin Sieff, United Press International

The threat is real, the technology exists, and it is available and incredibly cheap; at least a half-dozen rogue states and well-funded terrorist groups around the world could afford it, and the menace puts in danger the lives of more than 200 million Americans. Yet almost nothing has been done about it.

The threat is that of old, short-range Scud ballistic missiles being launched with nuclear or biological warheads from large container cargo ships from outside U.S. territorial waters, some of the nation's leading experts in ballistic-missile defense (BMD) warn.

The entire populations of the U.S. Eastern seaboard and the West Coast, some 70 percent of Americans totaling more than 210 million people, are at risk from such attacks, experts have warned.

Tens of thousands of container cargo ships are at sea every day going to and from the United States. More than 1 million cargo containers a day are unloaded at Long Beach, Calif., alone.

The technology to intercept one or a few Scud missiles not only exists, it is mature and reliable. Earlier marks of Patriot missiles successfully defended the main Israeli centers of population in and around Tel Aviv from massive Scud missile attacks launched by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during the 1991 Gulf War. Today's land-based U.S. Army Patriot PAC-3s, built by Raytheon, as well as the U.S. Navy's Aegis-radar-guided, warship-deployed Standard Missiles-3s, have chalked up long and impressive records of interception against vastly faster and more difficult to hit intermediate-range ballistic missiles since then.

Since al Qaeda hijacked four airliners and successfully flew three of them into the sides of the two World Trade Center towers in New York City and into the Pentagon, killing more than 2,800 Americans on Sept. 11, 2001, the Bush administration has given top priority to boosting U.S. ballistic missile-defense and port security. It has invested billions of dollars in being able to detect any nuclear or biological weapons or material that terrorists or rogue states may attempt to smuggle into the United States through its ports or across the land borders from Canada and Mexico. At the same time, ballistic-missile defense programs able to shoot down short- and intermediate-range missiles also have been energetically improved. U.S. allies such as Israel, Japan and Taiwan have proven eager customers to buy the technology and the BMD weapons systems to protect their own population centers.

However, both the U.S. government and the American mainstream media have lost track of the threat posed by mounting Scuds and their light, very mobile launching pads in container ships and firing them at sea, experts warn. In fact, the U.S. Missile Defense Agency and its boss, Lt. Gen. Henry "Trey" Obering III, have been warning for years about the grave danger posed by offshore ballistic-missile launches. But on Capitol Hill and in the U.S. media alike, their warnings have fallen on deaf ears.

The advantages of such a mode of attack are obvious, experts say. The weapons systems involved are extremely cheap. Land-based ballistic missiles can be almost instantly identified with their countries of origin after takeoff. But Scuds launched from container ships cannot.

Writing for BusinessNet in November 2005, analyst Otto Kreisher noted there were already 75,000 anti-ship cruise missiles in circulation around the world in at least 70 countries, and many of them could easily be programmed to attack land targets instead.

<http://www.washtimes.com/news/2008/aug/07/threat-of-scud-attacks-a-reality/>

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Washington Post

August 7, 2008

Pg. 4

Russia Asks That Iran Be Given More Time

No Deadline on Incentives, Envoy Says

By Colum Lynch, Washington Post Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS, Aug. 6 -- Russia said Wednesday that Iran should be granted more time to respond to a package of incentives that the United States and five other powerful nations have offered Tehran to freeze its uranium enrichment efforts, a stance that may slow U.S. and European efforts to impose U.N. sanctions on Tehran. Russia's U.N. ambassador, Vitaly I. Churkin, said the six nations should continue negotiating with Iran over its nuclear program. He dismissed assertions by the United States, Britain and France that Tehran had missed a deadline this week to respond to the offer, which would make a push for U.N. sanctions inevitable.

"We haven't set any deadlines for their response," he said. "We have some negotiating opportunities, and rather than focus almost entirely on sanctions we should focus on what those opportunities should be."

Churkin's remarks raised the prospect of renewed strains between Washington and Moscow over Iran policy during the final months of President Bush's tenure. Administration officials say Iran is buying time to advance its capacity to enrich uranium, an effort they suspect is intended to fuel a nuclear weapon. They have made it clear they hope to secure a fourth round of U.N. sanctions against Tehran before Bush leaves office in January, according to U.N. diplomats.

Iran denies that it is seeking nuclear weapons, and says that the council has no right to prevent it from developing a civilian energy program.

The United States, France and Britain pressed ahead with efforts to punish Tehran after a conference call Wednesday between representative of the six nations. Britain's top Middle East expert, Kim Howells, indicated that the allies secured agreement with Russia and China to pursue a "dual track strategy" on Iran -- including discussion of possible U.N. sanctions and further contacts between Iran's nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, and Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief.

The latest standoff comes nearly two months after the five permanent members of the Security Council -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- as well as Germany offered to sweeten a package of economic, political and security incentives to Iran. Solana, the group's representative, gave Iran until last Saturday to accept the package or face further U.N. sanctions.

Iran said in a letter to Solana Tuesday that it is ready to respond to the offer as long as the six big powers "simultaneously" provide Tehran with a more detailed explanation of the incentives.

The United States, France and Britain accused Iran of stonewalling, and said they would begin talks on a new U.N. sanctions resolution. Churkin, the Russian representative, conceded that "we would have preferred a more straightforward and positive answer from our Iranian colleagues."

"The letter that we received yesterday appears to be a stalling tactic," State Department spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos said. He said the big powers are "beginning to consider the possible outlines of another resolution." Council diplomats and analysts said Russia's initiative would lend support to what they think is an Iranian effort to buy time. "The Iranians seems determine to run out the clock," said Justin Logan of the Cato Institute. "The Iran problem appears likely to be handed to the next president."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/06/AR2008080601085.html>

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Christian Science Monitor

FBI: Ivins Held Identical Anthrax Strain

The scientist was the sole custodian of anthrax spores genetically identical to the powder used in 2001 attacks, say documents unsealed Wednesday.

By Peter Grier | Staff reporter

from the August 7, 2008 edition

WASHINGTON - To the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the heart of the case against Army scientist Bruce Ivins is a flask of anthrax spores labeled "RMR-1029."

RMR-1029 has been stored in the B3 biocontainment suite of Building 1425 of Fort Detrick, Md., ever since it was cultivated over a decade ago.

Dr. Ivins had unrestricted access to that suite -- and was RMR-1029's sole custodian.

All of the powdered poison used in the anthrax attacks that shook the country in 2001 had four genetic mutations found only in RMR-1029, according to court documents unsealed Wednesday.

And around the time of the attacks, Dr. Ivins spent an unusual number of late nights in the lab for which FBI agents claimed he had no good explanation.

"His access to Suite B3 ... afforded all of the equipment and containment facilities which would have been needed to prepare the anthrax and letters used in the Fall 2001 attacks," according to one affidavit.

Ivins committed suicide last week as the Department of Justice readied charges against him. The microbiologist, who had worked on developing an anthrax vaccine, was respected by fellow scientists and received a top Defense Department award in 2003 for his research at Fort Detrick's US Army Medical Institute of Infectious Diseases.

Some of his neighbors and co-workers had criticized the heavy-handed tactics used against him by investigators and maintained that Ivins was a fragile person who cracked under the strain of being a suspect.

Documents released Aug. 6, however, portray a person that most of his colleagues may not recognize. The FBI's allegations include a decades-long obsession with college sorority Kappa Kappa Gamma and other mental health issues.

In e-mails to an unidentified friend released by the government, Ivins talked about feeling dizzy and having a strange metallic taste in his mouth.

"Other times, it's like I'm not only sitting at my desk doing work, I'm also a few feet away watching me do it," he wrote in an e-mail on April 3, 2000.

The attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, appeared to affect him greatly. In December 2001, he sent a co-worker some poetry he had composed. "I'm a little dream-self, short and stout/ I'm the other half of Bruce -- when he lets me out," one poem began.

The substantive aspect of the case against Ivins appears to be the product of the rapidly developing science of microbial forensics. Harnessing powerful computers and new genetic knowledge, this tool develops DNA fingerprints by looking for tiny mutations in the genetic makeup of otherwise-related strains of bacteria. This new law enforcement tool received a large push from FBI efforts to solve the 2001 anthrax case. The government's years-long probe into the attacks has cost millions of dollars and been criticized both for its slow speed and for pointing wrongly toward another Ft. Detrick scientist, Steven Hatfill.

Hatfill was publicly named as a "person of interest" in the case, but has since won a judgment for millions of dollars from the government for false accusation.

The FBI now believes it has cracked the case with the aid of microbial forensics. But whether the genetic evidence would have stood up in a court of law will not now be tested.

"Microbial forensics has yet to be rigorously challenged in an adversarial setting," said Dr. Randall Murch, a former FBI agent and microbial forensic expert, at a January symposium on the subject sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

According to an affidavit, when the FBI first asked Ivins in 2002 for samples of anthrax drawn from RMR-1029, he submitted material drawn from other sources.

On the afternoon of April 7, 2004, an FBI agent accompanied Ivins into the Suite B3 and seized the RMR-1029 flask itself.

The documents contain some hints as to why the targets of anthrax letters might have chosen. They note, for instance, that Ivins was angry that an NBC television investigative reporter had filed a Freedom of Information Act request for certain information from his lab.

Tom Brokaw of NBC was among the letter recipients.

The envelopes used in the attacks could have been sold only at post offices in Maryland or Virginia, according to the FBI. The documents allege that from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s, Ivins sent hundreds of handwritten or typed letters to various members of society, including news organizations and US Senators.

Sen. Pat Leahy (D) of Vermont and former majority leader Sen. Tom Daschle (D) of South Dakota also received anthrax-laced letters in 2001.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0807/p25s20-usju.html>

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Washington Post

August 8, 2008

Pg. 6

Study Cautions Against Strike On Iran's Nuclear Facilities

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

A military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities would probably only delay the country's progress toward nuclear-weapons capability, according to a study that concludes that such an attack could backfire by strengthening Tehran's resolve to acquire the bomb.

The analysis by the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security found that Iran's uranium facilities are too widely dispersed and protected -- and, in some cases, concealed too well -- to be effectively destroyed by warplanes. And any damage to the country's nuclear program could be quickly repaired.

"Following an attack, Iran could quickly rebuild its centrifuge program in small, easily hidden facilities focused on making weapon-grade uranium for nuclear weapons," said principal author David Albright, ISIS president and a former U.N. weapons inspector.

The study, scheduled for release today, is based in part on a comparison of Iran's known nuclear facilities with Iraq's Osirak reactor, which Israeli jets destroyed in a 1981 strike intended to curb Baghdad's nuclear ambitions. Although Israel struck a devastating blow against Iraq's program, a strike against Iran would be harder by several orders of magnitude, according to Albright and co-authors Paul Brannan and Jacqueline Shire.

The core of Iran's program is its huge uranium enrichment plant at Natanz, where thousands of machines called centrifuges create the uranium fuel used in making nuclear energy. Although Iran says its efforts are intended for peaceful energy purposes, its stocks of enriched uranium could be used to build nuclear weapons.

Last year, U.S. intelligence officials concluded that Iran had halted nuclear weapons research in 2003 but continued to expand its capabilities in ways that would allow it to develop such weapons quickly.

Despite heavy fortification, the subterranean Natanz plant could be heavily damaged in an airstrike using bunker-busting bombs or missiles. But the centrifuges could be replaced rapidly, perhaps in hidden underground facilities, the ISIS report said. Iran is known to have constructed bunkers inside mountain tunnels near Natanz and other major nuclear sites.

While Iran once relied on imported technology and parts to build its centrifuges, it is now largely self-sufficient. The manufacture of key components is dispersed among a number of government-controlled factories, while imported parts such as high-strength aluminum have been stockpiled over the past decade, the report notes.

Moreover, since 2006, when Iran began limiting access to its nuclear facilities by U.N. nuclear inspectors, Western governments can no longer say with certainty where some key facilities are located, ISIS said.

"Current knowledge of the complex is lacking," the report stated. "Without that knowledge, an attack is unlikely to significantly delay Iran's mastery of enrichment with gas centrifuges."

According to Albright, an Israeli or U.S. attack would result in broader popular support for Iran's ruling clerics and could lead Tehran to sever ties with the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

"Iran would likely launch a 'crash' program to quickly obtain nuclear weapons," Albright said in an interview. "An attack would likely leave Iran angry, more nationalistic, fed up with international inspectors and nonproliferation treaties, and more determined than ever to obtain nuclear weapons."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/07/AR2008080703026.html>

Washington Times

August 8, 2008

Ivins' lab deemed early on as contaminated

Report finds lax Fort Detrick procedures

By Jerry Seper, The Washington Times

EXCLUSIVE:

Just seven months after the 2001 anthrax attacks that killed five people, the U.S. Army laboratory in Maryland where the accused killer, microbiologist Bruce E. Ivins, worked was described in a government report as a "rat's nest" that was contaminated with anthrax bacteria.

The highly redacted report, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Times, said Suite B-3 in Building 1425 at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick not only was contaminated with anthrax in three locations but the bacteria had escaped from secure areas in the building to those that were unprotected.

Written by the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, the report said that while the Fort Detrick facility where the FBI said Mr. Ivins spent an inordinate amount of time alone and at night had comprehensive procedures that would protect a "great number of personnel from exposure" if implemented, there was no requirement for routine surveillance to check for contamination inside or outside the containment laboratories.

The 361-page report said that safety procedures at the facility and in individual laboratories were lax and inadequately documented; that safety supervision sometimes was carried out by junior personnel with inadequate training or survey instruments; and that exposures of dangerous bacteria at the lab, including anthrax, had not been adequately reported.

During an inspection of the Fort Detrick lab where Mr. Ivins worked as a microbiologist and vaccinologist for 36 years and senior biodefense researcher for the past 18 years, investigators found substantial crowding; numerous instances of unlabeled or improperly labeled chemical bottles; inappropriate storage of chemicals; benchtop clutter; dirt and debris on the floor; supplies and equipment left in cluttered biosafety cabinets; and improperly handled biohazard waste.

Army investigators, according to the report, said the scientists in B-3, known at Fort Detrick as Team Anthrax, were "generally kind of sloppy."

They said one supervisor, whose name was redacted, had ordered his people to wear gloves "since I can't be sure the lab isn't contaminated." Another supervisor, identified in the report only as the "chief of the special pathogens branch in one of five branches within the diagnostic systems division," had sent several letters to B-3 for analysis and when a final report was returned, he regarded it as "reflecting contamination in the laboratory."

"At this time, I went to B-3. It was like a rat's nest. The countertops were dirty, the floor was dirty and the area was disorganized," the supervisor is quoted as saying. "At that time, I made a decision not to process any more samples in B-3."

Officials at the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command did not return calls for comment on the report. Mr. Ivins, 62, committed suicide July 29 after being identified by the FBI as the target of impending charges in the anthrax probe that could have resulted in the death penalty. Although he had assisted the bureau in analyzing the anthrax-tainted envelopes sent to Capitol Hill, the FBI said, Mr. Ivins possessed purified anthrax spores identical to the bacteria that killed the five, sickened 17 others and alarmed the nation in 2001 - in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks by al Qaeda terrorists.

It was advanced DNA testing by the FBI from samples taken from Mr. Ivins' lab of highly purified anthrax spores with "certain genetic mutations identical" to those used in the attacks that led investigators to the conclusion that he was their man.

Anthrax-laced letters sent to Capitol Hill and elsewhere killed Florida photo editor Robert Stevens, 63; U.S. postal workers Thomas Lee Morris, 55, and Joseph P. Curseen, 47, both of whom worked at the Brentwood facility in Northeast; Kathy Nguyen, a 61-year-old hospital stockroom employee in New York; and Ottilie W. Lundgren, a 94-year-old woman from Connecticut.

Mr. Ivins' death precluded the FBI from presenting its case in court, but FBI Assistant Director Joseph Persichini, who heads the bureau's Washington field office, said the Fort Detrick scientist "was responsible for the death, sickness and fear brought to our country by the 2001 anthrax mailings."

Known as the "Amerithrax" investigation, Mr. Persichini called the FBI probe one of the largest and most complex ever conducted by law enforcement. He said the DNA testing allowed investigators to pinpoint the origins of the anthrax to Mr. Ivins' lab.

The first concerns about contamination at Fort Detrick surfaced in December 2001, when "positive cultures" for the anthrax bacteria were found outside the biocontainment area of Building 1425, the report said.

According to the report, a microbiologist in the building, whose name was redacted, identified the cultures and decontaminated the area, although he did so "on his own initiative and without the direction of any supervisors." It said the microbiologist also did not notify any supervisors of his actions or of the contamination.

While the microbiologist's name is protected in the report's narrative on how and why the Army's investigation began, an accompanying index of the report's exhibits identifies him as Mr. Ivins. His name also appears two other times in the index in connection with redacted sworn statements he made.

In the report, Mr. Ivins' name appears to have been mistakenly listed on several occasions, suggesting he was a major player in the U.S. Army probe. In one reference, "Bruce" was redacted but "Ivins" was left in; a handwritten note on a totally redacted page says, "Bruce Ivins statement." In another handwritten note on a two-page sworn statement in which the source is protected, "Ivins" is listed in the margin.

According to the report, the Fort Detrick contamination first became known to lab supervisors on April 16, 2002, and was confirmed two days later as the anthrax bacteria. The report said evidence gathered by Army investigators suggested that "a single source" was responsible for the contamination although it neither identified a suspect nor ruled out the possibility that others could have been involved.

The report also said that "multiple contaminates" identified in an extensive search of the facility "suggest that multiple episodes of contamination may have occurred." The source of the decontamination was not discovered, the report said.

Mr. Ivins was working on finding vaccines for the anthrax bacteria. He and a colleague held two U.S. patents for anthrax vaccine technology, but law-enforcement officials have theorized that Mr. Ivins' decaying mental health and his desire to show people the importance of his vaccines could have motivated him to carry out the worst bioterrorism attack in the nation's history.

In October 2001, several letters contaminated with a virulent version of the anthrax virus were mailed to the offices of Democratic Sens. Tom Daschle of North Dakota and Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont, as well as to the offices of ABC News, CBS News, NBC News, the New York Post and the National Enquirer.

Mr. Ivins was among three Fort Detrick scientists to receive in March 2003 the Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service - the highest award given to Defense Department civilian employees - for helping solve technical problems in the manufacture of anthrax vaccine.

Although the FBI had initially settled on another Fort Detrick scientist, Steven Hatfill, as the major focus of its anthrax investigation, the target changed in 2006 when FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III named veteran agent Vincent B. Lisi and Edward W. Montooth to lead the probe. The director told them to re-examine leads in the case and re-evaluate others who might have been overlooked as potential suspects.

Federal law-enforcement authorities said that was when Mr. Ivins emerged as a major suspect.

Mr. Hatfill later collected \$5.8 million from the government as part of a settlement in a lawsuit he filed against the Justice Department and others.

<http://www.washtimes.com/news/2008/aug/08/lab-deemed-early-as-contaminated-rats-nest/>

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Washington Post

August 8, 2008

Pg. 1

Anthrax Case Raises Doubt On Security

Gaps in Lab Safeguards Prompt Calls for Investigations

By Nelson Hernandez and Philip Rucker, Washington Post Staff Writers

Revelations about anthrax scientist Bruce E. Ivins's mental instability have exposed what congressional leaders and security experts call startling gaps in how the federal government safeguards its most dangerous biological materials, even as the number of bioscience laboratories has grown rapidly since the 2001 terror attacks.

An estimated 14,000 scientists and technicians at about 400 institutions have clearances to access viruses and bacteria such as the *Bacillus anthracis* used in the anthrax attacks, but security procedures vary by facility, and oversight of the labs is spread across multiple government agencies.

Screening for the researchers handling some of the world's deadliest germs is not as strict as that for national security jobs in the FBI and CIA, federal officials said.

In Ivins's case, the microbiologist expressed homicidal thoughts to a therapist eight years ago and grappled with mental health problems long before he emerged as the FBI's lead suspect in the 2001 anthrax attacks. But his comments never came up in security and medical screenings at the Army lab where he worked.

"The system is supposed to catch and report that sort of information," said Jeffrey Adamovicz, who supervised Ivins at the Army's Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases in Frederick. "I had never heard of any of this before. His previous supervisor had never heard of any of this before. His current supervisor had never heard of any of this before."

The case sparked calls yesterday in Congress for investigations into whether the labs are physically secure and whether too many scientists have been granted clearances to handle deadly biological agents.

"I think we need to tighten up the procedures," Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.), chairman of a House Homeland Security subcommittee, said in an interview. "It surely seems as though [Ivins] was a troubled man and something should have picked this up earlier. He should have been rescreened and reevaluated in terms of his ability to have the access that he had."

Sen. Susan M. Collins (R-Maine), the ranking member of the Senate's Homeland Security committee, said in a statement that the Ivins case "raises serious questions about the effectiveness" of lab security.

More than a year before the anthrax attacks, Ivins told a counselor that he was interested in a young woman who lived out of town and that he had "mixed poison" that he took with him when he went to watch her play in a soccer match, the counselor said in an interview Wednesday.

Even though the therapist told police and Ivins's one-time psychiatrist, Ivins continued to have unfettered lab access at Fort Detrick, where he worked for more than 28 years before committing suicide last week. His bosses were apparently unaware of his e-mails and online postings fixating on the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, complaints of mental disturbances, unusual poems hinting at a double life, and suggestions of substance abuse.

Before the anthrax attacks, Ivins and his colleagues at USAMRIID received regular background and medical checks, said Caree Vander Linden, the institute's spokeswoman. She did not know how often these checks occurred, though security risk assessments are now valid for five years. Medical screenings were done every year by base doctors, she said, but she did not know whether they included psychological evaluations or drug tests, both of which have been added after the attacks.

After 2001, labs at Fort Detrick were subject to random inspections by an "elite roving observer force," then constant video surveillance. Ivins and others were required to enroll in a "personnel reliability program," which relies on scientists and technicians to self-report anything unusual, even something as minor as taking cold medicine. Co-workers are required to report abnormal behavior or risk losing their security clearances.

Yet none of these measures stopped Ivins from working in his lab until November 2007, when his access was revoked, Vander Linden said. Medical privacy laws forbid her to discuss what ended his access, she said, though former colleagues have said they believe he was banned from the lab in connection with the FBI investigation. Neither Vander Linden nor Ivins's colleagues could explain how the mental troubles outlined in FBI documents released Wednesday went unnoticed for so long.

"It's just incongruous with the individual that I knew," said Kathleen Carr, a former USAMRIID scientist who worked with Ivins and helped develop the institute's new security measures.

For the 14,000 scientists with clearances to work with "select biological agents" such as *Bacillus anthracis* -- many of them civilians working at private universities -- the security regulations are remarkably lax, some experts said. An individual is denied clearance if he or she has been committed to a mental institution or charged with a federal crime, according to the "select agent" security clearance program operated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Agriculture, in concert with the Justice Department. Also denied clearance are individuals who are involved in any terrorist group, are engaged in intentional acts of violence or are agents of a foreign power.

"They would not, for example, exclude a person who is a radical white supremacist," said Richard H. Ebright, a Rutgers University professor who closely follows lab security protocols. "They would not, for example, exclude a

person who is a radical Islamist. They would not, for example, exclude a person who has homicidal tendencies or even a person diagnosed with having a sociopathic personality."

Richard Besser, a director at the CDC who oversees the select agent security assessments, said the background checks for lab scientists are not as stringent as screenings for other federal agencies.

"The select agent program has, I think, led to major improvements in lab security and safety, but it's highly unlikely that we're ever going to be able to fully prevent someone from doing harm with a biological agent if they're really intent on causing harm and they have the know-how," Besser said.

The number of labs equipped to handle biological agents has increased dramatically since Sept. 11, 2001. Before then, there were only five "biosafety level 4" labs -- places equipped to study highly lethal agents such as Ebola that have no human vaccine or treatment -- a Government Accountability Office report stated last fall. Fifteen are in operation or under construction now, according to the report. There are hundreds more biosafety level 3 labs, which handle agents such as *Bacillus anthracis*, which does have a human vaccine.

In inspecting the 400 biosafety level 3 and 4 labs, the government has numerous security guidelines, but its only legal requirement is that the laboratory doors have locks, Ebright said.

"This is less security than at your local McDonald's or your local convenience store, which does have video surveillance," he said.

The Ivins case is not the first to highlight security lapses in the nation's labs. In 2006, at Texas A&M University, a lab worker unknowingly was exposed to the highly infectious agent brucella while cleaning an aerosol chamber, and campus authorities neglected to report the incident to the CDC as required. A subsequent CDC investigation revealed that the university was not authorized to aerosolize brucella and allowed unauthorized access to toxins and other protocol violations, according to the GAO report.

At the National Institutes of Health, most of the dangerous viral and bacterial agents are confined to one building on the Bethesda campus. That facility is monitored by video surveillance and guards. Scientists are not allowed to work in such laboratories alone, and alarms sound when an employee enters an unauthorized area.

Some institutions have been reluctant to adopt tighter scrutiny. At the University of Texas in Austin, which has two level 3 labs, Harold Davis, an associate vice president who oversaw security compliance, said he resigned in June because the university's faculty and administrators resisted federal security guidelines.

Even at Fort Detrick, there was resistance to tighter security, Carr, the former USAMRIID scientist, and three others wrote in a 2004 paper for a biosecurity journal. Roving patrols inspecting scientists' work could be perceived as an "intrusive and unwelcome presence," the paper said.

Besser, of the CDC, said it is difficult to strike a balance between necessary safeguards and an overly stringent work environment for scientists.

"The line that we end up drawing is probably one that leaves no one happy," he said. "Those who favor the most rigorous lab security will say it's not enough, and those who are doing their research will say it's too much."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/07/AR2008080703462.html?sub=AR>

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Christian Science Monitor

How Did Anthrax Suspect Ivins Keep Security Clearance?

The army microbiologist sought aid for mental health years ago.

By Peter Grier and Gordon Lubold | Staff writers of The Christian Science Monitor

from the August 8, 2008 edition

WASHINGTON - Army microbiologist Bruce Ivins may or may not have been the anthrax killer. But FBI documents about his case released Wednesday raise another troubling question: Why did he retain security clearance and access to deadly pathogens, despite years of strange – sometimes disturbing – behavior?

It is possible Dr. Ivins's superiors were unaware that he had sought help for mental-health problems as early as 2000. And perhaps the FBI did not want to alert him to their suspicions by starting a formal clearance review.

It is also possible that family members and co-workers were reluctant to report his actions. Sometimes, people don't take the security clearance process as seriously as they should, says a lawyer who handles similar cases, even at a facility as sensitive as Ivins's workplace.

"It's an exceptional case. It could be that it just slipped through the cracks," says attorney Mark F. Riley, a retired Army intelligence officer.

Ivins's security clearance and access to labs at Fort Detrick's US Army Medical Institute of Infectious Diseases were not pulled until November 2007, according to Justice Department officials. Ivins committed suicide last week as the US government readied charges against him.

Yet the FBI had requested a sample from a flask of anthrax spores which Ivins held as early as 2002. In April 2004, after discovering that the samples Ivins submitted in fact had not come from the requested flask, RMR-1029, an FBI agent accompanied Ivins into a biocontainment suite at Fort Detrick to seize the flask.

Asked at an Aug. 6 press conference why Ivins was allowed to retain access to anthrax, Jeffrey Taylor, US attorney for the District of Columbia, said, "When the investigation began to focus on Dr. Ivins, the lab was notified of our concerns about him."

PORTRAIT OF A SCIENTIST

According to documents released Aug. 6, Ivins was having personal problems long before the FBI zeroed in on him – and even before the anthrax attacks.

In e-mails from 2000 released by the government, Ivins described feeling disassociated from himself. He occasionally became dizzy, he said, and had a strange metallic taste in his mouth.

"Other times it's like I'm not only sitting at my desk doing work, I'm also a few feet away watching me do it," he wrote to an unidentified friend on April 3, 2000.

The attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, appeared to affect him greatly. In December 2001, he send a co-worker some poetry he had composed.

"I'm a little dream-self, short and stout/I'm the other half of Bruce – when he lets me out," one poem began.

At the time Ivins was in therapy for his problems, according to the FBI. It is not clear whether he had been referred to therapy by the Army, or sought treatment on his own.

Nevertheless, for years the scientist retained access to the stocks of deadly microorganisms at Fort Detrick as he worked on an anthrax vaccine. He maintained at least a façade of normalcy to many of his neighbors and co-workers.

The microbiologist, who had worked on developing an anthrax vaccine, was respected by fellow scientists and received a top Defense Department award in 2003 for his research at Fort Detrick.

"It does remind us we need to be careful about who works on this stuff," says Gerald Epstein, a senior fellow in the Homeland Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

At the same time, if Ivins was seeking out help on his own, that might have been an easy matter to conceal from the Army, notes Mr. Epstein.

"It's hard to look inside people's minds," he says.

RESTRICTING LAB ACCESS

An Army fact sheet provided to a reporter in response to a question about Ivins and his access to pathogens notes that he would have been subject to continuous evaluation from supervisors and fellow workers.

Medical treatment undertaken outside the Army as well as the taking of prescription medication could potentially result in a worker at the Fort Detrick labs being denied access to pathogens, notes the fact sheet.

"If a supervisor observes that an employee is under a great deal of stress, seems unusually distracted, or is exhibiting other signs of strain, the employee's entry privileges can be temporarily suspended until the situation is resolved," says the fact sheet.

The Army document notes only that Ivins's access to anthrax and other pathogens was pulled on Nov. 1, 2007, and does not explain whether his superiors had earlier suspicions about him.

Given the secrecy that has surrounded the anthrax investigation, it is possible that the whole story with regard to Ivins and his continued Army work has not yet been told, says attorney Mark Riley.

"Maybe the FBI did not want to alert him," he says.

Generally speaking, the Army does not wait to take action if a problem is identified, says Riley. And if it had begun a separate action to lift his clearance, information about it would be subject to privacy regulations, which are stringent.

A court proceeding against Ivins would have produced much more material about the investigation, perhaps answering the question as to why he maintained a security clearance despite years of deteriorating mental health. But even without such a trial, the Defense Department might now want to revisit its clearance procedures. And that raises yet another issue, according to Epstein of CSIS. Even if the FBI convinces most people in the US that Ivins was the anthrax killer, the government should not relax about biosecurity in general.

"I think there is a danger in assuming that if this is the guy, we've solved the problem [of vulnerability to anthrax and other pathogens]," says Epstein.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0808/p01s01-usju.html>

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Gaps in system kept anthrax scientist at high-security lab

By Matt Apuzzo, Associated Press August 8, 2008

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Army scientist Bruce Ivins didn't keep his problems to himself.

Therapists knew he had a history of paranoia, obsession and delusional thinking. Doctors put him on powerful medications.

One colleague complained he was a "manic basket case." Another recalled him openly weeping at his desk inside one of the military's top biological warfare facilities.

The Justice Department, too, had its suspicions. Investigators discovered years ago that he worked late nights just before the 2001 anthrax attacks. And by 2005, government scientists had genetically matched anthrax in his lab to the toxin that killed five people.

Yet Ivins stayed on the job at the military lab at Fort Detrick, Md. He also managed to buy guns and pass a background check.

As the FBI closed in on its top suspect, Ivins grew more unstable. He killed himself last week, more than a year after the FBI had gathered the primary evidence held up Wednesday as proof of his guilt.

Privacy concerns, bureaucratic loopholes, the demands of a criminal investigation - all combined to let Ivins keep his job and stay out of jail for years. And in the high-security lab until last November.

Or was it just that the government's evidence was too weak to act? That's what Ivins' attorney says.

"If it's such earth-shattering stuff, what's been going on since 2005?" Paul F. Kemp asked Wednesday after the government made its case with a news conference and a pile of documents. "Why is he on the street if they think it's that important?"

That question goes beyond the criminal investigation. It goes to the heart of how secure the nation's nearly 1,400 biological defense labs are and whether the estimated 14,000 scientists working with deadly toxins are being screened for the kind of mental illness Ivins exhibited.

The Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, known as USAMRIID, follows strict security measures meant to weed out troubled scientists. It has offered no explanation for why Ivins was allowed to work with some of the world's most dangerous toxins while taking antidepressants and receiving counseling to control his inner demons.

"The thinking now by the psychiatrist and counselor is that my symptoms may not be those of a depression or a bipolar disorder, they may be that of a 'Paranoid Personality Disorder,'" he wrote in a July 2000 e-mail included in government documents released Wednesday.

"I get incredible paranoid, delusional thoughts at times, and there's nothing I can do until they go away, either by themselves or with drugs," he wrote that August.

Investigators said that between 2000 and 2006, Ivins had been prescribed antidepressants, antipsychotics and anti-anxiety drugs. It wasn't until November 2007, after the FBI raided his home, that Fort Detrick revoked his laboratory access, effectively putting him on desk duty for the past year.

"If he really was the guy and he acted alone, then that's pretty scary because that's a lot of damage that can be done by one person," said Gigi Kwik Gronvall of the Center for Biosecurity at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. "USAMRIID is not like being in a shack in the wilderness. It's interacting with people in a pretty secure place."

Anything Ivins discussed with his therapists, doctors or at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings would have been protected by privacy policies. But David Fidler, an Indiana University law professor and expert on biosecurity, said he didn't understand how a scientist spending late nights in a secure lab could go unnoticed.

Ivins' explanation - that he wanted to escape a troubled home life - should have also raised questions.

"Didn't his superiors notice this odd behavior?" Fidler said. "That ought to have set alarm bells ringing."

It's unclear from the documents whether those bells went off, and the military has not said how long it knew of Ivins' problems. Mental health reviews are a key part of the military's security program, but at least one former colleague at Fort Detrick has said it's usually up to scientists themselves to report their problems.

Ivins had no trouble purchasing weapons. Jack Moberley, manager of The Gun Center in Frederick, Md., said he sold two Glock pistols to Ivins in 2005. The following year, Ivins traded in one of those guns and bought a different Glock, Moberley said.

Moberley said Ivins had passed the background check conducted by the Maryland State Police. "If I even suspected that he was anywhere close to being mental, I would not have done the paperwork at all. The state of Maryland approved him," Moberley said. "No gun gets out of here unless there's a background check."

Lawmakers have pledged to investigate the anthrax case and lab security generally. Bills in the House and Senate would order a review of how scientists work with deadly toxins.

"If we don't have a good handle on this at USAMRIID, it's probably true we don't have a good handle on it across the board," Fidler said.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., said Thursday he wants to know more about Ivins' motivation for mailing him a letter that contained deadly anthrax spores. Leahy suffered no infection, but two men died who worked at a Washington postal center that handled letters sent to him and then-Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D.

At most labs, unless scientists have been committed to a mental hospital, psychiatric issues don't factor into the security process. That's a policy decision that balances security and privacy rights.

As for why the Justice Department didn't arrest Ivins in 2005 - for lying to investigators, for instance - U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Taylor said Wednesday that authorities were still building their primary anthrax case at that time.

"At that point, the investigation still had a long way to go," Taylor said.

An arrest for lying might have barred Ivins from the lab, but it almost certainly wouldn't have taken him off the street. And it could have torpedoed any chance to continue building the anthrax case.

Taylor was asked how such a troubled man could have gotten away with the attacks for so long.

"I think what you're asking, sir, answers the question itself," Taylor replied. "He had been this way for a number of years, going back for quite a number of years and was still able to carry on his professional life at USAMRIID."

Associated Press writer Ben Nuckols in Baltimore contributed to this report.

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