



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 463, 7 November 2005

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Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with nuclear, biological and chemical threats and attacks. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

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British American Security Information Council

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS UPDATE

7 October 2005

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Past editions of Biological Weapons Update are available at: <http://www.basicint.org/update/bwu.htm>.

US Anthrax production

New Scientist magazine [reported](#) September 24 that a series of secret tenders have been drawn up that relate to the US army's Dugway Proving Ground in Utah. They involve the production of bulk quantities of a non-virulent strain of anthrax, and for equipment to produce significant volumes of other biological agents. The move is likely to raise questions over US commitment to the Biological and Toxin Weapon Convention that would restrict such large-scale production of the bacteria. . . . (Continued at web site below.)

<http://www.basicint.org/update/BWU051007.htm>

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USA Today.com

Posted 11/2/2005 4:44 AM Updated 11/2/2005 11:36 AM

Iran grants U.N. inspectors access to nuclear site

VIENNA (AP) — Iran is sending conflicting signals to an international community concerned about its nuclear agenda, granting U.N. inspectors access to a secret military site but also saying it would process a new batch of uranium that could be used to make atomic weapons, diplomats said Wednesday.

The two developments showed that Iran was unwilling to meet international calls to give up enrichment and all linked activities even while casting itself as conciliatory and ready to cooperate with International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors probing its past nuclear activities.

The last meeting of the 35-nation IAEA board told Iran in September to suspend all uranium enrichment-related activities, including conversion, and to give agency experts access to research, experts, locations and documents or face referral to the U.N. Security Council.

Iran has stopped at conversion but insists it has the right to the next stage — enrichment. Uranium enrichment can produce either nuclear energy or the fissile core of weapons.

The diplomats said IAEA experts were allowed to revisit the high-security military site in Parchin as they try to establish whether Tehran has a secret nuclear weapons program.

Parchin has been linked by the United States and other nations to alleged experiments linked to nuclear arms. The IAEA had for months been trying to follow up on a visit in January for further checks of buildings and areas within the sprawling military complex as it looks for traces of radioactivity.

Greater access to buildings

That visit — which was closely controlled by authorities — revealed no such traces.

But one of the diplomats — who like the others requested anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media about the sensitive investigation — said that over the past few days IAEA inspectors "gained access to buildings" previously out of bounds to them.

The diplomat, who is close to the agency, said environmental swipes were taken from objects in the buildings and would be analyzed at IAEA laboratories.

If those swipes reveal minute amounts of radioactivity, they would strengthen suspicions of nuclear-related work at Parchin.

Because Parchin is run by the country's armed forces, such a discovery would weaken Iranian arguments that its nuclear programs are strictly non-military.

That, in turn, would strengthen sentiment that Tehran be referred to the Security Council for breaching the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty as early as Nov. 24, when the IAEA board of governors has scheduled its next meeting.

The swipe results are expected before then.

U.S. intelligence officials said last year that a specially secured site on the Parchin complex, about 20 miles southeast of Tehran, may be used in research on nuclear arms, specifically in making high-explosive components for use in such weapons.

On Wednesday, British Prime Minister Tony Blair said military action against Iran was not being considered, but he said Tehran must change course.

Suspicious about military involvement

"Nobody is talking about military threats or invasion of Iran or any of the rest of it," Blair told the House of Commons. He added that Iran's government "has got to understand that the international community simply will not put up with their continued breach of the proper and normal standards of behavior that we expected from a member of the United Nations."

The IAEA has not found any firm evidence to challenge Iranian assertions that its military is not involved in nuclear activities, but in a document last year expressed concern about reports "relating to dual use equipment and materials which have applications ... in the nuclear military area." Diplomats said that phrasing alluded to Parchin.

Before the next board meeting, IAEA inspectors also hope to be allowed to visit Lavizan-Shian, suspected of being the repository of equipment bought by its military that could be used in a nuclear weapons program. The State Department last year said Lavizan-Shian's buildings had been dismantled and topsoil had been removed from the site in attempts to hide nuclear-weapons related experiments.

Agency officials subsequently confirmed that the site had been razed, but Iran said work at the site, on the outskirts of Tehran, was part of construction unrelated to military or nuclear matters.

Iran is under increasing pressure before the next IAEA board meeting to show it is cooperating with an agency probe of nearly 18 years of suspected clandestine nuclear activities as Tehran tries to derail a U.S.-backed European push to report it to the Security Council.

Russia and China — council members who also sit on the IAEA board — oppose such a move. But Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's calls last week for Israel to be "wiped off the map" have strengthened the U.S.-European hand.

Russia was among the dozens of nations protesting his statements.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-11-02-iran-nuclear_x.htm

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Mideast Stars and Stripes

November 2, 2005

Pentagon Has Plan Of Attack For Avian Flu

DOD stockpiling vaccines, medications in case of outbreak

By Patrick Dickson, Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon's top health officials have devised a multilayered plan of attack for the avian flu which mirrors President Bush's plan for the nation announced Tuesday.

Dr. William Winkenwerder, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, and Dr. John Grabenstein, director of the Military Vaccine Agency, spoke at length with Stars and Stripes recently to clear up misconceptions about the plan.

On Oct. 13, Stripes published a story that said the Department of Defense was experimenting with a vaccine and that the Pentagon did not need Food and Drug Administration approval to go ahead with inoculations, and wrongly attributed the information to Marianne Coates, Winkenwerder's director of communications.

A vaccine to combat the H5N1 bird flu virus is in fact being developed at the National Institutes of Health, not the DOD, and the Pentagon has ordered 2.7 million doses, which it expects to get first shipments of in February.

That vaccine will not be licensed by the FDA at that time, and the DOD will not use it without what is called an Emergency Use Authorization, Grabenstein said. That must come from the Department of Health and Human Services, which is spearheading the national plan outlined by President Bush.

In addition, the DOD is buying 2.5 million treatment courses — two pills a day for five days — of the anti-viral medication called Tamiflu. These medications are not a preventative — they are given with the onset of symptoms, "almost like an antibiotic," Winkenwerder said.

"We're exploring the acquisition of other anti-viral medications, specifically Relenza ... an inhaled product," he said.

The Pentagon also is pushing for its personnel to get their seasonal flu shot, purchasing 3.5 million doses of Fluzone and the inhalable FluMist.

But stockpiling vaccines and medications is just one aspect of the DOD plan.

The Pentagon also is educating leaders and the population about what avian flu is and what it isn't, and thus what people should and shouldn't do in the event of an outbreak, and monitoring potential outbreaks worldwide.

"We have been ... working on our preparedness and ability to respond for about 18 months," Winkenwerder said.

"Our first priority is to protect the health and safety of our troops, anywhere, anytime around the world."

Winkenwerder said the DOD is updating policies for both preparedness and action in the event of an outbreak.

Defense Department-run laboratories around the world have been testing samples of the H5N1 virus, deadly in bird-to-bird transmissions, and thought to be equally deadly if it mutates into a human-to-human transmittable form.

"The most recent outbreak ... reported two or three weeks ago, involving a child and a parent, was picked up through [a DOD laboratory] in Jakarta," Indonesia, Winkenwerder said.

In the event of an outbreak, the DOD would pursue a "ring containment" policy, Winkenwerder said.

That effort "involves getting an accurate report of individuals that might have been affected, identifying people that have come into contact with those individuals, tracing their contacts and so forth," he said.

Personnel nearby would be vaccinated, as would others in "priority groups."

“And among those priority groups would surely be our troops who are deployed, because they’re performing mission-critical functions, health-care workers, because they’d be in a position to care for people,” Winkenwerder said.

Since 2003, at least 62 people in Southeast Asia have died from H5N1; most regularly handled poultry. Strains of the virus have been seen in fowl in several European countries, and a strain was found in migratory birds in Canada, it was reported Monday.

Officials stress importance of getting flu shot

DOD health officials are stressing that despite the focus on avian flu this year, servicemembers, families, and especially retirees need to get their seasonal flu shot.

Each year in the United States, 36,000 people die from seasonal flu.

There is no shortage of seasonal flu vaccine.

“All the doses aren’t everywhere yet, said Dr. (Col.) John Grabenstein, director of the Military Vaccine Agency.

“It’s still coming off the assembly line. But, within about two or three weeks, all of our doses should be everywhere, and then it’s just a matter of having them come into the clinic. But every clinic has a starter supply to begin their local process.”

That includes troops downrange, who were sent the first batches of FluMist, an inhalable vaccine, and the injectable shot, Fluzone.

Those in Iraq and Afghanistan were “first on the list, Korea was second, and then we refocused back on the States — the elderly, retirees — because they’re the ones at risk of dying, and now we’re filling in the gaps everywhere else,” he said.

<http://estripes.osd.mil/index.php?archive=202703761764088209645088238789>

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Washington Times

November 3, 2005

Pg. 6

U.S. Criticizes Chavez For Nuke Ambitions

By Bill Sammon, The Washington Times

President Bush begins several weeks of almost constant foreign travel today, heading to South America as the White House tries to discourage Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's nuclear ambitions.

"It would be problematic for Chavez to be in the nuclear business," National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley said yesterday. "We want to make sure that nuclear power is handled in a responsible way and does not contribute to concerns about proliferation and, ultimately, nuclear weapons."

On Tuesday, Mr. Bush expressed skepticism about Mr. Chavez's request for the Argentine government to build a nuclear power plant in Venezuela. He questioned why Venezuela, which is awash in oil, would need nuclear power. "If I were a taxpayer in Venezuela, I would wonder about the energy supply that Venezuela has," the president told foreign reporters in advance of today's trip to Argentina.

Mr. Bush suggested that spent fuel rods from any plant that is built be collected by an international agency to prevent Venezuela from using the material to develop nuclear weapons. He has called for the same arrangement in Iran, where Russia would deliver nuclear fuel and then collect the spent rods.

"There must be total transparency," the president said. "I have proposed that we think of an international concept of sharing highly enriched uranium necessary for the running of a nuclear power plant -- for power -- with countries, and collecting that material and disposing of it in a reasonable and a sound way."

Mr. Hadley expressed doubt that Mr. Chavez would succeed.

"He's raised the issue of the nuclear reactor in a number of different forums and with a number of different countries," he said. "So far, he hasn't done very well in terms of getting any takers."

Mr. Chavez opposes Mr. Bush's plan for a free-trade zone encompassing the entire Western Hemisphere, except for Cuba, and has vowed to give the plan its "final burial" when Mr. Bush arrives in Argentina today for the Summit of the Americas.

Mr. Bush acknowledged his plan has stalled, but insisted it would help lift millions out of poverty.

"Grants and loans pale in comparison to the amount of good that can be done as commerce develops at all levels of government, at all levels of society, as a result of trade," he said.

After the summit, the president and first lady Laura Bush will travel to Brazil and Panama.

"The president and Mrs. Bush will tour the Miraflores Locks, the first set of locks on the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal," Mr. Hadley said. "Prior to departure, the president will join Panamanian youths to talk a little baseball."

The president will return to the White House Monday, but will spend less than a week in Washington before departing on a lengthy tour of Asia, including China, Korea, Japan and Mongolia.
<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20051102-113642-6781r.htm>

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Honolulu Advertiser
November 3, 2005

Dumped Toxic Weapons Still Lurk In Sea Off O'ahu

By Jan TenBruggencate, Advertiser Science Writer

The military dumped more than 8,000 tons of chemical weapons, including tens of thousands of chemical-filled bombshells and hundreds of bulk containers of chemicals, into the waters south of O'ahu in 1944 and 1945. And it's still there.

The Army has confirmed that the dumping occurred. However, it admits it does not know exactly where all the materials were dumped and therefore has not monitored debris fields for leaks.

"There is no danger of chemicals washing up on the island," said Dave Foster, a U.S. Army public affairs officer in Washington. But he said he would require further research to learn more about the dumping before he could respond to detailed questions.

Hawai'i scientists said the location of the materials needs to be pinpointed, and it should be determined whether there is chemical leakage and what impact that might have.

"It's a question that should be addressed. Where are they? Are they leaking? And if they're leaking, what's the risk?" said University of Hawai'i emeritus professor of oceanography Rick Grigg. "We should identify it as a high-priority research objective."

The military has dumped materials off the southern shores of O'ahu, ranging from conventional explosives to old aircraft, ships and vehicles. One underwater scientist said chemical dumping is a particular concern.

"There's just too many unknowns," said Christopher Kelley, program biologist for the Hawai'i Undersea Research Laboratory, an agency of the University of Hawai'i's School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology. "We need more information. A lot of chemicals down there is not a good thing."

Dumped materials surfaced nearly three decades ago during a dredging project that raised several shiny cylinders from the ocean floor off southern O'ahu. At least one was leaking. James Maragos, then a contracting officer with the Army Corps of Engineers and now a coral reef biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was in charge of the 1976 project.

"The chemical stuff was pulled up off Honolulu Harbor. They were metal containers 2 to 3 feet long. They brought up seven of them. The men were working barefoot on deck, and two or three of them got badly blistered feet (from the leaking chemicals)," Maragos said.

The Army says it believes the incident involved a liquid-filled 4-inch Stokes mortar round from a 1944 dumping in 1,000 feet of water off Pearl Harbor. Maragos said the dredge was miles from there, in 1,200 feet of water, three miles off Honolulu Harbor — suggesting that the Army's assessment of the dumping location was wrong or that there is more chemical weaponry off Hawai'i than has been reported.

Among the toxic chemicals on the ocean floor off O'ahu is mustard used in World War I battlefields. Commonly called mustard gas, it is a liquid that is driven into the air by explosives.

Portions of at least three fields of chemical-filled bombs, mortars and bulk containers are in waters where anglers fish and anchor, scientists conduct research and cables have been laid.

"A thousand feet is not very deep," Grigg said. "People are bottomfishing for onaga at that depth."

Many divers who use the waters off O'ahu are familiar with the sight of military refuse, including weaponry.

"A site that I dive off Wai'anae, there's some stuff at 200 to 220 feet. It's mostly cases of ammunition, big bomb-looking things, tubes. It's old stuff," said Charles Hunter of Hawai'i Kai, who is a recreational technical diver and uses special equipment to dive much deeper than most scuba divers do. "We're careful not to touch any of it."

At the end of World War II, the military dumped tens of thousands of tons of chemical weapons into the oceans of the world — just as a way to get rid of the dangerous material. It was dumped in bays and deep water, loosely dumped over the side of ships and sometimes dumped while encased inside scuttled ships. Occasionally, sailors came across canisters or weapons that were leaking toxic chemicals and simply dumped them into the water.

Limited details on each of dozens of dumpings are contained in a 2001 report by the Historical Research and Response Team of the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command. That report surfaced during an investigation whose results were published this week by the Times-Dispatch in Richmond, Va.

It details chemical-weapons dumping in the Mississippi River, in the Gulf of Mexico, in Manila Bay, in the North Sea, on both sides of the Atlantic, in the Mediterranean and across the Pacific. For some sites, the Army has coordinates of the dump sites. But not for O'ahu.

Regarding a two-week dumping program in 1945 of more than 4,000 tons of chemical weapons containing military ordnance and storage containers of four toxic chemicals, the report notes: "The material was loaded at Wai'anae, Hawai'i, to avoid moving the munitions through densely populated areas. The exact location of the sea disposal is unknown."

That dumping included seven tons of 1,000-pound hydrogen cyanide bombs; 461 tons of 1,000-pound cyanogen chloride bombs; 28 tons of 500-pound cyanogen chloride bombs; 800 tons of 114-pound mustard bombs; 510 tons of 4.2-inch mustard mortar shells; 1,817 tons of 1-ton mustard containers; and 300 tons of 1-ton lewisite containers. In 1944, somewhere off Pearl Harbor, 4,220 tons of hydrogen cyanide was dumped, apparently in various loose containers. The Army's Foster said that material is believed to have been dumped in water 1,000 feet deep off south O'ahu, but he was not certain how far from shore.

Also in 1944, the military moved 16,000 100-pound mustard bombs from upper Kipapa and Ala Moana and dumped them at an unspecified location listed as "about five miles" off O'ahu.

All four of the chemical weapons dumped off O'ahu are considered weapons of mass destruction under the United Nations' Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993. The U.S. has signed the convention, which calls for the destruction of all chemical weapons. The U.S. for many years ran the prototype chemical weapons destruction facility at Johnston Atoll, 750 miles southwest of O'ahu.

<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2005/Nov/03/In/FP511030313.html>

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GovExec.com
DAILY BRIEFING
November 3, 2005

Installation of anthrax detectors at postal facilities nears end

By David Francis, [Global Security Newswire](#)

The United States Postal Service is nearing completion of a four-year project to install systems that can detect anthrax in the mail.

By the beginning of December, the Postal Service expects to have installed Biohazard Detection Systems at 282 mail-processing facilities around the country, said Don Crone, USPS manager of mail-processing protection systems. These detection systems are the Postal Service's front-line defense against an anthrax attack through the mail system.

Planning for the anthrax detectors started immediately after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, predating the anthrax attacks that killed five people later that year, Crone said.

"From the engineering side, we immediately went out and started looking at technologies, what was available, talking to the experts, and of course we had a lot of people knocking on our doors with all sorts of ideas and things," Crone said.

The result of the push was the Biohazard Detection System. Developed by Postal Service engineers, the U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command and Northrop Grumman, a prototype system was installed in Baltimore in June 2002.

The Baltimore system "wasn't a completely automated system like the final version, but had at least assembled most of the technologies and put it into a cabinet," Crone said. "I'll call it semiautomatic at the time. But we were trying to prove out the system."

The completed system combined existing technologies in a new way that allowed individual pieces of mail to be tested for anthrax. A hood positioned over the processing system collects air samples from each piece of mail that are taken into an aerosol collector. In the collector is a cartridge that holds the samples. This cartridge is then inserted into a polymerase chain reaction unit that conducts a DNA test to determine if anthrax is present.

Crone said, however, that the lag time between collection and testing is not a concern. The Postal Service has developed protocols to keep mail from leaving a facility under anthrax testing is complete. Procedures are also in place to track individual parcels that have left the site.

"The idea is to detect it early and contain it in that originating facility so we don't contaminate other places," Crone said.

Each system costs about \$175,000, but installation and site preparation push the cost to \$250,000. Once installation of the systems is complete, 282 facilities will be equipped with 1,373 machines at a cost of \$375 million, Crone said.

The systems have been installed at all large mail-processing facilities around the country. Crone said smaller rural facilities are getting the system as installations come to an end. As of October, 218 facilities have received the system.

Once installed, Northrop Grumman is responsible for maintaining the systems, Crone said. The only interaction postal workers have with the system is to replace cartridges that collect samples. The systems are designed so that Northrop employees are notified immediately if there is a problem.

"The systems actually put out their own alert, so if something goes wrong with the BDS, the diagnostics will send out a message through our network automatically," he said. "A field service rep will get a message right on their Blackberry, directly from a machine."

Crone said the system has so far proven to be perfectly reliable. He said 27 billion pieces of mail have been screened without a single false positive.

If a system were to detect anthrax, the facility would be evacuated and the Homeland Security Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would be notified immediately. The sample that tested positive for the pathogen would be retested. If the result were positive, all employees present at the facility or who had contact with the infected batch of mail would be put on a five-day regimen of the anti-anthrax drug Cipro.

Crone claimed the Biohazard Detection System is the most advanced system for detecting anthrax transported through the mail in the world.

"This is the front line. And it's pretty much cutting edge. To our knowledge there's nothing else in the world that matches this," he said. "The technology all existed, but this is really the only system that we've really taken and completely automated, which is what's unique about this system."

Local postal officials and postal union officials share Crone's enthusiasm for the system.

Workers have been happy with the system, said Sally Davidow, a spokeswoman for the 330,000-member American Postal Workers Union. She said when the machines first arrive at processing facilities, workers generally need time to integrate them into their workplace. After a short time, however, workers become comfortable with the technology, she said.

"I think the reaction is generally positive," she said.

"It's been operating flawlessly," added Baltimore post office spokesman Bob Novak. He said the system had not slowed down operations and has presented no difficulties to workers.

"The good news is that it's never gone off," he said.

http://govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=32725&dcn=todaysnews

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Indianapolis Star
November 5, 2005

VX Destruction Shaky

Problems at plant delaying process to eliminate nerve agent

By Tammy Webber

A \$533 million western Indiana plant built to destroy the world's deadliest chemical has been idle nearly half of the time since it began operations six months ago, plagued by equipment and other unforeseen problems.

The latest problem at the U.S. Army's Newport Chemical Depot in Vermillion County, near the Illinois border, occurred Oct. 29 when an as-yet-undiagnosed problem caused a spill of almost 500 gallons of the caustic chemical byproduct created during destruction of the Cold War-era nerve agent VX.

The spill, the plant's third, forced officials to halt operations for the second time since the process began May 5.

Work also had come to a stop most of the summer, triggered by a June 10 spill blamed on faulty valves. The facility remained closed after a second, smaller spill in July during a testing procedure and the discovery that the byproduct was more flammable than thought. Operations resumed in late August, after the valves were replaced and officials learned how to reduce the byproduct's flammability.

Newport spokeswoman Terry Arthur said the valves involved in previous mishaps have been ruled out as the cause of last week's spill, which occurred in a loop of pipes in which VX is destroyed.

"We're looking at pipes, flanges, gaskets and all kinds of joints," Arthur said.

Since 1969, more than 250,000 gallons of VX, so deadly a single drop can kill a healthy adult in minutes, have been stored in 1,600 hardened steel containers at the Newport depot, the only place where the United States ever manufactured the agent. A mixture of hot sodium hydroxide and water has been used to successfully neutralize more than 6,500 gallons since May.

The Army and Parsons Corp., the contractor handling the project, as well as watchdog groups and residents, said they're not surprised -- or alarmed -- by the problems. The spills occurred in a sealed room designed to contain them, and they posed no danger to workers or the public, officials said.

It was expected that there would be problems when full-scale production began, because engineering of the plant was based only on laboratory-scale testing of VX. Also, there have been similar problems and delays at other weapons disposal sites, Army officials said.

"This (latest spill) doesn't seem too disconcerting," said Lois Kleffman, spokeswoman for the citizen watchdog organization Chemical Weapons Working Group. "There is no way to anticipate exactly what is going to happen."

Jeffrey Linblad, a spokesman for the Army's Chemical Materials Agency, said the problem is not with the technology or processes in Newport, because the facility has been proven to successfully destroy VX. Engineers must ensure all of the equipment, however, can hold up under the caustic wastewater.

Newport's problems don't stand out because there have been unexpected problems at every other facility where weapons destruction has taken place, Linblad said.

At Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, for example, destruction of bulk mustard agent "went through stops and starts" for the first 16 months while engineers for another contractor, Bechtel, worked out kinks. Only half of the agent was destroyed during that time, but once all of the problems were solved, the other half was destroyed within four months, Linblad said. That project ended in March, five months behind schedule.

"You are going to find challenges; you can't anticipate anything," he said. "We know things like that could happen. If it happens, we address it."

The question some are asking now is whether the job in Newport will be done by its target date of November 2007. The Army said it expected all of the VX would be destroyed on schedule, because a buffer was built into the project's timeline. Army officials said they hope the facility will be at full operation by January and will be able to destroy at least four containers of VX per day.

"It's going to take what it takes," Arthur said. "We are doing it slowly and deliberately."

Some residents said they believe the Army is overly confident in its ability to finish on time and within budget.

Parsons, based in California, is expected to be paid \$466 million for operating the plant by the time destruction is complete, officials said.

"I think there is going to be a long string of these (delays)," said Leonard Akers, who lives near the depot. "I think this is just a preview of coming attractions."

Indiana environmental officials said they want the VX destroyed as quickly as possible.

"The timeline probably is the overarching concern," said Thomas Linson, chief of the permitting branch in the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's office of land quality. "It's in everybody's interest to get the VX destroyed as soon as possible, but we want it to occur safely."

<http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20051105/NEWS01/511050436&SearchID=73225754232837>

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Atlanta Journal and Constitution

November 5, 2005

Pg. 1

Frist Urges Germ Spies

Bill would cloak war on bioterror

By Jeff Nesmith, Cox Washington Bureau

Washington --- A bill moving rapidly through the Senate would create a secretive national research center to respond to bioterrorism threats and natural disease outbreaks.

Some scientists cautioned Friday that the new agency could draw funds away from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and the National Institutes of Health, and disrupt their work.

The bill, co-sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), would shift the main responsibility for developing bioterrorism countermeasures out of the Department of Homeland Security and into a new Biological Advanced Research and Development Agency in the Department of Health and Human Services.

The agency, commonly referred to as BARDA, would be given a first-year budget of \$1 billion and some unusually strong powers.

It would have authority to shield drug manufacturers from liability lawsuits in the event a drug used to counteract a bioterrorism event or disease outbreak caused death or injury.

It also would be granted a blanket exemption from the federal Freedom of Information Act.

The bill creating BARDA was introduced by freshman Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) on Oct. 17 and approved the next day by the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Frist is one of five Republican co-sponsors, and the bill is believed to be his project.

In a June speech at Harvard University, Frist warned that the world may soon face "a front of unchecked and virulent epidemics, the potential of which should rise above your every other concern."

"I propose an unprecedented effort, the creation of a Manhattan Project for the 21st century, not with the goal of creating a new destructive agent, but to defend against infectious diseases and biological weapons."

Burr's press secretary, Doug Heye, confirmed Friday that BARDA would be the agency to carry out that project.

Heye said Burr's staff was negotiating with aides to Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) in an effort to get a bipartisan bill to the Senate floor as soon as possible.

Scientific organizations, some of which have been critical of delays by the Department of Homeland Security in identifying and counteracting bioterrorism threats, warned that the bill could disrupt existing disease agencies like the CDC and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

The institute recently created a network of 10 regional centers for research on bioterrorism, including one at Duke University in Burr's home state of North Carolina.

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology said in a letter to Burr that it was "troubled over the impact this new agency might have on existing programs at the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, particularly in an era of limited funding for discretionary spending."

"Our concern is BARDA might duplicate, constrain or even eliminate these programs," said Dr. Bruce Bistrain, a Harvard Medical School researcher who is president of the federation.

Other scientific organizations voiced similar concerns.

"Creation of a new and additional agency ... does not appear to be the best solution," Stanley Maloy, president of the American Society of Microbiology, said Friday in a letter to Burr.

Spokespersons for NIAID and the CDC said the agencies do not comment on pending legislation.

Maureen McCarthy, director of research and development at the Department of Homeland Security, was asked at a recent Center for Strategic and International Studies conference to comment on the BARDA bill.

"We believe firmly that the organization of the biodefense world right now as it's established and the roles and responsibilities of the agencies is working and we're supportive of the current structure that exists," she said in a recorded response.

Groups representing scientists, the media and others have complained that the agency would get an unprecedented exemption from scrutiny.

"This bill breaks new ground in the area of government secrecy," said Steven Aftergood, director of a Federation of American Scientists project on official secrecy.

Aftergood said other federal agencies can legally deny access to government documents if they decide the material deserves an exemption under the federal Freedom of Information Act. But BARDA would have blanket exemption for any FOIA requests, he said.

"It is an insult to the public," Aftergood said.

"These provisions turn the concepts of 'open government' and 'democracy' on their heads," said the Coalition of Journalists for Open Government in a letter to senators. "To our knowledge, an entire agency has never received a blanket exemption from compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

"Even those agencies which deal with sensitive national security information on a regular basis --- including the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense --- must comply with FOIA," the letter states.

Rutgers University biologist Richard Ebright called the bill "essential and overdue" because it would bring central coordination to U.S. biodefense efforts, which he said have been marked by "duplication, waste and minimal progress."

"Unfortunately," he said, "the Burr bill also calls for unprecedented, nearly absolute, exemptions of the coordinating agency from public accountability and of contractors from liability.

"These exemptions need to be sharply curtailed, or even stripped from the bill," he said.

Heye, Burr's press secretary, said that "this agency will be about providing information, not withholding it." He said the measure was meant to remove barriers to the development and production of drugs to defend Americans against infectious disease threats and bioterrorism events."

The bill states:

"Information that relates to the activities, working groups, and advisory boards of the BARDA shall not be subject to disclosure under section 552 of title 5, United States Code, unless the Secretary or Director determines that such disclosure would pose no threat to national security. Such a determination shall not be subject to judicial review." Section 552 is the Freedom of Information Act.

Although the measure does not require BARDA's director to respond to FOIA requests, it contains no requirement that employees of the agency maintain secrecy about matters that are deemed to involve national security.

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Washington Post
November 6, 2005
Pg. 22

Newly Released Data Undercut Prewar Claims

Source Tying Baghdad, Al Qaeda Doubted

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

In February 2002, the Defense Intelligence Agency questioned the reliability of a captured top al Qaeda operative whose allegations became the basis of Bush administration claims that terrorists had been trained in the use of chemical and biological weapons in Iraq, according to declassified material released by Sen. Carl M. Levin (D-Mich.).

Referring to the first interrogation report on al Qaeda senior military trainer Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi, the DIA took note that the Libyan terrorist could not name any Iraqis involved, any chemical or biological material used or where the training occurred. As a result, "it is more likely this individual is intentionally misleading the debriefers," a DIA report concluded.

In fact, in January 2004 al-Libi recanted his claims, and in February 2004 the CIA withdrew all intelligence reports based on his information. By then, the United States and its coalition partners had invaded Iraq.

Levin, ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he arranged for the material to be declassified by the DIA last month. At the same time that the administration was linking Baghdad to al Qaeda, he said, the DIA and other intelligence agencies were privately raising questions about the sources underlying the claims.

Since then, Levin said in an interview Friday, almost all government intelligence on whether Iraq pursued or possessed weapons of mass destruction has proved faulty. In addition to the allegation of training terrorists loyal to Osama bin Laden, there were government claims that then-Iraq President Saddam Hussein had stocks of chemical and biological weapons, that he had reconstituted his nuclear weapons programs, and that unmanned airborne vehicles posed a threat, Levin said.

He said that he could not be certain that White House officials read the DIA report, but his "presumption" was that someone at the National Security Council saw it because it was sent there.

Administration officials declined to comment for this article.

Levin noted in a prepared statement that, beginning in September 2002, President Bush, Vice President Cheney, then-national security adviser Condoleezza Rice, then-CIA Director George J. Tenet, and then-Secretary of State Colin L. Powell used the alleged chemical and biological training by Baghdad as valid intelligence in speeches and public appearances to gather support for the Iraq war.

In none of the speeches or appearances was reference made to the DIA questioning the reliability of the source of the claims, Levin said. The doubts about al-Libi were contained in the DIA's February 2002 "Defense Intelligence Terrorist Summary," which was sent to the White House and the National Security Council and circulated among U.S. intelligence agencies.

"The newly declassified information provides additional dramatic evidence that the administration's prewar statements regarding links between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda represents an incredible deception," Levin said. Levin pointed specifically to an Oct. 7, 2002, speech in which the president outlined what he said was the "grave threat" from Iraq days before the House and Senate voted on a resolution giving him the authority to go to war.

"We've learned that Iraq has trained al Qaeda members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases," Bush said, an assertion that was based, according to Levin, primarily on al-Libi's material. Other less important intelligence on the training of al Qaeda members, carried in the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs, also came from questionable sources, Levin said.

Bush also said in his October 2002 speech: "We know that Iraq and al Qaeda have had high-level contacts that go back a decade." Levin said the DIA's declassified February 2002 report points out that "Saddam's regime is intensely secular and wary of Islamic revolutionary movements. Moreover, Baghdad is unlikely to provide assistance to a group it cannot control."

"Just imagine," Levin said, "the public impact of that DIA conclusion if it had been disclosed at the time. It surely could have made a difference in the congressional vote authorizing the war."

Levin also pointed out that before the war, the CIA had its own reservations about al-Libi, although the agency did not note them in its publicly distributed unclassified statements. In those, Levin said, it described the source --

without naming al-Libi -- as "credible." In the classified version, however, the CIA added that the source "was not in a position to know if any training had taken place."

Levin said: "Imagine if the president or the others had added that the source of the information might have been making it up for his questioners or wasn't in a position to know. . . . Would he have delivered that in his speech?"

Levin said he first obtained the DIA document as part of his continuing investigation as an Armed Services panel member into intelligence activities that took place within the office of Undersecretary of Defense Douglas J. Feith after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Feith's Office of Special Plans undertook a review and analyses of prewar al Qaeda intelligence.

Levin said Friday that he was not aware whether the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, on which he also serves, has the document. That panel did not have the DIA document in July 2004 when it completed its Phase 1 report on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs.

The committee is now conducting its second-phase investigation of the use of Iraq intelligence, one part of which is to compare prewar public statements by officials and members of Congress with the information known at the time. Levin took part in a news conference Friday with two other intelligence committee Democrats in which they raised questions about whether the panel had received all the classified material on Iraq, including the February 2002 DIA publication, that Bush administration officials had when they made their public statements.

At that news conference, Levin urged that the process be slowed down to make sure the committee had gathered all the intelligence material.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/05/AR2005110501267.html>

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New York Times
November 6, 2005

Report Warned Bush Team About Intelligence Doubts

By Douglas Jehl

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5 — A top member of Al Qaeda in American custody was identified as a likely fabricator months before the Bush administration began to use his statements as the foundation for its claims that Iraq trained Al Qaeda members to use biological and chemical weapons, according to newly declassified portions of a Defense Intelligence Agency document.

The document, an intelligence report from February 2002, said it was probable that the prisoner, Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi, "was intentionally misleading the debriefers" in making claims about Iraqi support for Al Qaeda's work with illicit weapons.

The document provides the earliest and strongest indication of doubts voiced by American intelligence agencies about Mr. Libi's credibility. Without mentioning him by name, President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Colin L. Powell, then secretary of state, and other administration officials repeatedly cited Mr. Libi's information as "credible" evidence that Iraq was training Al Qaeda members in the use of explosives and illicit weapons.

Among the first and most prominent assertions was one by Mr. Bush, who said in a major speech in Cincinnati in October 2002 that "we've learned that Iraq has trained Al Qaeda members in bomb making and poisons and gases." The newly declassified portions of the document were made available by Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Mr. Levin said the new evidence of early doubts about Mr. Libi's statements dramatized what he called the Bush administration's misuse of prewar intelligence to try to justify the war in Iraq. That is an issue that Mr. Levin and other Senate Democrats have been seeking to emphasize, in part by calling attention to the fact that the Republican-led Senate intelligence committee has yet to deliver a promised report, first sought more than two years ago, on the use of prewar intelligence.

An administration official declined to comment on the D.I.A. report on Mr. Libi. But Senate Republicans, put on the defensive when Democrats forced a closed session of the Senate this week to discuss the issue, have been arguing that Republicans were not alone in making prewar assertions about Iraq, illicit weapons and terrorism that have since been discredited.

Mr. Libi, who was captured in Pakistan at the end of 2001, recanted his claims in January 2004. That prompted the C.I.A., a month later, to recall all intelligence reports based on his statements, a fact recorded in a footnote to the report issued by the Sept. 11 commission.

Mr. Libi was not alone among intelligence sources later determined to have been fabricating accounts. Among others, an Iraqi exile whose code name was Curveball was the primary source for what proved to be false information about Iraq and mobile biological weapons labs. And American military officials cultivated ties with

Ahmad Chalabi, the head of the Iraqi National Congress, an exile group, who has been accused of feeding the Pentagon misleading information in urging war.

The report issued by the Senate intelligence committee in July 2004 questioned whether some versions of intelligence report prepared by the C.I.A. in late 2002 and early 2003 raised sufficient questions about the reliability of Mr. Libi's claims.

But neither that report nor another issued by the Sept. 11 commission made any reference to the existence of the earlier and more skeptical 2002 report by the D.I.A., which supplies intelligence to military commanders and national security policy makers. As an official intelligence report, labeled DITSUM No. 044-02, the document would have circulated widely within the government, and it would have been available to the C.I.A., the White House, the Pentagon and other agencies. It remains unclear whether the D.I.A. document was provided to the Senate panel.

In outlining reasons for its skepticism, the D.I.A. report noted that Mr. Libi's claims lacked specific details about the Iraqis involved, the illicit weapons used and the location where the training was to have taken place.

"It is possible he does not know any further details; it is more likely this individual is intentionally misleading the debriefers," the February 2002 report said. "Ibn al-Shaykh has been undergoing debriefs for several weeks and may be describing scenarios to the debriefers that he knows will retain their interest."

Mr. Powell relied heavily on accounts provided by Mr. Libi for his speech to the United Nations Security Council on Feb. 5, 2003, saying that he was tracing "the story of a senior terrorist operative telling how Iraq provided training in these weapons to Al Qaeda."

At the time of Mr. Powell's speech, an unclassified statement by the C.I.A. described the reporting, now known to have been from Mr. Libi, as "credible." But Mr. Levin said he had learned that a classified C.I.A. assessment at the time stated "the source was not in a position to know if any training had taken place."

In an interview on Friday, Mr. Levin also called attention to a portion of the D.I.A. report that expressed skepticism about the idea of close collaboration between Iraq and Al Qaeda, an idea that was never substantiated by American intelligence but was a pillar of the administration's prewar claims.

"Saddam's regime is intensely secular and is wary of Islamic revolutionary movements," the D.I.A. report said in one of two declassified paragraphs. "Moreover, Baghdad is unlikely to provide assistance to a group it cannot control."

The request to declassify the two paragraphs was made on Oct. 18 by Mr. Levin and Senator John D. Rockefeller IV of West Virginia, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee. In an Oct. 26 response, Kathleen P. Turner, chief of the D.I.A.'s office for Congressional affairs, said the agency "can find no reason for it to remain classified."

At the time of his capture, Mr. Libi was the most senior Qaeda official in American custody. The D.I.A. document gave no indication of where he was being held, or what interrogation methods were used on him.

Mr. Libi remains in custody, apparently at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, where he was sent in 2003, according to government officials.

The Senate intelligence committee is scheduled to meet beginning next week to review draft reports prepared as part of a long-postponed "Phase II" of the panel's review of prewar intelligence on Iraq. At separate briefings for reporters on Friday, Republicans staff members said the writing had long been under way, while Senate Democrats on the committee claimed credit for reinvigorating the process, by forcing the closed session. They said that already nearly complete is a look at whether prewar intelligence accurately predicted the potential for an anti-American insurgency.

Other areas of focus include the role played by the Iraqi National Congress, that of the Pentagon in shaping intelligence assessments, and an examination of whether public statements about Iraq by members of the Bush and Clinton administrations, as well as members of Congress, were substantiated by intelligence available at the time.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/06/politics/06intel.ready.html>

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London Sunday Times

November 6, 2005

Al-Qaeda Woos Recruits With Nuclear Bomb Website

By Uzi Mahnaimi and Tom Walker

AN Al-Qaeda website containing detailed instructions in Arabic on how to make nuclear, "dirty" and biological bombs has attracted more than 57,000 hits and hundreds of readers' inquiries. Terrorism experts are warning that the site could be boosting the organisation's appeal to would-be assassins in Britain and abroad.

The manual, posted on October 6 on a forum titled Al-Firdaws, or Paradise, contains 80 pages of instructions and pictures of kitchen bomb-making techniques. It is divided into nine lessons under the overall heading The Nuclear Bomb of Jihad and the Way to Enrich Uranium, and is dedicated as a “gift to the commander of the jihad fighters, Sheikh Osama Bin Laden, for the purpose of jihad for the sake of Allah”.

As well as describing how to make a nuclear bomb from enriched uranium — impossible for the layman — the manual explains how to make simple bombs that can blow up anything from electrical generators to petrol stations. The site encourages its readers to look for materials such as radium, which it says is an “effective alternative to uranium and available on the market”. It is unclear who the author is or where he is based: he describes himself simply as “Layth al-Islam”, or the “Lion of Islam”, belonging to a group called “the Black Flags”.

“Fight them so that Allah will punish them at your hands and will put them to shame and will give you victory over them,” he writes, quoting the Koran. “Perhaps nuclear weapons represent a technology of the 1940s. However, the Crusaders, the allies of the Satan, Allah’s curse be upon them, insist on depriving the jihad fighters of the right to have these weapons.”

The site’s appeal is evident from the enthusiasm of its correspondents. One of the most recent, Mariyam al-Jihadiyya, writes: “God bless you for this precious topic . . . fight them, through your hands God tortures them . . . and heal the hearts of the faithful people.” Beneath she includes a couple of pictures for her hero. “I love you, Osama,” she writes.

Other users complain that not all the site’s links are activated, and several urge caution. “Don’t talk about things you don’t understand,” writes one. For enthusiasts there are links to a mailing service that provides regular updates on bomb-making techniques.

Nuclear physicists were alarmed by the site. “Normally you just get generic principles, but this appears to be more like a proper instruction manual,” said John Hassard, reader in physics at Imperial College, London. “The thing about this website that is striking is that it is very particular. A lot of effort has been put into it.”

He said that while it was highly unlikely that amateur bomb-builders could get hold of fissile material, smuggling networks with access to nuclear materials from the break-up of the Soviet Union could use the information.

“It is a very real threat and one which we can’t afford to ignore,” he said. “I would say this is public enemy No 1.” Experts on Al-Qaeda said the organisation appeared to be moving from a phase where it preached a fatwa permitting the use of weapons of mass destruction — issued two years ago — to one where it encourages its followers to produce both “dirty” bombs and smaller devices similar to those used in the London Tube attacks.

“Al-Qaeda strives to move directly from the stage of obtaining the WMD to the stage of using it,” said Matti Steinberg, an Israeli expert on the organisation. He said efforts by Al-Qaeda, whose members are Sunni Muslims, to produce a nuclear weapon also reflected its fear that Shi’ite Iran was on the brink of producing a bomb. Bin Laden wanted to “balance the efforts by Iran to obtain the first Shi’ite bomb by building the first Sunni one”.

While assessing the website’s influence on young British Muslims is difficult, terror experts believe it is an important potential recruiting tool.

Jeevan Deol, a terrorism analyst at the London School of Oriental and African Studies, said that while Al-Qaeda could not match western military capabilities and intelligence, its use of “cyberwarfare” helped redress the balance. “They are using the web in a focused way for propaganda and recruiting,” said Deol. “Some jihadi kid in Leeds clicks on it and thinks, ‘Wow, 50,000 hits — we don’t see Osama on telly any longer but we’re big, we’re bad and extremely engaged in all these things’.”

--Additional reporting: *Widiane Moussa and Flora Bagenal*

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2089-1859222,00.html>

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Washington Times

November 6, 2005

Pg. B4

Avoiding A Russian Arms Disaster

By Ted Turner and Stanley A. Weiss

Hurricane Katrina drove home the staggering devastation that disasters -- natural or man-made -- can inflict.

Meanwhile, July's attacks on the London Underground reminded us terrorists can still strike major world cities. Now imagine the two joined together: terrorists, armed with weapons of mass destruction, unleashing Katrina-scale chaos and death in the heart of a U.S. city.

Such attacks are hardly unthinkable. Roughly half of Russia's weapons-grade nuclear materials are poorly protected. In the small Russian town of Shchuch'ye, nearly 2 million shells of VX and sarin nerve gas -- each lethal enough to

kill 85,000 people -- lay stacked in chicken cooplike structures. The September 11 commission said al Qaeda has pursued getting and using these weapons as a "religious obligation" for more than a decade. Fortunately, unlike hurricanes, much can be done to prevent this nightmare from becoming real. One of our first and best lines of defense is the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program, created by former U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn, Georgia Democrat, and Sen. Richard Lugar, Indiana Republican. Since 1992, the program has eliminated thousands of Russian nuclear warheads, missiles, submarines and bombers.

But in recent years, a set of burdensome congressional restrictions has marred the program and led to a series of disruptive stop-and-start cycles. Key projects vital to America's security have ground to a halt for months on end because, for example, Russian human-rights obligations were not met or the paperwork to waive them was not completed.

Congress now has the chance to end such dangerous disruptions once and for all. Mr. Lugar, decrying those misplaced priorities, introduced language to repeal all the restrictions, which the Senate embraced by an overwhelming, bipartisan 78-19 vote in July. But until the full Congress approves it, CTR's vital efforts remain in danger, from both a national security and a business perspective.

Danger of delay: Current restrictions carry real costs on the ground. In mid-2002, all new CTR projects -- including security upgrades at 10 nuclear weapons storage sites -- stalled for four months because the conditions could not be certified. Destruction of the Shchuch'ye stockpile was delayed some 15 months from 2001 to 2003 for similar red-tape reasons.

Such stoppages not only prolong threats to America, they also endanger the hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars already invested in Shchuch'ye and other projects. So long as the conditions remain, these dangerous disruptions are inevitable.

Wasted resources: In a yearly drama, defense staffers and intelligence analysts must spend thousands of hours assessing Russian compliance with CTR restrictions -- even when it is immediately clear Russia cannot meet them. Nor can the president simply waive the conditions without first submitting to this annual exercise in foregone conclusions.

Abetting such delays or allowing concerns like human rights, however important, to threaten human existence massively is the height of folly. We not only agree with Mr. Lugar that, during a war on terror, these artificial barriers "are destructive to our national security"; we see them undermining one of the best investments our country can make.

CTR, simply is good security on the cheap. At an annual cost of as little as one-tenth of 1 percent (0.001) of the Pentagon budget, the program has deactivated and helped guard 6,760 Russian nuclear warheads. It has upgraded security to the Shchuch'ye depot and similar sites. It also helped remove all nuclear weapons from Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Today, CTR continues upgrading security and aiding accounting of nuclear weapons transportation and storage. It also works to destroy biological weapons production facilities and lock down pathogen collections in Russia and the former Soviet republics.

CTR's largest current project, eliminating the Shchuch'ye stockpile, will rid us of all 2 million of those weapons -- and cost each American roughly the same as a large latte.

Nor is this money "foreign aid": More than 80 percent of CTR funds go to five U.S. prime contractors that dismantle and destroy these weapons.

The risk of a Katrina-scale terrorist attack with Russian weapons is too critical to tolerate any delays to these crucial efforts. Congress must act and free us to meet what President Bush calls "the greatest threat before humanity today." *Ted Turner is chairman of Turner Enterprises in Atlanta. Stanley A. Weiss is chairman of Business Executives for National Security, of which Mr. Turner is a member.*

<http://www.washtimes.com/commentary/20051105-101712-9766r.htm>

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New York Times
November 7, 2005

Iran Reports Making Bid To Resume Nuclear Talks

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN, Nov. 6 - Iran said Sunday that it had asked the three European countries involved in stalled negotiations over its nuclear program to resume the talks. The announcement came as the Iranian government said it had reversed a decision and allowed United Nations inspectors to visit a military site.

Iran allowed inspectors from the United Nations nuclear agency to visit the Parchin military complex near Tehran last week, Ali A. Larijani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council and the country's chief nuclear

negotiator, said Saturday in an interview. The inspectors were also permitted to carry out the interviews they had requested and take environmental samples, he said.

On Sunday, the government confirmed the Parchin visit, and the semiofficial Fars news agency said Mr. Larijani had sent a letter to the foreign ministers of Germany, Britain and France inviting them to resume "reasonable and constructive negotiation within the framework of international regulations." The three countries also represented Europe in negotiations with Iran, which began in 2003. But they stopped the talks after the conservative government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad defied an agreement by resuming work at a uranium conversion plant near Isfahan that Iran says is intended to yield energy but that the West worries is a precursor to the development of nuclear weapons.

The European countries have said that work at the plant would have to be suspended before they would resume talks.

However, Iran also said Sunday that it was proceeding with major work at Isfahan. "We have told the agency that we are going to inject new initial material into the production chain," a reference to uranium ore, Javad Vaidi, an official with the Supreme National Security Council, said on state television.

Europe and the United States have warned that they may call for the referral of Iran's case to the United Nations Security Council if it does not comply with the demand to freeze its nuclear-related activities.

Inspectors from the United Nations agency, the International Atomic Energy Agency, visited Parchin in January 2005 but were allowed to see only part of the site. A request in March to visit again was denied. "Last week they were allowed to visit everywhere at the complex, do interviews and take samples," Mr. Larijani said in the interview. "Parchin is a military complex and Iran has its own concerns," he added.

A spokeswoman for the United Nations agency, Melissa Fleming, confirmed the inspection. "We're pleased; we got access; it was not restricted," she said. "We were allowed to see all the buildings and to take environmental samples."

Iran insists on its right to enrich uranium to produce nuclear fuel independently. The process can lead to making nuclear weapons if the material is enriched to high levels, but Iran maintains that its program is entirely for peaceful purposes.

"We will never abandon our right to the nuclear fuel cycle," Hamid Reza Assefi, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said Sunday in his weekly news conference. But, he said: "The door is open to discussions. Nothing has been closed."

Mark Landler contributed reporting from Frankfurt for this article.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/07/international/middleeast/07iran.html>

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