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Articles & Other Documents:

[Dr. Kay Had Maps with Coordinates of WMD Hiding Places in Syria](#)

[Warhead Blueprints Link Libya Project To Pakistan Figure](#)

[N. Korea And U.S. Have Plenty To Discuss](#)

[New Detrick Lab In Works](#)

[Letter With Ricin Vial Sent To White House](#)

[Ricin Poses Postal Risk, but Different From Germs](#)

[Ricin, Made From Common Castor Beans, Can Be Lethal But Has Drawbacks As A Weapon](#)

[Bush Orders A Plan To Protect Food Supply From Terror Attack](#)

[1918 killer flu secrets revealed](#)

[Alleged Nuclear Offer To Iraq Is Revisited](#)

[NATO plans special brigade to fight terror risks](#)

[Nuclear Expert Receives Pardon From Musharraf](#)

[In Response To Criticism, Tenet Reveals CIA Successes](#)

[Missed Signals On WMD?](#)

[Khan's Nuke Network Sparks Proliferation Fears](#)

[A Desert Mirage: How U.S. Misjudged Iraq's Arsenal](#)

[Pakistani Scientist Admits That He Passed On Nuclear Secrets](#)

[Government Refuses N. Korean Arms Offer](#)

[Ricin Partially Shuts Senate](#)

[Incident Illustrates Lapses In Security Net](#)

[It's Lethal, Easy To Make, But Impractical For Terror](#)

[Notable Events Involving Ricin](#)

[Pakistani Finger-Pointing And Denials Spread In The Furor Over Nuclear Transfers Abroad](#)

[Rumsfeld Says Iraq Likely Had Arms](#)

[Foreign Source Seen As Unlikely In Ricin Mailings](#)

[Tenet Defends CIA's Analysis Of Iraq as Objective, if Flawed](#)

[Key Source On Iraqi Bioweapons Was Deemed Dubious, Agencies Say](#)

[U.N. Nuclear Chief Warns Of Global Black Market](#)

[Senate Offices Open Again As Ricin Inquiry Continues](#)

[EU states pressuring Syria over WMD - diplomats](#)

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.

Established here at the Air War College in 1998, the USAF/CPC provides education and research to present and future leaders of the Air Force, as well as to members of other branches of the armed services and Department of Defense. Our purpose is to help those agencies better prepare to counter the threat from weapons of mass destruction. Please feel free to visit our web site at www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc-cps.htm for in-depth information and specific points of contact. Please direct any questions or comments on CPC Outreach Journal to Jo Ann Eddy, CPC Outreach Editor, at (334) 953-7538 or DSN 493-7538. To subscribe, change e-mail address, or unsubscribe to this journal or to request inclusion on the mailing list for CPC publications, please contact Mrs. Eddy. The following articles, papers or documents do not necessarily reflect official endorsement of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or other US government agencies. Reproduction for private use or commercial gain is subject to original copyright restrictions. All rights are reserved

Dr. Kay Had Maps with Coordinates of WMD Hiding Places in Syria

DEBKAFfile Exclusive Report and Analysis
February 2, 2004, 3:33 PM (GMT+02:00)

Setting up an inquiry commission is the political leader's favorite dodge for burying an embarrassing problem until the pursuit dies down. President George W. Bush will this week bow to election-year pressures from Democrats and his own Republicans alike and sign an executive order to investigate US intelligence failings regarding Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction on the eve of war. Both his senior war partners, the Australian and British prime ministers, face the same public clamor ever since WMD hunter Dr. David Kay resigned, declaring there were probably no stockpiles in Iraq and "we were all wrong."

At the same time, the CIA and other intelligence bodies accused of flawed performance do not look particularly dismayed by the prospect of facing these probes. They point to the cause of the political flap, Dr Kay, as contradicting himself more than once in the numerous interviews he has given since he quit as head of the Iraq Survey Group.

In the last 24 hours, **DEBKAFfile** went back to its most reliable intelligence sources in the US and the Middle East, some of whom were actively involved in the subject before and during the Iraq war. They all stuck to their guns. As they have consistently informed **DEBKAFfile** and **DEBKA-Net-Weekly**, Saddam Hussein's unconventional weapons programs were present on the eve of the American-led invasion and quantities of forbidden materials were spirited out to Syria. Whatever Dr. Kay may choose to say now, at least one of these sources knows at first hand that the former ISG director received dates, types of vehicles and destinations covering the transfers of Iraqi WMD to Syria.

Indeed the US administration and its intelligence agencies, as well as Dr Kay, were all provided with Syrian maps marked with the coordinates of the secret weapons storage sites. The largest one is located at Qaratshuk at the heart of a desolate and unfrequented region edged with marshes, south of the Syrian town of Al Qamishli near the place where the Iraqi, Syrian and Turkish frontiers converge; smaller quantities are hidden in the vast plain between Al Qamishli and Az Zawr, and a third is under the ground of the Lebanese Beqaa Valley on the Syrian border.

These transfers were first revealed by **DEBKAFfile** and **DEBKA-Net-Weekly** in February 2003 a month before the war. We also discovered that a Syrian engineering corps unit was detailed to dig their hiding places in northern Syria and the Lebanese Beqaa.

A senior intelligence source confirmed this again to **DEBKAFfile**, stressing: "Dr. Kay knows exactly what was contained in the tanker trucks crossing from Iraq into Syria in January 2003. His job gave him access to satellite photos of the convoys; the instruments used by spy planes would have identified dangerous substances and tracked them to their underground nests. There exists a precise record of the movement of chemical and biological substances from Iraq to Syria."

Armed with this knowledge, Kay was able to say firmly to The Telegraph's Con Coughlin on January 25: "We are not talking about a large stockpile of weapons. But we know from some of the interrogations of former Iraqi officials that a lot of material went to Syria before the war, including some components of Saddam's WMD program. Precisely what went to Syria and what has happened to it, is a major issue that needs to be resolved.

Yet in later interviews, the last being on February 1 with Wolf Blitzer on CNN's Late Edition - and for reasons known only to himself - Kay turned vague, claiming there was no way of knowing what those convoys contained because of the lack of Syrian cooperation.

What caused his change of tune?

Since he began talking to the media, interested politicians have been rephrasing his assertions on the probable absence of stockpiles, by dropping the "probable" and transmuting "no stockpiles", to "no WMD." These adjustments have produced a telling argument against Bush's justification for war and a slogan that has deeply eroded public confidence in US credibility in America and other countries. Tony Blair and John Howard will no doubt set up outside inquiry commissions like Bush. In Israel too, opposition factions have seized the opportunity of arguing that if Israel's pre-war intelligence on Iraq's arsenal was flawed, so too was its evaluation of Yasser Arafat's role as the engine of Palestinian suicidal terror. The fact that intelligence was not flawed - UN inspectors dismantled missiles and Iraq fired missiles at Kuwait - is easily shouted down in the current climate.

By the same token, no connection is drawn between the Iraqi WMD issue and the grounding this week of transatlantic flights from Europe to America by credible intelligence of an al Qaeda plot. The Washington Post spelled the threat out as entailing the possible spread of anthrax or smallpox germs in the cabin or planting of poison chemicals in the cargo.

It was also suggested that suicidal pilots might crash an airliner on an American city and drop payloads of toxic chemicals and bacteria.

Two questions present themselves here. One: if minute quantities of weaponized biological and chemical substances dropped by Osama bin Laden's killers from the air are menacing enough to trigger a major alert, why would Saddam need stockpiles to pose an imminent threat to world security and his immediate neighbors? Would not a couple of test tubes serve his purpose? Two: Where did al Qaeda get hold of the WMD presumed to be in its possession and who trained its operatives in their use?

Once again, **DEBKAF**'s senior intelligence sources recall earlier revelations. The ex-Jordanian terror master Mussab al Zarqawi is key director of al Qaeda's chemical, biological and radioactive warfare program. In late 2000, we reported him operating WMD laboratories under the supervision of Iraqi intelligence in the northern Iraqi town of Bayara. Since then, the same Zarqawi has masterminded some of the deadliest terrorist attacks in Iraq, such as the blasts at the Jordanian embassy and the murder of Italian troops in Nassariya.

Zarqawi is and was the embodiment of the link between Saddam and al Qaeda going back four years, long before the American invasion of Iraq - which indicatges the source of Osama bin Laden's unconventional weapons purchases.

In another interview, the former ISG director expanded on his statement that Iraq was falling apart "from depravity and corruption." The Saddam regime, he said, had lost control. Saddam ran projects privately and unsupervised, while his scientists were free to fake programs.

A senior **DEBKAF** source commented on this assertion:

"That's one way of describing the situation - and not only on war's eve but during all of Saddam Hussein's years of ruling Iraq. We are looking at institutionalized corruption of a type unfamiliar in the West; it was built up in a very special way in Iraq." The country was not falling apart, but it was being looted systematically. Just imagine, he said, Saddam and the two sons the Americans killed in July 2003 had their own secret printing press for running off Iraqi dinars and other currencies including dollars for their own personal use. The central bank went on issuing currency in the normal way, unaware that it was being undermined from within by the ruler's private press. "Saddam's corruption was structured, a hierarchical pyramid with the ruler, his sons and inner circle at the top and the petty thieves at the bottom making off with worthless paper."

Some of our sources challenged two more of Dr. Kay's assertions to Wolf Blitzer: a) After 1998 when the UN left, there was no human intelligence on the ground, and b) "There were no regular sources of information, not enough dots to connect." If this is true, how does he explain another statement in the same interview that the US entered the war on the basis of "a broad consensus among intelligence services - not just the CIA, but also Britain, France and Russia?"

On what did this consensus rest if there were no informants on the ground?

And furthermore, how were the American and British invading armies able to advance at such speed from Kuwait to Baghdad with no obstructions and without blowing up a single bridge, road or other utility, including oil fields, ports and military air fields? Every obstruction had clearly been removed from their path by **intelligence agents on the ground**, who reached understandings with local Iraqi commanders before the war began.

In the face of this evidence, the question must be asked: Why does Bush take David Kay's assaults and demands with such stoicism instead of going after Damascus - as defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld has proposed from time to time?

One theory is that he does not trust any of the evidence. Saddam was famous among UN inspectors for his deception techniques; he may have practiced a double deception. Hard and fast facts are likewise hard to come by in Damascus. Above all, Bush may simply be determined to adhere to his plan of action come what may, whatever crises happen to cross his path, in the confidence that his path will lead to a November victory at the polls.

Three inquiry commissions will most likely be set up to examine the American, British and Australian intelligence assessments of Saddam's weapons of destruction in the run-up to the Iraq war. In the meantime, the actual weapons will continue to molder undisturbed in the ground of Syria and Lebanon

<http://www.debka.com/article.php?aid=780>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

USA Today
February 4, 2004
Pg. 1

A Desert Mirage: How U.S. Misjudged Iraq's Arsenal

Evidence fit the allegations even if they were wrong

By John Diamond, USA Today

WASHINGTON — One year before President Bush ordered the invasion of Iraq, a U.S. spy satellite over the western Iraqi desert photographed trailer trucks lined up beside a military bunker. Canvas shrouded the trucks' cargo.

Through a system of relays, the satellite beamed digitized images to Fort Belvoir in Virginia, south of Washington. Within hours, analysts a few miles away at CIA headquarters had the pictures on high-definition computer screens. The photos would play a critical role in an assessment that now appears to have been wrong — that Iraq had stockpiled weapons of mass destruction.

The way analysts interpreted the truck convoy photographed on March 17, 2002 — and seven others like it spotted over the next two months — is perhaps the single most important example of how U.S. intelligence went astray in its assessment of Saddam Hussein's arsenal. Analysts made logical interpretations of the evidence but based their conclusions more on supposition than fact.

The eight convoys stood out from normal Iraqi military movements. They appeared to have extra security provided by Saddam's most trusted officers, and they were accompanied by what analysts identified as tankers for decontaminating people and equipment exposed to chemical agents.

But the CIA had a problem: Once-a-day snapshots from the KH-11 spy satellite didn't show where the convoys were going. "We couldn't get a destination," a top intelligence official recalled. "We tried and tried and tried. We never could figure that out."

As far as U.S. intelligence was concerned, the convoys may as well have disappeared, like a mirage, into the Iraqi desert. Nearly a year after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, Saddam's supposed arsenal remains a mirage.

The convoy photos, described in detail for the first time by four high-ranking intelligence officials in extensive joint interviews, were decisive in a crucial shift by U.S. intelligence: from saying Iraq might have illegal weapons to saying that Iraq definitely had them.

The assertion that Saddam had chemical and biological weapons — and the ability to use them against his neighbors and even the United States — was expressed in an Oct. 1, 2002, document called a National Intelligence Estimate.

The estimate didn't trigger President Bush's determination to oust Saddam. But it weighed heavily on members of Congress as they decided to authorize force against Iraq, and it was central to Secretary of State Colin Powell's presentation to the United Nations Security Council a year ago this week.

Powell argued that Saddam had violated U.N. resolutions, agreed to after the 1991 Gulf War, requiring Iraq to disarm. But David Kay, the former head of the CIA-directed team searching for Saddam's weapons, now says that Iraq got rid of most of its banned weapons about six months after the 1991 war and that, unknown to the CIA, Iraq's weapons research was in disarray over the past four years.

The failure to find biological or chemical weapons in Iraq has undercut the Bush administration's main justification for invading Iraq. And it has raised concerns that the United States is conducting a policy of pre-empting foreign threats with an intelligence system that is fundamentally flawed.

An independent commission, reluctantly backed by the Bush administration, will be established to find out what went wrong. Such a panel is sure to explore whether, like thirsty travelers seeking an oasis, the U.S. analysts were looking so hard for evidence of banned Iraqi weapons that they "saw" things that turned out to be illusions.

Major findings

How could the nation's \$40 billion-a-year intelligence apparatus, focused on Saddam's regime for more than a decade, have been so wrong? A three-month examination by USA TODAY of prewar intelligence on Iraq, involving more than 50 interviews and examination of thousands of pages of documents, found that:

*Volumes of intelligence suggested illegal Iraqi weapons activity but did not prove Iraq had such weapons. The evidence was intriguing but inconclusive. Spy satellites photographed convoys but couldn't determine where they were going. Human sources told of Iraqi attempts to buy banned equipment but didn't say whether the deals went through. Electronic intercepts exposed Iraqi concealment but didn't explain what was being hidden.

*Despite the lack of proof, CIA Director George Tenet and his top advisers decided to reach a definitive finding. Based on experience with Iraq — and with the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in mind — they were far more worried about underestimating the Iraqi threat than overestimating it.

*Few officials in U.S. intelligence, Congress or the executive branch seriously considered Iraq's claim that it had gotten rid of its weapons. Scarcity of evidence, intelligence officials said, stemmed not from innocence but from Iraqi concealment and lies.

The five men who put together the October 2002 intelligence estimate insist that the White House didn't pressure them into elevating the assessment of the Iraqi threat. But they were haunted by past failures and the fear of the worst-case scenario. Tenet, who declined to be interviewed for this article, pushed them to avoid wishy-washy conclusions. And they were aware that any finding exonerating Iraq would put them into conflict with top administration officials.

Now these analysts face another kind of worst-case scenario in which a war was premised on faulty analysis — and their judgments are no longer trusted.

Burned before

U.S. intelligence analysts were reluctant to give Iraq the benefit of the doubt because Saddam had fooled them before.

After the 1991 war, U.N. weapons inspectors, tipped off by an Iraqi defector, uncovered a much more extensive program to develop nuclear weapons than the CIA had estimated. It happened again in 1995 when Iraq admitted to a biological weapons program undetected by U.S. intelligence.

"The lesson of '91 was that (Saddam) was much more effective at denial and deception than we understood, and consequently he was a lot further along than we understood," Stuart Cohen, vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council, a senior advisory board, said in an interview.

Virtually all of the CIA's recent, painful lessons revolved around the failure to detect and warn of a threat. These included a bombing at the Khobar Towers military barracks in Saudi Arabia in 1996; nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in 1998; the bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000; and, most traumatically, the Sept. 11 attacks. In July 1998, a commission led by Donald Rumsfeld, who would become Bush's Defense secretary, cautioned that U.S. intelligence might not be able to warn of emerging ballistic-missile threats from states such as North Korea, Iran and Iraq. The solution, the panel advised, was a new kind of analysis to "extrapolate a program's scope, scale, pace and direction beyond what the hard evidence at hand unequivocally supports."

As Defense secretary, Rumsfeld would insist that war in Iraq was waged on solid intelligence. Increasingly, however, it appears that U.S. intelligence followed the course set by Rumsfeld's 1998 panel in extrapolating the scope of the Iraqi threat "beyond ... the hard evidence at hand."

Decisive convoy photos

Of all the Bush administration accusations about Iraq, none was more important than the charge that Saddam possessed chemical and biological weapons capable of killing millions of people. And no evidence was more important to making that charge than the convoy photographs taken in March, April and May 2002.

The story of the suspicious convoys in the Iraqi desert illustrates how the CIA turned tantalizing evidence of Iraqi weapons into conclusions that went beyond the available facts. It also underscores the limits of technical intelligence. Orbiting U.S. spy satellites provide periodic snapshots but, because they don't hover over a spot on Earth, they can't send back motion pictures of what's going on.

The eight suspicious convoys bore a striking resemblance to known chemical-weapons convoys that had been picked up by spy satellite photos in 1988. Briefing top officials at CIA headquarters, analysts placed examples of the old and new photos side by side on poster board. They also contrasted the eight suspicious convoys with more than 100 conventional Iraqi military shipments also photographed during the spring of 2002. They showed them on posters labeled "Normal Activity" and "Unusual Activity."

"There's some stunningly good evidence about what I would call chemical weapons munition trans-shipment activity," said Cohen, who played a key role in producing the Iraq intelligence estimate. Cohen said the evidence "was certainly subject to alternative interpretations, but there were very sensitive signatures involved that would have led any reasonable person to the same conclusion that we came up with."

Another high-ranking intelligence official called the convoy images "an extraordinarily important piece. It's one of those 'dots' without which we could not have reached that judgment that Saddam had restarted chemical weapons production."

By September, after intense debate, opinion solidified, and senior analysts preparing the intelligence estimate judged with "high confidence" that the convoys carried chemical weapons. Their conclusion was timely because Bush was just then ratcheting up his case against Iraq to the U.N. and Congress. Between October 2002 and the U.S.-led invasion the following March, satellite images showed three more convoys bearing what appeared to be the special signatures of chemical weapons.

Weeks before the invasion, however, there were signs that the CIA might be mistaken. U.N. inspectors visited the sites where the convoy photos were taken and scores of other locations, but they found no trace of chemical or biological weapons. At the CIA's prodding, the inspectors looked for decontamination trucks but reported finding standard water tankers with no evidence of decontamination gear.

Since the war, no decontamination vehicle has been found, the four intelligence officials said. U.S. interrogators have questioned scores of Iraqi military truck drivers. They either say they know nothing or tell stories that don't check out, according to a Pentagon official with knowledge of the search effort.

Deductive reasoning

What were the convoys doing if they weren't moving chemical weapons? The tanker trucks might have been carrying water in case munitions exploded, or fuel to keep a long-distance convoy moving. The trailer trucks might have been loaded with conventional rockets or shells, which would be hard to distinguish from chemical munitions.

U.S. intelligence did not know for sure, and still does not know, where the convoys were going or what they were carrying.

Other critical parts of the case against Iraq were also based on deductive reasoning.

Once Iraq showed it knew how to make chemical weapons in the 1980s, U.S. intelligence assumed it held on to the recipe. "Iraq's knowledge base is absolutely critical," Cohen said. "Knowledge is not something you lose."

Beginning in 1999, spy satellite photographs taken based on tips by human sources showed that Iraq was expanding a chemical plant near Fallujah called Habaniyya II that could produce phenol and chlorine, ingredients for chemical weapons. The CIA had information from 15 people over four years saying that Iraq was reviving its weapons production capability at Habaniyya and other plants. But the CIA rated the five best of those sources as having only "moderate reliability."

Electronic intercepts and reports from human sources showed that senior officers at some of these facilities were the same people known to have been involved in Iraqi chemical weapons production in the 1980s.

Chlorine can be used for civilian purposes such as water purification. But CIA analysts remained suspicious because of reports that Iraq had a surplus of chlorine at its water treatment plants. Why expand a chlorine plant if there was a surplus, they asked, unless it was to make weapons?

The CIA detected efforts by shadowy middlemen, negotiating with foreign governments and businesses, to buy equipment and chemicals useful in making weapons of mass destruction. Without hard evidence, U.S. intelligence decided it had to assume that some illegal material was getting through, the four high-ranking intelligence officials said.

Analysts made similar assumptions from U.N. reports. U.N. inspectors, for example, said Iraq could not account for about 3,000 tons of chemicals that could be used to make weapons. CIA weapons experts said Iraq could use those chemicals to make 100 to 500 tons of chemical agent, a figure used repeatedly by administration officials. The U.N. also said that Iraq had failed to account for growth media sufficient to make up to 25,000 liters of the biological agent anthrax and that there was a "strong presumption" that 10,000 liters of anthrax Iraq had in 1991 still existed. U.S. intelligence merged debatable intelligence about chemical and biological agents with equally debatable intelligence about weapons delivery systems. Iraq, the CIA said, still had 20 Scud missiles and was developing drone aircraft that might be launched, possibly off a merchant ship, to strike the United States.

Bush administration officials then translated the CIA's worst-case calculations into potential mass casualties. In his 2003 State of the Union address, Bush cited the U.N. figures in saying that the anthrax would be enough "to kill several million people" and that the chemical weapons could "kill untold thousands."

Powell, in his presentation last year to the U.N. Security Council, said even a conservative estimate would give Saddam enough chemical agent to attack "an area five times the size of Manhattan."

Since the war, no Scud missiles have been found. The drone aircraft U.S. search teams have found in Iraq were too small to deliver chemical or biological weapons.

'Mountain' of evidence

It is only beginning to become clear that information about Iraqi weapons was scarce because the weapons didn't exist. Aris Pappas, a former CIA analyst, said in an interview that U.S. intelligence had essentially "gone blind for three years" in Iraq after U.N. inspectors left at the end of 1998. Based on the available evidence, analysts probably made sound judgments, said Pappas, a member of an Iraq intelligence review panel established by Tenet. But they overlooked alternative explanations and paid too little heed to the weakness of their raw data.

"They keep referring to a 'mountain' of evidence. ... But it was corroborative evidence," Pappas said, meaning evidence that supported allegations of an illegal arsenal without proving its existence.

The Bush and Clinton administrations, foreign intelligence services, and Republicans and Democrats in Congress all took it as a given that Iraq had chemical and biological weapons.

"If we were massively wrong," said Robert Einhorn, who worked on proliferation issues at the State Department in the Clinton and Bush administrations, "we were all massively wrong. Everybody."

Bush didn't believe that U.N. inspectors had forced Iraq to get rid of its banned weapons after the 1991 war. Indeed, Bush's policy assumed that U.N. inspections couldn't work. After the Sept. 11 attacks, the watchwords at the White House and CIA headquarters were, assume the worst.

"We put the analysts under tremendous pressure," said Kay, the former head of the post-war weapons search. "There is a point where an analyst simply needs to tell people: 'I can't draw a conclusion. I don't have enough data. Go get me more data.' But in the wake of 9/11, believe me, that is difficult to do."

Sept. 11 showed the consequences of failing to warn of an imminent threat. Now U.S. intelligence is grappling with the consequences of perceiving a threat that was not there.

<http://www.usatoday.com/usatoday/20040204/5895838s.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Warhead Blueprints Link Libya Project To Pakistan Figure

By William J. Broad and David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3 — Twelve days ago, a 747 aircraft chartered by the United States government landed at Dulles Airport here carrying a single piece of precious cargo: a small box containing warhead designs that American officials believe were sold to Libya by the underground network linked to Abdul Qadeer Khan, the creator of the Pakistani bomb.

The warhead designs were the first hard evidence that the secret network provided its customers with far more than just the technology to turn uranium into bomb fuel. Libyan officials have told investigators that they bought the blueprints from dealers who are part of that network, apparently for more than \$50 million. Those blueprints, along with the capability to make enriched uranium, could have given the Libyans all the elements they needed to make a nuclear bomb. What the Libyans purchased, in the words of an American weapons expert who has reviewed the program in detail, was both the kitchen equipment "and the recipes."

Experts familiar with the contents of the box say the designs closely resemble the warheads that China tested in the late 1960's and passed on to Pakistan decades ago.

American officials are still studying the designs flown out of Libya to determine whether, in fact, they are complete. There is no evidence, the officials say, that the Libyans actually produced the warheads, much less sufficient nuclear fuel. The Libyan nuclear program was just getting started, although Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said recently, "It was simply a matter of time."

American officials emphasize that they have no evidence that the Pakistani government itself was aware of the sales, and they wave aside recent accusations by Mr. Khan's allies that President Pervez Musharraf was himself aware of the transactions. But some experts inside and outside the government say it is difficult to believe that Pakistan's nuclear secrets could have been exported without the knowledge of some in the military and the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence agency, especially since some shipments were made on Pakistani military aircraft.

Whoever was responsible, the warhead design appears now to have been a sought-after prize of the network of nuclear middlemen and parts producers that American officials say is being broken up, from Germany to Malaysia, and from Dubai to the Netherlands.

"Ever since the Libya revelations last month, there have been a lot of detentions, and some arrests," one American official said Tuesday.

The documents were hurried out of Libya on the first flight that could be arranged — a Jan. 22 charter that had arrived in Libya with equipment for the C.I.A. and others dismantling the Libyan nuclear complex. The documents are being held by the Department of Energy, which oversees America's nuclear arsenal. A second flight, a few days later, took thousands of parts for centrifuges to a site in Tennessee.

Inside the White House and across the Potomac at the Central Intelligence Agency, the documents from Libya have raised as many urgent questions as they have answered.

American intelligence officials say they are uncertain who else possesses copies of the design, but they assume there are others. Obtaining the enriched uranium or the plutonium to make a bomb is more difficult than getting a workable bomb design, but their fear is that the network they are uncovering sold both.

Investigators are also trying to determine whether the network of suppliers and experts sold a similar weapons design to North Korea.

American and South Korean officials say North Korea traded its missile technology to Pakistan in return for nuclear weapons technology in the late 1990's. That is during the same period when Libya paid to obtain the design and the centrifuge parts, investigators say.

The last shipment of those parts to Libya was intercepted in October, which was several years after Washington began pressuring Mr. Musharraf's government to shut down the scientists at the Khan laboratory.

According to American and European investigators, the network that supplied Libya was enormously complex, and not all the paths led directly back to the Khan laboratory. Centrifuge parts were made in Malaysia, and other parts were obtained in Germany and Japan. The Japanese last year seized critical equipment headed for North Korea, though they never announced it.

But both the centrifuge designs and the bomb designs seized in Libya appear to have come from the same country, according to experts who have reviewed them. "My understanding is that it did come from Pakistan," said David Albright, a physicist and president of the Institute for Science and International Security here.

The I.A.E.A. has not publicly said where the designs came from. But Mr. ElBaradei said publicly two weeks ago that weapons designs had been found and secured — apparently a reference to the documents flown to the United States. He did not say how Libya had obtained the blueprints or the origin of the bomb designs.

Mr. Khan was convicted in the Netherlands of stealing a centrifuge design in the 1970's. His conviction was overturned on a technicality, and American officials say it is possible that he or his associates also stole the warhead design in Pakistan without the government's knowledge. Mr. Khan had access to almost every aspect of Pakistan's nuclear program.

Mr. Khan has not spoken publicly since he was relieved of his post as an adviser to President Musharraf and accused — but not arrested — by Pakistani government officials of having supplied nuclear technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya.

Bush administration officials said Tuesday that they are waiting to see if Mr. Musharraf is willing to order his arrest, and face the wrath of Pakistani nationalists who regard Mr. Khan as a hero.

Statements by Mr. Khan's supporters already leave little doubt about the scientist's strategy: if arrested, he appears ready to argue that the Pakistani leadership knew about his transaction at the highest levels. That would put the White House in a difficult position, because President Bush is attempting to support Mr. Musharraf, a critical ally in tracking down members of Al Qaeda, while forcing him to shut down what officials say was a widespread source of nuclear proliferation.

The discoveries in Tripoli are causing intelligence agencies and investigators to revisit some older cases, including one involving Iraq — which documents suggest was offered nuclear technology before the start of the Persian Gulf war of 1991.

Mr. Albright and his associate, Corey Hinderstein, have reviewed documents found at the farm of Hussein Kamel, Saddam Hussein's son in law, after he defected from Iraq in 1995. Mr. Kamel told the C.I.A. that many of Mr. Hussein's weapons had been destroyed — a statement that appears to be correct, in light of the findings of David A. Kay, the former chief American weapons inspector in Iraq.

A memorandum found among Mr. Kamel's papers, dated June 10, 1990, appeared to be a proposal from an unidentified middleman referring to offers "from the Pakistani scientist Dr. Abd-el-Qadeer Khard regarding the possibility of helping Iraq establish a project to enrich Uranium and manufacture a nuclear weapon."

The I.A.E.A. later concluded that the Iraqis never took up the offer. Iraq already had sophisticated enrichment technology, and it suspected a sting operation or a scam.

The I.A.E.A. reviewed the memorandum and informed the United Nations Security Council four years ago, but said its study of the memo, and whether it represented a genuine offer, was inconclusive. But American officials say that details in the memorandum match up with what they are now learning.

William J. Broad reported from New York for this article and David E. Sanger from Washington.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/04/politics/04NUKE.html?pagewanted=all>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The New York Times

Pakistani Scientist Admits That He Passed On Nuclear Secrets

By DAVID ROHDE

Published: February 4, 2004

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, Feb. 4 — In an extraordinary announcement, Abdul Qadeer Khan, the revered founder of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, appeared on national television early this evening, admitted he had shared Pakistani nuclear technology with other countries and asked the nation for forgiveness.

"I take full responsibility for my actions," the scientist, once one of the most powerful men in Pakistan, said in a soft voice, "and seek your pardon."

Wearing glasses, a tan suit jacket and a striped tie, Dr. Khan, 66, said his "unauthorized proliferation activities" were "based in good faith, but errors in judgment."

He said he acted entirely on his own and did not have the permission of his superiors to share the technology.

"There was never, ever any kind of authority for these activities from the government," he said.

Pakistani government officials said the country's National Command Authority, a group of senior military and civilian officials who oversee Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, met this evening to decide whether to prosecute Dr. Khan and six of his aides accused of carrying out the proliferation.

A senior Pakistani official said General Musharraf would announce the government's decision on Thursday.

On Sunday a senior Pakistani official said a government investigation had found that the scientist had shared Pakistan's nuclear technology with Iran, Libya and North Korea for more than a decade. In what appears to be one of the most successful efforts to evade antiproliferation controls in history, Dr. Khan sent nuclear-weapons related

parts, plans and designs to the three countries with the aid of middlemen from Sri Lanka, Germany and the Netherlands.

Pakistani analysts said it was unlikely that Dr. Khan would be prosecuted.

A series of carefully scripted events today appeared to be designed to quickly put the issue to rest.

Analysts have said that it would have been nearly impossible for Dr. Khan to have passed on such information without the tacit approval of the country's powerful army.

This morning Dr. Khan met President Pervez Musharraf, a general who seized power in a 1999 coup, and asked for a pardon for his activities.

In silent footage shown on national television earlier in the day, a forlorn-looking Dr. Khan was seen leaning forward, alternately pressing his hands together and waving them in the air, as he spoke to General Musharraf. The general, sitting stiffly and dressed in a commando uniform, looked at him sternly and said nothing, with his hands clasped in his lap.

At the outset of the speech, Dr. Khan said he was appearing "with the deepest sense of sorrow, anguish and regret." His statement today, which his supporters said was coerced and humiliating, marked an ignoble end for a scientist lauded in Pakistan but derided in the West.

Dr. Khan was convicted of stealing plans for a high-speed centrifuge, which can be used to produce enriched uranium, a key component in a nuclear bomb, from a European company in the 1970's. The conviction was overturned on appeal.

In Pakistan he was hailed for achieving a miracle by overcoming a huge American effort to prevent Pakistan from acquiring the technology to enrich the uranium. He is the only Pakistani to have been twice awarded the nation's highest civilian award.

Dr. Khan is rumored to own dozens of houses across Pakistan. American investigators suspect that he has profited handsomely from the nuclear black market.

Senior Pakistani officials told them that Dr. Khan said he shared technology with three to four other Muslim countries in the hope that the creation of more nuclear-armed Muslim nations would ease Western attention on Pakistan's program.

A senior official said Dr. Khan had no good answer for why he shared technology with North Korea. "None of his explanations were satisfactory," the official said.

In recent days, as a resolution to the investigation approached, Pakistani officials had toned down their comments about Dr. Khan's corruption. A senior official said today that Dr. Khan was "partly driven by financial motivations." American analysts have said the key is not whether Dr. Khan is severely punished. It is whether the United States is given as much detail as possible about the nuclear smuggling network. They said eliminating that network, which appears far more difficult than keeping states from producing weapons, is now critical for the United States.

In Pakistan, the scientist's confession represented the collapse of an esteemed national institution — the country's nuclear program. The program, which was begun in the 1970's to counter India's nuclear arsenal, was a source of enormous national pride.

Pakistani military analysts said they believed that senior military officials must have at least tacitly approved of Dr. Khan's activities over the years, particularly those that involved the shipment of nuclear hardware out of the country. The inquiry by the military-led government found that senior military and intelligence officials were guilty of "omissions," but did not actively take part in the scheme.

A former senior American diplomat who served in Pakistan said on Monday that he believed successive Pakistani military and civilian leaders intentionally turned a blind eye to Dr. Khan's activities for a decade.

The former diplomat said Dr. Khan produced things Pakistani leaders felt they needed to counter their nuclear-armed rival India, such as ballistic missile technology from North Korea. Dr. Khan also became such a potent political force in his own right that no one dared challenge him.

"It's like Iran-Contra, they didn't want to know," said the former diplomat, referring to the Reagan administration scandal. "They needed the things he brought them."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/04/international/asia/04CND-STAN.html?pagewanted=all>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

February 4, 2004

Pg. 17

N. Korea And U.S. Have Plenty To Discuss

Differences Are Wide Before Nuclear Talks

By Anthony Faiola, Washington Post Foreign Service

TOKYO, Feb. 3 -- A fresh round of six-nation talks addressing North Korea's nuclear weapons program was agreed to despite the fact that the two key players -- the United States and North Korea -- still hold widely divergent positions, officials close to the negotiations said Tuesday, as they sought to lower expectations for a quick breakthrough in the standoff.

After weeks of intensive diplomatic efforts, North Korea announced earlier in the day that it would return to Beijing for a new round of talks starting Feb. 25. The first round, held in August among North Korea, the United States, China, Russia, Japan and South Korea, ended with virtually no progress.

Since then, China has tried to lay the groundwork for a speedy resolution by narrowing the gap between the Bush administration, which is seeking the complete and verifiable dismantling of the Pyongyang government's nuclear program, and the North Koreans, who have offered to freeze their program in exchange for a number of requests, including economic aid and oil shipments.

In Washington, where the North Korean crisis has often split the Bush administration, officials said key issues needed to be resolved, both internally and with allies, before the talks. Among the questions are how to define a freeze, whether it will include the highly enriched uranium program that U.S. intelligence says exists in North Korea and what level of verification will be required.

Attempts to bridge the differences between Washington and Pyongyang have met with little success, according to diplomats from three of the nations involved. Now, the parties appear to be shooting for a more modest goal of simply advancing the dialogue.

"We're not bringing any agendas," said Lee Soo Hyuck, South Korea's deputy foreign minister. "The agenda is resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. It may be difficult to hold big expectations for a breakthrough from the talks, but the position of each party would become clearer."

Russia's deputy foreign minister, Alexander Losyukov, echoed those sentiments. "The difference of stances between Washington and Pyongyang is very great," he told the Russian Tass news agency, saying that what is required is "not a breakthrough, but an understanding in what direction to develop the negotiating process."

But Asian diplomats say the North Koreans may be prepared to take an important first step -- offering not only to freeze their nuclear program, but also to allow the return of weapons inspectors expelled more than a year ago from the Yongbyon nuclear facility. The Pyongyang government claims to have reprocessed 8,000 spent fuel rods at the plant into weapons-grade plutonium.

In exchange, the sources said, North Korea is likely to insist on at least one of its demands: the quick resumption of international oil shipments that were cut off under U.S. pressure after what U.S. officials say was North Korea's admission in late 2002 that it had a uranium enrichment program.

The sources said North Korea is likely to be pressed on several other issues. These include a broad agreement to hold regular nuclear talks and a commitment to negotiations with Japan aimed at fully resolving disputes stemming from North Korea's admitted abduction of Japanese citizens during the 1970s and 1980s.

"Our agreement to the six-party talks is a product of our efforts to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully," the chief North Korean negotiator, Kim Ryong Song, said in Seoul, where he was participating in cabinet-level talks on Korean economic cooperation. "It also means that our position is right and just."

U.S. officials say they believe the recent disclosures in Pakistan, indicating that North Korea's alleged uranium enrichment program was developed with the aid of A.Q. Khan Laboratories, will strengthen their negotiating position. North Korea has denied having such a program, and its position had recently won support from China.

"A.Q. Khan has saved our bacon on this," one official said.

China, traditionally an ally of North Korea but now seeking to quell its nuclear ambitions, played a major role in getting the North Koreans back to the table, even threatening to move the talks out of Beijing, sources familiar with the talks said. They said China's growing frustration with the North Koreans is likely to be a key incentive for Pyongyang to cooperate. Of equal weight, the sources said, will be whether the Bush administration is willing to bend.

"We think [Washington's] position has become somewhat more flexible," said one Asian diplomatic source familiar with the talks. "But we have to see what the North Koreans are really willing to offer first. The fact that we are going back to the bargaining table is an essential first step."

Staff writer Glenn Kessler in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A8928-2004Feb3.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Los Angeles Times

February 4, 2004

Government Refuses N. Korean Arms Offer

By Times Wire Reports

Under pressure from the United States, Nigeria has rejected a North Korean offer to sell it missiles, U.S. officials said. Nigeria, a U.S. ally and a major oil supplier, did not immediately reassure the United States that it would turn down the offer when North Korea first made it last week.

U.S. diplomats then met with the Nigerian government and hinted at possible sanctions if it were to buy the ballistic missiles from the country Washington considers the world's No. 1 exporter of such weapons, U.S. officials said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-briefs4.3feb04,1,4452071.story>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Frederick (MD) News-Post

February 3, 2004

New Detrick Lab In Works

By Liz Babiarz, News-Post Staff

FREDERICK -- The National Institutes of Health and the Army are moving forward with plans for a \$105 million integrated research lab at Fort Detrick, where researchers will study disease-causing microbes in collaboration with other labs on the post.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) lab, a component of the NIH, is now in the design phase and should be operational by 2007, said Frank Kutlak, NIH architect and project officer.

The NIAID lab will be the first new lab built that's part of Fort Detrick's national biodefense campus, a confederation of four federal agencies that will work together to fight chemical and biological threats.

"Our interagency working group has effectively addressed many challenges involved in creating this new capability for our nation," Col. John E. Ball, the post's garrison commander, wrote in an e-mail.

Congress allocated \$105 million in fiscal 2003 for the NIAID lab, which is slated to be between 100,000 and 120,000 square feet or one-eighth the size of U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. It will sit on about 3.5 acres along Porter Street, east of USAMRIID, and will contain bio-safety level (BSL) 2, 3 and 4 labs.

The new facility will also address a national shortage of BSL-4 labs, which are secure enough to study dangerous and exotic agents with a high risk of life-threatening diseases. Besides USAMRIID, only two labs in the United States have this capability.

The research at the NIAID lab will focus on disease-causing organisms that emerge naturally or can be used as agents of bioterrorism. Researchers hope to get a better understanding of how these microbes cause disease and the human response to them.

Dr. Mary Wright, chief of the biodefense clinical research branch at NIAID, said the goal is to help doctors and researchers use tools at their disposal, like X-rays and blood work, to learn more about the disease process of certain infectious disease such as anthrax and plague.

The research will hopefully lead to new diagnostic tests, vaccines and therapies to protect civilians.

The NIH announced last week it has finished the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), a multi-step process that analyzes environmental issues, addresses alternatives to the project and considers public comment.

Ron Wilson, NIH master planner, said the final EIS found the lab posed minimal harm.

"We feel confident that the measures incorporated in the design of the facility will minimize the potential harm to lab workers and the community surrounding Fort Detrick," Mr. Wilson said.

The NIH will incorporate design and operational safeguards in the facility to protect lab workers and local residents from potential effects. These same safety procedures, "bio-safety in microbiological and biomedical laboratories," were developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and are used in research and clinical health environment throughout the United States, Dr. Wright said.

"Everything in the facility is designed ... so it has two back-ups," Mr. Kutlak said. "Based on that and engineering principles, it's going to be highly safe building."

Robert Duggan, who lives close to Detrick, isn't concerned about the new lab because of the safety measures the fort has and is taking.

"One of the main questions I had was, 'what additional risks are posed by this facility,'" said Mr. Duggan, who worked on post as a contract software integrator.

"... No one made a case that this new facility increases dangers beyond what's already there on post. They (Detrick) seem to be taking reasonable steps to mitigate what risks that there."

Paul Gordon, the former mayor of Frederick, believes the new lab will make Detrick a more enticing target for terrorists.

"In today's world, it is my belief all they are asking for problem building the lab here," said Mr. Gordon, who lives on Meadowdale Lane in Frederick. "They should build facilities like this in rural areas where less people live."

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

February 4, 2004

Pg. 1

Ricin Partially Shuts Senate

3 Buildings Sealed; Toxin Was Mailed to White House in Nov.

By Carol Morello and Spencer S. Hsu, Washington Post Staff Writers

Three Senate office buildings were sealed, all unopened congressional mail was quarantined, and more than 5,000 staffers were locked out of their Capitol Hill offices yesterday after a suspicious powder found in a mailroom was confirmed as the toxin ricin.

Ricin was also found in a letter sent to the White House in November, law enforcement sources said last night, but the incident was never made public and the Secret Service delayed sharing the information with the FBI and other federal officials. [Story, Page A7] In October, a similar package was discovered in a mail-sorting facility in South Carolina.

U.S. Capitol Police said Senate buildings would remain closed at least another four to five days, as investigators began searching last night for clues to the substance found in a suite of offices used by Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, two blocks from the Capitol.

Among lawmakers and staff members, there was a sense that despite the expensive and complex safeguards put in place after the anthrax scare of 2001, Congress remains vulnerable.

"Indeed, this is ricin," Frist announced at an afternoon news conference with Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.), Capitol Police Chief Terrance W. Gainer and other Capitol officials. "This is an insult, an assault on the Senate side of the United States Capitol. We are in a world where things like ricin, that we never had to think about, we do have to think about."

The Capitol was not the only place where ricin was suspected. In Wallingford, Conn., a letter found Monday containing a powdery substance and addressed to the Republican National Committee was determined to contain wood ash, not ricin, as initially feared.

Senate leaders tried to put on a brave front by proceeding with floor debate, but most meaningful work ground to a halt. The few Senate staff members who did find an office to work from were unable to reach their regular telephones or computers. House offices remained open.

No illnesses were reported a full day after the powder was discovered and identified. But dozens of employees were hosed down in the hallway of the Dirksen Senate Office Building for decontamination early Tuesday morning, and many others were advised to wash their clothes or throw them in a plastic bag.

Yesterday evening, Frist announced that the Senate would be in session today so that Congress could host a visit from Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of Spain. Senators looked for alternative office space and arranged to retrieve cars from underground garages and gain emergency access under escort to their offices.

"The work of government will continue," Daschle said. "As we speak, the Senate is in session. Terrorist attacks, criminal acts of this kind will not stop the work of the Senate or the Congress, as we have important work to be done."

Daschle acknowledged, though that without offices, staff and phones, the Senate found "very limited opportunity . . . to do its business." Daschle said reports of ricin in Frist's office "brought back horrific memories" of the anthrax-laced letters sent to his office 28 months ago. The "only consolation," he said, were the "lessons learned" from the anthrax incident that have given Congress "far greater ability to respond effectively" to such an attack.

Since the anthrax attack that left five people dead in October 2001, all mail destined for federal government offices each day is diverted through New Jersey to undergo irradiation to kill bacteria. But the process, designed to destroy live spores, has no effect on ricin, a colorless, odorless and lethal substance. Ricin (pronounced rye-sin) is readily distilled from castor beans. Once it is ingested or inhaled, death can follow within 72 hours. Ricin is not as easily spread as anthrax but there is no antidote or specific treatment.

One of Frist's interns discovered the powder about 3 p.m. Monday. In addition to his regular Dirksen office, Frist also maintains a leadership office in the Capitol where he spends the bulk of his time.

An FBI official said the intern noticed clumpy dust on a small mail-sorting machine he had been using. The machine was in a 10-by-15-foot mailroom attached to Frist's office. "All you have is dust," said the official, describing why it would be difficult to trace. "How long has it been there? Did somebody walk in and dump it?" Complicating matters, Frist staff members told investigators that the machine was always dusty, the official said.

Law enforcement sources said that while it is unclear how the ricin got into the mailroom, they suspect it was mailed. One source said investigators want to find the envelope but are concerned that it may have been taken from the office. Senate leaders called it terrorism; investigators said only that they have not ruled terrorism out.

"We know that this was sent specifically to the United States Senate, to an individual," Frist said. "Because it is a poison, a toxic chemical that we know is deadly, that we know there is no treatment for that, the assumption is the intent to harm."

In the first hours after the powder was found in the mailroom, concern was tempered by an initial test that came back negative for ricin, according to Senate staffers who were quarantined in the office building until early morning. So many were surprised when, about 6:30 p.m., U.S. Capitol Police began knocking on fourth-floor doors checking identities and ordering everyone into a large appropriations hearing room on the first floor. By then, many staff members had left for home.

About 40 congressional workers were sequestered in the room, said Erik Smulson, communications director for Sen. James M. Jeffords (I-Vt.), whose office is near Frist's on the fourth floor of Dirksen. Among the sequestered workers were staff aides to Frist and Jeffords, aides to Sen. Robert F. Bennett (R-Utah), James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.) and about 20 police officers.

Smulson and another Senate staff member who was in the room said people were calm, even as they learned what had transpired. Frist spoke to them via speaker phone, listing the symptoms and assuring them that there had never been a case of a person dying from inhaling ricin.

Police suggested that they contact their colleagues who had gone home and tell them to package their clothing in plastic and take a shower. According to one Senate staff member who was present, everyone pulled out their cell phones and Blackberry text pagers to spread the word. After the anthrax incident, staffers began wearing laminated cards around their necks with the names and phone numbers of all their co-workers. Some of the colleagues they reached said they had been met at the door by spouses holding bags for the clothing.

The Capitol physician's office notified them that the powder had tested positive for ricin. He told them they would be decontaminated -- basically, hosed down -- and advised them to monitor themselves and head to a hospital if symptoms arose.

"This was bad news," Smulson said. "That brought a new seriousness to it."

By last night, investigators had begun collecting and sifting through mail from offices, looking for the origin of the residue

Despite an experience some staff members characterized as surreal, few said they were afraid to return to work on Capitol Hill.

"Maybe it's because of what we all went through with anthrax," said one staff member. "During the anthrax scare, a lot of people took Cipro and had vaccinations. And we survived. Maybe we have an odd, false sense of security after that."

Despite a growing sense of relief that no one was reporting symptoms of ricin poisoning, health officials said the consequences could have been grave.

"Ricin is a toxin," said Julie L. Gerberding, director of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "It . . . can be very serious, and that's the whole reason we are taking this event very seriously and working to do everything possible to reduce human exposure."

Gerberding said researchers have significant experience with the course of symptoms from ingesting ricin, and slight experience with injection of the poison. But she said, "There is essentially no human experience with the inhalation of ricin. We may not have a full picture of how this will evolve. That is why we are casting a broad net to make sure we are not overlooking any symptoms."

The deadly toxin has been a weapon favored over the years by various terrorists and spies.

In the most infamous case dating to 1978, a Bulgarian defector was pricked with an umbrella tip that slid a ricin-laced pellet under his skin, killing him rapidly. In the mid-1990s, members of a Minnesota militia were convicted of plotting to kill a federal marshal with ricin.

Public warnings about potential ricin attacks have increased since January 2003, when British anti-terrorism police discovered traces of the toxin in a north London apartment, leading to a series of arrests and raids across the country in the following weeks.

But so far, this second biological incident in the Senate has not stopped visitors from coming to Washington.

"It seems as if the American public is taking this a little more in stride than in past cases of threats of this nature," said Bill Hanbury, president of the Washington Convention and Tourism Corp., referring to the anthrax attacks.

"These kinds of stories are clearly put into better perspective by the American public now. I think they're willing to wait and see what will happen rather than go into panic mode."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A10632-2004Feb3.html>

Washington Post
February 4, 2004
Pg. 7

Letter With Ricin Vial Sent To White House

November Discovery Was Kept Quiet

By Dan Eggen, Washington Post Staff Writer

The U.S. Secret Service intercepted a letter addressed to the White House in November that contained a vial of the toxin ricin, but never revealed the incident publicly and delayed telling the FBI and other agencies, law enforcement sources said yesterday.

The letter, signed by "Fallen Angel" and containing complaints about trucking regulations, was nearly identical to one discovered Oct. 15 at a Greenville, S.C., mail-sorting facility. It was accompanied by a metal vial that contained powdered ricin, sources said.

In the South Carolina case, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was called in to test the mail facility and its workers. The FBI also released detailed information about the case and, earlier this month, announced a \$100,000 reward for information leading to a conviction.

But the existence of a similar letter sent to the White House was not disclosed until yesterday, and then only by law enforcement officials who asked not to be identified by name.

Six sources in law enforcement and public health said the Secret Service did not immediately inform the FBI, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service or other agencies about the White House letter when it was discovered. Three of those sources said the delay lasted "weeks," while a fourth recalled a lag of about nine days. Several said the delay was long enough that anyone exposed to the ricin would have begun to show symptoms.

"We did not get involved in any reasonable amount of time," one law enforcement official said. "The whole thing was kept under wraps on a national security basis."

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), whose office was the site of the latest ricin scare, and Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.), recipient of one of the anthrax mailings in 2001, declined to comment. But aides said they were unaware of the incident before yesterday.

Secret Service spokeswoman Ann Roman declined to comment on details of the case or why it was kept secret, citing the ongoing investigation. Roman also declined to say whether workers at the mail facility were tested or underwent decontamination procedures, and said the facility's location was kept secret for security reasons. Officials have previously said that one mail facility used by the White House is located at Bolling Air Force Base. The letter is believed to have been sent from the Chattanooga area as it passed through a mail facility there, a law enforcement source said.

A law enforcement official in the administration, who declined to be identified by name or agency, said the letter was discovered in November at "an offsite mail facility" used by the White House and that it contained "a fine powdery substance" that "tested positive for ricin."

"It was . . . determined that there was no public health risk because of the low potency and granular form of the substance," the official said.

CDC officials said that scientists in the unit that would handle such an investigation do not recall being told about the White House letter. "I don't know of any involvement by the CDC," a spokesman said. It is unclear whether any other agency might have conducted medical tests.

In October, postal workers at a Greenville, S.C., mail facility that serves a regional airport discovered an envelope marked: "caution RICIN POISON Enclosed in sealed container Do not open without proper protection."

Inside the envelope was a metal key chain vial containing white powdered ricin. The envelope also contained a typewritten letter identifying the writer as a fleet owner of a tanker company and protesting regulations mandating more rest hours for truck drivers on the road. No arrests have been made in the case.

The letter writer also claimed to have the ability to make large quantities of ricin and threatened to use the poison if the regulation changes were not dropped. The rules went into effect as scheduled Jan. 4. The envelope in Greenville was addressed to the U.S. Department of Transportation, according to a DOT spokesman.

The CDC conducted environmental assessment and sampling at the Greenville postal facility where the letter was discovered. The agency also interviewed all 36 workers at the facility and initiated a statewide surveillance for the appearance of disease or illness consistent with ricin exposure.

On Monday, authorities announced that a white powdery substance found near a pile of mail in Frist's office had been tentatively identified as ricin, and further tests yesterday confirmed the presence of the poison, which is made from castor beans.

Some Senate aides criticized the Bush administration for not disclosing the White House letter sooner. "This shows that their obsession for secrecy is more powerful than their regard for the safety of their colleagues on Capitol Hill," one Democratic leadership aide said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A8403-2004Feb3.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

February 4, 2004

Pg. 6

Incident Illustrates Lapses In Security Net

By Manny Fernandez and Jonathan Weisman, Washington Post Staff Writers

Mail bound for federal government offices in Washington is shipped daily to New Jersey, where the letters are blasted with electron beams to kill any bacteria that might be lurking inside.

The U.S. Postal Service initiated the time-consuming and costly irradiation procedure after the anthrax attacks of 2001. But the discovery of ricin in a Dirksen Senate Office Building mailroom illustrates how easily another potentially deadly substance can slip through the safety web designed primarily to protect the nation's sprawling mail system from an anthrax attack.

If the ricin had in fact been mailed -- and officials were trying to determine yesterday how it got in an office mailroom of Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) -- the poison escaped the security precautions built around catching anthrax and other bacteria.

Irradiation is designed to kill bacteria and does not neutralize ricin, which is not a bacterium but a lethal poison. The biohazard detection systems that postal officials plan to install in mail-handling facilities in Washington and other cities in May focus on sampling for anthrax, not ricin. And the instruments that sample air and surfaces at the newly reopened postal plant on Brentwood Road NE, which had been shut for fumigation and renovation for two years since the anthrax mailings, do not detect for the poison.

Thomas G. Day, the Postal Service's vice president for engineering, said yesterday that ricin is a threat that the agency takes seriously. The poison was one of many bioterror agents identified last year in a Postal Service threat assessment.

"Ricin has been on the radar screen as both a threat and a vulnerability," Day said.

Day said the problem with ricin is that the more refined it is, the harder it is to detect. The biohazard detection systems, which sample air in the areas where mail is processed, can be modified to allow for additional technologies, which could include sampling for ricin, Day said.

The Postal Service asked the White House to include \$779 million in its 2005 budget request for additional detection equipment to avert bioterrorism, but the request was denied, said postal spokesman Mark Saunders. Instead, the administration asked Congress for no additional money for biohazard-detection equipment. Postal officials said that they now will go to Congress on their own to request the money and that they believe the ricin incident will bolster their case.

Congress has given the Postal Service \$587 million over the past two years to purchase biohazard-detection equipment, decontaminate facilities exposed to anthrax and test building ventilation systems. But the anthrax cleanup has proven so costly that the agency has had little left to spend on detection equipment, said a House Appropriations Committee aide.

In response to the ricin incident, postal officials late Monday night closed the V Street NE postal facility that processes U.S. government mail, including letters bound for the Senate. Postal officials, however, said they had not confirmed that they had handled the item.

U.S. Capitol Police Chief Terrance W. Gainer said the mail handled by Frist's staff had been irradiated, and officials were trying to determine how the powder arrived in the office. "Powder was observed in an area where a letter had been opened," Gainer said. "It has not been associated with a particular envelope as of yet."

Sixty samples were taken from surfaces at the V Street postal facility yesterday morning and sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta for testing, said postal spokeswoman Irene Lericos. She said results most likely would be available today. "We take each and every incident seriously until it's deemed otherwise," Lericos said.

Since the anthrax incidents of 2001, there have been 22,000 false alarms regarding suspicious powder and other materials nationwide that have disrupted postal operations briefly, she said. One postal plant, for example, discovered white powder that later was determined to be coffee creamer sent through the mail.

Many of the 200 workers at the V Street location reported for duty yesterday at the Brentwood Road plant, which began a phased-in reopening in December. The postal plant, which no longer handles government mail, handled two anthrax-tainted letters bound for Capitol Hill in fall 2001. Two of its postal workers died of inhalation anthrax. The V Street closure unsettled many in Washington's postal worker community. "It's like people are sitting ducks," said postal clerk Dena Briscoe, president of Brentwood Exposed, an employee support group formed in the aftermath of the anthrax mailings.

"Even though the stress is being put on Capitol Hill and making sure they're safeguarded, we have gotten no mention of where [the ricin] came through our mail system."

The discovery of ricin follows a similar incident in October. In that case, a vial containing the poison was found inside an envelope at a South Carolina postal facility. Tests showed that none of the toxin escaped. Last month, the FBI offered a reward of as much as \$100,000 for information leading to an arrest.

All D.C.-bound federal government mail, including Senate mail, is shipped to Bridgeport, N.J., for irradiation. The mail is handled at one facility on V Street before it is sent to New Jersey and by a second facility on V Street, the facility that was closed Monday, after it is decontaminated. Irradiated Senate mail is sent to a Capitol Hill mailroom before it is delivered.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A10415-2004Feb3.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The New York Times

Ricin Poses Postal Risk, but Different From Germs

By **ANDREW C. REVKIN**

Published: February 4, 2004

The postal system, including the branches that serve government offices, remains vulnerable to mailings of ricin and other poisons despite efforts to improve security since the anthrax attacks of 2001, government investigators and other experts said yesterday.

Even so, they said that in contrast to the hazards of infectious agents like anthrax, the risk posed by these other substances was more a matter of disruption than of mortal danger.

Many experts consider the public health risk posed by a mailed poison much smaller than that from a mailed germ, particularly the easily lofted spores of anthrax, which can multiply explosively if only a small number lodge in the lung.

For a poison to be deadly, "you'd need to absorb a lot more in quantity than anthrax, so from that standpoint it's less of a hazard," said a government official involved in continuing assessments of postal security.

"But it certainly can still be lethal," the official said, "so this is a concern."

And it can be extraordinarily disruptive, as was shown Monday and yesterday when all mail to government agencies in Washington was stopped and large parts of Congress's operations were shut down.

The postal system is particularly vulnerable to poisons because its main defenses are all aimed at killing or detecting harmful living organisms, like anthrax, which is a bacterium. Irradiation machines, which sterilize all first-class mail bound for Washington government offices, work by disrupting an organism's DNA. They have no effect on poisons, which are simply molecules that happen to have devastating effects on human physiology.

Moreover, though the Postal Service is installing air sampling systems to test for anthrax spores around sorting machines at 280 regional mail hubs, these systems, to be ready starting in March, will not initially be able to test for poisons or other harmful substances.

Bob Anderson, a spokesman for the service, said efforts were under way to expand the list of agents that the systems can monitor. "The systems are expandable," he said. "We've been working ever since 9/11 with federal law enforcement and health agencies to identify possible agents that might be used in the future."

Still, a government official directly involved in postal security assessments said additional screening was months away, at the least.

The list of agents to be newly screened may end up being a long one, because ricin is only one of many poisons worrying terrorism experts. Others are solanine, which is extracted from potatoes that have remained green as they grow, and nicotine, the tobacco ingredient, which, federal health officials say, can be lethal in a dose of about 40 to 60 milligrams.

Terrorism experts said mailings of such substances were the least of their concerns, however, given the larger threat they pose to targets like the food supply.

"For a terrorist to send a substance like ricin in the mail is such an ineffective way to use it," said Dr. Greg Evans, director of the Center for the Study of Bioterrorism and Emerging Infections at St. Louis University.

"This doesn't sound like a well-planned way to get around the protections that have been put in place," Dr. Evans said of the new episode on Capitol Hill. "It sounds more like some person or group trying to cause panic and turmoil."

That was apparently the motive the last time ricin showed up in the postal system: in October, a small container with labels urging careful handling was discovered at a mail center in Greenville, S.C.

When ricin, nicotine, solanine and other poisons have come up in the context of terrorism, it has almost always been with respect to the food supply. Last fall the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Food and Drug Administration separately issued statements about rising threats of terrorism through use of poisons, and the warnings from both agencies focused on preventing food or water contamination.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/04/national/04MAIL.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Los Angeles Times

February 4, 2004

It's Lethal, Easy To Make, But Impractical For Terror

Ricin won't reproduce, and the illness can't be passed on, making mass deaths unlikely.

By Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — Ricin is one of the deadliest poisons and among the easiest to manufacture, but the toxin has generally been used as an instrument of murder and intrigue rather than as a weapon of war and terrorism, experts say.

The reasons are practical: Contaminating masses of people with ricin could be difficult. It does not reproduce, like bacteria, and the illness it causes cannot be passed from a victim to another person. In addition, symptoms take hours to develop, making ricin useless for inflicting quick death.

"It didn't make a good mass-casualty weapon," said David R. Franz, former commander of the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Ft. Detrick, Md., which conducts biodefense research.

"It's been used in what are considered crimes, not terrorist offenses," he said.

Last fall, someone claiming to be a disgruntled trucker tried to mail a container of ricin to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Last year, police in London raided a suspected ricin lab run by a group linked to Al Qaeda. And police in Paris found traces of ricin in a train station locker linked to a militant Islamist group.

Ricin is produced from the castor bean plant, an ornamental woody herb prized by gardeners. The plant is legal to grow, and the oil from castor beans has been used for years in such diverse products as laxatives for humans and lubricants for high-performance engines.

"The seeds are kind of pretty, and people make necklaces from them," said Dan L. Brown, a nutritional toxicologist at Cornell University. "But it's about as poisonous as you can get."

The ricin toxin is extracted from crushed castor beans, or from the waste "mash" left over after producing castor oil. Making the poison is simple enough — instructions are on the Internet — that an amateur chemist can follow the process.

Toxicologists classify ricin as a cell toxin. Breathed in, swallowed or injected, ricin kills human cells by shutting down their ability to produce proteins, which they need to function. For example, people who inhale ricin develop difficulty breathing within a few hours. Their condition can deteriorate into respiratory failure and death within three days.

"Everything starts to shut down," said Marilyn Etzler, a UC Davis biochemist who has performed experiments with ricin. "It is a very dangerous thing to work with."

Depending on the concentration of the dose and the method of ingestion, a small amount of ricin can kill an adult. A pinhead-sized dose is sufficient if injected, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Greater amounts are needed to kill by inhalation or ingestion.

There is no antidote for ricin poisoning, but the symptoms are treatable.

Adults who ingest a small amount of ricin by chewing a few castor bean seeds often survive.

Ricin has been used in experimental cancer treatments with mixed results, but otherwise has no medicinal purpose.

The most notorious case involving ricin poisoning was in 1978. Georgi Markov, a Bulgarian dissident working in London, was stabbed in the leg by an unknown assailant wielding what appeared to be an umbrella. Markov died a few days later after developing symptoms of ricin poisoning. No one has been arrested, but authorities suspect agents of former Communist bloc countries.

In the United States, antigovernment groups have experimented with the poison.

In 1995, four members of a Minnesota tax protest group were convicted in a plot to kill a federal marshal. They were going to apply ricin to the door handles of the marshal's vehicle.

In 1993, Canadian authorities confiscated a container of ricin from Thomas Lavy, an American white supremacist who was trying to enter Canada from Alaska. The Canadians allowed Lavy to go free, but he was arrested by the FBI two years later. Agents discovered castor beans in his Arkansas cabin. Lavy committed suicide in jail. Last month, the FBI offered a \$100,000 reward for information in a ricin case involving the Department of Transportation. A letter writer identified only as "Fallen Angel," who claimed to be a trucking company owner, sent the department a threatening letter calling for the repeal of new rules that limit truckers' hours at the wheel. A metal vial containing ricin was included with the letter, which was intercepted Oct. 15 by postal workers in Greenville, S.C.

"I have easy access to castor pulp," the writer warned. "If my demand is dismissed, I'm capable of making ricin." If the rules remain unchanged, he added, "I will start dumping." No link has been established between that case and the Senate incident.

The investigation of the cases involving the Senate and the White House may be more difficult.

More than two years after letters containing deadly anthrax spores coursed through the nation's mail system, that case remains unsolved. Five people were killed; a public shaken by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks was traumatized. One of the letters, which were mailed to legislators and news media outlets, went to the office of Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), then Senate majority leader.

For much of 2002 and 2003, the government appeared to be zeroing in on a virologist who had worked at an Army lab. The researcher, Steven J. Hatfill, was described by U.S. Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft as a "person of interest" in the case. Hatfill has sued the government, asserting his innocence and charging that he is being made into a scapegoat. The anthrax investigation remains "intensely active," said FBI spokeswoman Debra Weierman, with 28 FBI agents and a dozen postal inspectors working on the case full time.

Times staff writer Richard B. Schmitt contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-primer4feb04,1,6513672.story?coll=la-headlines-nation>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
February 4, 2004

Ricin, Made From Common Castor Beans, Can Be Lethal But Has Drawbacks As A Weapon

By Donald G. McNeil Jr.

While ricin is one of the deadliest known poisons, and can be made from common castor beans, it has been used only rarely as a murder or terror weapon.

It is normally just a white protein powder, and its plain appearance has led to false alarms in detecting it.

A speck of pure ricin the size of a grain of salt is enough to kill if it is injected or swallowed, said Dr. Michael P. Allswede, a toxicologist at the Center for Biosecurity at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. But about 10 times that much would be needed if it is inhaled, so sending it through the mail is not as deadly as mailing anthrax, for example.

Even high-quality homemade ricin, if that is what was found in a Senate mailroom on Monday, is only about one-third pure, so a lethal dose would mean inhaling or swallowing at least three times as much as a pure dose.

None of the dozens of Capitol police and Senate staff members who were decontaminated by showering and throwing away their clothes yesterday showed signs of poisoning.

The toxin in castor beans is in the pulp left after the oil is squeezed out. The oil has long been used as a laxative and in paints and lubricants. The beans grow wild in the United States and are farmed in many countries.

There is no antidote for ricin poisoning. Doctors can offer only secondary support like fluids, oxygen and blood pressure drugs.

Ricin (pronounced RICE-in) can cause severe swelling and fluid in the lungs or bleeding in the stomach and intestines, and it destroys the liver and kidneys. A survivor of ricin poisoning would probably have permanent organ damage.

It is not a good battlefield weapon because, unlike hardy anthrax spores, its long, linked proteins break apart in dry, sunny conditions. Unlike nerve gases, it is not easily absorbed through the skin.

"It's best used as an assassination weapon or a food contaminant," Dr. Allswede said. "It needs to be targeted at an individual."

Last April, French officials were embarrassed when sophisticated tests revealed that a small bottle of powder found in a locker at the Gare de Lyon actually contained ground wheat germ and barley.

Initial tests in March identified it as ricin, which has similar proteins, and officials had boasted that they had probably thwarted a terrorist attack.

It was found during random locker searches when Paris was on a state of high alert because of the Iraq war. Three months earlier, a small amount of ricin had been found in a London apartment used by six North Africans who were arrested because of information gleaned by French police after the arrests of terror suspects in the Paris suburbs.

The most famous ricin murder was that of the Bulgarian dissident, Georgi I. Markov, who was killed in 1978 at a London bus stop by the Bulgarian secret service, apparently to silence his broadcasts on the British Broadcasting Corporation. A platinum pellet injected into Mr. Markov's leg with a spring-loaded umbrella contained a dose of ricin that killed him after three days of intense fever and vomiting.

In the 1990's, American white supremacist groups tried to kill police officers and tax officials by coating doorknobs and steering wheels with homemade ricin, hoping it would be ingested.

The poison has also been used in extortion attempts. Last October, an envelope containing ricin inside a sealed metal container was left at an airport postal building near Greenville, S.C. Accompanying it was a typed letter to the Department of Transportation that was signed "Fallen Angel." The writer claimed to be the owner of a truck fleet and demanded that a change in federal regulations to give drivers 10 hours of sleep between shifts instead of 8 be canceled. On Jan. 8, the Federal Bureau of Investigation offered a \$100,000 reward for the arrest of the author.

It is still very easy to find crude amateur recipes for turning castor beans into ricin. They have been printed in books on unconventional weapons like "Silent Death" and "The Poisoner's Handbook," and intelligence agencies have said that translations of those recipes have been found in Al Qaeda hideouts.

A five-minute Internet search yesterday produced a kitchen recipe using lye and acetone, which did contain a warning that making it at home could be fatal.

As recently as last year, a 1962 Army patent for making weapons-grade ricin was available on a public computer at the United States Patent Office. That Web page has been closed, but the military's recipe is still available elsewhere on the Internet.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/04/national/04RICI.html?pagewanted=all>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

February 4, 2004

Notable Events Involving Ricin

Jan. 6, 2004: Six residents of Lyon, France, are arrested in connection with alleged 2002 plot to attack Russian targets in France with ricin and botulism bacteria, connected to December 2002 arrest of returned Chechnya fighter Menad Benchellali.

Oct. 15, 2003: Postal worker in Greenville, S.C., postal distribution center discovers a package containing ricin and note threatening to use "large quantities" of the poison if federal officials did not repeal new trucking regulations. Note was signed "Fallen Angel."

Nov. 2003: U.S. Secret Service intercepted a letter to the White House with vial of ricin enclosed. The letter contained complaints about trucking regulations and was signed "Fallen Angel."

Feb. 5, 2003: At the United Nations, Secretary of State Colin Powell warns of a terrorist network camp in Iraq where ricin production was allegedly taught.

Jan. 5, 2003: Material seized during a raid of a north London apartment later tests positive for traces of ricin. Six men of North African origin are arrested.

June 19, 2002: Kenneth R. Olsen is arrested in Spokane Valley, Wash., for manufacturing ricin in his home. Ricin is found in his cubicle at work. He is convicted in July 2003 of possessing a chemical weapon and possessing a biological weapon and sentenced to 14 years in prison.

Nov. 16, 2001: Times of London reports that it found instructions for making ricin in an al Qaeda safehouse in Kabul.

1998: Neurologist Ray W. Mettetal Jr. of Harrisonburg, Va., is convicted of possessing ricin in 1995 to use as a weapon against his former boss in Nashville, Tenn. He serves more than four years in prison but later the conviction was overturned on appeal. A second trial results in a conviction in October 2001 but was again overturned on appeal in 2002.

November 1996: Ricin found in home of Thomas Leahy of Janesville, Wis., after his arrest for shooting his stepson. In 1998, he was sentenced to 12 years and seven months but an appeals court reduced the sentence.

1995: Kansas physician Debora Green tried to kill her husband with ricin and set a fire that killed two of her children. She was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

1994: Members of the Minnesota Patriots Council, "an extremist group with anti-government and anti-tax ideals that advocated the overthrow of the U.S.," were arrested in a right-wing plot to kill a federal marshal with ricin. In 1995, four men were convicted and received "relatively minor" prison terms.

1993: Thomas Lewis Lavy tries to enter Canada from Alaska with 130 grams of ricin. Canadian officials confiscate the powder but release him. In 1995, after the Oklahoma city bombing, he is arrested by the FBI in a raid in Arkansas and is charged with possessing ricin. He hangs himself in his cell.

Sept. 7, 1978: Bulgarian defector Georgi Markov is attacked in London. A ricin pellet is injected into his thigh by his attacker. He dies four days later.

-Compiled by Margot Williams

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/metro/daily/graphics/ricin_timeline_020404.html

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer

February 4, 2004

Bush Orders A Plan To Protect Food Supply From Terror Attack

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON - President Bush is ordering three cabinet departments and the Environmental Protection Agency to develop new procedures to protect the nation's food supply from terror attack.

An executive order released yesterday involved the Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security Departments, as well as the EPA, in the response to potentially calamitous agricultural terrorism.

The directive calls for creation of systems to contain any outbreaks of plant or animal disease that result from terror attack, and to prevent or cure the diseases themselves.

Bush ordered the agencies to plan ways to stabilize the food supply and the economy and to help the nation recover after an attack. He ordered the agencies to help agribusinesses develop plans to protect themselves.

Under the executive order, signed Friday, the three departments and the EPA, working with the CIA and other government agencies, would look for weak spots in the agriculture and food sectors and develop ways to repair them. This would include heightened screening of foods entering the country.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/7867884.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

February 4, 2004

Pakistani Finger-Pointing And Denials Spread In The Furor Over Nuclear Transfers Abroad

By David Rohde

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, Feb. 3 — The debate over who bears responsibility for the transfer of Pakistan's nuclear technology to other countries intensified Tuesday, with surrogates for the country's leading nuclear scientist and President Pervez Musharraf denying charges of impropriety.

The scientist, Abdul Qadeer Khan, the founder of Pakistan's nuclear program, denied telling a government inquiry that he had given nuclear technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya without government permission, a leading politician said Tuesday.

At the same time, Pakistani media accounts, citing both a senior investigator and a friend of the scientist, asserted that Dr. Khan had told investigators that General Musharraf had known that the nuclear technology was going to North Korea.

Government officials vehemently denied that the general had known about or approved of any transfer of technology to North Korea or any other country. "That's not true," said a senior official who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Of course not. Of course not."

In a series of disclosures in the past two weeks, Pakistani government and intelligence officials, speaking anonymously, have issued to the media various accounts assailing Dr. Khan as a corrupt rogue scientist who used German, Dutch and Sri Lankan middlemen to sell or share nuclear technology with Iran, North Korea and Libya from 1989 to 2000.

Dr. Khan and his allies, including secular and Islamist political parties, have responded with allegations that the country's powerful army approved of the transfers. Their latest statement, first reported in The Washington Post on Tuesday, included the assertion, reputedly from Dr. Khan, that General Musharraf knew of nuclear transfers to North Korea.

The Post also reported that a senior investigator and a friend of Dr. Khan said the scientist had told investigators that Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg, the army chief from 1988 to 1991, had known that Dr. Khan was assisting the Pakistani nuclear transfers. The account said the scientist had also told investigators that General Musharraf and Gen. Jehangir Karamat, the army chief from 1996 to 1998, had known of and approved the barter of nuclear technology for North Korean ballistic missile technology.

In interviews, General Beg has repeatedly denied ever approving nuclear transfers to Iran. General Karamat declined Tuesday to comment on the report. In an interview in November, he said no transfers had occurred.

American officials have said they believe that Pakistani nuclear technology has been transferred to Iran, Libya and North Korea. They have said Pakistani technology arrived in North Korea as late as mid-2002, and in Libya as late as last fall.

General Musharraf seized power in a bloodless coup in 1999, meaning that the reported transfers occurred at least four years into his rule. Pakistani officials have dismissed the American accounts of recent transfers and said tight controls the general placed on the nuclear program in early 2002 halted Dr. Khan's transfers.

Any revelation that General Musharraf supported transfers would put both American and Pakistani officials in a politically awkward and dangerous position. Since he reversed Pakistan's support for the Taliban after the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the general has been hailed by the Bush administration as a firm ally in the campaign against terrorism.

But critics in Congress have said the general is not doing enough to crack down on militancy in Pakistan and restore full democracy in the country. Links to nuclear transfers could only intensify that criticism.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/04/international/asia/04STAN.html?pagewanted=all>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

BBC News

Thursday, 5 February, 2004, 19:00 GMT

1918 killer flu secrets revealed

Scientists have worked out how the virus which caused the world's worst flu epidemic infected man.

They believe the virus, which claimed the lives of 50m people around the world, jumped from birds to humans.

The breakthrough, published in Science, should help doctors identify which future bird viruses pose a threat to man at an earlier stage.

But the National Institute for Medical Research team warns viruses cannot be stopped from crossing between species.

They also say their work is unlikely to aid the current fight against avian flu in the Far East as knowing the structure of a virus is not enough to block its progress.

The key first stage of infection is for the flu virus to attach itself to the cells in which it will breed.

It does this by using spike-like molecules called Hemagglutinins (HA) that bind to particular receptors on the surface of cells in the body.

Human and bird virus HAs interact with different cell receptors and therefore bird viruses do not usually infect humans.

However, the NIMR team has studied the HA of the 1918 virus in close detail, and found that only minor changes in its structure were required for it to start to bind with human cells as well as bird cells.

This gave it the ability to pass from birds to humans, and then between humans - with devastating results.

3D structure

The researchers examined samples of the 1918 virus using a technique called X-ray crystallography. This enabled them to determine the three-dimensional structure of its HA.

It seems part of the reason that the 1918 virus wreaked such devastation was because the changes required to pose a threat to humans were so small - smaller than those which made similar species-jumping viruses deadly in 1957 and 1968.

Lead researcher Sir John Skehel said the findings would enable scientists to track and monitor the changes in flu viruses.

However, scientists would not be able to predict the form future versions of the virus would take or prevent their formation, he said.

Sir John told BBC News Online: "This research should help improve surveillance.

"If we find that the structure of a bird virus resembles that of the structure of the 1918 virus that we have determined, then we will know that it potentially poses a threat to man, and it will have to be kept under more active surveillance than usual.

"However, our research will not have an immediate impact on the situation currently unfolding in the Far East with the chicken flu known as H5, since, from our previous work, we know that the 1918 and the H5 Hemagglutinins are quite different."

Huge death toll

The 1918 "Spanish" flu pandemic is estimated to have infected up to one billion people - half the world's population at the time.

The virus killed more people than any other single outbreak of disease, surpassing even the Black Death of the Middle Ages.

Although it probably originated in the Far East, it was dubbed "Spanish" flu because the press in Spain - not being involved in the Great War - were the first to report extensively on its impact.

The virus caused three waves of disease. The second of these, between September and December 1918, resulting in the heaviest loss of life.

It is thought that the virus may have played a role in ending the Great War as soldiers were too sick to fight, and by that stage more men on both sides died of flu than were killed by weapons.

Although most people who were infected with the virus recovered within a week following bed rest, some died within 24 hours of infection.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/3455873.stm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Times

February 5, 2004

Pg. 1

Rumsfeld Says Iraq Likely Had Arms

Disagrees with Kay, says search isn't over, backs prewar decisions

By Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times

Standing his ground, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told Congress yesterday that it is "not likely" Iraq lacked weapons of mass destruction when war broke out in March, putting him at odds with the recently resigned CIA weapons inspector.

Mr. Rumsfeld refused to back down from his prewar statements that Saddam Hussein owned chemical and biological weapons. He said weapons still might be found, despite former inspector David Kay's assessment last week that they will not.

"Think, it took us 10 months to find Saddam Hussein," Mr. Rumsfeld told the Senate Armed Services Committee. "The reality is that the hole he was found hiding in was large enough to hold enough biological weapons to kill thousands of human beings."

And he said the decision to go to war based on Saddam's suspected arsenal reflected intelligence endorsed by both the Clinton and the Bush administrations in the past 10 years.

"I came to my conclusions based on the intelligence we all saw, just as each of you made your judgments and cast your votes based on the same information," he testified.

He said his prewar statements reflected an intelligence community consensus, not an unanimous opinion of every spy analyst.

Delivering the Bush administration's first counterattack after days of Democratic charges, the defense secretary also rejected claims that Bush officials somehow pressured the intelligence community.

"You've twice or thrice mentioned manipulation," a combative Mr. Rumsfeld said during a chilly exchange with Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, Massachusetts Democrat. "I haven't heard of it. I haven't seen any of it, except in the comments you've made."

After Sen. Carl Levin, Michigan Democrat, read portions of a prewar Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report that said there was no conclusive proof that Saddam owned large stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), Mr. Rumsfeld found a passage in the same report that he said Democrats have ignored.

It said, "Although we lack any direct information, Iraq probably possesses chemical — CW agent in chemical munitions, possibly including artillery rockets, artillery shells, aerial bombs, ballistic missile warheads. Baghdad also probably possesses bulk chemical stockpiles, primarily containing precursors, but that also could consist of some mustard agent and stabilized VX."

The administration will continue a counteroffensive today with a scheduled speech at Georgetown University by the man at the center of the storm — CIA Director George J. Tenet. Mr. Tenet is expected to vigorously defend his agency's Iraq assessment and, like Mr. Rumsfeld, argue that the search for WMD is not over.

Mr. Rumsfeld was testifying in a doubleheader budget hearing, first before the Senate Armed Services Committee and then before its House counterpart.

Last week, Mr. Kay, resigned CIA weapons inspector, said eight months of on-the-ground surveys in Iraq had led him to believe that Saddam had not possessed WMD since the 1990s. His report touched off a barrage of charges from Democratic lawmakers and presidential candidates that President Bush took the country to war on a false pretense.

But Mr. Rumsfeld rebutted those charges.

"First is the theory that WMD may not have existed at the start of the war," the secretary said. "I suppose that's possible but not likely."

Mr. Kay helped the administration on some points, telling the Senate Armed Services Committee last week that no intelligence analyst with whom he spoke was pressured by the White House. And Mr. Kay, a former United Nations inspector in Iraq, said before the war, he thought that Saddam owned unconventional weapons. He added that Baghdad still had programs in place to resume making germ and chemical weapons once U.N. sanctions ended.

Work by the Pentagon's Iraq Survey Group (ISG) are continuing under a new chief CIA inspector, Charles Dueltel.

"The ISG's work is some distance from completion," Mr. Rumsfeld said.

The secretary gave little ground when grilled by Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Levin.

"I'm sure I never saw that piece of intelligence," Mr. Rumsfeld replied when Mr. Levin read him sentences from the DIA report.

Mr. Kennedy pounded on Mr. Rumsfeld for saying that during the war "we know" where WMD will be found. Mr. Rumsfeld said he was referring to suspected sites north of Baghdad.

"You're quite right; shorthand, 'We know where they are,' probably turned out not to be exactly what one would have preferred in retrospect," Mr. Rumsfeld said of remarks made during a wartime press conference.

He then reminded the Democrats that they issued the same conclusive statements about Iraq's weapons during the Clinton administration.

"I'm not going to go back and quote the comments from the previous administration and President Clinton and Vice President [Al] Gore and Secretary [William] Cohen and all of that the way you have," he said. "I can just say that the stream of intelligence over a period of a long time in both administrations led the same people in similar jobs to the same conclusions."

In 1998, Mr. Levin and other top Senate Democrats signed a letter to Mr. Clinton that said, in part, "We urge you, after consulting with Congress, and consistent with the U.S. Constitution and laws, to take necessary actions (including, if appropriate, air and missile strikes on suspect Iraq sites) to respond effectively to the threat posed by Iraq's refusal to end its weapons of mass destruction programs."

Democrats also signing were Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, the current presidential front-runner, and Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota.

Sen. Pat Roberts, Kansas Republican and Senate Intelligence Committee chairman, said his staff has interviewed scores of intelligence employees. None has told of any White House pressure to rig the estimate that Saddam owned WMD. In fact, Mr. Roberts said the intelligence remained consistent under Presidents Clinton and Bush.

"We have found a large and consistent body of analysis ... over 10 years in regards to Saddam Hussein in reference to his WMD capability," the senator said. "This intelligence was used ... by the executive by President Clinton, by President Bush and also by those of us in Congress."

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20040205-120749-4565r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

February 5, 2004

Pg. 16

Alleged Nuclear Offer To Iraq Is Revisited

Memos Indicate Attempt to Sell Pakistani Bomb Plans, Equipment on Eve of '91 War

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

The confession yesterday by scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan that he provided Pakistan's nuclear secrets to other countries has rekindled interest in one of Khan's alleged ventures: an attempt to sell designs for a nuclear bomb to Iraq on the eve of the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Reports of the alleged attempted deal have circulated since the late 1990s, when U.N. weapons inspectors discovered Iraqi documents describing a business proposition from a man claiming to represent Khan. The proposal allegedly offered nuclear weapons blueprints and uranium enrichment equipment for an upfront price of \$5 million. The Pakistani government and Khan have long denied any knowledge of the deal. But recent disclosures of Khan's assistance to other countries give the Iraqi documents new credibility, according to a report released yesterday by a nuclear research group in Washington that has studied the matter.

"These documents provide additional indicators that Pakistani scientists may have offered a range of countries both uranium enrichment and nuclear weapons designs," says the report by the Institute for Science and International Security.

Khan's alleged offer was described in an October 1990 memo by Iraq's intelligence service, the Mukhabarat. According to a U.N. translation of the document obtained by the institute, a man identified as Malik relayed an offer from Khan to help Iraq in making enriched uranium and nuclear weapons. "He is prepared to give us project designs for a nuclear bomb," the Iraqi memo states, referring to Khan.

The Iraqis were initially suspicious, thinking the offer was a scam, said David Albright, president of the institute and co-author of the report with Corey Hinderstein. Still, Iraqi officials decided to seek samples from the middleman, the documents show. No such samples were delivered, the institute's report says, and three months later the outbreak of war essentially ended Iraq's nuclear program.

The Iraqi documents -- combined with the recent discovery of weapons designs in Libya -- raise new concerns about whether Khan's other clients also received bomb plans. "The big question is whether bomb designs were also sold to Iran," Albright said.

Iran has denied having the designs for building a nuclear bomb or the intention to do so.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A14070-2004Feb4.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer

February 5, 2004

Foreign Source Seen As Unlikely In Ricin Mailings

By Seth Borenstein and Sumana Chatterjee, Inquirer Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - The ricin sent to top government agencies - including the White House - is probably coming from inside the United States and from a homegrown criminal rather than foreign terrorists, investigators and outside experts believe.

"It does not bear the mark of an international terrorist attack," an official at the Department of Homeland Security said yesterday, speaking on the condition of anonymity. "This is a criminal issue. It is not a weapon of mass destruction."

The investigation has broadened beyond Washington to Chattanooga, Tenn. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R., Tenn.) said late yesterday that tests were being conducted at a postal facility there for the presence of the poison. He declined to elaborate.

Two ricin-tainted letters sent last fall were signed by "Fallen Angel," who described himself as a business owner who had a gripe against a Department of Transportation rule that increased the amount of sleep required for truckers. Now investigators are trying to see if the ricin found Monday in Frist's mail room is somehow connected to those letters.

Hampering the investigation is that no letter or package that contained the powdery ricin in the mail room has been found. Officials said they did not know how the toxin arrived in the mail room. An intern noticed it on a letter-opening machine Monday and alerted police.

Officials said none of the several dozen workers who were potentially exposed seemed ill yesterday.

Three Senate office buildings were shut, but senators and their staffs will be allowed to return today to the Russell building. The Hart building will open tomorrow. The Dirksen building, where the ricin was found, will reopen Monday.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan acknowledged yesterday that a ricin-laced letter was sent to the White House but was intercepted in an off-site mail facility in November.

"The letter was deemed by public-health officials not to be a public-health threat," he said, so its existence was kept a secret to aid investigators.

The first Fallen Angel letter - with no mail address and no postmark - was intended for the Department of Transportation and was found in a Greenville, S.C., post office Oct. 15. The author threatened to start "dumping" the poison if the trucking rule, which went into effect Jan. 4, was not stopped.

Ricin, a highly toxic substance that causes cell and organ failure, is made from easy-to-find castor beans, but experts say that, unlike anthrax, it cannot cause mass casualties.

"It's not a big threat. It's the equivalent of mailing rat poison to somebody," said Randall Larsen, founder of Homeland Security Associates, a consulting firm in Alexandria, Va. "This fits in the category of kook rather than terrorist."

The FBI is the lead agency investigating all three ricin incidents.

Federal officials gave somewhat conflicting accounts of the ricin-tainted letter sent to the White House in November, which was first revealed late Tuesday.

Secret Service spokeswoman Ann Roman said the letter was received by the White House mail-sorting office Nov. 6, opened and tested because of its contents. Initial tests showed no ricin. But the postal mail-sorting machinery tested positive the next day. Federal authorities were notified Nov. 12, she said.

The ricin was confirmed locally Nov. 13, and on Nov. 14 samples were sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and also confirmed, Roman said. She said the CDC also found it was of low potency and of no risk to public health.

CDC spokesman Tom Skinner said, however, that the CDC tested only for the presence of ricin, not potency, and determined there was no health threat.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/7877254.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Washington Times

February 5, 2004

NATO plans special brigade to fight terror risks

By Bruce I. Konviser

PRAGUE — NATO is creating a special rapid-reaction brigade in response to fears that its military units as well as civilians could be attacked by terrorists with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

At least 13 member nations, including the United States, have enrolled in the battalion, which is expected to be operational this summer.

"The battalion can be deployed individually or together with other units," said Petr Pavel, the Czech Republic's deputy commander of joint forces.

"Possible operational scenarios include threat or real use of [weapons of mass destruction] against military or civil objectives, industry accidents of great scale, outflows of dangerous materials caused by natural catastrophes, etcetera," he said.

The Czech army, renowned for expertise in weapons of mass destruction, is to take the lead in training the battalion. The U.S. military will be committing a biology lab, a team that will collect air and ground samples, and a decontamination team that will be able to cleanse people, rooms and vehicles, Czech officials said.

The unit, known as the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense Battalion (CBRN), was formed in December.

The battalion will be able to rapidly deploy mobile analysis labs that can work in contaminated areas, operate a specialized infection hospital that would carry stocks of vaccines against biological weapons for deployed forces, do reconnaissance and risk assessments, and perform light and heavy decontamination of people and vehicles.

It will enable other NATO troops to carry out missions that otherwise would be threatened by a nuclear, biological or chemical attack.

The battalion will operate both independently and as part of the new NATO Response Force, a rapid deployment force of up to 21,000 troops, which began training in October but won't be fully operational for three years.

Once a nation's CBRN troops have gone through the training, they will be on call from their home country, on a rotational basis, by NATO command for quick deployment abroad.

They also will be able to aid their civilian emergency crews in case of a terrorist attack at home, said Robert Pszczel, a NATO spokesman in Belgium.

Military units may aid civilian populations in the event of a terrorist attack, but ultimately it's the local authorities and police, fire and ambulance services that will be on the front lines of such an attack, said Gerald Epstein, a homeland security analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"New York City is as prepared as anyone is to handle an attack with weapons of mass destruction," Mr. Epstein said, "but many other cities are considerably further behind."

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/world/20040204-100140-3022r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Tenet Defends CIA's Analysis Of Iraq as Objective, if Flawed

By Dana Priest and Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writers

CIA Director George J. Tenet argued forcefully yesterday that, months before the war in Iraq, intelligence agencies gave policymakers objective, apolitical judgments on Iraqi weapons, including caveats and details of where analysts disagreed in their assessments.

Defending the agency for the first time since his own weapons expert said prewar intelligence on Iraq was "all wrong," Tenet acknowledged that the CIA made misjudgments but said the agency worked hard to provide a careful and nuanced assessment regarding weapons of mass destruction.

"Let me be clear: Analysts differed on several important aspects of these programs, and those debates were spelled out in the estimate," he said. "They never said there was an imminent threat."

In a speech at Georgetown University, Tenet defended his analysts as "dedicated, courageous professionals." But he also revealed that the postwar work of U.S. weapons experts in Iraq has cast doubt on numerous judgments made by the CIA in a classified October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) that was circulated to Bush administration policymakers.

Some of those judgments -- involving the status of Iraq's nuclear program, mobile biological weapons labs and unmanned aerial vehicles for the dispersal of biological weapons -- were portrayed as evidence by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell during his presentation to the United Nations one year ago.

Tenet did not directly address the question of whether top administration officials went beyond the CIA's assessments as they built a public case for going to war with Iraq, as many Democrats have charged.

Tenet said recent assertions by his former chief weapons hunter, David Kay, that U.S. intelligence had also missed proliferation programs in Libya and Iran were "misstatements." White House officials in recent days have echoed Kay's concerns, and President Bush has said he will appoint an independent commission to look at the broader issue of proliferation intelligence, not just whether the CIA erred on Iraq.

"I welcome the president's commission looking into proliferation," Tenet said. "We have a record and story to tell."

To rebut the charge that the agency missed proliferation activities, Tenet disclosed a series of previously secret operations to penetrate and disrupt clandestine weapons-smuggling rings involving the father of Pakistan's nuclear program, Abdul Qadeer Khan, as well as clandestine nuclear programs in Libya and Iran. [Story, Page A18.]

Tenet also revealed for the first time that reports by two informants working for foreign intelligence services weighed heavily in his thinking as he assessed the gravity of Iraq's weapons threat. The information came to Tenet while his team was putting together the NIE in the fall of 2002 and continued into 2003 as the buildup to war began. A senior intelligence official said that the two sources Tenet mentioned worked for different countries, and that U.S. officials independently validated what one of them said. The official declined to name the countries but, when asked, confirmed that neither was Israel. Tenet said the foreign services had determined the informants to be "established and reliable."

Tenet said the first source, who had direct access to Saddam Hussein and his inner circle, told of how Iraq "was aggressively and covertly developing" a nuclear weapon, and that Hussein's Nuclear Weapons Committee had assured the Iraqi leader that once the country obtained fissile material, "a bomb could be ready in just 18 to 24 months."

The same person said that Iraq was stockpiling chemical weapons, and that equipment used to produce insecticides under the U.N. oil-for-food program had been diverted to covert production of chemical weapons.

The second person, Tenet said, told his handlers that Iraq was producing chemical and biological weapons, and that prohibited chemicals were being manufactured at dual-use facilities, meaning factories normally used for industry.

"Now, did this information make a difference in my thinking? You bet it did," Tenet declared. "Could I have ignored or dismissed such reports at the time? Absolutely not."

Much of Tenet's speech yesterday was a progress report, a "provisional bottom line," that juxtaposed prewar judgments with the facts found so far in Iraq. He said final judgments must wait until the Iraq Survey Group finishes its work.

Tenet said there remains a solid consensus about Hussein's intent to acquire weapons of mass destruction and missiles or other delivery systems capable of striking his neighbors and the United States, and a consensus about his efforts to conceal these programs from U.N. inspectors.

But overall, Tenet's speech indicated there is less consensus on some key issues that led analysts to believe Iraq possessed chemical and biological weapons, had reconstituted its nuclear program and had the means of firing those weapons at its enemies.

Tenet noted the CIA's October 2002 NIE report estimated that Hussein could have a nuclear weapon within a year if he could immediately obtain weapons-grade materials, plutonium or enriched uranium. If he had to produce the material himself, it would take him until 2007 to 2009, the report said, although U.S. analysts disagreed whether Iraq had reconstituted its nuclear program after U.N. inspectors destroyed equipment in 1991. Kay reported in October that he believed the Iraq nuclear program was only rudimentary.

Yesterday, Tenet said that "we may have overestimated the progress Saddam was making" on nuclear weapons, although he maintained that Hussein wanted them and "intended to reconstitute a nuclear program at some point."

Tenet also addressed the question of Iraq's biological weapons. The CIA's October 2002 estimate said there was "active" work going on to create biological weapons and described them as "larger and more advanced than they were before the Gulf war." It also said there was "high confidence" that Iraq had such weapons.

Tenet repeated Kay's findings from October that there were unexplained laboratories and safe houses maintained by Iraq's intelligence service, which he said had equipment for chemical and biological research. He said such facilities and talent could allow Iraq to resume production.

But, he said, "we have yet to find that it actually did so, nor have we found weapons."

The CIA's 2002 NIE said Iraq possessed mobile labs capable of producing "an amount of [biological weapons] agent equal to the total that Iraq produced in the years prior to the Gulf War." Discussing the three trailers that have been found since the end of fighting, Tenet said yesterday: "There is no consensus within our community over whether the trailers were for that use or if they were used for the production of hydrogen."

Tenet also touched on the issue of chemical weapons. In 2002, the CIA report judged Iraq's chemical weapons capability to be weaker than it was in the early 1990s but said Hussein "has begun renewed production of mustard, sarin, GF [cyclosarin] and VX." It also said Iraq "probably has stocked at least 100 metric tons and possibly as much as 500 metric tons of CW [chemical weapons] agents -- much of it added in the last year."

Tenet yesterday admitted that there was "high confidence" before the war that Iraq had these stocks but that investigation has yet to turn up physical evidence of chemical production. Kay has reported that the program was stopped in the 1990s.

Here, Tenet said his "provisional bottom line" assessment is that Hussein "had the intent and the capability to quickly convert civilian industry to chemical weapons production."

Tenet's speech did not quell criticism from Democrats that the administration's prewar statements on Iraq were exaggerations that went beyond conclusions drawn by the CIA. Yesterday, Senate Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.) insisted that Bush's soon-to-be-named commission look at "how was this intelligence used or perhaps abused."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17286-2004Feb5.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

February 6, 2004

Pg. 1

Nuclear Expert Receives Pardon From Musharraf

By David Rohde

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, Feb. 5 — Pakistan's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, granted a full pardon on Thursday to Abdul Qadeer Khan, the founder of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, a day after Dr. Khan appeared on television and confessed to sharing nuclear technology with Iran, North Korea and Libya.

As a result, Dr. Khan, 67, will not face prison, a fine or any other punishment.

In a 90-minute news conference at army headquarters here, General Musharraf said Pakistan would not hand over all documents from its investigation to international nuclear inspectors. He said it would not order an independent investigation into the Pakistani Army's role in the proliferation, calling the idea "rubbish." And he said he would never allow United Nations supervision of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

"Negative to all three," General Musharraf said, raising his voice. "It is an independent nation. Nobody comes inside and checks our things. We check them ourselves."

The White House praised General Musharraf for breaking up the network linked to Dr. Khan, which appears to have been one of the largest ever discovered, but made little mention of the pardon and declined to say whether it would insist that Pakistan sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty.

For General Musharraf, the news conference was a supreme test of political skill. Having satisfied international demands for an investigation on Wednesday, he switched to a defiant tone on Thursday, reaching out to a domestic audience and asserting that, unlike Libya, which had agreed under pressure to give up its nuclear program, Pakistan would stand firm.

Explaining his decision to pardon the scientist, General Musharraf said Dr. Khan "is still my hero; he is still high in the sky for me." He said the scientist's role in helping Pakistan develop nuclear bombs to counter those of India, its longtime rival, was grounds for leniency.

"No one can negate it, no one can cancel it, no one can disprove it," he said, referring to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, which remains a source of enormous national pride. "This hero has given us grace and respect."

Later, however, the general acknowledged that Dr. Khan had clearly benefited financially from his dealings, pocketing large sums to pay for a lavish standard of living and palatial homes.

The general, who seized power in a bloodless coup in 1999, also declared himself and senior army commanders free of any wrongdoing in connection with Dr. Khan's activities. "No government or military official has been found involved in the activity of proliferation," he said.

American officials have said Pakistani nuclear aid flowed to Libya as late as last fall. Opposition political parties and Pakistani military experts have said it is nearly impossible that the army did not at least tacitly approve of the smuggling.

In Pakistan on Thursday, the issue was not whether Pakistan had done too little to aid international inspectors, it was whether it had done too much. Opposition political parties attacked General Musharraf's decision to have Dr. Khan read a confession on national television on Wednesday, calling the statement coerced and humiliating.

A coalition of hard-line Islamic parties has called for a national strike on Friday to protest the treatment of Dr. Khan, whose reputation appears not to have been greatly tarnished. In local news reports, many Pakistanis said Dr. Khan had been forced to make a false confession under American pressure. The extent of the strike could provide a sense of whether the government's deal with Dr. Khan plays well, or backfires.

Throughout his news conference, General Musharraf said he had not given in to American pressure by mounting an investigation into Dr. Khan's activities. "Nobody is pressuring me," he said. "We are acting independently."

Reconciling international demands for an investigation with domestic demands that Dr. Khan not be scapegoated presented General Musharraf with one of the most difficult political problems he has faced as president. His reversal of Pakistan's support for the Taliban after the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and new peace talks with India led to his being criticized for his association with the United States. He narrowly survived two assassination attempts in December.

A close aide to General Musharraf and a senior official in a pro-Musharraf political party said negotiations with Dr. Khan in the last week led to a simple deal. If Dr. Khan apologized on national television, he would not be prosecuted.

Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, the leader of a pro-Musharraf political party, the Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam, conducted the secret negotiations with Dr. Khan, a senior party official said. The deal's elements — the request for a pardon, public apology and granting of the pardon — came together this week. The official said the deal aimed to avoid a public backlash against the government, to prevent opposition political parties from turning Dr. Khan's case into a political issue, and to prevent details of China's nuclear weapons assistance to Pakistan from becoming public.

A senior member of the Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam, told a Pakistani journalist that Chinese officials had expressed a desire for the inquiry to end quickly. The senior party official said government officials did not fear that Dr. Khan would identify top army officials if prosecuted. They feared he would publicly detail China's assistance — an embarrassment to a crucial ally that Pakistan considers a strategic counterweight to India.

Western nonproliferation experts believe China has provided Pakistan with a nuclear warhead design, ballistic missile aid and help with a plutonium production reactor.

But a close aide to General Musharraf said concerns about China and incriminating information from Dr. Khan were not factors in the pardon. But, he said, fears of a public backlash were. The aide, and a cabinet minister, said that in the last several days they were barraged with demands from a spectrum of Pakistani society that Dr. Khan not be punished. The close aides said criticism of General Musharraf for his American ties would have been cemented. "Everybody thinks we're under pressure," said the close aide, referring to the United States. "It would have been a disaster."

Dr. Khan became head of Pakistan's uranium-enrichment program in 1975, a year after India detonated its first atomic bomb. In the next 25 years, as head of the Khan research laboratories, he was a powerful and virtually untouchable force in Pakistani policy and public life.

Reports of corruption, the close aide said, led General Musharraf to remove Dr. Khan from his post in March 2001, but the government did not sound international alarms.

"When this was discovered 9/11 had not happened," the aide said, referring to a period when General Musharraf was politically isolated. "We were not very comfortably placed in the community of nations."

General Musharraf clearly played to his domestic audience during the news conference, which was later broadcast on national television. He spoke in Urdu, Pakistan's primary language, and wore his commando uniform. When he addresses a Western audience, he wears a business suit and speaks in English.

Knowing that Pakistan faced being declared a rogue state if it did not act, the general said he faced an agonizing choice. "Is Pakistan important or the hero important?" He said, "Pakistan is important."

His voice choked with emotion at one point, he described his dismay when first shown the evidence against Dr. Khan. He said "we make such heroes larger than life," but "they are only human."

After avoiding several questions about Dr. Khan's palatial homes and business dealings, General Musharraf said one thing motivated the scientists.

"They were doing it for money," he said. "They had a lust for wealth."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/06/international/asia/06STAN.html?pagewanted=all>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer

February 6, 2004

Key Source On Iraqi Bioweapons Was Deemed Dubious, Agencies Say

By Jonathan S. Landay, Inquirer Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - Dubious intelligence about Iraq's biological weapons programs found its way into the Bush administration's case for a preemptive invasion of Iraq despite the fact that officials warned in May 2002 that some of the information might be unreliable or fabricated.

The charge that Iraq had mobile biological-warfare research laboratories came solely from a defector provided to U.S. intelligence officials by Iraqi exile leader Ahmad Chalabi, said senior U.S. officials, revealing the oversight for the first time yesterday. The officials, some of whom are critics of Chalabi, spoke on the condition of anonymity because the intelligence remains classified.

Chalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress, is a favorite of pro-war civilian Pentagon officials but is deeply distrusted by many rank-and-file professionals in the CIA, Defense Intelligence Agency and State Department, who worried that some of the defectors he produced might be Iraqi double agents.

The Defense Intelligence Agency, which debriefed the defector, flagged the information he provided as questionable in 2002. Top DIA officials helped draft an October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate, or NIE, on Iraq's weapons programs and reviewed Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's February 2003 speech to the U.N. Security Council, but never raised their own agency's doubts about the source, said two senior officials.

"It was never made clear to us" that the information was dubious, said a senior State Department official. A DIA spokesman didn't return a telephone call for comment.

That, said another senior official and Chalabi critic, raises the possibility Chalabi and others, possibly including Saddam Hussein's own intelligence service, may have tried to deceive the United States about the state of Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs.

The Iraqis, the official said, may have tried to deter a U.S.-led attack by making it appear they were ready to use chemical and biological weapons. Meanwhile, Chalabi and others may have tried to encourage a U.S.-led attack by making it appear Iraq was an imminent threat to American interests.

Francis Brooke, a spokesman for Chalabi in Washington, said he was unable to comment because he was unaware of the specific defectors.

CIA Director George Tenet referred to the issue in his Georgetown speech yesterday.

"We recently discovered that relevant analysts in the [intelligence] community missed a notice that identified a source we had cited as providing information that, in some cases was unreliable, and in other cases, was fabricated," he said without elaborating.

A CIA spokesman declined further comment.

The senior U.S. officials said questions arose in mid-2002 about the veracity of the defector who provided the information about alleged mobile biological research laboratories. They didn't identify him, but Powell told the U.N. Security Council he was an Iraqi major.

The man passed a polygraph examination, the senior officials said, but the DIA still sent the "fabrication notice" to other intelligence agencies, warning that he might have been trained to dupe a polygraph and that his information should be considered unreliable.

"There were still questions about whether he was being honest or truthful," said one official. "A notice went out that maybe he was fabricating."

The matter was among a number of problems uncovered by a Tenet-ordered internal CIA review of Iraq intelligence led by Richard Kerr, a former deputy agency director.

The review is one of at least six inquiries completed or under way into the failure of U.S. arms inspectors in Iraq to uncover the alleged chemical and biological weapons on which President Bush built his main justification for the invasion.

A senior administration official said Tenet informed Powell of the oversight after it was noted in the Kerr inquiry.

Bush is to order a seventh probe, this one by an independent bipartisan commission.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/7886593.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

February 6, 2004

Pg. 18

In Response To Criticism, Tenet Reveals CIA Successes

Director Points to Pakistan, Libya, Iran and North Korea

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

CIA Director George J. Tenet yesterday took the unusual step of disclosing previously secret success by the agency, describing its spying on Pakistan's nuclear scientist, Abdul Qadeer Khan, and on the international trade in nuclear weapons technology involving Libya, Iran and North Korea.

The disclosures were an attempt by Tenet to counter what he described as ill-informed criticism of the CIA's record in tracking global weapons proliferation. Last week, David Kay, former chief U.S. weapons inspector in Iraq, said the United States had been surprised by revelations about nuclear programs in other countries. The White House then said it would create an independent commission on prewar intelligence on Iraq that would also review CIA performance elsewhere.

"It's important that I address these misstatements, because the American people must know just how reliable American intelligence is on the threats that confront our nation," Tenet said in a speech at Georgetown University. In Libya, Tenet said, U.S. and British intelligence agencies played a major role in getting Moammar Gaddafi to give up his pursuit of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. He said Gaddafi's renewed interest in getting a nuclear weapon was discovered because intelligence agencies had "penetrated Libya's foreign supplier network." With such knowledge, and working with other countries, CIA officers located and stopped a shipment of centrifuge parts that were to be used in processing uranium.

CIA and British officers visiting Libya last year were able to show Libyan officials that they knew so much about that country's missiles and nuclear programs that scientists there finally showed them actual weapon designs, Tenet said.

"Intelligence," Tenet said, "was the key that opened the door to Libya's clandestine programs."

Tenet said the CIA also had deep knowledge of the activities of Pakistan's Khan, who admitted this week that he gave nuclear expertise and equipment to Iran, Libya and North Korea.

The CIA director said that, with the help of the British, "we pieced together the picture of the network, revealing its subsidiaries, scientists, front companies, agents, finances and manufacturing plants on three continents. Our spies penetrated the network through a series of daring operations over several years." The information, Tenet said, was central to uncovering Khan's "years of nuclear profiteering."

In Iran, Tenet said, the United States was not surprised by reports in 2002 from an Iranian opposition group that Tehran was moving secretly toward completing a facility to enrich uranium. The recent admissions by Iran to the International Atomic Energy Agency about that facility validated previous intelligence assessment, Tenet said. He also credited U.S. intelligence with enabling Washington to confront North Korea on its decision to turn to uranium enrichment as a way to get weapons-grade material for its nuclear weapons programs.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17166-2004Feb5.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

February 6, 2004

Pg. 18

U.N. Nuclear Chief Warns Of Global Black Market

By Peter Slevin, Washington Post Staff Writer

VIENNA, Feb. 5 -- Pakistan's top nuclear scientist, Abdul Qadeer Khan, represented "the tip of an iceberg" in an illicit nuclear supply network that has connections in many countries, the chief of the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency said Thursday.

The Khan case "raises more questions than it answers," said Mohamed ElBaradei, the agency's director. He said existing safeguards had failed to stop the spread of nuclear technology, and he called for urgent international cooperation to police a global black market whose reach is unknown.

"We need to know who supplied what, when, to whom. Dr. Khan was not working alone," ElBaradei told reporters at his headquarters in Vienna one day after Khan publicly admitted to providing nuclear weapons expertise and supplies to North Korea, Libya and Iran.

Investigators are pursuing leads in Japan, Malaysia, Germany and two still-unidentified European countries, IAEA officials said.

ElBaradei said IAEA investigators were also reviewing an allegation that a representative of Khan's offered to provide Iraq with designs for a nuclear bomb and uranium enrichment equipment for \$5 million on the eve of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Iraqi authorities rejected the proposal as a scam.

"Maybe in hindsight it was not a scam," ElBaradei said. "But thank God they did not act on it."

ElBaradei described the U.S. failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq as an affirmation of the U.N. inspections process. He said the White House should allow the IAEA to return to Iraq and finish its work.

ElBaradei said a recent report by a former chief U.S. weapons inspector, David Kay, "validated what we have thought, that inspections were working."

Kay's conclusion that Iraq had not rebuilt its nuclear program "strengthened my conviction that we need to go back to Iraq and stop this hullabaloo and bring the issue to closure," ElBaradei said, referring to the debate over the prewar extent of Iraq's nuclear program and U.S. intelligence about it.

"We are the ones who have the credibility, and we know every person there," ElBaradei said. "And I think we can bring that issue to closure as early as anybody else could."

The black market in nuclear components was uncovered in discussions with Iran and Libya. Both countries have revealed secret sources of supplies for programs that long went undetected by foreign intelligence services or international organizations.

The IAEA was among the outside institutions that passed information about the network to the Pakistani government. Pressed by the Bush administration, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's president, ordered the detention and interrogation of senior weapons scientists who worked with Khan, often called the father of his nation's nuclear weapons program.

ElBaradei, noting that the supply network had representatives in at least five countries, said evidence that a Malaysian company had produced sophisticated parts for enriching uranium raised concerns about factories elsewhere peddling such goods outside the public eye.

Malaysian police have said Scomi Precision Engineering, known as SCOPE, had manufactured components for Libya's fledgling nuclear program. SCOPE is a subsidiary of Scomi Group Berhad, a publicly traded conglomerate whose principal shareholder is a son of Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. The parent company said the parts were ordered by Gulf Technical Industries, a company in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Scomi Precision Engineering said in a statement that it made "14 semi-finished components." The parts were shipped to Dubai in four batches between December 2002 and August 2003 in a deal worth \$3.4 million.

ElBaradei said the revelations showed that informal rules designed to prevent suppliers from aiding nuclear weapons aspirants were "kaput." He said only 38 countries take part in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, a voluntary alliance.

"You need a complete overhaul of the export control system. It is not working right now," said ElBaradei, who called news about the clandestine supply network "the most dangerous thing we have seen in proliferation in many years."

Special correspondent Azhar Sukri in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A16406-2004Feb5.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

February 6, 2004

Pg. 23

Missed Signals On WMD?

By David Ignatius

The intelligence failure in Iraq began with U.N. weapons inspectors, who gathered detailed evidence that Saddam Hussein had destroyed his weapons of mass destruction in 1991 but never presented those findings forcefully to the world, according to Iraq's top nuclear scientist.

Jafar Dhia Jafar, who ran Iraq's nuclear program from 1982 on, revealed new details of his country's dealings with U.N. inspectors in a telephone interview yesterday from the United Arab Emirates, where he now lives. His interview was the first broad, on-the-record discussion of WMD issues by a top Iraqi scientist since the end of the war.

Jafar said he has explained the 1991 termination of Iraqi WMD programs in more than 20 voluntary debriefings with U.S. officials since he left Iraq on April 7, 2003. The debriefings took place in the United Arab Emirates and Jordan. To confirm the accuracy of his account, he said, he volunteered to take a lengthy polygraph test, which U.S. officials administered.

The comments from Iraq's most prominent scientist add a new perspective to the intense debate over Iraq's alleged WMD programs. Jafar, 61, who received his doctorate in physics in Britain in 1965, said his chief complaint concerned the U.N. inspectors, who, he said, "had all the facts but evidently did not present them convincingly enough to the United Nations Security Council."

"The United Nations inspectors were on the ground. They were everywhere. They had access to all the documents," Jafar argued. "They knew the facts, and they should have said confidently that Iraq was free of weapons of mass destruction."

Instead, he said, U.N. inspectors -- under apparent pressure from the United States and Britain to continue looking for weapons that had actually been destroyed -- kept asking for more time to conduct further searches. The Iraqis were never able to prove the negative.

If Jafar is right, the U.N. inspectors had detailed evidence to rebut the arguments about Iraqi WMD made in the intelligence dossiers compiled by Britain and the United States that were a main justification for their March 2003 invasion. In the supercharged political atmosphere before the war, that evidence was either diluted, suppressed or ignored.

The United Nations' problems began with Hussein, by Jafar's own account. He said the Iraqi leader initially concealed some of his WMD stockpiles after the 1991 Persian Gulf War by turning them over to his most trusted military unit, the Special Republican Guards.

But after U.N. inspectors discovered some of the material at a Special Republican Guards camp in early July 1991, Hussein ordered the unilateral destruction of all his banned stockpiles. "Before the end of 1991, all proscribed nuclear, chemical, biological and missile assets were destroyed," Jafar said.

Jafar said Iraqis destroyed all stockpiles of chemical weapons -- including mustard gas, sarin, tabun and VX -- and biological weapons, including botulinum toxin, anthrax and aflatoxin. Some of the biological toxins had been weaponized in 1990, but never used, so the regime decided to conceal that program from U.N. inspectors, Jafar said. They also withheld some details of their nuclear program.

The Iraqi regime initially decided to deceive U.N. inspectors about some aspects of the nuclear and biological programs for two reasons, Jafar said. First, to obscure the extent to which they had violated treaties against developing such weapons and, second, to minimize the destruction of the facilities where they had carried out the work.

First hints of the Iraqi bioweapons program were made to U.N. chief inspector Rolf Ekeus in 1995, because the Iraqis knew that defectors had spoken of the program, Jafar said. A full accounting of the bioweapons that had been destroyed four years before came later in 1995, after the defection to Jordan of Hussein's son-in-law Hussein Kamel. Remaining aspects of the nuclear program were also disclosed to U.N. inspectors after Kamel defected, Jafar said. But U.S. and U.N. officials suspected the Iraqis were probably hiding other violations. The mistrust was amplified by Hussein's antagonism toward the U.N. inspectors, whom he regarded as spies who might threaten his personal security, Jafar said.

As an example of the detailed information given to U.N. inspectors, Jafar cited 26 letters he provided between January and March 2003 to rebut allegations that Iraqis were continuing their nuclear weapons program. The letters, totaling 85 pages with 1,400 more as attachments, countered specific claims made in a Sept. 24, 2002, British intelligence dossier.

Jafar's story reinforces one theme of the unfolding Iraqi WMD saga: Even for intelligence analysts and U.N. experts, facts could not be disentangled from expectations. The will to believe that Hussein had WMD was far stronger than the evidence that he didn't.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17489-2004Feb5.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
February 6, 2004

Senate Offices Open Again As Ricin Inquiry Continues

By Carl Hulse

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5 — Senate office buildings began reopening Thursday as investigators said they still had not determined how the poison ricin got into the mailroom of the Senate majority leader on Monday.

Hundreds of Congressional staff members, eager to return to desks that had been off limits for days, clustered outside the entrances to the Russell Senate Office Building across Constitution Avenue from the Capitol and streamed in when the doors opened just after noon.

Officials said the collection of unopened mail, the decontamination of the office and the environmental testing of the Senate buildings were all proceeding smoothly and more quickly than they had expected. As a result, the Capitol police reopened the Hart building Thursday evening, ahead of schedule.

The Dirksen building, where the poison was discovered, is scheduled to reopen no later than Monday morning, but officials were trying to get it back in business sooner as well.

"Substantial progress continues to be made to reclaim the building," Chief Terrance Gainer of the Capitol police said. "We really are moving along very nicely."

Officials from the Environmental Protection Agency, which is overseeing the testing, said ricin had not been detected anywhere except in the fourth-floor mailroom of the majority leader, Senator Bill Frist of Tennessee, where it was first spotted by a Congressional intern about 3 p.m. Monday.

"We have not found a hot letter at this point in time," said Michael Mason, assistant F.B.I. director in charge of the Washington field office. "In terms of how it was delivered to that room, it is open to your imagination."

With no letter in hand, investigators seemed to be considering the idea that the substance may have arrived in another way. "The possibilities for the delivery mechanism, whether it is a person or a letter or a package, is open," Chief Gainer said.

Mr. Mason described the criminal investigation as "still in its infancy." The law enforcement officials acknowledged that the Secret Service had not immediately informed them of a ricin-contaminated letter directed to the White House in November, but they said new procedures put in place since then would prevent future communication gaps. "From my perspective, this is water over the dam," said Mr. Mason.

But Senator Tom Daschle of South Dakota, the Democratic leader, said lawmakers of both parties were "very frustrated about the way that whole matter was handled."

"There's no reason why information that vital should be withheld," Mr. Daschle said. "It affects our own ability to cope with circumstances similar to those, here on the Hill."

Medical officials said none of the dozens of staff members who were in the vicinity of where the ricin was discovered had shown any symptoms of exposure.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/06/politics/06POIS.html?pagewanted=all>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Times
February 6, 2004
Pg. 15

Khan's Nuke Network Sparks Proliferation Fears

By Sharon Behn, The Washington Times

The existence of an underground market for nuclear equipment and technology sparked fears yesterday that atomic and other weapons of mass destruction could fall easily into the hands of terrorists and states with the money to buy them.

David Kay, the former U.S. chief weapons inspector for Iraq, accused Pakistan's top nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan of running "a Sam's Club for nuclear weapons."

Mr. Khan has admitted spreading weapons technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya.

"We need to unravel this foreign procurement network that is operating around the world," Mr. Kay told the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

He said he was dismayed that Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf yesterday had decided to pardon the scientist. Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, confirmed that Mr. Khan had not been working alone.

"There were items that were manufactured in other countries, items that were reassembled in different countries," he told reporters at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

Mr. Kay said the idea that someone such as Mr. Khan could outsource weapons production to countries such as Malaysia was of grave concern.

CIA Director George J. Tenet, under fire over intelligence estimates on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, said yesterday that U.S. intelligence had penetrated Mr. Khan's network through a series of "daring operations".

"We discovered the extent of Khan's hidden network. We tagged the proliferators. We detected the network, stretching across four continents, offering its wares to countries like North Korea and Iran," he said.

Working with British intelligence, "we pieced together the picture of the network, revealing its subsidiaries, its scientists, its front companies, its agents, its finances and manufacturing plants on three continents," Mr. Tenet said in a speech at Georgetown University.

He praised the intelligence breakthroughs that revealed the extent of nuclear weapons and missile programs in North Korea, Iran and Libya, adding that Mr. Khan's operation "was shaving years off the nuclear-weapons development timelines of several states, including Libya."

Gen. Musharraf let Mr. Khan, known as the father of Pakistan's nuclear-weapons program, off the hook after he admitted on national television that he had peddled the technology on the black market. Some in Washington think the pardon was part of a deal.

"This is the biggest break we've had," said one State Department official, as Mr. Khan disclosed the extent of his weapons-technology proliferation.

"He has already affected a lot of things, like North Korea" and its use of centrifuges in its nuclear-weapons program, the official said on the condition of anonymity. "It gives credibility to our assertions on North Korea."

Malaysia said yesterday that it was looking into reports that a company controlled by the prime minister's son was linked to the international black market and in supplying components to Libya's nuclear program, the Associated Press reported.

Mr. Tenet said Malaysian authorities had shut down one of Mr. Khan's network's largest plants.

The United States has introduced to the U.N. Security Council a resolution to ban the transfer of weapons-of-mass-destruction technology and materials to nonstate groups and rogue governments, but the council is a long way from approving the draft, diplomats say.

"I would say it's in abeyance," said one council envoy.

Betsy Pisik contributed to this report from New York.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20040205-092927-8779r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Reuters

06 Feb 2004 15:53:33 GMT

EU states pressuring Syria over WMD - diplomats

By Lin Noueihed

BEIRUT, Feb 6 (Reuters) - EU member states have stepped up their pressure on Syria to show it is fighting the spread of weapons of mass destruction since Libya said it would scrap its banned weapons programmes, diplomats say.

The 15-nation bloc had been expected to initial an economic and political cooperation pact with Syria by the end of 2003, but diplomats say it is being held up because some governments want Damascus to show a greater commitment against WMD.

Syria has repeatedly denied accusations by the United States that it is developing chemical weapons.

Libya's decision to halt its banned arms programmes and Iran's move to allow snap U.N. nuclear inspections has increased Syrian isolation over the issue. Some European Union member states are now pushing for a tougher text on WMD before signing the Association Agreement.

"The member states have to take a decision in the context of the wider political situation because of what happened in Libya and Iran and the American position," a European diplomat said.

"The question is should we weaken the Western front on Syria by allowing the EU to sign this agreement with the Syrians?"

Syria is hoping to counter-balance mounting U.S. pressure by accelerating the signing of the economic pact.

A U.S. law passed in December demands that Syria -- a fixture on the U.S. list of state sponsors of "terror" -- cease pursuing WMD and backing anti-Israeli groups or face further sanctions.

Syria denies it has acquired any weapons of mass destruction but says it has the right to defend itself against its arch-foe Israel, which is believed to have some 200 nuclear warheads.

Syrian officials were not immediately available for comment.

In December, EU negotiators and Damascus agreed on a text obliging Syria to cooperate to counter the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

"After five years of negotiations, the two sides agreed on the texts. We have since reached a problem," said Frank Hesske, EU delegation head in Damascus. "We are now in the process of trying to get the approval of both authorities including on the issue of fighting the spread of weapons of mass destruction."

Previous Euro-Mediterranean pacts do not include elaborate WMD provisions. But the EU agreed in November to include a WMD clause in all future pacts with third countries, diplomats said.

Syria is the last of a group of 12 Mediterranean states yet to ink a pact with the EU, eyeing a free trade zone by 2010.

"The Syrians do think they are being picked on, which is partially true," said the diplomat.

However, another European diplomat said an agreement could be thrashed out as early as next month.

"If things go well we could have an agreement done and dusted by March with implementation by late summer," the diplomat said. "Syria will need to show a lot more flexibility before it comes to that happy conclusion."

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L05475810.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)