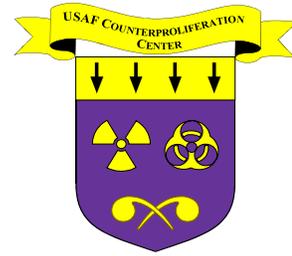


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Los Angeles Times

December 31, 2002

Pg. 1

Inspectors 'Have Zilch' Thus Far

By Sergei L. Loiko and Maggie Farley, Special to The Times

BAGHDAD --In their search for hidden Iraqi arms, U.N. inspectors have so far faced little conflict, have found little evidence and have received little outside intelligence to guide them, said one inspector. The teams have discovered

two technical matters that could be considered violations of U.N. resolutions but have yet to find a smoking gun, a trace of radiation or a single germ spore.

"If our goal is to catch them with their pants down, we are definitely losing," the inspector said on condition he wouldn't be named. "We haven't found an iota of concealed material yet."

In one of the first glimpses of the inspection process from inside Iraq, the inspector described a team of experts who have been thwarted by Iraqi authorities who have better preparation, equipment and intelligence than the inspectors. Their minders have faster cars and better radios with which to alert others that they're on their way and, of course, know just where they're going and what they're looking for.

The list of Iraq's violations is short. During the four years in which inspectors have not been allowed in the country, the Iraqis tried to procure missile parts and altered others without notifying the U.N., the inspector said -- two incidents that could be considered a breach of U.N. resolutions, though perhaps not large enough to justify military action.

But the inspectors' roster of frustrations is long. There are 110 U.N. weapons experts in Iraq, 100 searching for chemical and biological weapons and 10 looking for evidence of a nuclear program. Their mission is nearly impossible -- trying to find suspected caches of material or documents in a country about the size of California. Their work is relentless -- sometimes the different teams conduct seven inspections a day, which means early wake-up calls, long drives and intense searches. Monday was that kind of day as inspectors made seven visits, including one to a water-purification plant and one to a missile factory.

To keep their plans secret from wiretaps, moles or eavesdropping devices, inspectors operate like spies, passing notes about the day's plans rather than speaking aloud, and driving their U.N. jeeps in circles to confound those trying to determine their destination.

But often, inspectors say, by the time the U.N. convoys arrive at a site, the gates are open and the workers are waiting. The Iraqis have been obliging, even eager to please, allowing the inspectors to wander through the bedrooms of a once off-limits presidential palace "like idle museum-goers," the inspector said.

"Even private facilities which are not part of their state-run military industrial complex open up for us -- like magic," he said. "But even if they open all the doors in Iraq for us and keep them open 24 hours a day, we won't be able to find a black cat in a dark room, especially if it is not there. We need help. We need information. We need intelligence reports if they exist."

The inspector said he and his colleagues feel acute pressure from Washington to find something soon. But if the U.S. has provided its long-promised intelligence, they haven't seen it yet.

"We can't look for something which we don't know about. If the United States wants us to find something, they should open their intelligence file and share it with us so that we know where to go for it," he said.

A senior Bush administration official said Monday that the U.S. has passed along "high-quality" information regarding suspected chemical or biological sites but that the inspectors haven't acted on it yet.

"They have gotten some intelligence, and they will get more," the official said. But what the U.S. intelligence community is concerned about is whether the information can be used fruitfully and not compromised so that it loses its value, he said. "It is as much a test of the inspectors as it is of Iraq."

Past inspection teams were infiltrated by moles who reported the U.N. experts' plans to Iraqi authorities. This time, the demands for secrecy are intense.

"We are not allowed to say a word about what we are doing," said the inspector, noting that the Iraqis, in contrast, usher journalists into just-searched sites and describe in detail what questions the experts asked and what they were looking for.

"By being silent, we may create the false illusion that we did uncover something," the inspector said. "But I must say that if we were to publish a report now, we would have zilch to put in it."

The chemical experts haven't found a trace of the tons of chemical agents that Iraq is suspected of having, he said. The biologists are taking air samples to find spores, but the biological agents don't have a long shelf life and probably have long been buried or disposed of.

The nuclear inspectors found that the massive installations used to enrich uranium were practically undisturbed since they were decommissioned and sealed by the previous inspection team. They are convinced that the old facilities are not being used. But the inspectors are still searching for secret stores of enriched uranium, small caches of which could be hidden almost anywhere in the country.

The only possible breaches, the inspector said, might come from Iraq's handling of aluminum tubes that experts suspect were to be used as part of a centrifuge to enrich uranium. The Iraqis say that the tubes were meant for helicopter-launched air-to-ground missiles but that when they didn't work as expected, they were altered for use in anti-aircraft rockets. Altering the tubes without informing the U.N. violated previous resolutions about dual-use goods.

Then, Iraq used foreign-registered front companies to buy replacement tubes without informing the U.N. -- another breach of U.N. sanctions.

In the past, the inspectors' best source of information came from defectors who had worked on the weapons program, and U.S. officials are pressuring the U.N. teams to take scientists and relatives out of the country for interviews. Last week, Iraqi authorities provided inspectors with a list of 500 scientists who headed or worked on weapons programs. Probably 1,000 more have knowledge of weapons work, the inspector said.

The interviews are "a very difficult and complex thing," he said. "I took part in such interviews in 1998. It is a spectacle, not for people with poor nerves. It was happening in the presence of Iraqi generals, in the lights of the cameras. You could see large drops of sweat streaming down the forehead of a mature middle-aged scientist. These interviews didn't get us anywhere then. They will not take us anywhere now. The risk for their lives and the lives of their relatives is great, and we can't do anything to create a normal situation."

The first interview this time produced nothing, the inspector said, because the minders were all security service officials, keeping careful track of what was being said.

"It's stupid to think that we can offer them to go abroad to testify. Once any of them expresses a desire to go abroad for an interview, his brains will be kicked out in no time -- his and his entire family's," he said.

The inspectors said his colleagues think it possible that Iraq really has eliminated its banned materials. But, he noted, it still has its scientists.

"We didn't cut off heads," he said. "They can gather all the intellectual potential together and start their deadly work again."

Special correspondent Loiko reported from Baghdad and staff writer Farley from the United Nations.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/la-fg-iraq31dec31004422.story>

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Washington Times

December 31, 2002

Pg. 1

U.S. Suspects Iraq Hides Scientists

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

Iraq is hiding at least two weapons scientists in Saddam Hussein's presidential palaces, U.S. intelligence officials have told The Washington Times.

The intelligence officials also said there are signs that Iraq's military forces recently moved chemical and biological weapons materials to underground storage areas unknown to arms inspectors from the United Nations.

"They've moved the scientists to two palaces," said an intelligence official familiar with internal U.S. government reports on Iraq sent to senior officials last week.

Intelligence reports about the scientists support the Bush administration's conclusion that Iraq is violating the terms of the latest U.N. resolution requiring Baghdad to cooperate fully with weapons inspections.

The Iraqis are hiding the scientists apparently to prevent the arms inspectors from questioning them, the officials said.

The two scientists were not identified by name. The officials said one is believed to be involved in Iraq's covert nuclear arms program and that the second is a specialist in chemical and biological weapons.

The U.N. Security Council, meanwhile, agreed yesterday to tighten restrictions on the humanitarian oil-for-food program for Iraq. The resolution is aimed at blocking Iraq from obtaining military items under the guise of purchasing humanitarian goods.

The new restrictions were added at the request of the United States and were contained in a resolution approved at the world body's headquarters in New York.

The resolution added items to the U.N. "goods review list" aimed at preventing Iraq from acquiring medical supplies that could be used to inoculate its troops against chemical and biological weapons, and blocks the importation of such goods as work boats that could be used in terrorist attacks.

The restrictions come amid preparations for U.S. military action against Iraq and follow recent intelligence reports indicating that Baghdad had obtained a special silicon powder through the oil-for-food program that could be used to enhance chemical and biological weapons.

Iraq also obtained trucks from the program that were converted into mobile missile launchers, according to U.S. officials.

Weapons inspectors searched six sites in Iraq yesterday, some for the second time, looking for banned weapons. The inspectors visited a missile plant, a water-treatment facility south of Baghdad and a communications plant near the Iranian border, according to wire service reports.

It could not be learned whether the information about the two Iraqi scientists was supplied to the inspectors or whether it was specific enough to merit any response from them.

The administration has in the past withheld intelligence from the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, known as Unmovic.

Iraq supplied the United Nations with a list of 500 weapons scientists last weekend.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said in a Sunday television interview that Iraq has been cooperating with the inspectors but that it is not clear whether the cooperation will continue.

"There's been some resistance in recent days to some of the things the inspectors are looking for, and we are providing more information and intelligence to the inspectors to cue their visits, and we'll see whether that attitude of cooperation continues," Mr. Powell said on ABC's "This Week."

In another television interview, Mr. Powell said the United States has begun supplying intelligence to the arms inspectors.

He also disputed Saddam's assertions that Iraq has halted work on weapons of mass destruction.

"Well, we'll establish whether or not that is the case," he said. "We do not believe he has stopped, but the inspectors are hard at work, and we have intelligence information that we are sharing with the inspectors to assist them in their work."

Additional U.N. reports on Iraq's weapons programs are due at the end of January, Mr. Powell said.

Asked whether time is running out for Iraq, Mr. Powell said, "I think that this can't go on indefinitely. We are anxious to see the results of the inspectors' work, and the president has not made a decision yet with respect to the use of military force, or with respect to going back to the United Nations. But it's a situation, of course, we are monitoring closely, and, of course, we are positioning ourselves and positioning our military forces for whatever might be required."

Mr. Powell also said there are questions about whether Iraqi weapons technicians being interviewed in Iraq by the arms inspectors are free to talk.

"The first one who came in had a minder with him, somebody with him," Mr. Powell said on "Fox News Sunday." The U.S. government wants Iraq's "key" arms officials to be questioned outside the country and to have their families protected from retribution by Baghdad, Mr. Powell said.

Gen. Hossam Mohammed Amin, the Iraqi official in charge of monitoring the inspectors, said yesterday that any interviews with scientists should be held in Iraq.

"They met thousands of scientists for thousands of hours, with the presence of the Iraqi side, without intervention from the Iraqi side," Gen. Amin told Arab satellite TV channel Al Jazeera.

The list of arms technicians provided by Iraq on Saturday includes names of experts who have taken part in building ballistic missiles and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

It was required under Security Council Resolution 1441, passed in November to restart arms inspections.

President Bush said in October that to learn the truth about Iraq's arms programs, "the regime must allow witnesses to its illegal activities to be interviewed outside the country."

"And these witnesses must be free to bring their families with them so they are beyond the reach of Saddam Hussein's terror and murder," Mr. Bush said. "And inspectors must have access to any site, at any time, without pre-clearance, without delay, without exceptions."

U.S. intelligence agencies have identified as many as 46 palaces used by Saddam. Some of the facilities are up to 50 square miles.

The latest U.N. arms inspection resolution reversed an earlier ban on conducting inspections at Saddam's presidential sites. Earlier this month, the weapons inspectors tested Baghdad's willingness to allow full access to any site.

Inspectors were delayed about 10 minutes at a presidential compound west of Baghdad on Dec. 3 before being allowed inside.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20021231-519991.htm>

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Risk Rises For A Reignited Arms Race

Pursuit of nuclear arms from Iran to N. Korea creates challenge more complex than cold war.

By Faye Bowers and Howard LaFranchi, Staff writers of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON – As North Korea escalates its pursuit of nuclear weapons, it is bringing the threat of a nuclear arms race to its most ominous level in four decades.

The threat is all the more alarming because the nations involved - forming an unstable nuclear-proliferation belt stretching from Pyongyang to Baghdad - are within a five-minute strike of other would-be nuclear powers. That proximity, minimizing decision time in crises, is one factor making the current situation more complex for America and other nations to manage than the face-off between America and the former Soviet Union during the cold war. Moreover, it is not clear that these countries are pursuing these arms solely for cold-war-style deterrence, making concerns about proliferation all the more acute.

"This is the most dangerous time since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis," says Michael Krepon, an expert on nuclear proliferation at the Stimson Center in Washington. "And the dangers are compounded because we are not just worried about one country. We are worried about Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and the Indian subcontinent."

The US has made clear it will address this crisis through diplomatic channels, but the reality is that the region's powers, beginning with China and Russia, have differing interests in how proliferation is handled.

Both China and Russia have a history of helping neighbors with nuclear programs, an issue the US will have to confront more forcefully as its diplomats visit the region beginning next week.

"Acquiring nuclear weapons is worrying because they can sell them," says David Kay, a senior fellow at the Potomac Institute in Arlington, Va., and a former UN chief nuclear weapons inspector in Iraq. "Instead of North Korea shipping missiles to Yemen [as it did two weeks ago], they could ship nuclear warheads."

Experts and government officials say if these countries aren't stopped, this could spiral into a much broader arms race.

If North Korea develops a nuclear arsenal, for example, how will South Korea and Japan respond? Or, if Iraq goes nuclear, why wouldn't Iran continue to pursue its own arsenal - in the name of deterrence - and several other neighbors in the region as well?

The challenge, of course, is how to stop these countries. During the cold war, Mr. Kay points out, the former Soviet Union and the US were able to place "chokeholds" on their allies, preventing them from pursuing their own programs. But with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it's mainly the US that shoulders the responsibility - either by acting unilaterally or by building multilateral coalitions. And that responsibility includes a great deal of aid - in the billions - to prevent former Soviet Union nuclear supplies from falling into the wrong hands.

Granted, there are international agreements in place. All the countries that are now worrisome signed the NPT except for Pakistan. And all of them - including Pakistan - belong to the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA), the global nuclear watchdog, and have received assistance from it - in return for allowing monitoring - to pursue peaceful nuclear energy programs.

"The only difference is the intention of the government," says Kay. He points out that Iran said it was cooperating with Russia to build a peaceful program. But suddenly, two facilities appeared in the desert that had nothing to do with nuclear energy, but with weapons processing. And "the North Koreans signed the NPT and managed to fool the inspectors for about eight years, as the Iraqis had before."

Iraq, of course, is the highest on the US targets of President Bush's "axis of evil" countries. But the US has all but abandoned its unilateral approach toward Iraq and has worked hard to build a multilateral coalition. Still, as Iraq continues to bob and weave with the UN, the US continues its military build-up in the region and says it will go to war if it finds Iraq in "material breach" of UN Resolution 1441.

"We do have to separate Saddam Hussein from his weapons of mass destruction," says the Stimson Center's Krepon. "Preferably through diplomacy, but if necessary, through military means. At the same time, we need to strengthen treaty regimes.... We need to engage North Korea and Iran."

North Korea - another of the "axis of evil" countries - has come to the fore as the most challenging of the three in recent days. It is daily ratcheting up its threats to restart its nuclear program, mothballed after the 1994 Agreed Framework negotiated between the US and North Korea.

In addition to retooling its manufacturing capabilities, "North Korea continues to export complete ballistic missiles and production capabilities ... primarily to Iran, Libya, Syria, and Egypt," said CIA Director George Tenet, in testimony before the Senate earlier this year.

The US has taken a more low-key approach toward North Korea than Iraq, treating this as more of a northeast Asia problem than a US problem.

"This is a great opportunity for the US to play the multilateral card," says Kay.

He asserts that the US should leverage its relationships with China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia - the countries that have greater stakes in the region.

But the US is going to run into conflicting interests as it seeks to address the proliferation challenge in a region that has defied efforts at regional security solutions for decades.

In the first place, every key player from Japan to Russia wants the US involved -- no one favors a nuclear-armed North Korea. Yet while Asia experts see an opportunity for the region's powers to put heavy pressure on Pyongyang, at the same time both Russia and China are especially wary of any action that would enhance American power and prestige in the region.

Conflicting approaches to the crisis are already emerging. The US is hoping for enhanced international economic sanctions to force North Korea's hand. But that approach is likely to run into resistance from China and South Korea. Given their proximity to the North, both countries see little attraction in steps that could push a crumbling neighbor closer to collapse.

"China has extensive trade and diplomatic links with North Korea," Kay says. "The Chinese have no interest in a military conflict on the Korean peninsula," he says. "And war and disruption would tear China's economic miracle asunder and pose serious political issues."

The third of the "axis of evil" countries, Iran, last week announced that it would continue its construction of a nuclear power plant - with help from Russia. But the US still has concerns that Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapon. The US continues to pressure Russia to stop supporting Iran's nuclear efforts, but so far, Russia - for its own economic interests - has continued to help.

"Russia continues to supply significant assistance on nearly all aspects of Tehran's nuclear program," Mr. Tenet told the Senate. "It is also providing Iran assistance on long-range ballistic missile programs."

The third worrisome area is the India subcontinent. "Both India and Pakistan are working on the doctrine and tactics for more advanced nuclear weapons, producing fissile material, and increasing their nuclear stockpiles," Tenet told the Senate.

Both countries have tested delivery systems for their nuclear weapons, and continue to threaten each other over the Kashmir region. Just yesterday, Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf told Pakistani Air Force veterans that he had been prepared to use nuclear weapons earlier this year - at the height of Indian-Pakistani tensions.

"I personally conveyed messages to [Indian] Prime Minister Vajpayee through every international leader who came to Pakistan, that if Indian troops moved a single step across the international border or Line of Control, they should not expect a conventional war from Pakistan," President Musharraf said, according to The Associated Press.

Part of the problem with the Indian-Pakistani build-up, according to experts, is that no one stepped in - other than the placement of limited sanctions on the countries - to stop them from pursuing nuclear weapons.

"No one wanted to get caught in the Indian-Pakistani conflict," says Kay. But both he and Krepon say this is now one of the most dangerous regions of the world.

One factor that makes this so true today, unlike during the years of the cold-war arms race, is that countries seeking nuclear arms have so many more experts from whom to glean the technology they need.

"Nuclear technology used to be the stuff of Nobel prizes, [but] this is pretty easy science these days," Kay says. "The golden days when you thought you could control the technology you owned are long gone.

"If North Korea, the poorest of the poor, can develop [nuclear weapons," he adds, "then any country that is willing to do it can do it."

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/1231/p01s03-wogi.html>

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Washington Post

January 2, 2003

Pg. 10

No Support For Strikes Against N. Korea

Officials Say Pyongyang Has Nuclear Bombs, Altering Context of U.S. Policymaking

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

In 1994, when the Korean Peninsula last faced a crisis over North Korea's nuclear ambitions, two former officials in the first Bush administration wrote an influential opinion article in which they argued for "decisive action" -- a military strike against a nuclear reprocessing facility designed to convert fuel rods into weapons-grade material. The Clinton administration was already contemplating a military buildup in the region. The Pentagon produced a contingency plan for bombing the facilities, concluding that it could take them out quickly without widespread radiation.

Today, there is virtually no support for military action, even in an administration that has enshrined "preemption" as part of its national security strategy. Indeed, the prospects for a military solution have shrunk, even as the administration asserts that North Korea likely has crossed the nuclear threshold and already may possess one or two nuclear weapons.

To some extent, the current Bush administration is hamstrung in its military options because it is consumed with planning a possible war against Iraq. But the administration, in its rhetoric and its policy choices, has also subtly changed the context for dealing with North Korea, mainly by already anointing North Korea as a nuclear power. This has allowed the administration to keep the focus on Iraq, which it acknowledges has unrealized nuclear ambitions, while minimizing the immediate threat from North Korea.

The Clinton administration, in effect, operated on the presumption that it was unclear whether North Korea had nuclear weapons but that the regime was so unstable and irrational that it must be kept firmly within the international system of nuclear nonproliferation. So officials leaped at the chance to engage with the North Korean government and negotiate a deal to freeze its nuclear program.

The Bush administration, by contrast, states flatly that North Korea has nuclear weapons and appears to play down the possibility that it may soon acquire more. Indeed, even though North Korea just admitted to secretly cheating on its agreement with the Clinton administration, Bush officials appear to believe North Korea will act calmly and rationally in the coming months, and respond to international pressure to meet the terms demanded by the United States for a resumption of dialogue.

"Don't be quite so breathless," Secretary of State Colin L. Powell cautioned one interviewer who expressed alarm on Sunday. "Yes, they have a large army, and, yes, they have had these couple of nuclear weapons for many years, and if they have a few more, they have a few more, and they could have them for many years."

The administration's hard line on negotiations with North Korea, which it views as a morally bankrupt regime on the verge of collapse, has protected it from criticism from the right over what some might regard as a cavalier dismissal of the nuclear threat. "If [President Bill] Clinton had said that, they would have had his head," said L. Gordon Flake, executive director of the Mansfield Center for Pacific Affairs, a public policy organization in Washington.

But, despite administration claims, it is not so clear-cut that North Korea is already a nuclear weapons power. In early 1993, the CIA began circulating an analysis that North Korea may have obtained enough fissile material to produce one or two bombs. But, even today, that analysis is the subject of dispute, with some experts dismissing it as little more than a "back of the envelope" calculation. It is based largely on the amount of plutonium that would be needed for a nuclear weapon and how much North Korea is estimated to have diverted from its nuclear facilities.

"There are people who don't agree with that," said David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security, a research group. He said the possibility was 50-50, but that he believes the odds that North Korea has developed its nuclear weapons capability have increased over time.

The Clinton administration officially acknowledged the CIA analysis in 1997. But James B. Steinberg, Clinton's deputy national security adviser and now vice president at the Brookings Institution, said it has not been confirmed that North Korea took the plutonium and produced two weapons. Asserting that North Korea already has nuclear weapons, and so it is less alarming if it produces more, "is a pretty slippery-slope argument," he said.

An administration official said that, given that the CIA has calculated that North Korea has enough nuclear material for two weapons, it made little sense to set a new strategic threshold that needed to be crossed. "What does the number have to become before you say we've crossed a new line?" he asked.

Robert Einhorn, a top nonproliferation expert in the Clinton administration, said one or two bombs give a nation only the ability to suggest it has a doomsday bomb that it could use in response to an attack. "Six or seven is the beginnings of a military strategy. You are able to target [U.S.] allies," he said, as well as have enough material to sell to other countries.

In 1994, the foreign policy community operated on the assumption that North Korea did not have nuclear weapons. The crisis then was prompted by North Korea's refusal to allow inspections of its facilities at Yongbyon, its threat to

withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and then its decision to withdraw spent fuel rods without detailed international inspections.

Brent Scowcroft and Arnold Kanter, the former Bush officials who advocated a military strike, said it was not clear whether North Korea had enough plutonium to make nuclear weapons, but that without action, in six months it would have had enough material to produce as many as eight nuclear weapons. "We must not let that happen," they wrote.

Preparations for military action, however, did not progress very far before former president Jimmy Carter negotiated a freeze in the North Korean program. According to former Washington Post reporter Don Oberdorfer, in his book "The Two Koreas," Clinton and his top advisers were discussing options for deploying troops and military equipment to South Korea when Carter called to say that North Korean leader Kim Il Sung had agreed to the freeze. Carter urged a resumption of dialogue between the United States and North Korea. At the time, U.S. military officials were greatly concerned about a North Korean preemptive strike in response to the buildup, as well as projections for as many as 1 million dead in a full-scale war.

The resulting deal, known as the Agreed Framework, committed North Korea to shuttering its nuclear reactor in exchange for regular fuel oil shipments and the construction of two light-water nuclear reactors. But it was concluded just as the Republicans took control of Congress, and the administration was immediately forced on the defensive to preserve it. Many conservatives attacked it as merely postponing an inevitable crisis.

Testifying before Congress in early 1995, Paul D. Wolfowitz, now Bush's deputy defense secretary, assumed, as did the Clinton administration, that North Korea had not yet obtained nuclear weapons. But he said the agreement did nothing to change the North Korean policies that are the cause of tensions on the peninsula. "There is every reason to suspect that they will continue with some kind of nuclear development in secret," he predicted.

In October, North Korea admitted that it had been conducting a secret effort to produce enriched uranium for possible use in nuclear weapons, prompting the current crisis.

Kanter, one of the advocates of military action in 1994, said he is not sure whether he would propose military action today because of the administration's assessment that North Korea already has two nuclear weapons. "Given the enormous risks a military strike would entail, going from two to six bombs changes the situation," he said. "At a minimum, it's a much closer call."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64723-2003Jan1.html>

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New York Times

January 1, 2003

Pg. 1

President Makes Case That North Korea Is No Iraq

By David E. Sanger

CRAWFORD, Tex., Dec. 31 — President Bush drew a sharp distinction today between the nuclear standoff with North Korea and his confrontation with Iraq, saying he was certain that weapons projects in North Korea could be stopped "peacefully, through diplomacy." He said that Saddam Hussein, on the other hand, "hasn't heard the message" that he must disarm, or face military action.

Answering questions on his way into the only coffee shop in this one-stoplight town near his ranch, Mr. Bush issued no demands that North Korea halt the nuclear programs it has threatened to restart, and he did not mention the ouster today of the international inspectors who have monitored activity at the country's primary nuclear site.

"I believe this is not a military showdown, this is a diplomatic showdown," the president said, on his way to get a cheeseburger and to chat with his neighbors here.

But the president's tone and his warnings changed noticeably when he turned to Iraq. He cited Mr. Hussein's effort to build a nuclear weapon in the early 1990's and said that as of now "we don't know whether or not he has a nuclear weapon."

Assessing the nuclear capability of both North Korea and Iraq has been among the most difficult tasks facing Western intelligence agencies. The Central Intelligence Agency and Britain's intelligence service have publicly estimated it would take Iraq five years to develop such a weapon — or a single year if Mr. Hussein was provided with fissile material. North Korea already has two weapons, according to C.I.A. estimates, and could build five or six more in the next six months if it reprocessed its large stockpile of spent nuclear fuel into weapons-grade plutonium.

Adding to the pressure, North Korea took another step today toward removing its nuclear program from international controls by strongly suggesting it would withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The signals Mr. Bush sent with his comments were particularly significant because the administration has come under increasing criticism, from Democrats and some Republicans, for playing down the significance of North Korea's actions while plowing forward in the confrontation with Iraq.

In The New York Times today, former Secretary of State Warren Christopher wrote that unless Mr. Bush had classified evidence of greater Iraqi military capability than was known to the public, "the threats from North Korea and from international terrorism are more imminent than those posed by Iraq."

Mr. Bush took issue with that view today. Asked whether the United States could afford the \$50 billion to \$60 billion it would cost to wage war with Iraq, an estimate his budget director offered on Monday, he said, "an attack from Saddam Hussein or a surrogate of Saddam Hussein would cripple our economy." He added, "A Saddam Hussein with weapons of mass destruction is a threat to the security of the American people."

In contrast, he said nothing about his view of the threat posed by Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader.

During his presidential campaign, Mr. Bush often cited the possibility of an attack by North Korea as a reason that the United States needed a missile defense system. North Korea already has a significant arsenal of missiles that could reach South Korea, Japan and 100,000 American troops stationed in Asia; Mr. Hussein is believed to possess only Scud missiles with far more limited range.

Nevertheless, Mr. Bush talked at some length today about his worry that Iraq could find a way to attack the United States, either directly or indirectly. As he spoke, a crowd of Crawford residents and curious tourists gathered around the entrance of the coffee shop.

In his comments, Mr. Bush also addressed for the first time the F.B.I. alert issued two days ago, asking Americans to keep a lookout for five people, all of Arab descent, it is searching for in the United States. Mr. Bush said he had authorized the F.B.I. to put out an all-points bulletin. He did not refer to the men as terrorism suspects, but said, "We need to know why they have been smuggled into the country."

Mr. Bush's comments today about North Korea and Iraq seemed to suggest that he has concluded that Mr. Kim can be persuaded to reverse course under threat of economic pressure, a method that Mr. Bush says has failed with Iraq. He twice noted that in a meeting at his ranch this fall with President Jiang Zemin of China, the two leaders promised to work in concert to deal with the North Korean government.

"Right here in Crawford, we had a dialogue where we both committed ourselves to working in a way to convince Kim Jong Il that it's not in his country's interests to arm up with nuclear weapons," Mr. Bush said, standing in front of the coffee shop in a light windbreaker, after a morning of working around his ranch. "And I believe that can be resolved peacefully."

China has denounced North Korea's actions, but it has stopped short of saying it will join in any economic sanctions against the country — a critical omission, because China is one of the North's most important trading partners.

In discussing Iraq, the president told reporters, "I hope we're not headed to war." But he quickly added: "We've got a military presence there to remind Saddam Hussein, however, that when I say we will lead a coalition of the willing to disarm him if he chooses not to disarm, I mean it. And we will continue to work to resolve the situation on the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful way."

In private, some of Mr. Bush's aides offer a more explicit explanation of the difference in the administration's approach to the two countries. They argue that the North's existing nuclear capability, and its ability to wreak enormous damage on Seoul with its conventional weapons, has led them to conclude that the United States has no viable military options, at least without risking the rekindling of the Korean War.

Mr. Hussein, they contend, is the more dangerous of the two men, seeking regional domination rather than just survival. They say he must be confronted before he obtains the kinds of weapons of mass destruction that Mr. Kim already possesses.

One of Mr. Bush's senior national security officials argued over the weekend, however, that the United States was not putting North Korea on the back burner while it dealt with Iraq, and did not need to do so. "We can handle both," the official said.

Mr. Christopher's article today suggested that no president, even in a White House as disciplined as this one, could manage that feat.

"Anyone who has worked at the highest levels of our government," he wrote, "knows how difficult it is to engage the attention of the White House on anything other than the issue of the day."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/01/international/asia/01PREX.html>

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N. Korea Threatens To Abandon Treaty ***Talks With U.S. Only Way To Ease Conflict Over Nuclear Program, Pyongyang Says***

By Peter S. Goodman, Washington Post Foreign Service

North Korea threatened today to withdraw from the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty, the international accord that is the foundation of efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, as the last two U.N. nuclear monitors left the reclusive country following their formal expulsion. According to Russia's Interfax news agency, North Korea's ambassador to Moscow, Pak Ui Chun, claimed that North Korea had been forced to pursue developing nuclear weapons by the United States, which, he asserted, has not only cut off supplies of fuel oil, but is also "threatening us with a preventative nuclear strike."

"In these circumstances, we also cannot fulfill the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the basic clause of which is the obligation of nuclear states not to use the nuclear weapon against states which do not possess it," he said.

Pak added that the conflict could be solved only through direct negotiations between North Korea and the United States -- a step President Bush has rejected, asserting that it would effectively reward North Korea for engaging in nuclear blackmail.

U.S. officials have strongly denied making threats to attack North Korea, while emphasizing that the Bush administration hopes that diplomacy can prevent a nuclear confrontation on the Korean Peninsula. President Bush underscored that stance today by calling the situation "a diplomatic showdown" and "not a military showdown." Still, North Korea's threat to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons -- to which it had acceded in 1985 and tried to withdraw from in 1993 -- could ratchet up the level of confrontation. Diplomats in the South Korean capital said today that if North Korea follows through, it will strengthen the likelihood that the Bush administration will succeed in gaining support at the U.N. Security Council for action -- perhaps a stern warning or economic pressure.

But further signs emerged today of a divide between the United States -- which hopes to contain North Korea through economic and political isolation -- and its regional allies, particularly South Korea.

South Korea's president-elect, Roh Moo Hyun, who was elected this month on a pledge to continue his country's "sunshine policy" of engagement with the North, criticized Washington for embracing containment as a means of limiting North Korea's nuclear threat.

"I am skeptical whether so-called tailored containment reportedly being considered by the United States is an effective means to control or impose a surrender on North Korea," he told reporters. "Success or failure of a U.S. policy toward North Korea isn't too big a deal to the American people, but it is a life-or-death matter for South Koreans. Therefore, any U.S. move should fully consider South Korea's opinion."

Roh's comments came a day after South Korea's outgoing president, Kim Dae Jung, assailed the containment policy advanced by the United States as an antiquated and ineffective relic of the Cold War.

Tonight, more than 20,000 South Koreans gathered in Seoul in the biting cold of an outdoor square for the latest anti-American protest -- this one a candlelight vigil for two teenage girls crushed to death in June by a U.S. Army mine-clearing vehicle during a training exercise.

A U.S. military tribunal in November acquitted two soldiers involved in the accident on charges of negligent homicide, enraging much of the South Korean public. The protesters, who held candles and sang, demanded that the two be subject to a new trial in local courts. They also called on the United States to apologize to the girls' families and pay them compensation.

Though the vigil was nominally focused on the two girls, many protesters injected their feelings about the nuclear tensions. Some carried signs proclaiming "No Blood in Korea" and "Stop the War." Many said they were concerned about the prospect of North Korea developing nuclear weapons, but felt it was an issue Koreans could sort out for themselves.

"It's not Bush's problem, it's my country's problem," said one protester, Roh Jae Won, 33. "Before, our relations with North Korea were getting better and better. But now President Bush is putting so much pressure on them that there's no give and take. What we need is negotiation and cooperation."

The confrontation between North Korea and the United States stems from the disintegration of a deal that settled the last outbreak of nuclear brinkmanship on the Korean Peninsula in 1994. In that case, North Korea promised to

abandon its nuclear program and submit to U.N. inspections in exchange for shipments of fuel oil and the building of nuclear power plants by the United States and its allies.

But after disclosures in October that North Korea had been secretly pursuing the development of uranium-based nuclear weapons, the Bush administration cut the fuel shipments. North Korea then began reviving a nuclear reactor complex capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium and expelled the inspectors.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A60811-2002Dec31.html>

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Jerusalem Post
January 2, 2003

Senior Officer Warns Of Al-Qaida Chemical Threat

By Margot Dudkevitch

The Western world should be prepared for the possibility of al-Qaida and other terrorist groups gaining chemical warfare capability to use against it in the distant future, a senior IDF officer told military reporters in Tel Aviv Wednesday. But he called an attack on Israel by Iraq unlikely.

He said one of six senior al-Qaida officials operating in countries such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia recruits Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, trains them mainly in the techniques of bomb making, and supplies them with funds to plan and plot attacks against Israeli targets, operating as independent cells.

The officer noted that in January 2001, Osama bin Laden linked up with Iman a-Zwahil, the Egyptian terrorist leader, in order to expand the organization's activities.

"Without joining forces with the Egyptian, al-Qaida could not have prepared for the September 11 attacks in the US and expanded its activities," he said.

Al-Qaida also wages an economic jihad, striving to destroy tourism and hit a countries in the pocketbook in order to prove to the world that it is strong enough to create economic instability, according to the officer.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said last month that al-Qaida had infiltrated into the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, where it linked up with Hizbullah.

Chances of an escalation in the North by the Hizbullah in the event of a US attack on Iraq are unlikely, the officer said, but noted that Israel is monitoring cooperation and contacts between Syria, Iran, and Iraq and the ongoing manufacturing of weapons by Syria, which has transferred some to Hizbullah. Israel is also monitoring the transfer of "sensitive equipment" among the three countries, which began in the spring of 2002.

The officer mentioned that this is besides the permanent weapons run from Iran to Hizbullah. Israel estimates that a US campaign against Iraq is most likely to occur between the end of January and the beginning of March, the officer said, adding that chances of an attack on Israel are slim. He noted that there are no signs that Iraq has nuclear capability.

While security officials admit that Iraq may have chemical and biological warfare remaining from the Gulf War 12 years ago, they doubt whether it is capable of launching them against Israel. It is believed that 20-50 rockets and six mobile launchers are still in Iraq's possession.

There is also no indication that Iraq has sent nonconventional weapons to this area to be used by terrorist groups against Israel in the event of a US attack on Iraq, he added.

The officer noted that Israel's defensive capability has advanced considerably since the Gulf War, particularly with the addition of the Arrow anti-missile missile.

"Today the situation is far less of a threat than it was then," the officer said, adding, "While there is a very low possibility of being attacked by Iraq, it doesn't mean one should not be prepared."

Regarding the threat of an attack using smallpox, the official said there is no information available to prove that Iraq has that capability.

Russia, he said, created the virus prior to the 1991 Gulf War, but there is no information regarding whether the virus was transferred to Iraq or other countries.

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Washington Post
January 3, 2003
Pg. 1

U.N. Inspectors Ready To Step Up Pace

As Report Deadline Nears, Evidence of Banned Iraqi Weapons Seems Lacking

By Peter Baker, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Jan. 2 -- After five weeks in Iraq, U.N. weapons inspectors have rebuilt an operation that lay fallow for four years and, by Iraqi count, checked out 230 sites in a blitz of searches uninterrupted by weekends or holidays. Now the inspectors are ready to step up the pace even more, using helicopters to descend swiftly on suspect sites and opening a regional office to widen the hunt for banned arms or research programs.

But Iraqi officials maintain that the operation has yet to turn up any proscribed weapons and, privately, some U.N. officials agree. "If we'd found a shed full of Scud missiles, don't you think we would have reported it to the [Security] Council?" said a U.N. official who asked not to be identified.

That does not mean that inspectors have not found subtler clues that, added together, might point to violations -- "precursor" chemicals that could be used to develop weapons, for example, or aluminum tubes that could be used in enriching uranium. And the Bush administration, which insists that Iraq possesses banned weapons, has pledged to provide intelligence to help the inspectors find what they are looking for.

But if inspectors do not produce more conclusive proof in the days and weeks to come, the United States might find it difficult to convince other nations of the need to go to war against President Saddam Hussein's government. The U.N. inspectors have just a week before their chief, Hans Blix, must deliver a status report to the Security Council and 18 days more before he presents findings under the Nov. 8 council resolution mandating Iraqi cooperation with the inspections.

Iraqi officials said today that Blix has accepted an invitation to return to Baghdad in the third week of January to talk about "pending issues" -- in effect, a last chance to satisfy his concerns before making his conclusions to the Security Council on Jan. 27.

In the meantime, the inspection force has assembled a fleet of six U.S.- and Russian-made helicopters to begin exploring the country from the air and pouncing on faraway sites with greater surprise. On Saturday, it expects to open its first branch office, in a hotel in Mosul, about 240 miles north of Baghdad.

Until now, Iraq has responded to the inspection process with calm cooperation, opening every door with virtually no significant delays or trouble. Yet as it becomes clear that the United States is sending more troops to the Persian Gulf region despite lack of new evidence, Iraqi officials have grown increasingly irritated with the U.N. team and stepped up the anti-American rhetoric they had largely eschewed at the beginning of the inspections.

In the last few days, directors of facilities have bristled at the behavior of the inspectors. One complained that they stormed into his missile plant like "a gang." Another groused about an unannounced visit on New Year's Day, when everyone was off on holiday. Yet another complained today that the repeated visits were interrupting his staff's work.

Gen. Hussam Mohammed Amin, the chief Iraqi liaison to the U.N. team, endorsed the grievances. "We think with him that this entry was provocative and touching our dignity," he said today, referring to the "gang" complaint.

"When you come to my house and you want to visit my house, you can say, 'Please, good morning, I want to visit this room or that room.' . . . When you go directly without apologizing and running inside the site . . . this is unacceptable really and touching the Iraqi sensitivities and Iraqi feelings."

Amim said his scientists had shadowed the inspectors everywhere they went and could determine for themselves that the U.N. team had found no violations. His conclusion was backed up by recent comments of an inspector who told a Los Angeles Times reporter that "we would have zilch to put" in any report now.

Yet the latest news of planned U.S. troop movements appears to have convinced Iraq that the inspections will not sway Washington. "They didn't say, 'Let us wait for a while for the result of the inspection and then let's decide what to do,' " Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz told visiting Spanish peace activists today. "When they continue their preparations for the war of aggression, what does that mean? It doesn't mean that they are genuinely afraid of an imaginary Iraqi threat. It means that they have an imperialist design."

Readmitting the inspectors was a calculated risk by Hussein's government that it could avoid a U.S.-led attack by displaying cooperation. But the government created a difficult position for itself when officials issued categorical statements denying any current development of ballistic missiles or chemical, nuclear or biological weapons, leaving themselves no room to make concessions and making the government vulnerable if anything were found.

A foreign official working here said he still expected Iraqi officials to find a way to walk back that absolute denial and admit a little here or there as a strategic way to ease the pressure, just as they did during the seven years that inspectors operated in Iraq before withdrawing under pressure in 1998. A diplomat concurred that the Iraqis still have some moves left. "There will be more [concessions]. Definitely there will be more," he said. "This is a chess game being executed on 10 levels at the same time."

Mohammed Muthafar Adhami, dean of political science at Baghdad University and a member of the Iraqi parliament, said the strategy was to divide the United States from its allies by going along with inspections. "The most important thing is to keep cooperating with the inspection teams," he said. "If there is any breach of [U.N. Resolution] 1441, it means war. At least, that's the American point of view."

Iraq has played host to a stream of peace delegations arriving from Europe and the United States. Aziz met with a group of U.S. religious leaders who spent the last few days visiting schools, hospitals and other locales here, then issued a statement today condemning a potential war against Iraq as "completely antithetical" to the teachings of Jesus.

"Preemptive war is immoral and illegal," said Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches and a former member of Congress from Pennsylvania. "It is theologically illegitimate and profoundly violates our Christian beliefs and religious principles."

Melvin G. Talbert, a United Methodist bishop who joined a similar mission just before the Persian Gulf War of 1991, said he was struck by the difference in Aziz's tone. "This time he was much more cordial," Talbert said. "This time he was understanding of the importance of our being here. . . . He understood that the image of Iraq in our country is a negative one and we're here to put a positive spin on things."

Staff writer Colum Lynch at the United Nations contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A3616-2003Jan2.html>

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Washington Times

January 3, 2003

Pg. 7

Inside The Ring

By Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough

Iraqi railroad labs

Defense officials tell us Iraq is suspected of converting railroad cars into mobile weapons laboratories as a way to circumvent U.N. arms inspections.

The intelligence reports were distributed within the U.S. government by a Pentagon intelligence service, but the CIA was skeptical.

U.N. inspectors have not conducted any searches of Iraqi rail facilities for such labs, which could be disguised as mobile medical facilities.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told reporters in July that Iraq had deployed biological weapons labs in trailers. U.N. arms inspectors have not reported finding any of those mobile labs.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030103-9789688.htm>

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San Antonio Express-News

January 3, 2003

Lackland Gets A Shot At Smallpox Vaccine

By Sig Christenson, Express-News Military Writer

Fourteen airmen, including one general, rolled up their sleeves Thursday and became the first people in San Antonio to be inoculated against smallpox since the Pentagon ended the practice more than a decade ago.

The vaccine was given to medical personnel at Lackland AFB's Wilford Hall Medical Center. Eight officers and six enlistees were selected after being screened for medical conditions that would disqualify them from getting vaccinated.

They'll now administer the vaccine to others, or — in the case of an outbreak — care for those infected with smallpox.

"If there was a case of smallpox identified, it would be assumed that this was a biowarfare or terrorist event," said Col. (Dr.) Larry Hagan, educational director for Wilford Hall's Department of Allergy and Immunology.

Wilford Hall and an undisclosed number of other military installations have started vaccinating volunteers as a first step toward preparing for a terror attack involving smallpox.

As many as 200 specialists and other personnel at Wilford Hall will be vaccinated when the Pentagon issues the order, which Hagan expects to come soon.

A little more than 10 million public health workers in communities around the country will be given the vaccinations under a plan recently unveiled by President Bush, who was vaccinated just before Christmas. He has shown no adverse effects, a White House spokesman said.

Though the federal government is offering the vaccine to volunteer smallpox response teams, it's not recommending that residents get inoculations. Provisions, however, are being made for those who want the vaccine.

Civilian vaccinations won't begin until after Jan. 24, the date when the Homeland Security Act of 2002 takes effect. Bill Pierce, a spokesman with the Department of Health and Human Services, said he believes that, so far, only the military has been given the vaccine.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will send about 40,000 doses of vaccine to the Texas Department of Health, which will distribute them to hospitals and public health departments.

The Defense Department wouldn't say Thursday how many doses it will use, but Pentagon spokesman Jim Turner said more than 500,000 troops would receive it.

"Our program basically reflects in many ways the public health program, but for our designated personnel it is mandatory for certain people in the military who would be deploying to certain high-risk areas," he said.

That likely means troops serving in the Persian Gulf region, already inoculated against anthrax, will be given the smallpox vaccine.

As the vaccination program began in San Antonio, the Air Force took extra care in administering the vaccinations. It gave them in a small building away from the main medical center and sealed off the inoculation area around the upper arm with see-through patches. That will prevent anyone from coming into contact with the vaccine, a live virus that can spread to others.

The Air Force didn't identify those taking the vaccine, citing Pentagon policy. A 25-year-old immunization technician and a 32-year-old physician said they harbored no fears about the inoculations, given by a thin, finger-length needle.

"For me, the benefits far outweigh the risks," the doctor said.

A health scourge for centuries, smallpox was declared eradicated in 1980 by the World Health Organization, with the last naturally occurring case found three years before in Somalia. Military vaccinations continued, but were limited to recruits entering basic training.

The Pentagon's vaccination program ended in 1990, but was revived after the 9-11 attacks and a spate of letters laced with anthrax that followed.

"If you thought that airliners hitting skyscrapers was a low-probability event before 9-11, if you thought high-grade weaponized anthrax was a low probability before 9-11, I think the administration now is moving very much in the direction of taking precautions," said Andrew Krepinevich Jr., a former aide to three defense secretaries who heads the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. "And, arguably, not moving fast enough to suit some people."

<http://news.mysanantonio.com/story.cfm?xla=saen&xlc=910722>

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New York Times

January 3, 2003

Director Quits Los Alamos Under Fire

By Kenneth Chang

The director of the nation's pre-eminent nuclear weapons laboratory has resigned amid investigations of corruption and missing equipment, officials said yesterday.

John C. Browne, director of Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico since November 1997, submitted his resignation on Dec. 23, according to the University of California, which manages the laboratory for the Department of Energy. Joseph Salgado, the laboratory's principal deputy director, also resigned. The resignations will take effect on Monday.

George P. Nanos, a retired Navy vice admiral who is a deputy associate director at Los Alamos, will become interim director while the university looks for a permanent replacement.

"These changes reflect the university's deep concern about the allegations that have been made about Los Alamos business practices and our absolute and steadfast commitment to addressing them in a timely manner," Richard C. Atkinson, president of the University of California, said.

The university said it delayed the announcement of the resignation until Admiral Nanos had been selected as interim director and laboratory employees returned to work.

In a stern letter to Dr. Atkinson on Dec. 24, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said he was "deeply concerned" about the situation at Los Alamos. Noting that in November the laboratory fired two investigators looking into the accusations, Mr. Abraham wrote that the reported abuses "reflect a systematic management failure, one for which laboratory management must be held accountable."

The University of California has run Los Alamos under contract to the federal government since the laboratory was founded in 1943, developing during World War II the world's first atomic bombs. The latest five-year contract extension began in January 2001.

But Mr. Abraham said in his letter that "taken together, these problems have called into question the University of California's ability to run the Los Alamos National Laboratory."

Other management changes will put the laboratory under closer scrutiny. Los Alamos's auditor, administrators and business managers will now report directly to the university president instead of the laboratory's chief administrator. A management oversight board will be appointed to help Admiral Nanos.

In March, Glenn Walp, a former chief of the Arizona Capitol police hired by the laboratory, wrote a memorandum to Los Alamos administrators outlining more than \$3 million worth of equipment that had been reported lost from October 1998 to September 2001. An investigation also found credit card abuses, including an employee who tried to buy a \$30,000 Ford Mustang.

Another investigator, Steven Doran, who was police chief of Idaho City, Idaho, before being hired by Los Alamos in July, said yesterday that he and Mr. Walp had uncovered rampant abuse in the use of the laboratory's credit cards and purchase orders. Laboratory employees — primarily members of the support staff, not the scientists — had bought expensive lawn furniture, barbecue grills, gift certificates for massages, jewelry and even \$9,000 worth of military knives, Mr. Doran said.

"We found just an extensive abuse and misuse of taxpayer dollars, in the millions," he said. "It's part of the culture. Even now, they truly cannot see the error of their ways."

Mr. Doran said that when he was fired he was told only that he "did not fit in with lab culture."

A review by a former inspector general for the Energy Department and accountants at PricewaterhouseCoopers L.L.P. found \$3.7 million of unreconciled purchases. But the laboratory said that as of Dec. 18 all but \$121,000 of its purchasing accounts had been reconciled, and \$20,000 worth of questionable transactions were still being reviewed.

"The allegation that there are millions of dollars of Los Alamos property involved in the misuse of credit cards is absolutely false, and that was proven by this external review," said Linn Tytler, a laboratory spokeswoman.

At the time of the firings, Philip Kruger, the deputy human resources director for Los Alamos, said the firings were not in retaliation, but "were related to loss of confidence."

Investigators from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Energy's inspector general's office and Congress are also looking into the accusations.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/03/national/03ALAM.html>

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National Defense

January 1, 2003

Pg. 12

ROK Fears North Korean Ability To Wage Asymmetric Warfare

By Roxana Tiron

A buildup of conventional weapons by North Korea is a more immediate concern to its southern neighbor than a potential nuclear threat, South Korean officials said in Washington, D.C.

“The threat of the conventional military power cannot be overlooked,” said Lt. Maj. Gen. Young Han Moon, the defense attaché of the Republic of Korea (ROK). “North Korea has continued its military buildup and has been increasing its stock of strategic weapons and conventional forces.”

Moon emphasized that not only are North Korean conventional forces far larger than the ROK’s, but their artillery and missiles easily could strike South Korea.

“The most dangerous fact is that approximately 60-65 percent of the artillery pieces are deployed forward along the DMZ [demilitarized zone], hidden in tunnel positions,” Moon said. Compared to North Korea’s estimated 1.5 million soldiers, the ROK has about 690,000 troops, said South Korean Army Col. Kye Su Park, the military attaché in Washington, D.C.

North Korea is in a position to wage “asymmetric warfare,” said Moon, because of the steady growth in its special operations forces and in its capabilities to develop chemical and biological weapons.

“North Korea is believed to have more than 100,000 special operations forces [soldiers] and hold a stockpile of 2,500 to 5,000 tons of anthrax and chemical agents,” he said. That would make North Korea’s special operations force twice as large as that of the United States, which has about 46,000 members.

North and South Korea made attempts at reconciliation and tried to reduce the military tension back in June 2000, when the two presidents met in Pyongyang for the first time since the division of the Korean peninsula in 1945.

“Much progress seemed to have been made ... to improve the inter-Korean relationships,” said Moon. “But the naval clash which occurred last June in the West Sea, and North Korea’s recent confession of the developing nuclear program drove the Korean peninsula into a more serious and difficult situation.”

A violent skirmish between the two Korean navies on the Yellow Sea (West Sea) left at least four South Korean sailors dead and at least 19 others injured, when a North Korean vessel allegedly crossed the Northern Limit Line, a demarcation on the West Sea established by the United Nations.

North and South Korea have been divided since the 1950-53 Korean War and remain technically at war—never having signed a peace treaty. But North Korea rejected the Northern Limit Line during the armistice negotiations, claiming a zone of 12 nautical miles, instead of the 3 nautical miles set by the U.N. As a result, the North does not observe the line, often sending fishing boats and naval ships into the zone, said South Korean officials.

Meanwhile, South Korea has been bolstering its weapon acquisition programs, spending 33 percent of its defense budget on modernization efforts. The total budget for the ROK government for fiscal year 2003 is approximately \$90 billion, said Moon. Of that, \$14 billion is allocated to national defense.

“Compared to 2002, the defense budget for 2003 has increased by \$800 million, which is 6.4 percent,” Moon said. “The increase is a little bit high because for the last five years, the average growth of the defense budget has been 4.8 percent.” The average growth of the force modernization programs has been 2.4 percent for the last five years, he added.

The high-priority programs are the Multiple Launch Rocket System, unmanned aerial vehicles for ground forces, the Korea Destroyer project, the SSX (submarine project for the Navy), a new fighter program for the Air Force, as well as a surface-to-air missile program, dubbed the SAM-X, according to Moon. However, he said, South Korea’s anti-missile program will be delayed, in order to fund more pressing Army programs.

According to the naval attaché, Cmdr. Jim Hyung Kim, South Korea plans to introduce major upgrades into its navy. In July, the government awarded Lockheed Martin a \$1.2 billion contract for three Aegis combat systems for the ROK Navy’s three new 7,000-ton KDX-III destroyers. The Aegis air-defense technology can track up to 100 targets, at ranges out to 500 km. Kim said the KDX III will be commissioned in 2008.

In addition to the Aegis system, the ROK Navy is seeking new surface-to-air missiles (SAM-X). Among the options being considered is a new series of Raytheon Standard Missile II Block 4 missiles.

The F-X fighter is one of four major weapons procurement projects started in 1999. Others include a next-generation attack helicopter (AH-X) and an airborne surveillance system (E-X).

The F-X program originally was planned for 120 aircraft, but subsequently was cut down to 40, said Col. Hyung Chul Kim, South Korea’s air attaché.

In a highly contested competition, the Boeing F-15K beat France’s Rafale, the Eurofighter-2000 and Russia’s Su-35. John Pike, a military weapons expert, wrote on his Web site www.globalsecurity.org, that Dassault’s Rafale barely edged out Boeing’s F-15K by a margin of 1.1 percent in the first round of competition. “The U.S. model and the French-built Rafale were very close in the first-stage evaluation of costs, operational capabilities, technology transfer and compatibilities with existing weapons systems,” said Pike.

The South Korean Air Force selected General Electric engines for the fighter jets, said Kim.

The 40 fighter-jet deal is valued at more than \$4 billion and now has entered a second phase of evaluation, which would focus heavily on the fighter’s interoperability with allied U.S. forces.

“The F-15K will reinforce the combined operational capability between [South] Korea and the U.S. Air Force, and these aircraft must be the key assets to obtain and maintain air superiority over the Korean Peninsula in case of conflict,” Kim said.

Additionally, he noted, the F-X program is expected to help boost the South Korea’s aerospace industry and “obtain the technology necessary to develop her own fighter aircraft in the near future.”

The South Koreans plan to roll out the T-50 Golden Eagle, a supersonic advanced jet trainer by 2005. The trainer is being developed by KAI (Korea Aerospace Industries, Ltd.) and Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, as the principle subcontractor. The U.S. firm developed the T-50 avionics system, flight control system and wings.

The first flight took place in October 2002. The T-50 will replace the aging fleets of F-4s and F-5s.

Historically, the United States has been South Korea’s top arms supplier. But that nation increasingly is developing its own defense industrial capabilities, experts said.

Nevertheless, defense attaché Young Han Moon, stressed that his country needs continuous support from the United States.

Since the end of the Korean War, the United States has contributed to the defense of South Korea. About 37,000 U.S. troops currently are deployed to that country.

Defense attaché Moon said that the stationing of American troops is still “vital to the ROK defense posture” and help maintain the peace in the region. North Korea, he said, repeatedly has demanded the withdrawal of U.S. forces, known as USFK.

“They used tactics to urge the phased reduction of the forces, or sometimes they suggest the conditional change of the role of the USFK,” he said. “My government’s position regarding the USFK is firm and clear. As long as a threat remains in the Korean peninsula, the presence of USFK is crucial. Even after unification, we believe the USFK should remain stationed in the Korean peninsula for the stability of the region.”

Moon said that he is hopeful inter-Korean relations will improve. “Lots of progress can be made in exchanging military personnel and information, the installation of a hotline, notification of and participation in military exercises, the peaceful utilization of the DMZ, connection of the rail road and further reduction talks regarding conventional forces.”

<http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/article.cfm?Id=1002>

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