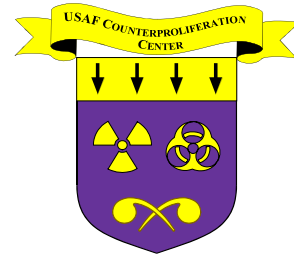


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Washington Post

February 10, 2003

Pg. 1

U.N. Inspectors Fail To Win Key Iraq Concessions

Baghdad Meetings Yield Little

By Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Feb. 9 -- The top U.N. arms experts said tonight that they were unable to reach agreement with Saddam Hussein's government on several key issues they had traveled here to resolve in a bid to build support for continuing weapons inspections.

The two chief U.N. inspectors, Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, failed to achieve three top goals during two days of meetings with senior Iraqi officials: the disclosure of significant new evidence about Iraq's past weapons programs, safety guarantees from Iraq for reconnaissance aircraft to aid in inspections; and a high-level declaration criminalizing the production of nuclear, chemical or biological arms.

Blix sought to cast the talks in the most positive light possible by saying he saw the beginning of an Iraqi understanding that it must seriously observe U.N. demands for disarmament, but he acknowledged at a news conference this evening that he had not achieved a "breakthrough." Iraqi concessions on substantive issues, he said, were "less good" than he was expecting.

The results of the meetings could have a far-reaching impact on the diplomatic brawl at the United Nations over U.S. demands that the inspections cease and that military force to topple Hussein be approved by the Security Council. U.N. officials said the discussions will play a significant role in shaping a crucial progress report Blix plans to give the council on Friday, and lack of agreement likely will be seized upon by the Bush administration to reinforce its case that the inspections are not working.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, asked about Blix's statements, noted that the president has said: "Given the fact that Saddam Hussein is not disarming, time is running out."

In remarks delivered to congressional Republicans before Blix spoke today, President Bush said Hussein "wants the world to think that hide-and-seek is a game that we should play."

"It's over," Bush said. "It's a moment of truth for the United Nations. The United Nations gets to decide shortly whether or not it is going to be relevant in terms of keeping the peace, whether or not its words mean anything."

The inspectors did receive several documents that Iraqi officials said would answer long-standing questions about Iraq's past nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programs, specifically the production of anthrax bacteria and VX nerve gas, as well as the development of two rockets U.N. experts believe can exceed a 93-mile limit imposed on Iraqi missiles. But one U.N. official who saw the papers characterized them as "talking points" and not the sort of new evidence the inspectors had been seeking.

"They are welcomed," Blix said of the documents, "but they are not the answer."

Blix also said the issue of private interviews with Iraqi scientists now appeared to be a "mixed bag." Of the five non-nuclear scientists whom inspectors sought to interview in confidence since Thursday, only three agreed to do so without a government official present, U.N. sources said.

Despite the overall lack of progress, Blix and ElBaradei said they still held out hope that Iraq would relent on some of their key demands in coming days. A senior Iraqi official said tonight that his government hoped to reach a deal on the reconnaissance flights before Blix speaks to the council on Friday. The Iraqi government also said it would set up a commission to find and hand over documents wanted by the inspectors.

"I would say I'm beginning to see a change of heart on the part of Iraq," ElBaradei said.

In this weekend's meetings with Blix and ElBaradei, Iraqi officials for the first time stopped dismissing the contention that Iraq still has unresolved disarmament issues, a senior U.N. official said. "They finally acknowledged there were issues that needed to be resolved," the official said.

But ElBaradei, who heads the International Atomic Energy Agency, expressed frustration that Iraq still was not moving with enough alacrity to address those issues. "At this crucial time, at this critical time, we need 100 percent Iraqi cooperation," he said.

ElBaradei said he and Blix were mindful of the desire of the Security Council "to see quick progress," saying he told Iraqi officials that the world would "need to see . . . drastic change" in the coming days. "Something spectacular has to happen," he said.

The two-day visit, the second Blix and ElBaradei have made to Baghdad in a month, starkly illustrated the diplomatic tightrope both men must walk. While they are trying to prod Iraqi officials to be more cooperative, they fear that being overly critical will fuel U.S. efforts to pull the plug on the inspections. As a consequence, both men sought to nudge Iraq along, saying they hoped disarmament still could be achieved without a war.

"The ball is very much in Iraq's court," ElBaradei said. "If we see full cooperation . . . on all the issues, then I believe we will be given time we need. As long as we're registering good progress, I think the Security Council will continue to support the inspection process."

Saying they were hopeful Iraq would offer more concessions, Blix and ElBaradei called for a continuation of the inspections. "Inspection does work," ElBaradei said. "Inspections are making progress and, in fact, inspection is -- and can -- provide an alternative to war."

Asked about a statement by Bush that "the game was over" for Iraq, Blix said: "Well, we are still in the game."

Hussein's top adviser on weapons issues, Gen. Amir Saadi, expressed guarded optimism that Iraq's hand-over of documents and its promise to resolve the issue of reconnaissance flights would be welcomed in the Security Council. "We believe it should satisfy the skeptics and also satisfy the fair minded," he said. "That's best we can do. If something else happens, we hope sanity will prevail."

The inspectors want guarantees from the Iraqis that they would not attempt to shoot down U-2 surveillance aircraft flying under U.N. orders and marked with U.N. insignia. Iraqi officials have insisted they cannot assure the safety of the high-altitude planes if U.S. and British fighter jets do not cease patrols over portions of northern and southern Iraq designated as "no-fly" zones. Iraqi anti-aircraft guns and missile batteries routinely target the U.S. and British planes, and officials here have warned that a U-2, even if it was flying under U.N. authority, could be mistaken for a warplane.

Saadi said Iraq was trying to work out a compromise with the United Nations that would involve the inclusion of non-U.S. aircraft, including French and Russian jets as well as unmanned German drones, in the reconnaissance patrols.

"We are confident we can reach some measure of success soon," Saadi said.

The inspectors said today that they had found another empty missile warhead equipped to carry chemical weapons at an ammunition depot north of Baghdad. Inspectors have identified 18 such warheads over the past few weeks, although none was loaded with chemical agents.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A48929-2003Feb9.html>

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U.S. News & World Report

February 17, 2003

Six Deadly Fears

The U.S. military is confident of victory in Iraq, but at what price?

By Mark Mazzetti and Kevin Whitelaw

Donald Rumsfeld likes making lists. This is a man, after all, who lives by a collection of maxims known as "Rumsfeld's Rules." Yet few lists the defense secretary has ever compiled are more ominous than the one that now sits on his desk at the Pentagon. It is a collection of things that could go wrong if the United States goes to war with Iraq, and for months he has been steadily adding to it. He has yet to cross anything off.

With Colin Powell's address to the United Nations ratcheting up pressure on Saddam Hussein and a military conflict drawing ever closer, there is remarkable consensus among war planners about one thing--that the United States would win a second Gulf War, and in short order. "On the military side, the outcome is not in doubt," says one top officer. Iraq's ramshackle and ill-trained Army, they argue, would be little match against overwhelming U.S. military superiority. With 125,000 troops already in the region and the northern half of Kuwait converted into a vast marshaling yard, the Pentagon last week launched another round of deployments, sending the 101st Airborne Division and the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk toward the Persian Gulf. More than 42,000 British troops are poised for an attack, and cargo ships continue to bring a stream of tanks and armored vehicles into Kuwaiti ports. Retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey, whose 24th Mechanized Infantry Division helped execute the famous "left hook" attack against an Iraqi Army stronger than today's in Operation Desert Storm, puts it this way: "The Iraqis have no good military options. There is no technique, no tool that they can now adopt that will have any military significance on the outcome of the conflict."

Yet beneath the confidence among U.S. officials about the outcome, a general unease exists about the unintended consequences of trying to take down Saddam Hussein's regime. It could go smoothly: Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution estimates that as few as 100 U.S. soldiers may be killed. If things go badly, he predicts, that figure could hit 5,000. Saddam, many fear, like the biblical Samson, will bring the walls of the temple down around himself. "Based on a fair amount of trying to figure Saddam and his cronies out, I wouldn't try to predict how they will behave," remarks one senior Pentagon planner. "That's what makes them so dangerous." The following are scenarios that war planners tell *U.S. News* keep them up at night. Some of their worst-case scenarios they refuse to divulge, for fear of giving Saddam any more ideas.

1. Iraqi forces unleash their chemical or biological weapons arsenal.

After the 1991 Gulf War, the CIA reported that Saddam Hussein had ordered his troops to use chemical weapons if American troops crossed a certain line in Iraq. They didn't, and a fusillade of deadly gases was never launched. This time around, any war would go all the way to Baghdad, and U.S. intelligence is reporting that Saddam recently authorized his field commanders to use chemical weapons to combat a U.S. invasion. Most likely, Saddam would use artillery-delivered mustard gas and nerve agents against U.S. ground elements advancing on Baghdad. If so, says McCaffrey, "it's going to create conditions of abject misery, but it will have no impact on the pace of the operation." U.S. military planners are working to confound Iraq's ability to use these weapons. The invasion plan is designed to move swiftly, sow confusion, and cut off Saddam's command and control. Already, U.S. forces are conducting psychological operations to persuade local commanders to ignore orders to use weapons of mass destruction or face war-crimes charges in the aftermath. But the orders could still be carried out by the Special Security Organization, a powerful agency headed by one of Saddam's sons.

Iraq is most experienced at loading chemical weapons into artillery shells that could be used on the battlefield. Unprotected Iraqi civilians could be killed, and U.S. forces might still take casualties despite their protective gear, but U.S. forces could take out artillery batteries relatively quickly. Biological weapons could be scarier still, particularly if Saddam employed a nonconventional delivery system, such as aerosol sprayers hidden along major roads. "We might not even realize we've been slimed," says Michael Eisenstadt, a military expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Defenses against exotic agents like botulinum toxins are limited.

According to Powell, Iraq retains several dozen long-range Scud missiles it could use to hit nearby U.S. military command posts or against Israel in order to draw a response that could provoke the Arab world. But U.S. Scud-hunting techniques have improved since the last war, and special operations troops may already be scouring the western Iraqi desert to neutralize any remaining launchers.

In his presentation to the United Nations last week, Powell revealed a newer, more serious threat: Iraq has been testing unmanned aerial vehicles with a range of more than 300 miles. Combined with spraying technology that Iraq has previously developed, these could deliver deadly biological agents to a number of neighboring countries and nearby U.S. military bases.

2. Saddam Hussein makes a bloody last stand in Baghdad.

Baghdad is the one true prize in the fight for Iraq, but it could prove a costly one for U.S. troops. Many analysts think most Iraqis would simply hunker down in their homes and wait out the war. But the streets of the capital could provide a last-ditch defense for Saddam's most loyal troops: the Special Republican Guard and his fiercely disciplined security forces. "If you have 100,000 people willing to defend Saddam, that can cause a lot of casualties," says Kenneth Pollack, an Iraq analyst at the CIA during the Gulf War. Troops and tanks that make easy targets in the open desert are harder to attack in an urban setting, and war planners worry that civilian casualties and so-called collateral damage could weaken support for the U.S. war effort.

The Army's 1993 experience in Mogadishu, Somalia, where 18 Rangers were killed by Somali militiamen, is still fresh in the minds of officials at the Pentagon. In recent months, U.S. soldiers and marines have been assaulting mock cities in Louisiana, California, and Guam to prepare for what they might encounter in Baghdad. Marine Corps officials have also traveled to Israel to study how the Israeli Defense Forces quelled the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank town of Jenin. Yet military officials are still hopeful that after a massive bombardment of Saddam's power centers and wholesale defections of Iraqi troops, they might never have to apply what they've learned.

3. Iraq's oil wells are turned into fields of fire.

As they retreated from Kuwait in 1991, Iraqi troops committed one final indignity: They torched the country's oil wells. It took oil-field workers nine months to put the fires out, and Central Command is expecting Saddam would use the same tactic if the U.S. invades. According to intelligence officials, there are signs that Saddam has already wired some of Iraq's 1,500 oil wells to explode on his orders.

This time, war planners would try to dispatch U.S. or coalition forces to protect the oil fields before he could set them ablaze. But if he did, the result could be far worse than in 1991. Besides the fact that Iraq has more than twice as many wells as Kuwait, oil-field firefighters say the natural pressure in Iraq's oil wells may be double that of the Kuwaiti wells, meaning that fires would be more intense. In addition to polluting the air, the wells could foul the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, sources of water for drinking and irrigation, as well as dump 2 million to 3 million barrels of oil a day into the Persian Gulf.

Jeff Miller of Cudd Pressure Control, one of the oil-field firefighting companies the Pentagon has retained to cap burning wells, says that while firefighters were able to extinguish the 1991 fires at the rate of one blaze per day, it would take much longer in Iraq. "This looks like six to seven days per well in some locations, and multiply that by the number of wells, and you've got a huge environmental disaster." According to Miller, the Defense Department has contingency plans in place for his 38 employees as well as dozens of other firefighters from three other

companies. "They all have pagers, kind of like doctors," he says. If called, it would probably take them 24 to 48 hours to arrive, probably on military and civilian cargo planes that also carry their equipment.

4. Saddam puts civilians in harm's way.

As Air Force planners methodically pore over target lists, there is one wild card they can't control: a decision by Saddam to use human shields in Baghdad or other Iraqi cities. The opening phase of the war would be a massive air campaign on Baghdad to cut off Saddam's command and control. Military officials worry that Saddam could put Iraqi civilians or western reporters inside high-value targets, which the Pentagon may have to strike regardless. "It could be a very dangerous situation," Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Richard Myers recently acknowledged. Central Command also fears that Saddam might kidnap U.N. weapons inspectors, holding them hostage before the United Nations was able to pull them out of the country.

Such tactics could be part of a larger scorched-earth campaign Saddam would execute in his final days. The United States has gathered intelligence indicating that he would destroy mosques and power plants in an attempt to pin blame on western invaders. Saddam could even destroy the four key dams controlling the water supply in Iraq, flooding the southern marshlands and potentially killing thousands. During Operation Desert Storm, the U.S. military considered such a tactic to flood Baghdad, and now planners face the threat of Saddam's pulling out every stop to slow down a U.S. advance. Says Judith Yaphe of the National Defense University, "I don't trust him to leave anything sacred."

5. Terrorists acquire Saddam's weapons of mass destruction.

Whether or not Saddam is currently allied with al Qaeda, a war could push them closer. Indeed, the CIA has assessed that Saddam may well deliver chemical or biological weapons to terrorists as his "last chance to exact vengeance by taking a large number of victims with him."

Even if this didn't happen, the chemical and biological weapons stocks could still slip out of the country in the chaos following an invasion. "You can take one of the mobile biological labs and drive it across the border," says Pollack. "The greater possibility is they get across into the open arms of Syrian and Iranian border guards." These regimes already have their own programs to build weapons of mass destruction (WMD). But terrorists could well obtain smaller quantities of harmful agents, especially if, as U.S. officials allege, the stocks have been secreted all over the country. "There's nothing to say that an Iraqi bioscientist doesn't have a pile of the stuff in his freezer," says one former defense official.

For the U.S. military, anything connected to WMD is a top-priority target. Air Force planners have spent months trying to locate these stockpiles and determine whether or not they are safe to bomb. U.S. ground forces would blanket the country as quickly as possible, using defectors and scientists to locate the stockpiles.

Even short of a WMD attack, the risk of terrorism would be much higher if there is war. Iraq, for one, would try to hit U.S. targets. "They're putting terror teams out there," says one source with access to intelligence. More broadly, al Qaeda and other groups could use the war as further motivation to go after Americans.

6. Once Saddam is ousted, Iraq descends into chaos.

After war, Iraq could prove hard to control. The fate of Saddam himself is perhaps least worrisome because, even if he somehow escaped, few experts believe he could ever mount much of a guerrilla campaign. "If he is able to thumb his nose at us like Osama bin Laden, the United States is going to look ridiculous," says Edward Walker, a former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs. "But he won't be a threat once he's out of power, so it's more symbolic."

But Iraqis, freed from Saddam's repressive grip, could unleash a wave of revenge killings that could spin out of control. "After a period of bloodletting, there will have to be law and order," says one U.S. official. This would most likely take thousands of U.S. soldiers camping out in Iraq for many months. While most Iraqis probably would be happy to be rid of Saddam, there is great resentment after years of American-led sanctions. If the Iraqi death toll in a war is high, U.S. forces could be greeted very coldly.

American planners have devised a process for ruling Iraq that begins with an American general in charge and evolves over a period of more than 18 months into an Iraqi government. But no decisions have been made about who exactly would govern Iraq then. Iraq's numerous tribes, for example, could end up battling one another in a power struggle. U.S. officials think they can control it. "If we're the most powerful player in the region, they will want to be allied with us," says one planner. "If we have to pay for it, so be it."

Experts can spin out countless other scary scenarios. Kurdish parties could be tempted to push for independence. The country could split between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. Or neighbor Iran could meddle. "On some days, I get up

thinking this will be relatively quick and we will be left with a pretty good situation afterwards," says one U.S. official involved in the planning. "On other days, I wake up and think, 'Holy sh - -.'"

With Marianne Lavelle

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/issue/030217/usnews/17six.htm>

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Newsweek

February 17, 2003

Judging The Case

New threats from Al Qaeda lead to a high-threat alert as Powell lays out the evidence for a war against Iraq. The proof—and what's ahead

By Richard Wolffe and Daniel Klaidman

It was only a fake, a prop thrown into his speech for the benefit of the cameras. But Colin Powell's small vial of simulated anthrax was still too hot to handle for his aides as they flew to New York.

In a jittery nation fearful of war abroad and terrorist attacks at home, nobody wanted to carry the dried silicon powder onboard a commercial flight from the nation's capital. So it was left to Powell's spokesman, Richard Boucher, to carry the vial (complete with an official chemical analysis of its contents) on the secretary of State's plane, which took off from Andrews Air Force Base, to avoid triggering a terrorist alert at Reagan national airport. More than any murky satellite photo, Powell's prop—designed to show the world how much terror Saddam Hussein could unleash with a fraction of his secret weapons stockpile—would become the enduring image of the historic session at the United Nations. On the eve of war, and the eve of possible terrorist attacks, it looked like the sum of all fears.

As Powell cranked up the pressure to go to war, America's threat barometer was moving in the same direction. At the end of the week, the administration raised its official threat level to Code Orange—the second highest security alert—based on fresh warnings of Qaeda attacks on American targets. Intelligence sources say the planned attacks appear to be timed to take place between the end of the hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, in mid-February, and the start of war in Iraq. "Our reporting strongly suggests that Al Qaeda has completed preparations for multiple attacks with spectaculars set for the United States and probably Saudi Arabia, and is delaying them until just before or just after a war begins with Iraq," says a classified FBI bulletin obtained by NEWSWEEK. "In that situation, Al Qaeda attacks will be described as an effort to defend Iraqi Muslims against the attack of the U.S.-led Crusaders." NEWSWEEK has learned that one of the administration's most immediate concerns is the possibility of multiple attacks on American Jewish groups and businesses. Late last week FBI field offices across the country began contacting Jewish leaders and rabbis and urging them to enhance security. Other threats include reports of an attack using chemical, biological or radiological materials. "We had much more information on chem-bio stuff," says one senior law-enforcement official. "That really unnerved me."

For the Bush administration, those imminent terrorist threats only underscore the pressing need to go on the offensive against Baghdad. Saddam's terrorist ties were at the heart of Powell's pitch to the Security Council last week. Yet intelligence officials acknowledge that the Qaeda story remains the most tenuous piece of the Iraqi puzzle. And for many American allies, the prospect of a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq is seen as a dangerous provocation that could set off a new wave of terrorist attacks in Europe and the Arab world. "I'm not sure that the way you make people more moderate in the region is by bombing Baghdad," says Chris Patten, the European Union's commissioner for external affairs.

Battle-tested by countless military briefings, Powell was the embodiment of overwhelming force. In contrast to President George W. Bush's vague if forceful sermons on good and evil, Powell fired a 76-minute salvo of detailed evidence with photos, tapes, sources and place names. The most popular—and most respected—member of Bush's cabinet was gambling that American intelligence could shame and shock the United Nations into signing up for military action. In normal times, diplomats try to avert conflict. But here was the spectacle of America's most senior diplomat arm-twisting a reluctant world to go to battle. His public diplomacy transfixed a television audience across the planet; administration officials estimated a worldwide viewership of more than 1 billion. So just how convincing was Powell's case for war? And will Powell—and the United Nations—survive with their reputations intact?

At the United Nations, Powell found himself pitted against a worldwide antiwar movement led by France. Inside the Security Council, he engaged in a series of sharp exchanges with his French counterpart, Dominique de Villepin.

The retired general spent the morning excoriating the inspections process in Iraq, while the career French diplomat (and published poet) shuffled impatiently in his chair. At a closed-door lunch, France kept pushing the Council for more time and more inspectors. Finally, the normally easygoing Powell snapped. He charged that Paris, not Washington, was undermining the United Nations. "This Council has to stand by what it says," he insisted. "Resolution 1441 has been violated."

The early reviews of Powell's performance were mixed. In the U.S. audience he changed so many minds that half of all Americans are now ready to go to war immediately, compared with only a third last month, according to the new NEWSWEEK Poll. And yet overseas, Powell seemed to have little impact, as many prominent world leaders showed scant enthusiasm for the war. No matter how steadfastly Britain, Spain and Italy stood behind Bush and Powell, Washington found no support in Paris, Berlin, Moscow or Beijing. Several senior State Department officials believe (or fervently hope) that they already have a majority inside the Security Council for a second resolution against Iraq. But once again this week, the Bush administration is mounting another diplomatic offensive on the world's capitals.

On at least one point, Powell's evidence seemed overwhelming: the Iraqi game of deception and cover-up that frustrates the work of inspectors. Intercepted conversations between Iraqi officers were particularly damning. The day before the inspectors arrived in November, a colonel and brigadier talk about evacuating a "modified vehicle." In January, two Republican Guard officers clear out "forbidden ammo." Papers, missiles and computer hard drives have apparently gone missing, dispersed around the country. "One wonders how 200, 300 or 500 inspectors are going to disarm Iraq," said one senior State Department official, dismissing the French proposal to double or treble the number of inspectors in Iraq. At the White House the next day, Bush effectively abandoned U.S. support for the inspectors, saying: "The game is over."

Some U.N. sources criticized Powell for failing to acknowledge the past successes of inspectors in Iraq. Powell claimed that Iraq had kept "up to a few dozen" Scud-type missiles, but U.N. inspectors accounted for 817 of the 819 Scuds after the last gulf war. Powell also detailed "vast amounts of chemical weaponry" from the gulf-war years, while the U.N. inspectors said they verified the destruction of virtually all of Iraq's stocks.

If Powell was convincing about the pattern of Iraqi deception, his assertions about Saddam's terrorist links seemed less watertight. "Iraq today harbors a deadly terrorist network, headed by Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi," Powell asserted, "an associate and collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda lieutenants." Although Baghdad has long supported Palestinian terrorism, claims of an alliance between Iraq and Al Qaeda have been disputed by some CIA officials ever since the administration's hawks first floated the idea in the days and weeks after 9-11.

It was no coincidence that CIA Director George Tenet was sitting directly behind Powell as he made his pitch to the United Nations. For months, some in the CIA had been dismissive of the Bush team's assertions about a Baghdad-bin Laden link. Aware of the tensions, Powell wanted Tenet and his people engaged in writing and staging the speech, to signal that Washington was finally presenting a united front. (For Bush, the director's highly visible support was one of the high points of the presentation.) Tenet and his staff had spent several days helping to redraft Powell's speech in a conference room at the CIA's Langley, Va., headquarters. Much of the speechwriting at the CIA, including a pizza-fueled session that went late into the night on Saturday, concerned which intelligence to declassify for public consumption. For his part, Powell was keen to triple-rivet the accuracy of his claims and to translate the CIA's intel-speak into normal English. On the morning of his U.N. showdown, Powell traveled in his limo from the Waldorf-Astoria to Tenet's hotel to ensure they were photographed walking into the U.N. building together. And yet the agency's support was more tentative than the visuals suggested. While nobody questions the underlying data, like all intelligence assessments, the conclusions are in the eye of the beholder.

U.S. officials now say that what enabled the CIA, Pentagon and State Department to agree on Powell's alarming brief was the accumulation, since early last summer, of intelligence on the travels and activities of Zarqawi, a Palestinian born in Jordan. Zarqawi used to run his own terrorist-training camp in Afghanistan, close to the city of Herat. When the Taliban regime fell, he, like other Qaeda operatives, fled to neighboring Iran. But Zarqawi apparently sustained a serious leg wound while fighting American troops after 9-11. Last May, U.S. intelligence began to receive information that Zarqawi had checked into a Baghdad hospital to have his leg amputated and a prosthesis fitted. While in Baghdad, he apparently was joined by a dozen or more Qaeda "affiliates," as Powell described them in his speech. U.S. officials say the Jordanian government twice asked the Iraqis to extradite Zarqawi, but Baghdad did not respond; he later disappeared. Several of his associates are still in Baghdad, officials say.

According to German police documents obtained by NEWSWEEK, Zarqawi's goal is to kill the Jordanian king and replace his regime with an Islamist state. It was Zarqawi who paid and armed the killer of Laurence Foley, a State Department official in Amman, Jordan, in October.

More ugly details were provided by a captured Qaeda operative, according to Powell. The detainee described a web of Zarqawi associates across Europe and in such places as Chechnya and the wild-west Pankisi Gorge region of Georgia. Very recent intelligence tied Zarqawi to alleged plots by Qaeda suspects in Britain, France, Italy and Spain. One suspect arrested in Italy told interrogators the group had purchased toxins from Iraq "that would make Americans die like flies," according to a U.S. intelligence official.

However, some officials question whether this new intelligence means that Saddam is actively collaborating with Zarqawi's outfit. U.S. officials familiar with the evidence said just hours after Powell's speech that the nature of Zarqawi's relationship with Saddam's regime—and its role in his medical treatment—was "unknown." Rather than controlling Zarqawi's group, Saddam Hussein's police state could be just tolerating its limited presence in Iraq. Moreover, German police documents obtained by NEWSWEEK suggest that Zarqawi and his group have extremely close ties to—and regularly operate from—Iraq, rather than Iraq. (American sources counter that some crucial intelligence on the Iraqi connection to Al Qaeda was so sensitive that it was tightly held inside the U.S. government, and even within the intelligence community.) Powell's credibility was not helped by his high praise for a recent British paper on Iraqi deception. Tony Blair's spokesman admitted at the end of last week that sections of the report were copied from magazines and academic journals.

For Powell, and the administration, the lingering doubts matter little. Saddam's terrorist ties are not what brought U.N. arms inspectors to Iraq. Instead, Powell is focusing on Iraq's refusal to disarm, in line with last year's U.N. resolution. So the Bush administration has mapped out a strategy to maintain maximum pressure on the Security Council. The president will play host at the Oval Office to international leaders who support military action, such as Australia's Prime Minister John Howard, and Bush and Powell will continue to press for more international support before the U.N. inspectors return with another report on Friday.

Bush does not need another resolution to go to war in Iraq, and the Security Council's members know it. At the same time, White House officials have no desire to tackle the expensive job of rebuilding Iraq without full international backing. So the bargaining and feuding continue. European officials—including the Brits—are deeply skeptical about the administration's optimistic predictions that toppling Saddam could spark a democratic wave across the Arab world. Administration officials brush aside those Euro-fears, attributing them to nerves on the eve of a military action. A far more troubling question, still unresolved even within the administration, is what will come next in Iraq. Winning the war may be easy. Winning the peace is likely to be far tougher.

With Tamara Lipper, Michael Isikoff, Mark Hosenball, John Barry and Christopher Dickey

<http://www.msnbc.com/news/869606.asp?cp1=1>

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Boston Globe
February 9, 2003
Pg. 1

Hussein's Ex-Scientists Say Nuclear Bid Stymied

By Farah Stockman, Globe Staff

In 1980, one of Saddam Hussein's half-brothers arrived at the prison cell of a nuclear scientist with a message: If the scientist would help Iraq build an atomic bomb, the electric shocks would end, and he would be freed and showered with gifts and privileges at the presidential palace.

But Hussain Al-Shahristani, a University of Toronto graduate, says he refused the offer, and spent the next 11 years behind bars, serving as a living example to the rest of Iraq's nuclear experts of what would happen to those who defy Hussein.

The United States is at the brink of war with a country and a man who has long coveted nuclear arms. His well-documented quest for nuclear weapons, which spanned three decades, employed a mixture of brutality, patriotism, and reward to spur his cadre of Western-trained scientists to make progress on Iraq's nuclear weapons program. Despite Hussein's ambitions, he never actually obtained an atomic weapon, nuclear specialists and exiled Iraqi scientists say. Instead, he was thwarted by inspectors, US and Israeli bombs, and even his own scientists, who often dragged their feet and exaggerated their successes as they worked under the threat of imprisonment and assassination.

"The scientists were really only interested in the science, and having these expensive toys and the money," said David Albright, a former UN weapons inspector. "Their heart was not really in the atomic weapons program at all." Iraq's nuclear ambitions started well before Hussein took power in 1979.

In 1974, in an era of plenty for Iraq's nuclear program, a group of Iraqi scientists traveled to Paris to buy a nuclear reactor. Iraq had just ratified a nuclear nonproliferation treaty that allowed the scientists to conduct peaceful research in exchange for a pledge not to build a nuclear weapon. Iraq was the only country in the region able to produce radioactive isotopes for medical uses. And a group of bright young nuclear scientists had just returned to Iraq from universities in England and the United States to work at the Atomic Energy Commission.

Among them was Shahrastani, who had brought his Canadian wife home to Baghdad. Another was Jaffar Dhia Jaffar, a brilliant British-trained physicist from a wealthy family who had married a British woman, and a third was Khidhir Hamza, who studied at MIT and Florida State University.

"We had the degrees, we had the science, and we had the knowledge," said Imad Khadduri, a University of Michigan-trained nuclear physicist who returned to Baghdad around that time.

Shahrastani, Jaffar, and other scientists went to Paris to negotiate the purchase of the reactor and told the French it was for peaceful research, according to Hamza's memoir, titled "Saddam's Bombmaker."

But a year later, when then-Vice President Hussein flew to France to cement the deal, he told the Beirut magazine *al-Usbua al-Arabi* that his trip there was part of "the first Arab attempt at nuclear arming" after Israel had established a nuclear program.

Over the next few years, Iraqi scientists were asked by their government to build a nuclear bomb.

Shahrastani said he got his order in 1979, the year Hussein became president. Shahrastani, a member of the Shiite Muslim majority that has been persecuted by Hussein, said he was stunned by the order and began to criticize the government's human rights abuses.

"I was hoping, by that tactic, they would either fire me, or ... send me into retirement," Shahrastani said in a recent telephone interview from his London office.

Instead, he was arrested and tortured with electric shocks for 22 days, leaving him temporarily paralyzed.

Months later, Barzan al-Takriti, Hussein's half-brother, arrived at the jail.

"He told me that Saddam was sorry for what has happened to me, and they would like me to go back to work," Shahrastani said. "They have prepared the quarters for me at the presidential palace, they have a checkbook for me ... with blank checks, and I had all the privileges available to me of palace life.

"Then he said, 'Whoever is not willing to serve his country does not deserve to be alive,'" Shahrastani said. "I was lying on the floor, paralyzed, and I said, 'I agree with you it is a person's duty to serve his country, but what you are asking me to do is not serving my country.'"

Shahrastani says he stayed in prison for nearly 12 years. During the chaos of the Gulf War, he escaped, and he now heads the Iraqi Refugee Aid Council in London, where his life story was made into a documentary.

His imprisonment served as a reminder to those who remained in Iraq. Just after Shahrastani's arrest, his colleague Jaffar voiced support for Shahrastani and was put in jail, where he was forced to watch others being tortured, according to Judith Yaphe, a former US intelligence analyst and specialist on Iraq. Jaffar's wife, a British national, took up his case from London.

Eventually, Jaffar was released from prison. He returned to work and divorced his wife. Now one of the main Iraqi nuclear officials working with UN inspectors in Iraq, Jaffar is widely considered to be the father of Iraq's nuclear weapons program.

"I do consider him as a friend," said Shahrastani, who believes Jaffar saved his life. "But I also know that he went and worked on the program ... and I do not agree with him that that is patriotic - knowing what Saddam is."

In 1981, Israeli fighter jets fired on the French-built Iraq reactor, destroying it. The attack followed the assassination of Yahia El-Meshad, a key scientist on the Iraqi nuclear program, in Paris, where he had reportedly been arranging a shipment of enriched uranium.

But the setbacks only cemented Hussein's drive to produce a nuclear weapon, said Khadduri, who spoke to reporters for the first time in recent weeks from his home in Canada. He says he escaped Iraq with his family in 1998, "on the pain of death."

After the Israeli attack "we went full speed ahead with our nuclear weapons program, with unlimited resources," Khadduri said. "We are scientists. You ask the American Manhattan Project scientists how they felt ... We were in the same dilemma as these people were, trying very hard to appease our conscience and to appease our brains. Whether circumstances forced us, that is only for history to tell."

With the reactor destroyed, scientists poured their efforts into parallel attempts to produce fuel for a weapon: Jaffar's painstaking effort to produce weapons-grade uranium used a magnetic process called EMIS, developed in the 1940s, a regimen so old and cumbersome that its design had been declassified because no one believed that any country would ever try it. The scientists also said they tried to produce weapons-grade uranium with complex centrifuges, built with the help of unscrupulous German companies.

Despite almost unlimited resources, former inspectors, defecting scientists, and US officials say the scientists failed to produce enough enriched uranium for a weapon.

In his memoir, Hamza writes that Jaffar exaggerated his success and faked data for his superiors to avoid punishment and to buy time.

Albright, the former weapons inspector, said he has reviewed monthly reports written to Jaffar's superiors that showed a spike in the enrichment level of uranium. The spike was deliberately misleading, Albright said, because the enrichment went up but the quantity produced dropped.

"They tricked their bosses," Albright said. "Hussein Kamel [a Hussein son-in-law, who oversaw Jaffar's efforts] and Saddam Hussein are not scientists, so scientists can get away with a lot, at the same time that they are being terrorized and lavished with a lot of money."

David Kay, a former UN weapons inspector who interviewed Jaffar and reviewed internal Iraqi progress reports, said: "There's some evidence that Jaffar did [drag his feet] and there is some evidence that other scientists exaggerated their progress.

"In a totalitarian country where failure is punished, lying is generally not," Kay said. But he added: "I also think there were a number of them who got genuinely caught up in the thrill of what they were doing, the scientific challenge. Jaffar said something to the effect, 'Look, we wanted to prove that we were as good [at physics] as any of you.'"

Albright and Kay said that they believe Jaffar's efforts would have succeeded eventually. "EMIS would have given them product. There's no doubt," Kay said. "They had solved most of the problems."

But before scientists could make more headway, Hussein invaded Kuwait, prompting the Gulf War and bombing raids by allied forces that destroyed many of their facilities.

Although allied bombers had no idea that Iraq had built an EMIS facility, the building was on at least one US pilot's list of secondary targets, and he unloaded a bomb on it in 1991, according to Kay.

The Gulf War also allowed disenchanted Iraqis to escape, including one young scientist who told the international community about the centrifuges from Germany. Armed with that information, UN inspectors found them and destroyed them.

Dark years followed for the scientists, as sanctions dried up the flow of cash for their projects, said Khadduri, who said he was jailed for 18 days after the Gulf War when he was suspected of leaking information to UN inspectors. Hussein Kamel, who headed the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization and was married to one of Saddam Hussein's daughters, defected in 1995. He told the UN about hundreds of pre-1991 nuclear weapons documents hidden on his farm. He eventually returned to Iraq and was killed.

In his presentation Wednesday to the UN Security Council, US Secretary of State Colin L. Powell listed nuclear ambitions as a reason that Iraq is a threat. Powell said that although Hussein had not obtained enriched uranium, he had tried in recent years to purchase high-specification aluminum tubes, magnets, and high-speed balancing machines that could be used in uranium enrichment plants.

But Khadduri says that the nuclear weapons program in Iraq dissolved after the Gulf War.

"No serious nuclear weapons program was ever possible after the war, because of no management, no infrastructure, [and] the scientists were all dispersed," said Khadduri. "The whole program fell to pieces."

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/040/nation/Hussein_s_ex_scientists_say_nuclear_bid_stymied+.shtml

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New York Times
February 10, 2003

Iran Says It Has Developed Ability To Fuel Nuclear Plants But Won't Seek Weapons

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN, Feb. 9 — President Mohammad Khatami said today that Iran was determined to develop nuclear technology, but he reiterated that it would be for peaceful purposes.

"I assure all peace-loving individuals in the world that Iran's efforts in the field of nuclear technology are focused on civilian application and nothing else," Mr. Khatami said during a meeting with Mostafa Moin, the minister of research, science and technology, and with university professors, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported. "This is the legitimate right of Iranian people."

The United States has put increasing pressure on Iran over the issue, accusing Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons.

Mr. Khatami said Iran had begun mining uranium near the city of Yazd, in central Iran, and that the country had acquired the knowledge to prepare the ore for use in civilian power plants.

He added that Iran was planning to build two plants — in the cities of Isfahan, in central Iran, and Kashan, south of Tehran — for processing the uranium to provide fuel for generating electricity.

Russia has helped Iran to complete a 1,000 megawatt nuclear power plant in the southern city of Bushehr, which is expected to begin operating by the end of 2003.

The United States has raised concerns about the Bushehr power plant and about newly disclosed plans for two other nuclear plants.

An Iranian dissident group, the National Council of Resistance of Iran, said in August that it had learned from sources within Iran about two secret nuclear sites under construction. One, about 25 miles southeast of the city of Kashan, was to be used for nuclear fuel production, the council said. It said the site included two large spaces that are 25 feet underground. A facility meant to produce heavy water was along a river near the central city of Arak, the council said.

Iran has large oil and gas reserves, and the United States argues that Iran has no need to develop nuclear energy.

However, Iran has rejected claims that it is trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction. It contends that nuclear plants are needed to help increase its electricity generation by 6,000 megawatts over the next 20 years.

The State Department spokesman, Richard A. Boucher, said in a written answer to a question at a Friday news briefing that the United States believed that "Iran uses Bushehr as a cover and a pretext for obtaining sensitive technologies to advance its nuclear weapons program."

"The recent revelations that Iran has been secretly constructing nuclear-related facilities capable of producing fissile material not needed for Iran's 'peaceful' nuclear energy needs, is but one example of the sustained effort by Iran to cloak the true activities and intentions of its nuclear program," he said.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hamidreza Assefi, denied the accusations and said that Iran's nuclear activities were carried out under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations body that monitors nuclear facilities.

"In spreading their poisonous and disdainful rumors, the United States is trying to militarize international relations to serve its political and economic interests," he said.

The European Union, in talks aimed at strengthening economic ties with Iran, has also put pressure on Iran to sign the energy agency's additional protocol to expand inspections in the country and to require more rigorous declaration of nuclear-related activities.

Chris Patten, the European Union's commissioner for external relations, said last week during a visit to Tehran that Iran was still seeking to acquire nonconventional weapons. He said that openness was vital for arms control.

Although Iran has signed the international treaty on nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, signing "the International Atomic Energy Agency additional protocol would send a most positive message, setting a regional lead and underlining serious international commitment," he said.

Mr. Khatami emphasized that Iran had cooperated with the International Atomic Energy Agency and "welcomed international supervision to dispel the lies being fabricated against Iran."

The director general of the atomic energy agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, is expected to visit Iran on Feb. 25 to inspect sites to make sure they are part of the "civilian fuel cycle."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/10/international/middleeast/10TEHR.html>

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Washington Post

February 9, 2003

Pg. C1

Fort Detrick's Tower Of Doom To Come Down

Stories of Anthrax Production Survive as Feared Building Nears Its End

By David Snyder, Washington Post Staff Writer

The old laboratory, closed for decades, is widely known in Frederick County as "the tower of doom" -- a nearly windowless, seven-story structure of dark brick looming over the Army's Fort Detrick. It was the cloistered,

pressure-sealed edifice in which Cold War scientists brewed microbes for the U.S. military's biological weapons program.

The program was halted long ago, the government says. Now only the building -- Building 470 -- and its legends remain.

It's a sort of haunted house, said Al Weinberg, a Hood College professor and Frederick native. "When you were showing somebody around" the county, he said, "you could drive by and say, 'There's the Anthrax Hotel -- it's so dangerous, they sealed it up, and nobody's been in there for years.' "

Before the Nixon administration declared an end to the biological weapons program, the lab-coated warrior-researchers of Building 470 spent almost two decades cooking up microscopic payloads meant to fatally sicken America's enemies. The building has been mostly unoccupied since 1969 and was officially decommissioned in 1971. Ever since, the story has persisted in Frederick that the tower is contaminated.

It has even been said that a dead man is sealed within its walls.

Now the National Cancer Institute, which took over Building 470 in 1988, wants to tear it down. And in preparation, officials are working to dispel any fear that the demolition will fill Frederick's air with deadly germs sealed in the tower for 30-plus years. Thousands of gallons of anthrax slurry -- a pastelike substance containing anthrax spores -- were manufactured in the building. But officials say anthrax is not a concern; what worries them are asbestos and lead paint.

"Since 1971, people have been going into that building," said George W. Anderson, a decontamination expert with Southern Research Institute. He and numerous colleagues have concluded that it would be safe to raze the building. "There is no evidence of any viable, living [anthrax] spores in the building," Anderson said.

It is impossible to say with certainty that there are no anthrax spores in the building, he said. But after multiple decontaminations over the years, and many tests for the spores, he said, he is confident it is safe for unvaccinated demolition workers.

Ed Regis, author of "Biology of Doom," a book about the U.S. germ warfare program, said that for many people, the fear inspired by Building 470 has waned, including suspicions that biological-weapons work continued there after President Richard M. Nixon's 1969 announcement that it would stop.

Fort Detrick has "really been largely demystified and demythologized" for many people, Regis said.

But not for all people, as the cancer institute knows.

The institute, part of the National Institutes for Health, said it must get funding approval from the NIH before tearing down the building. In the meantime, officials are conducting briefings for workers at Fort Detrick, telling them that the demolition plan is not dangerous. They recently took Frederick city officials and two Washington Post journalists on a tour of the old laboratory.

Visible from well beyond the 1,200-acre Fort Detrick, Building 470 is the tallest structure on the grounds and one of the tallest in the city.

The bottom two floors are dark. This is where, in the 1950s and '60s, scientists showered and changed into street clothes after working with germs that could kill people by the thousands. In the evenings, they went home to their families, prohibited from uttering anything about the work that occupied their days.

Drab green paint covers the walls, and routine safety warnings are still posted. Some parts of the building bring to mind Frankenstein's laboratory.

There are two cylindrical, 2,500-gallon brewing vats stretching several stories through the structure. A network of pipes feeds into two huge "kill tanks" in the basement, where unused biological agents were flushed and subjected to a treatment that rendered them harmless.

Much of the equipment used decades ago remains, including glass cases where scientists handled deadly germs with thick rubber gloves, and huge fermenters -- resembling those in a brewery -- in which anthrax spores were created.

The top floor contains a powerful ventilation system that kept the building always at "negative pressure," meaning air pressure outside was always greater than inside. It was a redundant safety feature. If a door to the outside opened unintentionally, or a crack appeared in a wall, air would rush in, not out. If any contaminants happened to have escaped into the building's hallways, they would go no farther.

Now there are puddles of water throughout the building from leaks in the roof. Mold has grown in large, dark swaths across much of the interior. Paint is peeling from walls. Broken glass litters many of the rooms.

The building has become structurally unsound, according to several reports commissioned by the cancer institute.

Before demolition can begin, possibly before spring, it will take about two months to clear out the asbestos covering most of the pipes. Then the building will be covered with plastic construction mesh to prevent problems from falling debris and slowly dismantled in sections.

And then Building 470 will be gone, and perhaps its legends, too.

One story holds that because of a massive accident involving deadly biological agents, the government could never be entirely sure that the building was safe to occupy -- and that was why it was closed. And because officials couldn't be sure the toxins were gone from the building, it had to be left standing.

Nonsense, officials say.

"The building is an anachronism and a throwback," said Robert H. Wilttrout, associate director of the cancer institute. Yet given its history, it remains "a lightning rod for all of the things that happened at Fort Detrick."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A45811-2003Feb8.html>

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San Diego Union-Tribune

February 8, 2003

2 Marines Who Balked At Vaccine Deployed

Both go to Kuwait, face penalty later

By Jeanette Steele, Staff Writer

Two Marines who refused the military's mandatory anthrax vaccination are among thousands of Camp Pendleton-based troops deployed to Kuwait, according to officials.

The 1st Marine Division is deferring punishment and will allow them to serve in "duties that will not ... unduly jeopardize them or their fellow Marines," said 1st Marine Division spokesman 2nd Lt. Eric Knapp.

There are no plans to court-martial them while in Kuwait, he said.

That departs from previous Marine actions on anthrax refusal, which involved removal from deployment status and quick punishment.

It's unclear whether the two Marines have been charged, but in past years the Marine Corps has court-martialed others who refused the controversial vaccination. At least 37 service members were tried for refusing the vaccine when it was first mandated in the late 1990s.

Another Pendleton Marine, Cpl. Anthony Fusco, currently faces court-martial for the same offense, which is disobeying a lawful order.

The Marines said preparation for a possible war and a commander's judgment influence punishment decisions. The division commander is Maj. Gen. James Mattis, who led the Marine forces into Afghanistan in late 2001.

"Although swift disposition of disciplinary proceedings is preferable in most instances, it is not unusual for operational commitments to delay such proceedings, especially when ... related to real-world contingencies," Knapp said.

A Marine spokesman at the Pentagon said the two will face punishment later.

"All Marines who continue to refuse the anthrax vaccination will be held accountable ... for disobeying orders, eventually," said Lt. Col. Stephen Kay, a Marine headquarters public affairs officer.

One of the Marines is Lance Cpl. Kevin Lotz, a 21-year-old machine gunner stationed at the Twentynine Palms Marine base. His division is headquartered at Camp Pendleton. The other Marine's name wasn't available.

Lotz's mother, Kathleen Lotz of Arcata, said she's disappointed the Marines would punish him after he serves in a potential combat zone.

"I can't believe they would put a Marine on the front lines, fighting a war and risking his life every day, then bring him home only to court-martial him and give him a bad conduct discharge," Lotz said.

"All I can do as a mother is pray for his safety while in Iraq and trust in the history of honor the Marine Corps has."

By refusing the vaccinations, the two men put themselves at greater risk in an anthrax attack, Marine officials said.

Anthrax is a deadly bacteria that the White House has said Saddam Hussein possesses and may use against U.S. troops.

"They have been ordered to take the vaccine and counseled about the necessity for protecting their bodies from the dangers of anthrax," Knapp said. "We expect them to take the vaccine and fulfill their enlistment oath."

All other division Marines have been vaccinated, he said.

http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/world/iraq/20030208-9999_7m8kuwait.html

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Los Angeles Times

February 8, 2003

Pg. 1

Al Qaeda Feared To Have 'Dirty Bombs'

By Josh Meyer, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON -- After years of experiments, Al Qaeda is now capable of constructing "dirty bombs" and appears ready to launch terrorist attacks using the radioactive devices along with deadly chemical weapons, counter-terrorism authorities said Friday.

Since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon nearly 17 months ago, U.S. officials have publicly stated their fears that the global terrorist network headed by Osama bin Laden was trying to acquire and use such devices. But they maintained that Al Qaeda did not have the technology, particularly to launch so-called dirty bombs, which use conventional explosives encased in radioactive waste. When detonated, such portable bombs could disperse significant amounts of radiation, causing poisoning and contamination over a widespread area. Recent intelligence -- gleaned from Al Qaeda redoubts in Afghanistan, intercepted communications, interrogations and other sources -- indicates that the terrorist network has apparently gained the technology, U.S. and coalition officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity. Some intercepts have specifically mentioned an interest in using radioactive bombs, but it was unclear whether any such devices were in the hands of the terrorists involved, a senior U.S. counter-terrorism official said.

But U.S. officials said Friday that, while they had no evidence to substantiate that Al Qaeda had actually built such a bomb, they now believe it has done so -- and that it could be planning to use one in the coming months.

The recent intelligence was one factor in the Bush administration's decision to raise the domestic threat level on Friday. Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft referred specifically to the dangerous developments in announcing that the threat level had been elevated to code orange, signifying a "high risk" of attack.

"There has always been a concern about Al Qaeda obtaining biological, chemical and radiological weapons," said one U.S. counter-terrorism official. "I think that concern is growing, and that is why it was mentioned today. It was not mentioned before in connection with raising the threat level."

In recent days, other U.S. officials and their allies overseas have been open about their concerns as well.

In his speech before the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell cited Al Qaeda's recent interest in the use of ricin, one of the most toxic of poisons.

On Thursday, the State Department took the unusual step of warning U.S. citizens overseas that they face an increased risk of being attacked with chemical, biological and radioactive devices -- a threat it has never raised before.

And a top-ranking intelligence official for one of the United States' major European allies said Al Qaeda is perhaps stronger than ever -- and successfully moving away from conventional terrorist attacks such as assassinations and bombings using conventional explosives and into the realm of chemical, biological and radiological warfare.

"They haven't got access to nuclear," the official said after meeting with U.S. counter-terrorism authorities and White House officials in Washington. "But they have got the capability of creating so-called dirty bombs. And they have made some experiments with chemical and biological [agents]. We have some information that they were active with these things."

U.S. counter-terrorism officials on Friday said they were particularly worried about Al Qaeda's plans to launch attacks using ricin, a poison so deadly -- and without an antidote -- that anyone coming into contact with less than a thimbleful will die within 72 hours. They noted that ricin is very difficult to use as a weapon of mass destruction because of its chemical makeup and its highly lethal nature.

Nevertheless, in recent weeks, European authorities have broken up several cells of Al Qaeda terrorists that they allege were planning attacks with the substance.

Powell, in his United Nations address, said at least 116 suspected co-conspirators had been arrested in raids in France, Britain, Spain and Italy.

One U.S. intelligence official said authorities believe more Al Qaeda operatives are still at large and plotting some kind of imminent, coordinated attack using the poison against Western targets overseas.

"When you get intelligence from so many different directions and see so many people running around with this stuff -- 116 people connected to that one plot line alone -- you get concerned that something is up," the official said. "It is a lot of people in a lot of European capitals, so you have to wonder which ones didn't you get."

Al Qaeda also appears to have the capability of making a dirty bomb, which, while not capable of inflicting mass casualties, could cause widespread panic and radiation poisoning.

"We have seen, both from the practice of Al Qaeda and from the law enforcement work of individuals around the world and from the intelligence community, that Al Qaeda continues to demonstrate a very serious interest in chemical, biological as well as radiological devices, the impacts of which would obviously be adverse," Ashcroft said Friday at a news conference at Justice Department headquarters. "It's based on those considerations, as well as

others, that we find this occasion one in which we feel that we should elevate this designation from 'elevated state' to a 'high state' of alert."

Citing documents seized in Afghanistan, Britain's government last week confirmed that it had evidence that Al Qaeda was developing a so-called dirty bomb.

British intelligence agencies released documents showing that Al Qaeda had already constructed a small dirty bomb at a laboratory in the Afghan city of Herat, using radioactive isotopes taken from medical equipment supplied by the former Taliban regime.

British spies had infiltrated Al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan and discovered that Bin Laden had made the development of such devices a top priority, along with biological and chemical warfare agents. Intelligence material shown to the British Broadcasting Corp. revealed that the agents brought back secret documents, diagrams and reports to back up their claims.

The intelligence officials noted that the agents never found such a device, but that Al Qaeda had written a training manual on how to use the weapon with maximum effect.

U.S. officials said evidence gathered in Afghanistan and the questioning of Al Qaeda detainees -- as well as electronic intercepts -- show that Al Qaeda had long sought the expertise needed to make a dirty bomb. One Al Qaeda leader, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, was said to be obsessed with it; he is still at large, despite a \$25-million U.S. bounty on his head.

U.S. authorities also have said a former Chicago gang member, Jose Padilla, was part of an Al Qaeda plot to detonate a dirty bomb in the United States. He was arrested in Chicago last year as he exited a plane; authorities said he was on a scouting mission.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/la-na-dirty8feb08001442,1,5088895.story>

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Seattle Times
February 7, 2003

Preparing to meet the invisible enemy

Fort Lewis Soldiers Learn How Grain Of Sand Could Be Life-Threatening

By Hal Bernton, Seattle Times staff reporter

FORT LEWIS — On a rainy Northwest morning, the men and women of the 40th Transportation Company prepare for what might face U.S. troops in the deserts of Iraq. They don charcoal-lined suits, strap on airtight face masks and march into a green cabin filled with gas.

Inside, soldiers swivel their heads, chomp like they're chewing gum and hop up and down to pump up their heart rates. They are testing their gear for faulty seals or pin-prick holes that let in throat-searing riot gas — holes that in a wartime assault would bring in something far more lethal.

"Ninety people went through — only two of them had their masks malfunction," said Staff Sgt. Michael Jenkins, who supervised the company gas training. "The scary part about that is, if this was on the battlefield, that would have been two people contaminated and maybe dead."

In an invasion of Iraq, the prospect of a chemical or biological attack is the unsettling wild card. Iraqi government officials say they have no such weapons. But Bush administration officials have said that the Iraqi regime has not accounted for some 38,000 liters of botulism toxin and up to 500 tons of sarin, mustard gas and VX nerve agents. Intelligence sources cited by President Bush suggest that Saddam Hussein already has authorized their use. Such attacks would force survivors into full protective gear — boots, suit, gloves and mask — that extensive Army studies indicate can substantially impair stamina, communication and combat skills.

"We are really venturing into terra incognita here," said Bernard Trainor, a retired three-star Marine general and military analyst with Council for Foreign Relations. "We haven't faced anything of this nature since World War I. Up to now, everything is kind of theoretical and laboratory-tested and war-gamed. But we really don't know."

A U.S. invasion of Iraq could involve up to 200,000 troops that are now being staged in the Persian Gulf region. The 40th Transportation Company out of Fort Lewis has not received deployment orders, but some 1,200 soldiers drawn from base engineering and medical units have been put on notice of Persian Gulf duty.

Military planners are hoping that a decadelong push to improve equipment and training will prepare these troops to cope with chemical or biological weapons.

All soldiers are supposed to know what to do if they hear the clanging of metal on metal that signals an attack: quit breathing, close their eyes and, during the next nine seconds, grab their masks from their Velcro-covered side pouches and strap them onto their faces. And every soldier should be prepared to self-inject a nerve-agent antidote. Soldiers also are drilled on the importance of frequent inspections to try to ensure that the mask is properly maintained. They are taught that a few grains of sand stuck in the wrong place, or a small crack in a thin plastic filter, could sabotage the effectiveness of the mask.

"There are very small things that if you don't check could mean the difference between life and death," said Jenkins, the Fort Lewis staff sergeant.

In the Persian Gulf, U.S. soldiers may be aided by specialized units of chemical troops who can scout for gas and toxins with high-tech sensors. They also can set up cleaning stations to help soldiers change from contaminated suits and scrub equipment. One of these units, the 11th Chemical Company, is based at Fort Lewis, and could end up being deployed to the Persian Gulf.

Critics say that the military still has not done enough to prepare soldiers for chemical and biological warfare. In a report released Wednesday by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, Eric Taylor, a University of Louisiana professor and former Army captain, said that significant training gaps remain, and that senior commanders have not pushed hard enough to simulate the worst-case surprise attacks that Iraq might launch.

These attacks could come from the ground, with a tanker truck full of chemicals exploding near troops. Or they could come from the sky, with an unmanned plane spraying a chemical, or an artillery shell exploding with gas. Trainor and other military analysts concede that such attacks could cause hundreds — perhaps thousands — of casualties. Some bodies might be so contaminated that they could never be brought home for burial on U.S. soil. But U.S. military analysts do not expect that chemical or biological weapons could repel a U.S. invasion. U.S. troops would not linger in a contaminated area. Instead, they would try to push through as quickly as possible.

"It can certainly create problems, but it's not going to be a show stopper," said retired Army Maj. Gen. William Nash, who served in the Gulf War.

Tests of wars past

America's efforts to defend against chemical and biological attacks dates back to World War I, when the ghastly effectiveness of German, French and British gas on soldiers of all nations prompted formation of what is now known as the U.S. Army Chemical Corps.

As the U.S. renounced first the use — then development — of new chemical and biological weapons, the corps' mission shifted to focus on troop defense.

During the 1991 Gulf War, as the U.S. sought to push Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, the corps prepared for a possible chemical attack.

There was concern that Iraqis may have used such weapons on U.S. troops. But in an unclassified report released in April 2002, the CIA found no such evidence.

That report was published, in part, to try to address possible causes for the Gulf War syndrome, a collection of illnesses and health concerns registered by more than 100,000 of the 697,000 troops that served during the war. The CIA report cites only one post-war instance — when U.S. troops blew up Iraqi rockets at the Khaisiyah Depot in March 1991 — that nerve gas reached U.S. troops.

Even without a direct attack, the Gulf War proved to be an important testing ground. And there were lots of problems.

The detection equipment picked up trace pollutants and triggered numerous false alarms, prompting soldiers to repeatedly don full protective gear.

"The alerts were going off all the time — we just kept putting our masks on and off," said Sgt. 1st Class David Carufel, a Gulf War veteran who helps train Fort Lewis soldiers of the 40th Transportation Company.

Some of those false alarms came from the Army's M8 chemical sensors. Since then, the military has developed a new model, the M22, that should give fewer false alarms, according to Col. Thomas Spoehr, director of training at the Army Chemical School in Missouri.

The Army also had "unacceptable false-alarm rates" from biological air samplers. After the war, U.S. researchers developed a new system, known as BIDS — the Biological Integrated Detection System — that features a shelter mounted on a Humvee and quicker, more accurate detection.

The performance of crucial protective masks also has come under scrutiny. The M17 masks used by many Gulf War soldiers were hard to fit correctly. About 5 percent of the soldiers had difficulty getting any sort of air-tight seal. Now, all soldiers deployed to the Persian Gulf have a newer, better model, the M40.

"We have the best protective masks in the world," said Spoehr, whose training school puts masked soldiers through a chamber spiked with nerve gas.

Suits become a burden

Even with the improvements, no one wants to fight a war in full protective gear. In a contaminated area, this gear must be changed daily in a time-consuming process that involves 27 different stations. And simple tasks, such as drinking and eating, become onerous. Soldiers must use special straws to tap into water pouches and liquid foods. And the sheer bulk of the gear can significantly reduce combat performance, according to extensive studies of Army field exercises.

Those studies found:

- Troops clad in full protective gear suffered a 15 to 19 percent drop in marksmanship.
- In the exercises, the number of shots fired at friendly rather than enemy soldiers increased from 5 percent to almost 20 percent for soldiers using full protective gear.
- Leader performance declined. They became exhausted and irritable, and were often among the first casualties.
- The suits are not vented, and in a hot desert can cause heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Staff Sgt. Kelvin Gaut, of the Washington Army National Guard, recalls an incident early in his career when he tried to train in a suit in the 101-degree heat of a Yakima summer. "I blacked out in about 20 minutes."

More soldiers, more training

The Army and other military branches have worked to bolster combat performance through stepped-up training. That effort has been slowly gaining momentum over the past decade. A 1996 General Accounting Office report concluded that Army and Marine troops were "not adequately trained for effective chemical and biological defense." But a 2000 report found improvements.

"I absolutely believe that we have a better handle on the things that need to be done, and they are being done more thoroughly," said Spoehr, of the Army Chemical School.

But training still has shortcomings. To gain a better sense of wartime conditions, more soldiers need more training missions in suits, according to congressional testimony last October by Ray Decker, a General Accounting Office official.

At Fort Lewis, soldiers do tackle some field missions in full gear, and they suit up to practice their marksmanship, according to Joe Hitt, a base public information officer. The chemical training also is reflected in periodic tent seminars on mask maintenance and routine training with riot gas.

Earlier this week, members of the 555th Engineer Group went through the gas drill.

On Wednesday, they gathered — 15 men and women — in a clearing. Someone yelled "Gas! Gas!" and they all put on their gear. But not without problems. Some soldiers couldn't secure their masks in nine seconds; others touched the ground, which in a real-life situation might have been contaminated.

Such mistakes diminish with practice. And for those headed for the Persian Gulf, that practice has gained new importance.

"You pay attention," said 1st Lt. Amy Jansen. "You want to make sure that mask seals down tight."

<http://archives.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=chemwar07m&date=20030207&query=Invisible+Enemy>

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Chicago Tribune
February 7, 2003

Chemical, Biological Arms Have Major Limitations

By Douglas Holt, Tribune staff reporter

WASHINGTON -- As they prepare for war in Iraq and the threat of a chemical or biological attack, U.S. military planners have this in their favor: The difficulty of using such weaponry and the effectiveness of U.S. countermeasures dramatically mitigate the danger to American forces.

President Bush alleged Thursday that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein recently authorized his field commanders to use chemical weapons. Experts fear that Hussein could order caches of such weapons to be blown up, sending a deadly cloud over troops and civilians alike. Or his forces could lob Scud missiles laden with toxic agents at U.S. troops. But a host of complicating factors, including wind direction and atmospheric conditions, can render biological or chemical weapons useless. Delivering sufficient quantities to cause significant damage is a challenge. And each compound has inherent weaknesses, one reason the United States was willing to abandon development of biological weapons in 1969 and chemical weapons in 1990.

"In theory they can do a whole lot--these things are pretty terrible," said William Dee, former head of the Army's chemical munitions program. "But there're a lot of ifs and whens. The practicality of doing it is a lot harder than the theory."

Iraqis could use some weapons only if upwind from U.S. forces. If there is no temperature inversion to keep gases near the ground, they are likely to ride columns of hot desert air up into the sky and harmlessly dissipate.

With U.S. and allied forces well-stocked with antidotes and protective gear, "in the military balance you may be not changing things in your favor if you use it," said retired Army Gen. John Reppert, executive director of Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

Iraq also would have to consider that any decision to use unconventional weapons would irreversibly raise the stakes of battle, likely turning world opinion against Iraq. Also, U.S. officials have not ruled out using nuclear weapons should the regime attempt biological or chemical warfare.

Without question, chemical and biological arms can wreak havoc and terror.

Iraq fatally gassed hundreds of Iranian soldiers in the 1980s. Few Iranian troops had gas masks, and most who did wore beards, preventing the masks from sealing properly.

In 1988, the Hussein regime killed thousands of Kurdish villagers in northern Iraq with mustard gas and nerve agents delivered by slow-moving aircraft.

The Iraqi military has attempted to convert MiG-21 and other warplanes into drones carrying spray tanks--the most efficient way to disseminate chemical or biological agents over a wide area, according to a CIA analysis.

But should such a craft get off the ground during combat with U.S. troops, it probably would not last long, said Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), a Navy reserve intelligence officer who has flown missions over Bosnia and Iraq.

"They're not particularly quick," Kirk said of the aircraft. "And they have the radar profile of a barn door."

Missile defenses improved

As for Scud missiles and other battlefield munitions, the Army says its anti-missile defenses, including the Patriot system, are much improved over those used in the Persian Gulf war, when by most accounts the Patriot defenses failed. Still, such defenses have not been tested in combat against the erratic-flying Scuds.

"One should not minimize the potential impact of a missile loaded with VX on a densely populated target," said former Army Brig. Gen. Walter Busbee, who served as a chemical weapons officer.

Other worst-case scenarios include the use of a small, unmanned crop-dusting plane to fly low to evade radar and spread toxins on troops. Hussein's forces could try to poison food supplies of U.S. troops or lace land mines and booby traps with toxic agents.

The best way to defend against such attacks is to deter Hussein or other top Iraqis from calling for them, Pentagon officials said.

In addition to the tacit nuclear threat, the Bush administration has sought to dissuade Hussein's subordinates from carrying out any orders to use chemical or biological weapons. In St. Louis last month, Bush warned Iraqi officers that they would be tried as war criminals if they followed such commands.

Military analysts say the U.S. is likely, as in the past, to try quickly to find and destroy Scud missiles, artillery and aircraft that could carry chemical or biochemical warheads.

"Priority One--first night of the war, if not prior to the first bomb being dropped--Special Forces, CIA, military in theater go to what we believe are the Scud boxes and secure those areas," said retired Rear Adm. Stephen Baker, an analyst at the Center for Defense Information. In the gulf war, however, Hussein fooled U.S. forces with Scud decoys.

Successful attack unlikely

If Hussein succeeded in launching a biological or chemical attack, what then?

Consider anthrax. If breathed in it can kill. Anthrax spores are hardy and can withstand the shock and heat of a missile ride and the explosion needed for dispersal.

But troops are vaccinated against anthrax, and in any case it would require an incubation period of one to seven days, making anthrax, as most bioweapons, a poor tactical choice.

"With the concentration of firepower that the United States could bring to bear . . . it would all be over before any of the troops began to get sick," said William Patrick III, former chief of product development for the Army's defunct bioweapons program. "The battle would be lost."

Botulinum toxin is one of the most toxic substances known. However, Patrick said, "on an open-air target, it isn't going to go anywhere" because it requires too large a dose. "As applied in an aerosol form, it's not very effective." VX is the most toxic of nerve agents. As little as 10 milligrams on the skin can cause rapid death. But as a weapon, the heavy, oily substance is hard to turn into an aerosol spreading over a wide area, Dee said. "It can adequately be protected against."

One of the oldest chemical weapons -- mustard gas -- remains "one of the nastiest things around," he said, because it is stable and persistent. But mustard gas generally does not kill soldiers. Like other agents, it can be guarded against with suits and masks. Exposed soldiers can be treated.

A big drawback of chemical weapons is that they require far greater quantities than biological weapons, requiring massed, coordinated attacks to be effective. Military experts consider them a small-scale, tactical weapon--not a strategic weapon capable of inflicting mass casualties.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-0302070412feb07,1,7733886.story>

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Rumsfeld Sees Rising Dangers in N. Korea

Sun Feb 9, 12:07 PM ET

By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON - The official Bush administration view of North Korea ([news](#) - [web sites](#))'s nuclear breakout is that, while troubling, it does not amount to a crisis. Yet that is exactly the word that comes to mind when Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld talks about its dangers.

To Rumsfeld, it's not simply a matter of North Korea becoming a nuclear weapons state. The CIA ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) estimates that the communist-ruled country has had one or two nuclear weapons for nearly a decade. In his view the bigger danger is that, by cranking up a nuclear weapons production complex that had been idled under U.N. seal since 1994, a cash-starved North Korea could produce enough nuclear materials to sell to terrorist states or terror networks who might make America a target.

"It's pretty clear that if they restart that reprocessing plant, which they seemed to indicate they intend to do, that they could have nuclear materials sufficient to make an additional six or eight weapons," Rumsfeld told delegates to a European security conference on Saturday.

He said they could have that many extra weapons by May or June. As "the world's leading proliferator" of ballistic missile technology, it would not be hard to imagine that North Korea would sell some of that extra nuclear material on the black market to al-Qaida or Iraq, Rumsfeld said.

That, in Rumsfeld's view, is a frightening example of the nexus between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. It's a principal basis of his argument for why Iraq must be disarmed sooner rather than later, before it acquires a nuclear weapon.

There's still another worry about North Korea's nuclear ambitions beyond the obvious possibility that it could launch a nuclear attack or blackmail others by threatening one. There is a fear that a nuclear-armed North Korea could lead others in the region, including Japan, Taiwan and South Korea ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) — which once had a nuclear program but gave it up — to decide they, too, must have the ultimate weapon.

Although Rumsfeld and the U.S. military are preoccupied with preparing for war against Iraq, to begin perhaps as early as this month or next, it was clear from the defense secretary's comments in Europe last week that he has decided a case can be made for confronting North Korea in some way.

President Bush ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) had said a number of times in recent weeks that the United States has no intention of invading North Korea, although on Friday he mentioned that "all options are on the table."

Rumsfeld has not suggested a military solution to the North Korean problem, but he has mentioned that the North Koreans — like the Iraqis — are on the State Department's list of terrorist states. Both, along with Iran, are in the "axis of evil" that Bush condemned a year ago.

In an interview with reporters traveling with him Friday, Rumsfeld predicted that North Korea would become "within a year or two or three" the leading example of why, in his view, the set of international treaties and agreements designed to stop the spread of nuclear weapons is failing.

He said the problem is too big for any one country to handle alone.

"It's going to take an enormous effort across the globe," he said.

War with North Korea would be a risky proposition. The country has an extraordinarily large and well-concealed arsenal of artillery within range of South Korea's capital, Seoul, as well as stocks of chemical and possibly biological weapons not to mention the one or two nuclear weapons.

That reality is the main reason the Bush administration has tried to approach North Korea's renewed defiance of U.N. nuclear safeguards with the stated intention of finding a peaceful solution. In recent days, however, Rumsfeld has raised the issue with a greater sense of urgency and concern.

Speaking to U.S. troops at the Aviano Air Base in Italy on Friday, Rumsfeld noted without prompting that while Iraq is a threat, so too are countries such as North Korea, which already have nuclear weapons.

"That danger is one we have to face," Rumsfeld said.

EDITOR'S NOTE — AP Military Writer Robert Burns covers military affairs and accompanied Rumsfeld on his European trip.

On the Net: CIA's North Korea page: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/kn.html>
http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030209/ap_on_re_as/us_north_korea_nuclear_2

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(Editor's Note: The publication below is guidance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This publication is *Are You Ready? A Guide to Citizen Preparedness*. The National Security Emergencies section gives guidance on what to do in the event of nuclear, biological or chemical attack. Click on first hyperlink to view National Security Emergencies section; second hyperlink will connect you to entire "Are You Ready" publication.)

Are You Ready?

National Security Emergencies

In addition to the natural and technological hazards described in this publication, Americans face threats posed by hostile governments or extremist groups. These threats to national security include acts of terrorism and acts of war. The following is general information about national security emergencies. For more information about how to prepare for them, including volunteering in a Citizen Corps program, see the "For More Information" chapter at the end of this guide. . . .

<http://www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/security.pdf>

<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>

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USA Today

February 11, 2003

Pg. 1

U.S. Prepares Troops To Resist Chemical Attacks

Military strategists would rather fight any war in Iraq in the cool winter months, before scorching heat makes it tough for troops to wear the bulky suits designed to protect against chemical or biological agents. What's it like to wear the gear? A USA Today Pentagon reporter trained with an Army unit to find out.

By Dave Moniz, USA Today

FORT MYER, Va.--It's not as exhausting as running hip deep in the ocean. Or as claustrophobic as lying on your back in an MRI chamber. But marching around in a full set of Army chemical and biological protective gear is no day at the rifle range, either.

After 45 minutes walking and running the streets of this Army post, I was bathed in sweat. Two 75-yard sprints induced Darth Vader-like breathing and a mild sense of suffocation. I did this on a 35-degree day while carrying less than half the combat load of an infantry soldier. It's hard to imagine what eight hours under a broiling Middle Eastern sun might do to troops dealing with the bulky suit *and* all the other stresses of combat.

We might soon know.

Sometime soon — perhaps only weeks or days from now — U.S. military forces could face the daunting prospect of fighting America's first chemical and biological war since World War I, when more than 1 million troops on both sides were injured or killed by poison gas attacks.

The Pentagon says it is ready to fight Iraq on a battlefield that could be showered with the most deadly substances on earth, including botulinum toxin, VX nerve agent, anthrax and smallpox. Last week, the Pentagon's top officer, Gen. Richard Myers, said U.S. troops could fight in temperatures that top 120 degrees, should the war extend into the summer.

Despite such assurances, experts are divided on what a hot weather war might be like for foot soldiers saddled with cumbersome protective suits. Most analysts say it's possible, if not desirable, to fight in hot weather. Others argue that the threat from the heat and Saddam's chemical and biological arsenal is overblown.

"We do this training all the time, in super hot weather," says Barry McCaffrey, a retired Army general who led the 24th Infantry Division into Iraq during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

This time around, McCaffrey estimates that only 2% to 3% of the U.S. troops would have to operate in full protective gear during the war. In the event of chemical or biological attacks, McCaffrey says, "we would suffer far fewer casualties than from the same amount of high explosive artillery shells."

A desert inferno

No one knows what kinds of chemicals or diseases Saddam Hussein might unleash if he is facing the prospect of certain death or prosecution for war crimes. Pentagon officials are alarmed enough to have ordered smallpox and anthrax inoculations for all forces heading to the Persian Gulf.

Every soldier will carry at least one protective suit, known in military parlance as a Battle Dress Overgarment, or BDO, into battle.

Few dispute that the harsh climate in the Gulf has played a role in the timing of an invasion that could begin as early as this month.

The last time the Pentagon went to war there, from mid-January to early March 1991, it was winter in Iraq. In February and March, the average daily high temperature in Baghdad ranges from 64 to 73 degrees Fahrenheit. Just two months later, Iraq becomes an inferno — the average daily high in May is 96 degrees; in June it zooms to 105. I asked two seasoned Army chemical warfare specialists what it's like to wear BDO suits for hours at a time in hot weather. Both smiled in a way that seemed to suggest, *don't try this at home*.

"Think of playing football in July. Now bump that up by about 5 degrees," says Maj. Forte Ward, an Army chemical weapons officer with Fort Myer's Old Guard who has spent as many as 10 hours in full BDO gear. Ward's comrade, Staff Sgt. Charles Defendall, put it this way: "Think of the hottest place you've ever been."

The BDO suits aren't particularly heavy. But once you fasten the Velcro straps, pull tight the drawstrings and create an airtight seal with your mask, the only thing that breathes is your lungs.

David Hackworth, a decorated Vietnam veteran who is often critical of Pentagon policy, says the military has deliberately downplayed the potential for heat casualties. In an article last fall, Hackworth wrote, "Our soldiers won't be able to function for long in any environment in this type of gear."

A full BDO suit weighs about 10 pounds and includes an airtight mask and hood, rubber boots, rubber gloves and snugly fitting trousers and jacket. It is possible to drink, but not eat, while wearing a full set of protective gear.

Personal hygiene will surely test the brotherhood of America's foot soldiers: In full gear, is impossible to go to the bathroom without assistance from a "buddy" to fumble with the cumbersome gloves and undo the suit.

The Army's research shows that troops and units can slow to a crawl while wearing the suits. In extremely hot weather, Ward says, soldiers need to take frequent breaks and drink a lot of water. As a general rule, soldiers wearing a full BDO feel about 10 degrees hotter than the temperature outside.

Soldiers are less effective fighting in full protective gear, according to research compiled by Globalsecurity.org, a Web site that specializes in military matters. Their fighting skills can drop by as much as 50% and they can take up to three times longer to perform tasks. And they get tired. And dangerously overheated.

During a demonstration last fall, an Army soldier wearing protective gear passed out during a Pentagon news conference.

What Saddam has done

Saddam has used chemical weapons to kill his enemies by the thousands. During the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, historical accounts show he used chemical weapons indiscriminately against Iranian troops, helping to turn the tide of a near certain defeat into a stalemate.

Iraq used chemical weapons against Iranian troops in every major battle of the war from 1984 to 1988, according to author Kenneth Pollack in his book *The Threatening Storm*. Saddam continued to use the weapons until the war ended, Pollack wrote, even though it was clear he also killed large numbers of his own troops.

In the late 1980s, Saddam began gassing Kurds in northern Iraq. In one raid, on March 5, 1988, chemical weapons attacks in the town of Halabja killed at least 5,000 Kurds.

U.S. strategists believe Saddam still has large stores of chemical and biological agents and the weapons to deliver them. But measuring the risks to U.S. troops is not easy. Although chemical and biological agents can be loaded into rockets and artillery shells or sprayed from airplanes or boats, they are difficult to control on the best of days.

"Things like VX and sarin gas are very tough to use," says Bill Martel, a professor of national security at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I. Their killing power can vary based on wind direction, temperature and humidity.

Some chemical weapons such as sarin gas tend to evaporate quickly in hot weather. Others, such as VX nerve agent or anthrax, can linger for days. A shift in wind direction can result in death or injury to civilians or to those firing the weapons.

Stephen Cimbala, who teaches national security at Penn State University, says that Saddam recognizes that such ghastly weapons might be his one advantage against America's high-tech military.

"In a confrontation with the United States, Saddam will bank on the fact that Americans are skittish about military ventures involving heavy casualties," Cimbala says.

One of the Army's top experts on chemical and biological weapons estimates that the top threats to U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf are anthrax, smallpox and botulinum toxin, a deadly substance that kills by paralyzing its victims and rendering them unable to breathe.

Col. Erik Henchal, head of the Army's Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick, Md., said last month that the United States does not have a vaccine to counter botulinum toxin, which Iraq produced in quantities of up to 2,000 gallons in the early 1990s. There is an antidote, but it is in short supply.

American soldiers will fight alongside sophisticated sensors, robots, chemical detection vehicles and mobile labs. Units will have access to thousands of gallons of decontaminating foam.

The Bush administration has threatened war crimes trials for any Iraqi officer who uses chemical or biological weapons. And the Pentagon has made it clear it will launch "decisive and violent" bombing strikes against large numbers of Saddam's troops if he uses weapons of mass destruction, senior Defense officials say.

But, as in most wars, the front-line defense will fall to each soldier, and the threat that a desperate Saddam will unleash chemical or biological attacks could keep them in their suits for long stretches.

"Most of our war fighting groups will be wearing protective gear," Henchal says. "It has got to change your outlook."

http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2003-02-10-chem-war-usat_x.htm

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Philadelphia Inquirer

February 11, 2003

U.S.: N. Koreans Might Fire Missile

In Tokyo, the ambassador recalled a 1998 incident. He also warned that the U.S. could fight two wars.

By Michael Zielenziger, Knight Ridder News Service

TOKYO - The U.S. ambassador to Japan, Howard H. Baker Jr., warned yesterday that North Korea may try to fire another missile over Japan as part of a pattern of escalating "provocation."

He also insisted that while the Bush administration wanted to handle North Korea's nuclear-development program through patient dialogue, the United States was capable of fighting North Korea even if war was also being waged against Iraq.

Baker's comments appeared to be part of an effort by the administration to warn North Korea against taking advantage of U.S. attention on Iraq. North Korea has said it was restarting its nuclear reactor in Yongbyon, which is capable of producing plutonium for nuclear weapons.

"We are fully able to take care of ourselves if one or two conflicts are thrust upon us," Baker told a security forum here. "There is still room for diplomacy," he added, repeating American assurances that the United States does not intend to invade North Korea. "What we need now is reciprocity."

"We hear reports that they may engage in a missile test, perhaps overflying the island of Japan," the ambassador said, citing intelligence as well as news reports. "They've done it... before, and there certainly is no guarantee they won't do it again. It's a realistic prospect."

In August 1998, North Korea test-fired a Taepodong missile, which flew over the Japanese archipelago before landing in the Pacific Ocean.

Baker said the United States had no plans for a preemptive attack if it appeared a missile launch was likely.

Over the weekend, Japanese newspapers reported that the Japanese government planned to alert the nation if it received indications that North Korea might attempt to launch another missile. A contingency plan also would permit the Japanese government to take economic or other sanctions in the event of another test firing.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plans to meet in Vienna, Austria, tomorrow to discuss North Korea's decision to eject international inspectors and restart its nuclear generating plant. Experts believe North Korea could reprocess enough plutonium to build nuclear weapons within two or three months.

Two weeks ago, South Korea and Japan asked the IAEA to delay its meeting, hoping North Korea might soften its position. But a visit by a high-level South Korean delegation to the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, yielded no obvious progress.

Officials in South Korea expect the IAEA to ask the U.N. Security Council to tackle the North's decision to walk out of the treaty against nuclear proliferation. The North has warned that it would consider economic or political sanctions an act of war.

Baker said North Korea had only a limited amount of time to stand down before the security situation on the Korean peninsula grew more serious. "We are approaching the time when North Korean provocations must come to an end," Baker said.

The crisis over North Korea's nuclear programs began in October when U.S. officials said North Korean officials admitted they had a clandestine nuclear-weapons program. Washington and its allies then suspended oil shipments, and North Korea responded by taking steps to reactivate nuclear facilities frozen under a 1994 energy deal with the United States.

North Korea has demanded direct talks with the United States. The Bush administration has suggested talks that include other nations as well.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/nation/5151590.htm>

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Washington Times

February 11, 2003

Pg. 15

Seoul, U.S. to consult on North

By Jong-heon Lee, United Press International

SEOUL — South Korea and the United States have agreed to establish a joint governmental consultative body to deal with North Korea's nuclear threats, officials said yesterday.

The two allies will also set up a separate committee to discuss their decades-old security ties, which have been soured by anti-American sentiment in South Korea, a top official at the presidential transition committee said.

The agreement was made at a meeting last week between U.S. Vice President Richard B. Cheney and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun's special envoy, Rep. Chyung Dai-chul.

Mr. Chyung led a high-level delegation that traveled to Washington as part of preinauguration efforts to seek a solution to the North Korean nuclear issue and strengthen security ties between South Korea and the United States.

Mr. Roh is to take office on Feb. 25.

The accord came amid growing signs of policy differences between the two countries in handling of the months-long nuclear standoff sparked by revelations North Korea has continued efforts to develop nuclear weapons in violation of a 1994 accord.

The United States has pushed to bring the nuclear issue before the United Nations Security Council, which could impose sanctions. North Korea says it would consider any sanctions to be an act of war, warning military conflict would devastate South Korea, too.

South Korea opposes the imposition of sanctions against North Korea, stressing the need for time to allow diplomacy to work to resolve the crisis.

South Korean Prime Minister Kim Suk-soo said yesterday he believes North Korea does not possess nuclear weapons, contradicting U.S. assertions Pyongyang already has one or two atomic bombs.

In the joint consultative body, the two sides will "intensively" discuss the nuclear crisis and coordinate their policies toward North Korea, said Yoon Young-kwan who had joined the delegation. Mr. Yoon is the chief of Mr. Roh's transition team on reunification, foreign affairs and security.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the U.S.-South Korean security alliance, the two countries also agreed to set up a special civilian-government committee to discuss ways to forge their closer security ties.

"The committee will help quell concerns that their decades-long security alliance may be undermined under Seoul's new leadership," a senior Foreign Ministry official told United Press International.

Mr. Roh, who was elected president with promises of less reliance on the protection of the United States, has vowed to put the U.S.-South Korean relationship on a more "equal" footing.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030211-65030240.htm>

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Washington Times
February 11, 2003
Pg. 3

FBI, CIA Believe Mass-Casualty Al Qaeda Strike More Likely

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

Al Qaeda's latest threat of terrorist attacks is focused on operations in three areas: the continental United States, the Persian Gulf region or Southeast Asia, according to intelligence officials.

Intelligence from both the FBI and CIA indicates that al Qaeda is preparing to conduct a major attack that will cause mass casualties, like the September 11 attacks, according to officials.

The CIA is worried that the new attack will be al Qaeda's first attempt to carry out a terror strike using deadly chemical, biological or radiological weapons, said officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Federal officials raised the national terrorism alert status Friday from code yellow, or "elevated" threat, to code orange, or "high" threat — a change expected to last at least 45 days, which could overlap U.S. military action against Iraq.

Attorney General John Ashcroft said last week, when asked whether the new alert was related to the buildup of American forces in the Middle East, that they were "very clearly unrelated."

Former CIA counterterrorism official Vincent Cannistraro, however, said the warning is related to the buildup near Iraq.

"It is specifically related to the impending hostilities with Iraq," Mr. Cannistraro said in an interview. "Al Qaeda plans to take advantage of an attack to enlist the support of radical Muslims and foster anti-American hostilities." U.S. intelligence agencies believe al Qaeda is "planning to do something and they would like to do something spectacular," Mr. Cannistraro said.

Intelligence officials said there are also reports that al Qaeda's latest threat to attack Americans is related to the Hajj, the Muslim religious observation in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, honoring the religion's founder and prophet Muhammad. The annual observance began Sunday with up to 2 million people attending.

Southeast Asia also remains a focus of concern over al Qaeda attacks in the wake of the bombing in Bali, Indonesia, in October that killed about 200 people in a nightclub.

The London-based Arabic-language newspaper Al-Majallah reported last week that al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden plans to appear on audiotapes and videotapes after the start of U.S. military operations against Iraq.

The Saudi-owned weekly stated Feb. 2 that Abd al-Rahman al-Rashid, who operates a pro-al Qaeda Internet site, said bin Laden will surface to "incite the Arab and Muslim nations to strike at U.S. interests and repulse the U.S. military presence in the Gulf."

The bin Laden statement will include "surprises" that Al-Rashid declined to specify, according to the newspaper, which noted that information about the bin Laden response to a U.S. attack was provided by al Qaeda officials.

Officials familiar with intelligence reports said the FBI for weeks has had reports that al Qaeda is planning to attack so-called "soft" targets in the United States, such as hotels and apartments that do not have the same level of protection as government buildings.

The overseas intelligence of an attack is based primarily on recent information collected by British authorities.

British police last month arrested six men who intelligence officials say are linked to al Qaeda. Evidence seized at the time of the arrests indicates the group was handling ricin, a toxin derived from the castor bean that is deadly when ingested.

Mr. Ashcroft noted that "there are also indications, bolstered by the recent arrests in London, where chemical ricin was discovered, [of] ... al Qaeda's interest in carrying out chemical, biological and radiological attacks."

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030211-704598.htm>

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Washington Post
February 11, 2003
Pg. 1

Terror Attack Steps Urged

Officials Suggest Stocking Water, Other Supplies

By John Mintz, Washington Post Staff Writer

Top federal officials yesterday issued their most pointed advice since Sept. 11, 2001 on precautions the public should take against terrorist attacks, warning that every home should be stocked with three days' worth of water and food in case of a strike with chemical, biological or radiological weapons.

They also recommended that families consider designating a room where they will gather in the event of such an attack, and have on hand duct tape and heavy plastic sheeting to seal it, as well as scissors, a manual can opener, blankets, flashlights, radios and spare batteries. The officials said they believe the al Qaeda terrorist network is particularly targeting New York and Washington.

Ranking officials of the Department of Homeland Security told reporters at a briefing that Americans must take some responsibility for protecting themselves, but stressed that people should not feel panicked or abandoned by the government.

"We see information on citizen preparedness as prudent planning," said Gordon Johndroe, the department's spokesman.

But given al Qaeda's interest in weapons of mass destruction, he said, "It's appropriate for citizens to be informed about how to respond to a terrorist attack, much as people have prepared for years to be ready for tornadoes, hurricanes or floods."

While much of the information in yesterday's briefing was previously available on government Web sites, the news conference was an effort by federal officials to call attention to the steps individuals can take to prepare against the possibility of terror attacks.

"You have to talk to your family, and plan how you're going to communicate with each other" after a devastating terrorist attack, said David Paulison, the U.S. fire administrator, who is a top civil defense planner for the new department. For example, he said, families could designate a third party with whom telephone messages can be left. The briefing came three days after officials raised the national terrorist threat index to indicate a "high risk" of attack by al Qaeda on U.S. targets here and abroad, and officials suggested privately that they do not want the gravity of the threat overlooked.

Department officials were offering what one acknowledged was "a complex message" with several elements to it. The first is that people must mentally rehearse for an attack, even though it is unsettling. Yet officials want citizens to remain calm and not view the situation as dire.

Law enforcement and homeland security officials have been criticized since soon after the Sept. 11 attacks for offering the public frightening but vague warnings while giving little guidance about what to do.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and Attorney General John D. Ashcroft have often said Americans should "be vigilant," and on New Year's Eve people were advised to "avoid crowds."

Terrorism experts said that given large amounts of new intelligence, especially from Europe, suggesting that Americans could be targeted by weapons of mass destruction, U.S. government officials face the same public relations quandary they encountered in the past, but with higher stakes.

"While police departments and local governments have a menu of steps they take in reaction to the higher threat alerts, private citizens don't, and there's not a hell of a lot an ordinary citizen can do," said Brian Jenkins, a Rand Corp. specialist on counterterrorism. "That creates consternation, maybe even an atmosphere of terror that terrorists want to create. And so that leads the government now to try to offer advice to people."

"They're not trying to scare people, but to educate people," said Randall Larsen, director of the private Anser Institute for Homeland Security, who teaches security studies at the National War College. U.S. officials have studied the Israeli government's citizen preparedness campaign before the Persian Gulf War, when families were given gas masks and plastic sheeting to protect them from possible chemical attacks by Iraqi Scud missiles, he said. "The Israelis learned one main task is psychologically preparing the population," Larsen said. "Americans need to be prepared the way the Israelis are. The most important message we could send to terrorists after the next attack is get up and go to work the next morning."

Paulison said one key message for the public is that, after a terrorist attack, people should listen to the news to learn what authorities are advising, and stay home if that is the recommendation. "If you don't have to evacuate, don't," he said. "The roads will be clogged."

But he laid out a vision of post-attack paralysis that made some other department officials wince. "People are going to be on their own for the first 24 or 48 hours," he said, reflecting on his experience with hurricanes as the former fire chief for Miami-Dade County.

Officials also offered details about actions the department has taken since Friday, when the threat level was raised from yellow to orange, the second-highest. Ridge, for example, held a conference call on Friday with 66 top corporate executives in charge of energy pipelines, utilities and other infrastructure to urge them to tighten security.

Department officials also contacted real estate management firms to urge them to impose new rules requiring visitors to tall buildings, as well as delivery workers, to obtain approval before entering. Likewise, mall owners were urged to begin moving parking for motorists, especially truck drivers, away from buildings. Many malls have hired armed guards in recent days.

Owners of all large buildings are being urged to secure air-intake equipment to prevent attempts to kill people with chemical weapons. Hotels have been told to restrict underground parking.

"The announcement on Friday was a signal to private industry and to state and local officials that more actions need to be taken," Johndroe said.

Officials are particularly concerned about intelligence that al Qaeda is targeting synagogues and other Jewish institutions. That has prompted a significant tightening of security at those places in recent days.

U.S. officials said one reason for yesterday's advice, and release of information about security discussions, was that al Qaeda tends to avoid targets it feels have been hardened.

"When we have more protections up, and signal we're paying attention, it lessens al Qaeda's interest in attack," an official said.

Staff writer Dan Eggen contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A54212-2003Feb10.html>

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Christian Science Monitor

February 11, 2003

US Troops: Ready For A Biochemical Attack?

Worried about retaliation from Hussein, soldiers prepare for worst-case scenarios - from Scud attacks to bioterror.

By Ann Scott Tyson, Special correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON – Facing a US-led invasion, will Saddam Hussein order chemical and biological weapons attacks on US troops - or even on his own people as a propaganda ploy? Will he decide to set Iraqi oil fields ablaze? Will he order Scud missile attacks on Riyadh, Tel Aviv, or other cities?

Simply put, once his regime is doomed, will Mr. Hussein go out with a wave of vengeful destruction?

Pentagon planners must assume the answer is yes.

Indeed, months ago, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld drafted a list of "risks of acting" to overthrow Hussein and presented it to President Bush. Top US military officials added to the list, which now runs four or five pages, and are readying countermeasures.

Whether or not the United States can avert such worst-case scenarios remains in doubt, however, especially if Hussein chooses to wreak havoc on his own country, say military officials and analysts.

One potential catastrophe would involve the successful Iraqi use of chemical or biological agents. US officials believe the Baghdad regime is preparing to use weaponized agents against American forces and possibly against civilians in neighboring countries or in Iraq.

"[There is] concern about Saddam Hussein using weapons of mass destruction against his own people and blaming it on us, which would fit a pattern," Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said recently.

The Iraqi military last fall began dispersing rocket launchers and warheads filled with biological agents in western Iraq. It hid the launchers in large groves of palm trees, with plans to move them every few weeks to escape detection, according to US intelligence cited by Secretary of State Colin Powell last week. Hussein recently authorized field commanders to use the weapons, he said.

Washington is trying to discourage such attacks in two ways: First, it has vowed to bring to justice any Iraqi who obeys orders to use "weapons of mass destruction" (WMD). It is uncertain, however, whether such a warning will influence hardened Hussein loyalists.

Second, the Bush administration has pointedly retained the option of nuclear retaliation. "I'm not going to put anything on the table or off the table, but we have a responsibility to make sure Saddam Hussein and his generals do not use weapons of mass destruction," Andrew Card, White House chief of staff, said recently.

Nevertheless, whether the United States can make the nuclear deterrent credible in the case of Iraq remains in doubt. Prior to the 1991 Gulf War, US officials publicly hinted of the threat of nuclear retaliation if Hussein used WMD or ignited Kuwaiti oil fields - but failed to carry out that threat when the oil wells were set on fire. Indeed, privately, the nuclear option had been all but ruled out by senior US officials including Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Today, some US officials are downplaying the nuclear deterrent. "I think we believe we have all the capabilities we need with our conventional forces," said Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. Also, the political threshold for using a nuclear weapon remains extremely high. "The president would really have to pause to be the first person to use a nuclear weapon in more than half a century," notes Hans Binnendijk, a nuclear-arms expert at the Pentagon's National Defense University. Moreover, the US currently lacks a small, low-yield nuclear device suited for striking deep bunkers, he says. Should Iraq launch a chemical or biological weapons attack using artillery shells or airborne vehicles, US troops are well equipped to deal with it. With protective masks, suits, and the ability to quickly counterattack, US forces would likely be slowed but not stopped by such weapons. "The most [Iraq] could get off would be a few rounds, and that would be choked off very quickly," says James Carafano, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments here. Civilian populations in Iraq and elsewhere would be highly vulnerable to the toxic weapons, however. "In urban areas, the civilians would take the brunt of the casualties," Mr. Carafano says. Another disaster could result if Hussein decides to blow up some of Iraq's 1,500 oil wells. Military movements in Iraq's southern and northern oil fields indicate the regime may have begun wiring oil heads to be destroyed - just as it destroyed Kuwaiti oil fields in 1991, according to a senior US military official. The cost of such an "act of terrorism" could range from \$30 billion to \$50 billion in infrastructure repair as well as billions more in lost Iraqi oil revenues and environmental damage. Smoke, soot, and sulfur from the blaze would only temporarily divert US forces, but it could have long-term health impacts for Iraqis, he says. US military planners are working on options to "preserve and protect" the fields. Still, if the wells are prewired to detonate, the American forces may not be able to act quickly enough. A third contingency preoccupying US military planners is the possibility - recently underscored by Iraqi threats - that Iraq will launch Scud missiles at neighboring states. Iraq is believed to have at most a few dozen Scud or Scud-type missiles with ranges of 150 miles to 400 miles - capable of striking Israel, Turkey, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. While often faulty and inaccurate, the missiles nevertheless are lethal. In the Gulf War, Iraq fired dozens of such missiles at Israel and Saudi Arabia, killing an Israeli citizen and 28 American servicemen. Today, US commanders hope the latest technology will allow them to destroy the Scuds before they hit - a goal that proved elusive during the last Gulf conflict. The strategy includes having US Special Operations Forces on the ground seek out missile sites and call in airstrikes to destroy them. Unmanned aerial drones, such as the Predator, can also offer real-time surveillance of suspected sites. If Iraq does launch Scuds, US forces would try to shoot them out of the sky with new Patriot missile-defense systems. The Army's truck-mounted, "hit-to-kill" PAC-3 missile systems have performed well in experiments but remain untested in battle. "A combination of significantly improved Patriots ... plus better suppression capability with the Predators gives you a good chance of being able to prevent anything from getting to Riyadh or Tel Aviv," says retired Air Force Col. John Warden, who planned US air strategy in the Gulf War. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0211/p02s01-usmi.html>

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Washington Post
February 11, 2003
Pg. 12

U.S. Wary Of Iranian Nuclear Aims

Tehran Insists Program Is Solely for Electricity

By Peter Slevin and Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writers

Iran's sudden announcement that it would reprocess spent nuclear fuel and mine uranium prompted concern yesterday that the Tehran government is following North Korea's example by increasing efforts to build nuclear weapons in defiance of the international community.

Although Iran said its nuclear program is intended solely for meeting a growing demand for electricity, analysts and U.S. government officials said the timing of the declarations strongly suggests that Tehran intends to develop an atomic threat.

"This is Iran declaring to the world that it's not going to be pushed around on nuclear matters," Rose Gottemoeller, a scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said. She described Iran's decision to publicly disclose its efforts as a strategic choice by the Tehran government.

The announcement Sunday by Iran's president, Mohammad Khatami, poses another significant challenge for the Bush administration as it stretches to confront troublesome weapons programs in Iraq and North Korea. With Iraq, the administration has chosen the threat of force; with North Korea the path of diplomacy. U.S. officials who expressed grave concern that Iran's announced plans are a pretext to develop nuclear weapons said the White House would await the findings of an inspection mission later this month by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) before developing a response.

Authorities on the subject believe Iran's nuclear program is years behind North Korea's; the CIA estimates that it would take seven years for Iran to build a nuclear weapon. But U.S. officials yesterday described a sense of nervousness.

"There is anxiety about it," one State Department official said. He added that Iran's announcement would do nothing to encourage warmer ties to the Tehran government. "It looks a little like what's going on with North Korea. It leaves a bad taste in everyone's mouth. This is going to complicate factors across the board."

The administration is seeking Iran's help in the event of a U.S.-led war with Iraq. In private talks in Europe recently, U.S. envoys asked Iranian emissaries not to intervene in an Iraqi conflict or grant safe haven to Iraqis who might try to challenge a new Baghdad government. U.S. officials also asked for assistance with refugees and search-and-rescue missions.

Some analysts suggested that Iran may be taking advantage of the U.S. preoccupation with Iraq to make fresh progress on its nuclear program and may have observed that months after North Korea acknowledged a secret program to enrich uranium, abrogated its commitment to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and dismantled U.N. monitoring equipment at the Yongbyon nuclear facility, the United States has been unable to stop it.

Although the Iranian president's disclosure startled many observers, Iran has made no secret of its ambitions to expand its civilian nuclear program. More than a decade ago, Iran declared its intention to develop uranium mines, and it invited the IAEA to inspect the mines in 1992. In September, Iran told the IAEA of plans to enrich uranium for use in a nuclear power plant -- a project that is expected to take years to complete.

Iran is a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which allows the peaceful pursuit of nuclear technology, including uranium mining and enrichment, under IAEA oversight.

IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei said yesterday that he will press Iran's government during a visit later this month to agree to more stringent monitoring, including no-notice inspections that would make it harder to divert fissile material into a nuclear weapons program. European Union and U.N. officials yesterday urged Iran to accept the additional oversight.

Bush administration officials, however, are deeply skeptical of the motives behind Iran's announcement, not least because the country has vast sources of energy in its oil and gas reserves. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the announcement that Iran would retain control over spent fuel from a nuclear reactor under construction at Bushehr contradicts an agreement with Russia to return the spent fuel to Russia.

Iran's ambitious and costly pursuit of a complete nuclear fuel cycle only makes sense if it is in support of a nuclear weapons program, Boucher suggested.

The United States and the international community have worked hard in recent years to prevent Iran from developing a 1,000-megawatt nuclear reactor at Bushehr. The facility is due to be completed during the coming year.

The latest Iranian disclosures suggested to some analysts that Iran has chosen to be more open about its nuclear program. Reports of clandestine nuclear facilities -- including two suspicious construction sites depicted in satellite photographs released in December -- had fueled fears that Iran would try to keep its key weapons programs secret.

"It's the 'half-step' scenario: They get themselves a weapons capability and then sit on it," said Leonard S. Spector, deputy director of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. He said Iran could develop, in the open, skills it would need to produce weapons-grade uranium.

One test of Iran's candor would be its willingness to sign the protocol granting additional international oversight, said Lawrence Scheinman, a former executive at the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

"Clandestine activity can still go on," Scheinman said. But it's just much harder to do.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A54213-2003Feb10.html>

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Wall Street Journal
February 11, 2003

Inspections Are A Total Waste Of Time

By Khidhir Hamza

My 20 years of work in Iraq's nuclear-weapons program and military industry were partly a training course in methods of deception and camouflage to keep the program secret. Given what I know about Saddam Hussein's commitment to developing and using weapons of mass destruction, the following two points are abundantly clear to me: First, the U.N. weapons inspectors will not find anything Saddam does not want them to find. Second, France, Germany, and to a degree, Russia, are opposed to U.S. military action in Iraq mainly because they maintain lucrative trade deals with Baghdad, many of which are arms-related.

Since the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 we have witnessed a tiny team of inspectors with a supposedly stronger mandate begging Iraq to disclose its weapons stockpiles and commence disarmament. The question that nags me is: How can a team of 200 inspectors "disarm" Iraq when 6,000 inspectors could not do so in the previous seven years of inspection?

Put simply, surprise inspections no longer work. With the Iraqis' current level of mobility and intelligence the whole point of inspecting sites is moot. This was made perfectly clear by Colin Powell in his presentation before the U.N. last week. But the inspectors, mindless of these changes, are still visiting old sites and interviewing marginal scientists. I can assure you, the core of Iraq's nuclear-weapons program has not even been touched. Yesterday's news that Iraq will "accept" U-2 surveillance flights is another sign that Saddam has confidence in his ability to hide what he's got.

Meanwhile, the time U.N. inspectors could have used gathering intelligence by interviewing scientists outside Iraq is running out. The problem is that there is nothing Saddam can declare that will provide any level of assurance of disarmament. If he delivers the 8,500 liters of anthrax that he now admits to having, he will still not be in compliance because the growth media he imported to grow it can produce 25,000 liters. Iraq must account for the growth media and its products; it is doing neither.

Iraq's attempt to import aluminum tubes of higher tensile strength than is needed in conventional weapons has been brushed aside by the IAEA's Mohammed El-Baradei. He claims there is no proof that these tubes were intended for modification and use in centrifuges to make enriched uranium. Yet he fails to report that Iraq has the machining equipment to thin these tubes down to the required thickness (less than one millimeter) for an efficient centrifuge rotor. What's more, they don't find it suspect that Iraq did not deliver all the computer controlled machining equipment that it imported from the British-based, Iraqi-owned Matrix-Churchill that manufacture these units. Mr. Blix also discounted the discovery of a number of "empty" chemical-weapons warheads. What he failed to mention is that empty is the only way to store these weapon parts. The warheads in question were not designed to store chemicals for long periods. They have a much higher possibility of leakage and corrosion than conventional warheads. Separate storage for the poisons is a standard practice in Iraq, since the Special Security Organization that guards Saddam also controls the storage and inventory of these chemicals.

What has become obvious is that the U.N. inspection process was designed to delay any possible U.S. military action to disarm Iraq. Germany, France, and Russia, states we called "friendly" when I was in Baghdad, are also engaged in a strategy of delay and obstruction.

In the two decades before the Gulf War, I played a role in Iraq's efforts to acquire major technologies from friendly states. In 1974, I headed an Iraqi delegation to France to purchase a nuclear reactor. It was a 40-megawatt research reactor that our sources in the IAEA told us should cost no more than \$50 million. But the French deal ended up costing Baghdad more than \$200 million. The French-controlled Habbania Resort project cost Baghdad a whopping \$750 million, and with the same huge profit margin. With these kinds of deals coming their way, is it any surprise that the French are so desperate to save Saddam's regime?

Germany was the hub of Iraq's military purchases in the 1980s. Our commercial attache, Ali Abdul Mutalib, was allocated billions of dollars to spend each year on German military industry imports. These imports included many proscribed technologies with the German government looking the other way. In 1989, German engineer Karl Schaab sold us classified technology to build and operate the centrifuges we needed for our uranium-enrichment program. German authorities have since found Mr. Schaab guilty of selling nuclear secrets, but because the technology was considered "dual use" he was fined only \$32,000 and given five years probation.

Meanwhile, other German firms have provided Iraq with the technology it needs to make missile parts. Mr. Blix's recent finding that Iraq is trying to enlarge the diameter of its missiles to a size capable of delivering nuclear weapons would not be feasible without this technology transfer.

Russia has long been a major supplier of conventional armaments to Iraq -- yet again at exorbitant prices. Even the Kalashnikov rifles used by the Iraqi forces are sold to Iraq at several times the price of comparable guns sold by other suppliers.

Saddam's policy of squandering Iraq's resources by paying outrageous prices to friendly states seems to be paying off. The irresponsibility and lack of morality these states are displaying in trying to keep the world's worst butcher in

power is perhaps indicative of a new world order. It is a world of winks and nods to emerging rogue states -- for a price. It remains for the U.S. and its allies to institute an opposing order in which no price is high enough for dictators like Saddam to thrive.

Mr. Hamza, a former director of Iraq's nuclear-weapons program, is the co-author of "Saddam's Bombmaker: The Terrifying Inside Story of the Iraqi Nuclear and Biological Weapons Agenda" (Scribner, 2000).

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