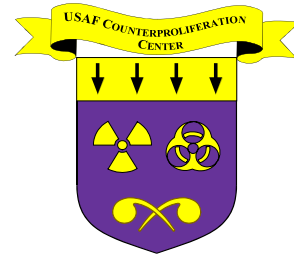


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Washington Post
February 12, 2003
Pg. 1

CIA Head Predicts Nuclear Race

Small Nations Pursuing Arms

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

CIA Director George J. Tenet warned yesterday that the "desire for nuclear weapons is on the upsurge" among small countries, confronting the world with a new nuclear arms race that threatens to dismantle more than three decades of nonproliferation efforts.

"The 'domino theory' of the 21st century may well be nuclear," Tenet said in reference to the doctrine that led the United States militarily into Vietnam in the 1960s to try to prevent a communist takeover of Southeast Asia. "We have entered a new world of proliferation."

Over the past 12 months, Tenet said, North Korea, Iraq, Iran and Libya have all moved to obtain equipment to produce weapons-grade nuclear materials and the ability to deliver them as nuclear bombs. There also has been ongoing concern about Pakistan's and India's maturing nuclear programs, as well as growing alarm that nuclear materials could fall -- or have already spread -- into the hands of terrorist groups such as al Qaeda for production of radioactive "dirty" bombs.

"More has changed on proliferation over the past year than any other issue," Tenet told the Senate Intelligence Committee in his worldwide threat briefing, an annual report to Congress.

The CIA director's remarks signaled that the Bush administration has concluded that without enforcement, the era in which countries were encouraged by treaties and self-regulation to avoid developing nuclear weapons may be coming to an end. Such a conclusion would buttress the administration's new national security doctrine, which envisions preemptive strikes against potential nuclear powers, as well as bolster the administration's case for developing missile defenses.

Tenet's testimony, which reflected long-held opinions of many Pentagon officials, called into question the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty in which the United States, the Soviet Union and dozens of other countries pledged to stem the spread of nuclear weapons. Although countries such as Israel, Pakistan and India never signed the treaty and have since acquired nuclear weapons, the pact has been widely credited as a landmark in arms control.

The testimony also pointed to concerns about the enforcement abilities of U.N. arms control agencies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency, which are supposed to prevent the spread of nuclear technologies, said Timothy V. McCarthy, senior analyst at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies and director of the Center's Proliferation Research and Assessment Program.

Tenet traced the breakdown of the global nonproliferation system not to existing nuclear powers but to what he called "non-state purveyors," meaning private companies or in some cases rogue individuals in Europe and elsewhere who are selling "technology and equipment that previously could only be supplied by countries with established [nuclear] capabilities." He described such individuals and companies as being "in the vanguard of this new world" of nuclear weapons proliferation.

Tenet cited North Korea's decision in recent months to develop the capability to produce weapons-grade uranium and to end its freeze on its plutonium production facilities; Libya's increased access to technologies that have both nuclear and civilian uses; and Iran's decision to produce enriched uranium that could be used for either civilian power generation or a nuclear weapon.

"The example of new nuclear states that seem able to deter threats from more powerful states, simply by brandishing nuclear weaponry, will resonate deeply among other countries that want to enter the nuclear weapons club," Tenet said.

Tenet particularly cited North Korea, which secretly began building an enriched uranium facility two years ago and since last fall has confronted the Bush administration with a strategic and foreign policy challenge. After being confronted last October by the United States, the North Korean government in Pyongyang admitted what it was doing, refused to halt its program without direct negotiations with Washington and thereafter withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It also openly repudiated a 1994 agreement with the Clinton administration that froze its plutonium production facility.

Using North Korea as a starting point, Tenet said, "Additional countries may decide to seek nuclear weapons as it becomes clear their neighbors and regional rivals are doing so."

In North Korea's case, Pakistani scientists in the mid-1990s laid out a road map of companies from which Pyongyang could purchase needed nuclear equipment. Iraq, according to U.S. intelligence, has been able to purchase from a variety of sources aluminum tubing that can be used in a centrifuge for producing weapons grade uranium. Traditional supporters of nonproliferation efforts reacted strongly to Tenet's statement.

"It is easy to say this regime won't work, but what's the alternative?" said Gordon Prather, a scientist who worked at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory with additional experience at the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill. He traced the CIA's concern over proliferation to the "shock" in finding that Iraq in 1991 had come close to developing a nuclear capability. North Korea's ability to procure equipment for its new enriched uranium was another example, Prather said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A59498-2003Feb11.html>

Washington Post
February 12, 2003
Pg. 18

Harsh Iraqi Reaction Expected

Invasion Would Spark Attacks on Israel, Kurds, U.S. Sites

By Dana Priest, Washington Post Staff Writer

Faced with a U.S. invasion of Iraq, President Saddam Hussein would likely launch missile and terrorist attacks against Israel and U.S. facilities abroad, preemptive strikes against the Kurds in the north, and a "scorched-earth strategy" in Iraq "significant enough to stop a military advance," the Defense Department's top intelligence official said yesterday.

Vice Adm. Lowell E. Jacoby, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told the Senate intelligence committee that he expects Hussein would destroy Iraq's food and water supplies, and its transportation, energy and other infrastructure, creating a humanitarian disaster that would occupy the attention of U.S. troops trying to reach Baghdad and Iraqi military units.

In a briefing largely devoted to Iraq, Jacoby also called North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons "the most serious challenge to U.S. regional interests in a generation." While the Bush administration has sought to play down the bellicose rhetoric from Pyongyang and has ruled out the use of force to compel North Korea to dismantle its nuclear weapons program, Jacoby was more blunt about the threat: "The outcome of this current crisis will shape relations in Northeast Asia for years to come."

Three other factors make the North Korea situation particularly troubling, Jacoby said: Pyongyang's willingness to market nuclear weapons to terrorists; its continued development and testing of ballistic missiles capable of sending nuclear material to Japan and, in the future, the United States; and the fact that any war against the large, forward-deployed North Korean military would be "violent, destructive, and could occur with very little warning."

CIA Director George J. Tenet, questioned about the value of ongoing inspections by the United Nations, said there was "little chance you'll find weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq unless Hussein cooperates with inspectors. On the other hand, Tenet said he would expect U.S. troops "will find caches of weapons of mass destruction, absolutely" were they to invade the country.

If the United States decides not to go to war with Iraq and instead waits on inspectors, Hussein will continue developing weapons of mass destruction, Tenet said. "He will continue to strengthen himself over time," he said. "It never gets any better with this fellow, and he's never been a status quo guy."

Tenet also elaborated on the CIA's understanding of Iraq's link to al Qaeda, a central issue in the administration's case for going to war against Iraq in the near future, as opposed to waiting months longer for the U.N. inspectors to do more work. Tenet described Abu Musab Zarqawi, the main character in the administration's case that Iraq is working with al Qaeda now, as it had not done in the past, as a "senior al Qaeda associate." Zarqawi sought medical care in Baghdad, has met with Osama bin Laden, has been financially supported by al Qaeda and has taken "sustenance" from Iraq. But Zarqawi, he pointed out, is not under the control of Hussein.

"I did not suggest operational direction and control" of Zarqawi by Iraq, Tenet said. "He thinks of himself as independent and derives sustenance from them."

Tenet described the other two dozen terrorist operatives who moved into Iraq after the U.S. invaded Afghanistan as members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which merged with al Qaeda years ago. "They are indistinguishable from al Qaeda," he said.

French and German officials, who have had access to U.S. intelligence and analysis, have said they are not convinced there is a direct or credible link between al Qaeda and Iraq. They point out the fundamental ideological between the Islamic, religious-based followers of al Qaeda and the secular nature of Iraq's regime. Furthermore, they say it is not in Hussein's interest to attack the United States, a move that would give the United States a clear-cut reason to invade.

Tenet also testified that U.S. intelligence agencies had turned over to the U.N. inspectors all relevant information about weapons sites in Iraq that have a "high" or "moderate" likelihood of containing weapons or remnants of weapons material.

Some critics of Washington's Iraq policy, including France and Germany, have alleged that the United States is not sharing information on all weapons sites it knows exist, because it wants to bomb them during a war. "We've held nothing back," Tenet said. "We have given them everything we have, every site that we believe, based on current intelligence, can be fruitful for inspections."

Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) said Tenet's statement on intelligence sharing with inspectors was "a change" from the position taken by other administration officials, including Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, who had suggested recently the United States was withholding information from inspectors. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A59227-2003Feb11.html>

Los Angeles Times

February 12, 2003

Pg. 1

Biodefense Lab On The Defensive

Calls for more funds to fight bioterrorism are met with cries for greater scrutiny at the United States' lead research facility.

By Charles Piller, Times Staff Writer

FREDERICK, Md. -- As the Bush administration proposes a dramatic increase in research funding to protect Americans against bioterrorism, congressional and scientific skeptics are calling for closer scrutiny of the nation's leading biodefense facility.

The U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases at Ft. Detrick, Md., has accumulated a record of environmental, safety and security problems.

In congressional testimony, internal reports and interviews, officials and former researchers at the institute have asserted that:

* Dozens of laboratory samples, mostly noninfectious but crucial to biodefense research, were lost or misplaced during the 1980s and 1990s. Former employees say that controls on dangerous toxins were haphazard and record-keeping was spotty.

* Twice in April 2002, anthrax spores escaped or were taken from high-security containment labs at the Army institute, despite a tightening of safety procedures after the 2001 anthrax mailings. Anthrax spores were found in a hallway and a locker room, prompting an urgent cleanup. No one is known to have been sickened by the leaks.

* From 1946 until at least 1977, toxic waste from the institute and an earlier biowarfare program -- including vials of biological agents and anthrax-laced sludge -- was buried near Ft. Detrick. A decade ago, it was discovered that chemicals from the dump had leached into drinking water used by nearby suburban homes. The Army began a cleanup in late 2001.

* Hundreds of employees, visiting scientists and trainees have passed through the institute with minimal screening, prompting suspicions that the perpetrator of the anthrax mailings in 2001, which killed five people and caused the closure of the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, acquired the spores or the necessary knowledge at Ft. Detrick. An FBI investigation has focused on Steven Hatfill, a former scientist at the Army lab whom Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft has described as a "person of interest." Hatfill has denied any connection to the mailings. The commander of the research facility, Col. Erik Henchal, defended its three decades of research, which has produced a number of experimental vaccines and treatments.

He blamed the toxic-waste dumping on bioweapons projects discontinued in 1969, and he strongly disputed the notion that a current or former employee is responsible for the anthrax mailings.

Henchal, a microbiologist and career Army officer, said that mishandling of dangerous substances at the institute was rare and accidental exposures even rarer. And, he said, security has been enhanced since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"Hot labs" that handle the most dangerous microbes now operate on a buddy system; no one works alone. Employees are randomly searched as they leave the facility.

Yet Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs and International Relations, said doubts persist about the institute, stemming partly from its origins in a secret, Cold War-era bioweapons program. Shays said he will pursue an investigation into problems at the lab.

"It's a part of our military that hasn't gotten enough scrutiny," he said. "We need to take a very close look at what they've done and what they should be doing."

About 600 scientists and other employees of the institute, known by the acronym USAMRIID, work in an industrial-looking monolith of offices and labs in Frederick, Md., about 50 miles northwest of Washington.

The heart of the institute is a long hallway with small sealed windows and crash doors marked: "Infectious Area. No Entrance." This quarantine zone is protected by heavy security, including military checkpoints.

Scientists slog around in rubberized suits, trailing bright yellow air-supply lifelines. Cinderblock walls are painted with light-green epoxy to withstand the strongest antiseptics. Researchers study lethal biological agents such as the Ebola and Rift Valley hemorrhagic fevers in the most secure laboratories.

The institute has served as the forensics lab for the FBI's investigation into the anthrax mailings. Researchers have tested 30,000 samples of mail, office supplies and swabs of potentially contaminated surfaces, Henchal said.

USAMRIID was created in 1969 from the remnants of a massive bioweapons program begun in 1943. At the height of that earlier program, some 4,000 scientists and technicians pioneered "weaponization," the dark craft of breeding, drying, encapsulating, hardening and spraying disease agents. Munitions filled with anthrax, plague and other pathogens were tested in the air over sparsely populated sections of Utah, Army records show.

During congressional hearings in October, the Pentagon revealed that, from 1963 to 1968, microbes were sprayed from ships off San Diego; Oahu, Hawaii; and other areas in the Pacific to simulate a germ-warfare attack. The germs, then considered harmless, were later found to be potentially lethal for adults with compromised immune systems and small children.

In a similar experiment in 1950, a bacterium thought to be innocuous was sprayed over San Francisco. In widely published reports and in legal documents, the microbe was later blamed for a spate of illnesses and one death, that of an elderly man said to have suffered heart inflammation.

In 1969, President Richard Nixon renounced bioweapons and refocused the U.S. efforts on defensive research -- vaccines, treatments and similar measures. USAMRIID was created to do that work, using some of the same labs and personnel employed in the bioweapons program. Three years later, Nixon signed the Biological Weapons Convention, which permits only defensive research.

A legacy of the abandoned weapons program and of USAMRIID's early years lies buried at Ft. Detrick -- at a 399-acre site about a mile from the main base and a few hundred feet from neat suburban homes. It is known simply as Area B.

Live pathogens, possibly including anthrax, were tested there, according to a 1977 Army report.

In addition, the carcasses of animals infected in experiments were supposed to have been incinerated, but "were buried in Area B when the incinerator was inoperable," the report said. "The burial of animals and contaminated sludge has caused the area to be considered permanently contaminated with anthrax spores."

A decade ago, Maryland state officials detected hazardous levels of chemical solvents -- but no active biological agents -- in the drinking water of nearby homes. Area B was identified as the source.

In late 2001, the Army began a multimillion-dollar cleanup. Tents were erected around the dig area, along with an elaborate safety system that samples the air and freezes the ground beneath the dump to hold toxic substances in place.

Among the toxic waste so far uncovered are 96 vials containing biological material. Lt. Col. Don Archibald, who oversees the effort, said that about half the vials have been analyzed, and that several contained viable pathogens, including the organisms that cause pneumonia, meningitis and tuberculosis.

Workers excavating the site were taken to a local hospital for tests, but none became ill. No illnesses have been attributed to the tainted water, according to Gerald P. Toomey, an engineering consultant and co-chair of a community advisory board monitoring the cleanup. He said the full extent of contamination may not be known for years.

Said Archibald: "We are really dealing with the unknown. What took place here really didn't take place anywhere else."

Former USAMRIID scientists say the dump reflects chronic problems in maintaining control over its toxic inventory -- a particular concern at an institution that works with and regularly shares samples of pathogens with other labs.

During a 1988 Senate investigation, a former USAMRIID virologist, Neil H. Levitt, said that two quarts of Chikungunya virus, which causes a flu-like illness, had disappeared from his lab.

David Huxsoll, then commander of the institute, said the virus had probably been heat-treated to render it noninfectious. But he acknowledged that Levitt's allegation was never formally investigated.

In 1992, the facility's chief of experimental pathology asked a staff member to tally laboratory samples that researchers had reported missing. It emerged that an experimental treatment for simian immunodeficiency virus, an HIV-like virus strain that affects monkeys, had been lost -- along with at least 27 specimens of anthrax spores and the viruses that cause hanta, Ebola and other diseases.

Army officials said that the samples, like the missing Chikungunya virus, were noninfectious and that most were later recovered. Former staff members and outside critics say the lapses are nonetheless worrisome because lab samples, in the wrong hands, could reveal sensitive information about U.S. biodefense research and readiness. Last year's anthrax episodes, which involved highly refined spores similar to those used in bioweapons and biodefense research, stirred further concern about security at the institute.

The first incident was discovered April 8 when a researcher, on his own initiative, tested areas outside the containment labs and found infectious spores in a hallway and locker room. USAMRIID officials would not say what triggered the scientist's actions. About two weeks later, anthrax -- this time a noninfectious strain -- was discovered again outside the containment labs, according to lab officials.

The institute declined to release its investigative report on the two incidents.

Such episodes reflect an atmosphere of laxity, said Richard Crosland, 56, a physiologist who spent 11 years at USAMRIID before he was laid off in a round of budget cuts in 1997. Crosland said that while lab managers vigilantly tracked expensive equipment, they were careless about monitoring stocks of dangerous toxins.

"If you were missing enough botulinum toxin to kill a few thousand people, they didn't know anything about it," he said. When asked to account for hazardous substances, many scientists merely photocopied an old inventory and changed the date, he said.

"They never once had an audit of materials I had," he said.

After his dismissal, Crosland sued the Army for age discrimination. A federal court dismissed the suit, noting that a number of older scientists still worked at the institute. Crosland and two other plaintiffs have appealed.

Ayaad Assaad, 53, a former USAMRIID researcher and an expert on biological toxins, also said that oversight was sloppy at Ft. Detrick. Like Crosland, Assaad lost his job in the 1997 cuts and is pursuing an age-discrimination suit. He is now a toxicologist for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Assaad said that several years after he left the Army laboratory, its security office called him after an alarm sounded on a locked refrigerator filled with toxins and microbes. The officer was apparently unaware that Assaad had left the institute. Assaad said he was informed that he was still listed as the scientist responsible for the refrigerator.

"The security officer said, 'Yours is the only name on the roster,'" Assaad said.

Candidates for jobs at USAMRIID must undergo a "national agency check," the standard background investigation for federal employees, said Henchal, the commander. This includes verification of education and the previous five years of employment and a search for criminal records going back three years.

Staff members with access to classified information must also undergo national security screenings.

Hatfill, the scientist identified as a "person of interest" in the FBI's anthrax investigation, did not undergo either background check when he joined the lab as a research associate of the National Research Council in 1997. Hatfill was one of hundreds of students, trainees and foreign scientists who have passed through the institute over the years, according to USAMRIID officials. Hatfill's background was vetted by the research council, part of the National Academy of Sciences, the country's premier scientific society. Such reviews typically involve examining letters of recommendation and educational transcripts.

After he came under FBI scrutiny, it emerged that Hatfill's resume included unfounded claims of having served in the U.S. Army Special Forces and of belonging to a prestigious British medical society.

Henchal said the research council's screening is more stringent today. But Ray Gamble, director of the council program that sponsored Hatfill, said there have been no substantive changes in how applications are reviewed.

"It's a scientific review that hasn't changed in hundreds of years. It's based on the technical proposal, the scientific merit," he said. "There are always opportunities for people to misrepresent themselves."

As part of its anthrax probe, the FBI administered polygraph exams to some of the institute's scientists. The results of those tests are not known. Henchal said there has been no wider security review of the USAMRIID staff but that a handful of foreign nationals were re-screened after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Henchal said that institute records, which he declined to disclose, showed "no evidence" that the anthrax used in the mailings was taken from USAMRIID "secretly or otherwise." The federal government spent \$60 million on nonmilitary biodefense research in fiscal 2001, and \$317 million in fiscal 2002. The Bush administration has asked for about \$2 billion for the current fiscal year -- more than the combined research budgets proposed to fight breast and lung cancer, stroke and tuberculosis. The funds have yet to be approved by Congress, even though the fiscal

year began Oct. 1. The money would fund several new high-security labs at universities and government agencies for work on vaccines and treatments for biowarfare agents. Additionally, President Bush announced in his State of the Union address last month that he will propose spending \$6 billion on developing and stockpiling biodefense vaccines over 10 years. These funds would be on top of regular annual biodefense spending.

Some critics question the wisdom of so rapid a buildup. If a military lab has had problems, they say, civilian labs -- nearly all inexperienced with exotic pathogens -- might generate more security concerns than they solve.

"This well-intentioned response may perversely have exactly the opposite effect," said Richard Ebright, a microbiologist and biowarfare expert at Rutgers University.

Skeptics point out that the Bush program will increase the number of people with knowledge of biowarfare agents. This, they say, will make crimes of domestic bioterrorism more likely and, because of the expanded pool of potential suspects, harder to solve.

Such concerns are "understandable but really spurious," said Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which would disburse grants under the Bush program. "Bioterrorism and the need for biodefense is a reality. We can't walk away from it."

Fauci said that, since Sept. 11, 2001, federal biomedical research labs have dramatically tightened security, and that other institutions can do likewise.

"It's going to be a challenge," he said, "but I have every confidence that the biomedical research community will adapt well to the change."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-sci-biodefense12feb12,1,3166729.story>

Washington Post
February 12, 2003
Pg. 15

Drills Don't Calm Fear Of A Chemical Attack

For Troops in Kuwait, 9 Seconds to Don a Mask

By Peter Baker, Washington Post Foreign Service

CAMP DOHA, Kuwait -- The siren sounded and a voice came over the loudspeaker just after 2 p.m., a woman's voice, calm and dispassionate. "Exercise. Exercise. Exercise. Put on your protective masks. Seek cover."

Troops at this U.S. camp in the Kuwaiti desert immediately reached into green satchels on their hips, pulled out their black gas masks and slipped them over their faces. Then they headed to bunkers, ducking into the cramped concrete structures surrounded by sandbags. Within a minute, the streets of Camp Doha were virtually empty.

The Scud alert on Monday, simulating a chemical weapons attack, was the first of its kind in weeks at the main headquarters for U.S. forces assembling for a possible invasion of Iraq, and it reflected heightened concern as war appears to be drawing near. For the previous four days, every soldier on base had been required to keep a gas mask on hand while new arrivals were rushed through refresher courses in protecting themselves from chemical or biological agents.

"We're not watching it on TV anymore. We're here," said Air Force Capt. Regen Wilson, who normally lives in the District of Columbia. "The thought really comes home to you when you're this close."

They don't like to talk about it with their parents, they don't like to talk about it even with one another. But no matter how much training they get or how many drills they perform, nothing terrifies the soldiers here like the prospect of a chemical attack. As 21-year-old Army Spec. Paul Kinyon put it, "You got a little spot in the back of your mind thinking, 'Oh please, God, don't let it come.'"

Many here acknowledge they try to shove such thoughts deep into the recesses of their minds, busying themselves with daily routine -- anything rather than dwell on the possibilities. The military culture helps in a way, because even the most horrific aspects of war are distilled into procedures. The siren announcing a Scud alert signals not the approach of a missile bearing lethal nerve gas but the beginning of another test: Can a soldier don the mask in the regulation nine seconds? Repetition offers comfort.

"The more prepared you're going to be, the better you can react without being anxious," said Marine Capt. Deborah Bornhorst, 31, who arrived here two weeks ago from Quantico, Va., and sat through a morning class Monday reviewing how to put on a chem-bio suit.

Only when the discussion turns to words like "twitching" -- as in the effect nerve gas could have on an unprotected human body -- does the imagination function again. "With the nerve agents, all your muscles tighten up and eventually you crush your own spinal cord," Bornhorst observed, adding, "I don't think that would be fun." Something about the prospect of encountering such nerve gases as VX or sarin, or anthrax bacteria, seems particularly chilling. Troops crossing the border into Iraq would almost all be wearing bulky suits laced with activated charcoal, gas masks at their hips. Even false alarms would send them into their masks and require them to operate encumbered by all the gear.

This new form of warfare holds little appeal in the barracks here at Camp Doha. Just the thought of it makes some troops shake their heads. Offered a choice, Marine Cpl. Jeffrey Sayres, 21, of Morgantown, W.Va., said he would rather take "a lot of bullets" than a gas attack.

"If a bullet hits me, it'd be a lot less painful than chemical agents," he reflected. "Kill me faster, too."

On the next bunk, his fellow Marine, Lance Cpl. Jason Keezel, 23, of Portland, Ore., recalled some of the lessons they were taught about chemical and biological agents. "Just hearing briefs about what this stuff can do, how it's odorless and tasteless and you can't see it -- how can you fight back against something you can't see? I'm scared of it."

The risk is real even for those not deployed in the forward area. Camp Doha, about 40 miles south of the Iraqi border, sits within the range of Iraqi missiles -- not just the banned longer-range weapons the Iraq military allegedly has retained, but also short-range missiles allowed by the United Nations.

Although Patriot anti-missile batteries stay on alert to shoot down enemy fire, few here think the Patriots offer complete protection. Consequently, officers take drills like Monday's Scud alert seriously. The entire base was locked down and vehicular traffic was prohibited for 90 minutes.

Assigned to cope with the results of any real attack is a special unit called the Combined Joint Task Force-Consequence Management, a U.S.-led team of nuclear, chemical and biological experts based at Camp Doha. With 176 Americans, 326 Czechs and 63 Germans, the task force is one of the few examples of international cooperation visible here on the brink of possible war. The task force would rush to the scene of any attack to assess the threat, evacuate victims and begin decontamination.

So far, it has not had to respond to any problems, although it was put on standby Monday when reports arrived that a traffic accident near the base had resulted in a large cloud of white smoke. Fears that chemical agents might be involved quickly dissipated along with the smoke as it became clear that a bulldozer had run over an old mine. It was the second false alarm in recent weeks.

During the wait for war, the task force offers regular courses for all military personnel cycling into the region, reminding them of the warning signs of various chemical and biological agents and conducting rehearsals of how to act in such situations. Instructors display the detector paper that senses the presence of toxic agents and demonstrate how to jam an atropine autoinjector, with its 1 1/2-inch needle, into the thigh or buttocks to counteract the effects of nerve gas. When they hear three honks of a horn or someone shouting, "Gas, gas, gas!" soldiers have nine seconds to get their masks on.

"The main thing is: Don't panic when trying to put this mask on," Sgt. Walt Kramer told a class last week. "Keep calm."

That's easier in class than in the field, according to the instructors. But they force their students to do it again and again until they get it within the prescribed time. The students also must show that they can pull on the cumbersome protective suit, along with gloves and boots, within eight minutes. While there might be some leeway during regular training back home, those who cannot meet those requirements here must drill over and over until they succeed.

"They all do it to standard," said Sgt. 1st Class William Martin, another instructor. "We take no shortcuts. You're talking about life and death."

To prepare for possible biological warfare, the military command has been vaccinating troops against smallpox since the end of December. For some, that has meant unpleasant side effects.

Spec. Jose Flores, 20, from Southern California, felt ill for eight days after receiving his shot. "It got me real sick," he said. "Fever, body aches. I was tired all the time. It was real ugly. At first, I was worried, but then I figured these were the symptoms you get, so I just tried to not overexert myself."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A59469-2003Feb11.html>

N. Korea Standoff Sent To U.N. Council

Plutonium for Weapons Said Weeks Away

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

The U.N. nuclear agency said yesterday that North Korea may have secretly diverted nuclear material for weapons in violation of international treaties, and raised the stakes in the crisis by sending the issue to the Security Council. Bush administration officials have long sought the referral to the Security Council, believing it would increase pressure on North Korea and provide a multinational forum for resolving the standoff with the reclusive regime. The North Koreans have demanded direct talks with the United States, but the Bush administration has refused to negotiate unless the government in Pyongyang first takes steps to dismantle its nuclear weapons programs. One complicating factor for the administration is that few of its regional allies agree with this strategy; China, Russia and South Korea have repeatedly urged the administration to talk to the North Koreans. Officials hope that forcing the issue into the Security Council will require its partners to also grapple with the problem.

"The current situation sets a dangerous precedent," said Mohamed ElBaradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, after the IAEA's 35-nation governing board met in Vienna to approve the referral. He said North Korea was only weeks away from producing "a significant amount of plutonium" that could be used in weapons, putting at risk the international regime to control nuclear weapons if no action was taken.

The CIA has estimated Pyongyang already has one or two nuclear weapons. Many U.S. officials appear to have resigned themselves to the possibility that North Korea will produce weapons-grade material from a nuclear facility recently restarted by the regime, or possibly launch a missile test to escalate the crisis even further.

But one senior U.S. official said yesterday that, through back-channel communications with U.S. officials, the North Koreans have sent signals they will not produce material for weapons and are prepared to "wait and wait" for the United States to come to the negotiating table. "I don't discount it entirely," the source said of the reports.

U.S. officials have little hope that Security Council action by itself will put enough pressure on North Korea to pull back from the brink of confrontation. Russia and China at this point appear certain to block any effort to impose sanctions on the North Korean regime. U.S. officials said they would seek either a relatively mild resolution or a statement from the Security Council president deploring North Korea's action and urging compliance with international obligations.

"We certainly thought the matter belonged in the Security Council for a long time," said Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton. "It is hard to judge what gets through to the North Koreans," he said, but "this is the appropriate place to talk about it."

Bolton added that, despite tactical differences with other nations in the region, "the fundamental bottom line is that everyone agrees there should be a nonnuclear Korean Peninsula."

While no countries voted against the IAEA resolution, Russia and Cuba abstained on the grounds that it was not necessary to involve the Security Council yet. Russia, which has political and economic ties with North Korea, said, "We consider the sending of this question to the U.N. Security Council to be a premature and counterproductive step."

U.S. officials have been especially annoyed at China's reaction, because they believe China, as North Korea's prime source for food and energy, has major leverage over North Korea.

"The Chinese position is the Korean Peninsula will be denuclearized," Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told the House International Relations Committee yesterday. "So we are saying to them, 'Fine -- then why do you just turn to us to make it happen? You should be a part of this effort.'"

The crisis began in October, when North Korea admitted that it had a secret program to enrich uranium for possible use in weapons. After North Korea disclosed the uranium project, the United States pressed its allies to join it in suspending fuel oil shipments provided under a 1994 agreement to freeze Pyongyang's nuclear programs. In response, North Korea evicted international weapons inspectors, moved to restart a plutonium reactor that had been closed as part of the 1994 accord, withdrew from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and threatened to restart missile tests.

Yesterday, U.S. intelligence officials in testimony on Capitol Hill appeared to disclose new information about the range of an untested North Korean ballistic missile, dominating the midday news shows. But officials later backtracked, saying there is no new intelligence on North Korea's missile capabilities.

U.S. officials, preoccupied with the looming war with Iraq, have repeatedly resisted setting a "red line" that North Korea cannot cross without prompting action. The Bush administration also has all but ruled out a military response, though the Pentagon has put some forces on alert for possible deployment in the Korean theater, where 37,000 U.S. troops are based.

Richard N. Perle, head of an advisory group to the Pentagon, told reporters yesterday that it was unrealistic to think North Korea would ever give up nuclear weapons, no matter what pressure came from other nations, because "it's like making a deal in which the other side gives up its ration card . . . it's all they have."

He said it was time for the administration to start thinking of ways "to neutralize" the firepower possessed by the North Koreans in order to give the United States a better range of military options.

Staff writer Vernon Loeb contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A152-2003Feb12.html>

Washington Post

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Pg. 1

Panel: Iraq Broke Limit On Missiles

Finding May Lead to Tough Blix Report

By Colum Lynch and Dana Priest, Washington Post Staff Writers

UNITED NATIONS, Feb. 12 -- A team of international missile experts assembled this week by chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix has concluded that a major Iraqi ballistic missile program is in clear violation of United Nations mandates prohibiting Iraq from building medium- and long-range missiles, U.S. and U.N. officials said today.

The unanimous finding of the team, which included experts from six countries, is expected to set the stage for a confrontation between the Iraqi government and Blix over the probable destruction of Iraq's Al Samoud 2 rocket program. They are also likely to lead Blix to present a tougher assessment of Iraq's cooperation with inspectors at a critical briefing for the U.N. Security Council on Friday.

The Bush administration intends to cite Iraq's ballistic missile program as another justification for the council to declare that Iraq is in violation of its disarmament obligations and that the use of military force is justified, officials said.

Attention on Blix's presentation to the Security Council intensified today as the foreign ministers of Russia, France, China and Germany -- which have been pushing for continued inspections to ward off an early move to war -- announced that they will attend the session. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said he, too, will travel to New York to challenge the four governments to declare that Iraq has squandered the "final opportunity" to disarm voluntarily that it was granted by the council in a Nov. 8 resolution.

"Nobody wants war, but sometimes it's necessary when you need it to maintain international order," Powell told the House International Relations Committee. "There are some of my European colleagues right now who are resisting the natural flow of this resolution. They want to have more inspectors. More inspectors aren't the issue. The question I put to them is: Why more inspectors and how much more time? Or are you just delaying for the sake of delaying in order to get Saddam Hussein off the hook?"

Powell delivered the most detailed account to date of what he said were U.S. efforts to persuade Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his inner circle to seek political asylum outside of Iraq.

Powell said the United States is "in touch with a number of countries" in a bid to negotiate a peaceful transition in Baghdad. He suggested that any deal would ultimately require U.N. endorsement to "entice" Hussein and his senior aides to leave the country. "One way to avoid a lot of suffering is for the regime to step down -- Saddam Hussein and his cohorts," Powell said.

CIA Director George J. Tenet, meanwhile, faced a storm of criticism from Democrats on the Senate Armed Services Committee who charged that the administration has sabotaged the U.N. weapons inspections by not fully cooperating with the United Nations. They also accused Tenet of misleading them about the intelligence on Iraqi weapons that the CIA had turned over to the inspections teams.

In testimony before the Senate intelligence committee on Tuesday, Tenet surprised senators by saying that the agency had given U.N. inspectors all the information it had on weapons sites of "high" and "moderate" interest, meaning those sites that are likely to contain weapons or remnants of weapons. Today, Tenet told the Senate defense panel that he had been wrong. In fact, he said, there are "one handful of sites which may not have been known" to the U.N. inspectors.

Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, have pressed the Bush administration to provide timely and accurate intelligence on Iraqi chemical, biological and nuclear weapons sites. U.S. officials maintain that they have, although the inspectors have raised questions about the quality of some of the U.S. intelligence.

Sen. Carl M. Levin (D-Mich.) challenged Tenet's statements in an interview after the testimony, saying the CIA director continued to mislead lawmakers on the extent of the agency's cooperation. Levin cited classified letters from the CIA dated Jan. 24 and Jan. 28 in which the CIA said it had not shared information about what he characterized as "a large number of sites" of "significant" value. Levin said the CIA informed him on Tuesday that it planned to hand over more information within the next few days. "When they've taken the position that inspections are useless, they are bound to fail," Levin said. "We have undermined the inspectors since the beginning." Iraq admitted in a recent declaration to the weapons inspectors that it had developed two missiles, the Al Samoud 2 and the Al Fatah, and that they narrowly exceeded the U.N.-imposed limit of 150 kilometers (93 miles) in dozens of tests flights. Iraq maintains that the missiles will not exceed the limit when they are weighted down with conventional explosives and guidance systems. "Iraq declared that the missiles are of a range of less than 150 kilometers," said Mohammed Douri, Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations. "If that's the case, no one can ask us to destroy them."

Blix told the Security Council on Jan. 27 that the two missile programs "might well represent prima facie cases of proscribed systems." Blix ordered Iraq to freeze the programs until he could convene a panel of experts. The panel, which included missile experts from the United States, Britain, France, Ukraine, Germany and China, concluded that the Al Samoud is capable of exceeding the U.N. limit. But panel members were unable to agree on whether the Al Fatah -- a solid-fuel missile that Iraq admits reached 100 miles in a test -- is in violation of U.N. resolutions.

The limit on Iraqi ballistic missiles was set under the terms of the 1991 cease-fire agreement that ended the Persian Gulf War. That agreement also barred Iraq from producing biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. The missile limit was intended to prevent Iraq from developing missiles capable of threatening its neighbors while enabling it to defend itself from attack. U.N. diplomats and missile experts maintain that the current ranges of Iraq's missiles do not significantly alter the military balance in the region. But U.S. and U.N. officials say they are concerned that the missile programs may be part of a long-term effort to significantly extend the range of Iraqi missiles.

"My understanding is that one of the two missiles that is being analyzed definitely has a capacity that exceeds the range of 150 kilometers," said John D. Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. "That is something that our own intelligence sources have been telling us for months. But, apparently, now it's a matter of agreement among the experts."

In the latest indication of Baghdad's mixed record of cooperation, U.N. inspectors were permitted today to destroy a declared stockpile of mustard gas and artillery shells at a former weapons site in Al Mutanna, 90 miles north of Baghdad. But U.N. efforts to conduct an unmonitored interview with a biologist failed after the scientist refused to be questioned without the presence of an Iraqi official.

Priest reported from Washington. Staff writer Glenn Kessler in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A216-2003Feb12.html>

New York Times
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Iraq Chemical Arms Condemned, But West Once Looked The Other Way

By Elaine Sciolino

ISFAHAN, Iran — His breath was loud and hard, his mouth open wide as he struggled to force air into his lungs. "I am," said Muhammad Moussavi, a "living martyr."

Almost 15 years after Iran's war with Iraq ended, Mr. Moussavi and thousands of others like him are painful reminders of the long-lasting effect of Iraq's use of chemical weapons in that eight-year conflict.

His story is typical of a war generation that fervently believed, after Iraq invaded in 1980, in the need to defend Iran and, later, to overthrow Saddam Hussein. So Mr. Moussavi took time off from his engineering studies for months at a time to serve as a volunteer with martyr brigades. In March 1988, four months before Iran declared a cease-fire, he was badly wounded on the battlefield, not by bombs or bullets but by mustard gas.

"We were wearing gas masks because we expected Saddam to use chemical weapons," he recalled. "But there was too much gas. I suddenly felt a bitter taste in my mouth, and then my mouth filled with blood. I put on a new mask but the gas had already affected my body."

Today, at 40, Mr. Moussavi is chained to an oxygen concentrator. His lungs and air passages are permanently scarred, his vision blurred, his skin susceptible to peeling and rashes. When the breathing nearly stops, he chokes and his chest heaves. Two inhalators bring only partial relief. Words come slowly and, when they do, the sounds are brittle and cracked.

"This is a very burdensome illness, both for me and my family," he said. "I never feel I'm getting enough oxygen. The phlegm I cough is filled with blood and hard like bricks." The perennial feeling of being oxygen-deprived, he said, produces headaches, fatigue and body pain.

During the war, about 100,000 people were killed or wounded in chemical weapons attacks by the Iraqis, said Dr. Hamid Sohrabpour, a pulmonary specialist and the director of Iran's chemical treatment program, who studied at New York's Mount Sinai hospital. Iran has compiled records for about 30,000 of them.

One in 10 of these victims died before receiving treatment, he said. About 5,000 to 6,000 still receive regular medical care under government-financed programs.

In building an argument for war against Iraq, President Bush has stressed the need to rid the world of whatever may be left of Iraq's ballistic missile arsenal and its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs.

The fear that Iraq still might have such weapons drove the Security Council last November to approve unanimously a resolution calling on the Iraqi regime to disarm or face "serious consequences."

But there is deep resentment and anger here that it was Western companies that helped Iraq develop its chemical weapons arsenal in the first place and that the world did nothing to punish Iraq for its use of chemical weapons throughout the war.

"The world knew," Mr. Moussavi said. "Iraq developed these weapons with the help of the United States and the West. No matter how many times Iranians shouted that Iraq was using chemical weapons, they were ignored. I don't know why the United States has suddenly become kinder than a mother for the suffering of us chemical weapons patients."

Dr. Sohrabpour, who has lectured around the world about chemical weapons patients, is equally frustrated. "We took patients to Germany, to Britain, to France, but no one stopped Saddam's regime from using these terrible weapons," he said. "The United States let him develop, stockpile and use these weapons. Now suddenly it's changed. The fact is that the United States is only after its own interests. It doesn't care about what has happened to people."

In the early 1980's, Iranian diplomats visited the United Nations and the capitals of the world armed with disturbing photographs of wounded and dead Iranian soldiers, their bodies swollen, blistered and burned.

By early 1984, Iraq was making no secret of its war tactics. In one broadcast, Baghdad's Voice of the Masses radio gave a hint, speaking of "a certain insecticide for every insect," adding ominously, "We have this insecticide."

After a small group of American and European journalists visiting the war front in February 1984 independently verified the use of chemical weapons, the State Department publicly stated that available evidence suggested that Iraq had used the lethal weapons. It was the first confirmed use of the banned substances since World War I. But the United States, which tilted toward Iraq after it decided that Iran was a more dangerous country, did nothing.

Two years later, Iraq began using chemical weapons as an "integral part" of its battlefield strategy and a "regular and recurring tactic," according to a declassified report by the Central Intelligence Agency. Iranian soldiers often went into battle without gas masks or with masks that did not fit properly. The widespread use of the weapons also overwhelmed Iran's poorly trained and equipped medical personnel, who were themselves sometimes contaminated during rescue efforts. A move led by some Senate Democrats to impose sanctions on Iraq after it used chemical weapons on Iraqi Kurds in the town of Halabja in 1988 went nowhere.

The Iraqis used both liquid and dry forms of mustard agent, which burns body tissue and causes blindness, severe blistering, skin discoloration and lung damage, and nerve agents like sarin and tabun, which paralyze the muscles and cause convulsions and vomiting before death.

Nerve gas victims usually died on the spot unless they were immediately treated with antidotes. But many mustard gas victims survived, developing ailments that worsened over time and often led to death.

The 12,000-page weapons declaration that Iraq delivered to the United Nations in December identifies 31 major foreign suppliers for its chemical weapons program, including 2 companies based in the United States that are now defunct, 14 from Germany, 3 each from the Netherlands and Switzerland and 2 each from France and Austria.

The plight of chemical weapons patients in Iran is complicated by the fact that it has manipulated the legacy of the war for its own purposes. Even now, a number of power centers in Iran use the "blood of the martyrs" as a mechanism to hold on to power, demand sacrifice and impose limits freedom. But a generation born since the war has vowed not to be controlled or terrorized by this ideology or by the voluntary, state-protected militias that continue to try to control the streets.

Although there is deep sympathy for victims of chemical weapons attacks, there is resentment toward the Foundation for the Deprived and the War Disabled, a huge state-affiliated organization that disperses aid to the victims and that has long been accused of corruption and cronyism.

Mr. Moussavi, who was interviewed in the presence of two officials from the foundation, praised the organization for its constant support and said his sacrifice was worthwhile. "I'm very happy for the sacrifices I've made," he said. "I'm happy I defended my religion and my revolution."

Then, anger overtook him. "My anger is not targeted at anyone in particular," he said. "It's because I can't breathe. All those who are suffering from gas exposure have the same anger."

Mr. Moussavi's father, Reza, by contrast, is angry at the foundation. He has been lobbying for years for a special oxygen maker made in the United States that does not need to be refilled. "We've waited such a long time for the new machine," he told a representative of the foundation. "It will make so much difference for my son. You promised us one. You promised."

Other chemical weapons victims have accused the foundation of ignoring them because of their political beliefs. The sentiment that the government is not doing enough is so deeply felt that it has been explored in films about the war. The 1998 award-winning film "The Glass Agency," for example, deals with the government's abandonment of the volunteer military forces by not sending a dying war veteran abroad for special treatment. But the film also explores the lack of public sympathy for the volunteers and the privileges disabled war veterans enjoy.

For Dr. Sohrabpour, the issue is more complicated. "Some patients agree with whatever the government tells them," he said, "but others feel they were used by the government as a tool and now they have been neglected. Then there are those who believe that because they are war wounded all their demands should be met, even when we know there is no cure or special treatment for them.

"My experience with all these patients is that they're very demanding. They get nervous and depressed. And they have a right to be so."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/13/international/middleeast/13IRAN.html>

New York Times
February 13, 2003

North Korea Wants Arms And More Aid From U.S., Chief Of C.I.A. Suggests

By Michael R. Gordon with Felicity Barringer

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12 — The nation's intelligence chief said today that North Korea had settled on a twofold strategy of keeping its nuclear weapons program even as it seeks to improve ties with Washington.

The director of central intelligence, George J. Tenet, said North Korea was likely to process the spent nuclear fuel from its Yongbyon reactor, which would provide it with enough plutonium for several additional weapons.

He also cautioned that the United States could face "a near term" intercontinental missile threat from North Korea, repeating warnings that the Central Intelligence Agency has made for several years that North Korea may test and deploy the Taepodong 2 missile. North Korea is currently observing a moratorium on missile flight tests.

Mr. Tenet's assessment came as the International Atomic Energy Agency voted to refer the North Korean issue to the United Nations Security Council. The decision was made after the governing board of the I.A.E.A., the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency, passed a resolution at a meeting in Vienna that formally recognized that North Korea's actions represented a major security threat.

The board's vote came after Mohamed ElBaradei, the agency's director general, said "my numerous and repeated efforts to engage" North Korea had "been in vain."

Since last fall, North Korea has expelled I.A.E.A inspectors, renounced its participation in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and begun to accelerate its nuclear efforts, prompting wide speculation about its strategy.

One school of thought holds that North Korea is trying to create a new bargaining chip to induce Washington to offer economic aid and provide formal assurance that it will not attack. A competing theory holds that North Korea has determined that its security would be best assured with a potent nuclear arsenal.

Today, Mr. Tenet said North Korea's strategy was a subtle blending of both aims.

"Kim Jong Il's attempts to parlay the North's nuclear program into political leverage suggest he is trying to negotiate a fundamentally different relationship with Washington, one that implicitly tolerates the North's nuclear weapons program," Mr. Tenet told the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Mr. Tenet warned that North Korea's nuclear program combined with the weakening of international controls would encourage other nations to follow suit. They may conclude, he said, that nuclear weapons provide the best way to keep up with their neighbors and deter threats from more powerful nations.

"The desire for nuclear weapons is on the upsurge," Mr. Tenet said. "Additional countries may decide to seek nuclear weapons as it becomes clear their neighbors and regional rivals are already doing so. The 'domino theory' of the 21st century may well be nuclear."

Mr. Tenet provided no clues as to how the Bush administration planned to react if North Korea moved ahead with its nuclear program. The C.I.A. has said that North Korea probably has enough plutonium for one or two nuclear weapons. By reprocessing spent fuel from the Yongbyon reactor, North Korea could acquire about five bombs' worth of plutonium in six months or less, current and former American officials say.

Restarting the reactor itself could churn out enough plutonium for one bomb a year. North Korea could also increase its arsenal by completing the construction of two larger reactors and by proceeding with its uranium enrichment efforts.

North Korea could have a system to enrich uranium by the middle of the decade, the C.I.A. says, producing material for two bombs a year.

The Bush administration is hoping China and other nations will use diplomatic pressure to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear efforts. The administration has sent conflicting and often confusing signals about its eagerness to engage in direct talks with North Korea.

Asked if Washington had a negotiating strategy to dissuade North Korea from pursuing nuclear weapons, Mr. Tenet said the policy was still under review.

In Vienna, Dr. ElBaradei emphasized the need for diplomatic solution. He did not rule out economic sanctions, though Washington says it is not pressing for them.

"The message is that, let us first try a diplomatic solution, as we are trying in Iraq, as we are trying everywhere else," Dr. ElBaradei said. " But if it doesn't work, I haven't heard any member who is saying that the Security Council will not consider other options."

Two members of the nuclear agency's governing board, Russia and Cuba, abstained from the vote and two others were absent. In a statement after the vote, the Russian envoy, Grigory V. Berdennikov, said Moscow believed that direct talks between Washington and North Korea should have preceded the decision to send the report to the Security Council, a step he called "untimely and counterproductive."

John R. Bolton, the undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, said yesterday that North Korea's "nuclear weapons programs are a threat to the global nonproliferation regime."

"That's why a multilateral institution like the Security Council is the appropriate place for this," he said. But he also said the United States would not push for sanctions as a result of today's I.A.E.A. vote.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/13/international/13KORE.html>

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Pg. 14

Threat Data Termed Specific

Official Cites 'Known People'

By Susan Schmidt, Washington Post Staff Writer

Counterterrorism officials have specific information about a possible terrorist attack against the United States from a broad intelligence spectrum, including, sources said, information about the al Qaeda operatives masterminding the effort.

While government officials said they don't know when or where the terrorists may attempt to strike, they have been focused on the possibility that attacks could begin at the conclusion of the hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca made by Muslims that ends today.

U.S. sources said yesterday the government has tracked movements of al Qaeda money it believes is being used to finance the threats against the United States and its interests abroad. Information is coming from multiple sources, including foreign intelligence services, human sources, electronic intercepts and e-mail.

"It's very specific. It's known people," said a counterterrorism official. He and other sources said Sept. 11, 2001, mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed is believed to be among those involved in planning the new attacks, which they believe may be directed at Washington and New York.

On Friday, the government raised the threat warning level to reflect a "high risk" that al Qaeda will attack U.S. targets here or overseas. The designation was raised to orange on the five-tiered, color-coded threat scale, second only to red, which indicates an imminent or ongoing attack.

New York Police Department officials traveled to Washington Tuesday to meet with FBI officials to discuss the threat. A spokesman for Police Commissioner Ray Kelly said yesterday the city has no plans to raise its own threat assessment to code red.

On Friday, the federal government warned that newly acquired intelligence indicates a "high risk" of attack by the al Qaeda terrorist network against U.S. targets at home and abroad. Officials have said they are particularly concerned about chemical, biological or radiological weapons, including ricin, cyanide and "dirty bombs" that would spread radioactive debris over a wide area.

Department of Homeland Security officials urged Americans to take precautions against the possibility of an attack, including designating a sealed-off safe room in their homes and stockpiling food and water.

The increased threat level coincides with U.S. military planning for a possible war with Iraq, which could break out in the next few weeks, as well as the end of the hajj, an event specifically mentioned by CIA Director George J. Tenet in testimony before a congressional committee Tuesday. One source familiar with the government's intelligence assessment said officials are especially focused on a 10-day period, commencing with the beginning of the five-day hajj on Sunday.

Local authorities across the country have stepped up security in response to the threat warning, particularly in New York and Washington, where subway systems are seen as a possible target for a nerve gas attack.

In the District this week, Metro Transit Police administrators left their desk jobs and began patrolling stations during the morning and evening rush periods.

Transit Police Chief Polly Hanson said the extra patrols will continue indefinitely and that they are a way to increase police presence in the subway. Metro's 11 bomb-sniffing dogs also have been putting in more hours, she said.

Staff writers Brooke A. Masters and Dana Priest contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64237-2003Feb12.html>

Washington Times

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Pg. 16

Kurds Say Terrorists Make Poison In Zone

By Borzou Daragahi, The Washington Times

SULAIMANIYA, Iraq — Kurdish leaders say they have eyewitness accounts, prisoners' confessions and seized evidence to support claims by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell that an al Qaeda-linked group backed by Saddam Hussein has established a "poison factory" in northeastern Iraq.

They also say they have captured Iraqi military officers sent by Saddam to liaise with the Islamic radicals, providing evidence of a direct link between al Qaeda and the Iraqi leadership.

Mr. Powell, in his dramatic presentation to the United Nations Security Council Feb. 5, said an extremist group was running a terrorist-training center and poison factory in the small area of Iraq it controls near the Iranian border.

He said the program was supported by Abu Musaab Zarqawi who has been identified as a lieutenant of Osama bin Laden and implicated in the killing of a U.S. diplomat in Jordan in October.

As Mr. Powell spoke, a monitor displayed a photograph with the caption: "Terrorist Poison and Explosives Factory, Khurmal."

Mr. Powell was referring to Ansar al-Islam, a militant group of 600 to 700 fighters, many of them trained in bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan before making their way to the Zagros Mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan in 2001.

An Ansar attack in December killed scores of troops of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), which runs the eastern half of the autonomous zone enforced in northern Iraq by U.S. and British aircraft since the 1991 Persian Gulf war.

Sadi Ahmad Pire, a high-level official of the PUK, pinpointed the village of Sargat near the Khurmal district as the site of the chemical-weapons plant.

"Only the Afghan Arabs and not the local Kurds are allowed to be in the factory, which is surrounded by houses and buildings and inaccessible to all but a few," said a Kurdish intelligence chief, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The intelligence officer also said the PUK has captured "several" former Iraqi military and intelligence officers who confessed to being sent from Baghdad-controlled parts of Iraq to meet with Ansar al-Islam. The seized evidence, PUK officers said, includes poison cigarettes and paint.

Ansar al-Islam's leader, Najm al-Din Faraj Ahmad, commonly known as Mullah Krekar, has vehemently denied any links with al Qaeda or Baghdad, and independent analysts say they have been unable to verify American claims of a link.

"It's not corroborated by other sources," said Robert Malley, Middle East director for the International Crisis Group in Washington. "That does not mean there have not been some contacts ... but given the geography, Ansar would appear to be more dependent on certain groups in Iran."

The Kurdish claims, if confirmed, would support U.S. claims that Saddam is directly helping and backing Ansar al-Islam.

The Kurds also say they have linked the group to Qeyes Ibrahim Qader — an Islamic militant captured while trying to assassinate PUK-region Prime Minister Barham Salih last year.

The say Qader admitted he was acting on orders received in the town of Biyare from a man he later identified as Zarqawi.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030213-19153052.htm>

India test-fires supersonic cruise missile capable of hitting Pakistani cities

Wed Feb 12, 11:33 AM ET

By NEELESH MISRA, Associated Press Writer

NEW DELHI, India - India test-fired Wednesday a supersonic cruise missile jointly developed by New Delhi and Moscow and capable of hitting several Pakistani cities.

Pakistan criticized what it called India's "massive militarization."

The Brahmos, based on the Russian Yahont anti-ship missile, has a range of 300 kilometers (185 miles), enough to hit a large swathe in neighboring Pakistan — India's rival of five decades. It can carry only conventional weapons. "The missile followed the predicted trajectory and accurately hit the target," Defense Minister George Fernandes told reporters.

Pakistan criticized the test.

"We know that India has a policy of massive militarization. They are developing missiles of all sorts," said Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesman Kamran Niaz.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since British colonialists left the South Asian subcontinent in 1947. They conducted rival nuclear tests in 1998, and often match each other's missile tests within days of each other.

Niaz, the Pakistani spokesman, refused to say whether Islamabad would respond with a test of its own, adding: "We test when it is technically required."

In Washington, Andrew Koch, bureau chief for Jane's Defense Weekly, said the test was a major achievement for the Indian missile program.

"For the Indians this is a big deal, it's a vast improvement over what they currently have," Koch said. "It gives them much greater range, it gives them much greater speed and lethality. ... It's also more accurate than India's current antiship missiles, which are pretty limited in range."

In India, experts underplayed the test.

"It is not a strategic weapon, it is a very short range missile," said Brahma Chellaney, a leading Indian security affairs analyst.

"In the missile field, Pakistan has an edge over India," he said. "The difference is that India always develops weapons on its own, while Pakistan gets it on a platter."

India says Pakistan's missile program is heavily aided by China and North Korea ([news - web sites](#)).

New Delhi accuses Pakistan of harboring and patronizing Islamic militants who stage attacks on army targets, politicians and civilians in India. Pakistan denies this, but calls them "freedom fighters."

In Washington, Koch said the missile test was tied to larger expansion plans by India's navy.

"The big issue is that the Indian navy has been expanding fairly sizably and they have some grander plans for their navy, they really plan to replace most of their ships," Koch said. "They don't want to put the same old weapons systems on new ships and this missile is a big part of it."

Brahmos is the first supersonic missile in India's military arsenal. It was developed in a joint venture between India's Defense Research and Development Organization and Russia's Mashinostroyenia, both state-run companies.

The two countries plan to export the missile to developing countries.

The missile soared off the Indian navy's destroyer Rajput on Wednesday afternoon, Press Trust of India ([news - web sites](#)) reported. Brahmos flies at twice the speed of sound, has undergone previous successful tests and is expected to be deployed in 2004, army officials say.

India's missile arsenal includes army and air force versions of the nuclear-capable, intermediate range Agni; the short-range ballistic missile Prithvi; the Trishul, a surface-to-air missile that targets aircraft and can counter sea-skimming missiles; and the anti-tank Nag missile.

A cruise missile travels horizontally. A ballistic missile travels in a parabolic arc before hitting its target.

India, which conducted five nuclear tests in 1998, is perfecting its missile delivery system.

http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030212/ap_wo_en_ge/as_gen_india_missile_test_4

Los Angeles Times

February 14, 2003

Vaccine Program Going Well, Military Reports

By Vicki Kemper, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON -- Injecting the military can-do spirit into a program weighed down by difficulty, an Army colonel said Thursday that the Pentagon has vaccinated "well over" 100,000 troops against smallpox and received only three reports of serious reactions.

"The risks [of the vaccine] are still pretty darn low," Col. John D. Grabenstein, deputy director for military vaccines, told a scientific panel created to advise the government's smallpox vaccination program.

"Sick leave is rare and short ... and just about everything is occurring at rates lower than historically predicted," he added.

Grabenstein's upbeat report -- coming in the third week of a program characterized by fits and starts, confusion and controversy -- prompted members of the Institute of Medicine committee to ask how the military's matter-of-fact success can be replicated in the civilian world.

Not easily, appears to be the short answer. The military is spared virtually all the thorny issues that have slowed the vaccination program in state and local health departments.

For about 500,000 military personnel, inoculation against the deadly smallpox virus is an order, not a choice. Their deployment overseas increases the threat of a smallpox attack and, as a result, the incentive to be vaccinated. And they are guaranteed free medical care should they suffer serious side effects.

"It's all about reason and emotion" and making sure reason wins out, Grabenstein said in an interview.

For federal and state health officials, however, the program is also about logistical challenges, legal complications and constant fine-tuning of the nation's first large-scale vaccination program in almost 30 years.

In December, President Bush called for inoculations of up to 10.5 million health-care workers and police, fire and emergency personnel so they could safely respond to any terrorist attack that used smallpox as a weapon.

As of Tuesday, 1,043 of these front-line health-care workers, from 18 states and Los Angeles County, had been vaccinated, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Federal health officials are working with Congress to create a compensation fund for anyone injured by the vaccine, and the agency is still developing an electronic reporting system, funding mechanisms and educational materials.

Even the military, with all its built-in efficiencies, has had some problems with its vaccination program. Tens of thousands of military personnel have experienced fever, malaise and swollen lymph nodes after being vaccinated, and "there has been a rash of rashes," Grabenstein said, about 12 for every 1,000 people inoculated. Almost all are harmless, but as many as seven people have developed what may be generalized vaccinia, a systemic spread of the vaccine's live vaccinia virus in lesions over the body, he said.

In addition, two soldiers were hospitalized with encephalitis, a serious inflammation of the brain, and an airman developed myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart.

But even these severe cases "have had a full recovery and are not slowing down the military vaccination program," Grabenstein said.

Almost two-thirds of the military personnel inoculated were getting the smallpox vaccine for the first time. Grabenstein said their low rate of serious side effects shows that the vaccine is safe for people born after the United States stopped routine inoculations of children in 1972.

Public health officials from Georgia and New Jersey told committee members that the demands of the smallpox program have detracted from other bioterrorism efforts, as well as traditional public health activities.

But Dr. Eddy Bresnitz, state epidemiologist of New Jersey, where 98 health-care workers had been vaccinated by Tuesday, said he was pleased with his program's progress.

"Clearly, we have the capability now of responding" to a smallpox epidemic now, he said.

The Institute of Medicine is part of the National Academies, which were created by Congress to provide advice to the government on scientific matters.

In related action Thursday, Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-Los Angeles) introduced legislation to establish a no-fault compensation program for anyone injured by the smallpox vaccine. Waxman's bill would also give states federal grants to help meet costs of the program.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/wire/la-na-smallpox14feb14,1,571761.story>

International Herald Tribune

February 14, 2003

Thieves Caught Selling Radioactive Material

By Associated Press

MINSK, Belarus - Alleged thieves who tried to sell two containers of radioactive cesium-137 to an undercover agent have been detained in Belarus, officials said Thursday. Cesium-137 is one of the most likely substances that could be used in a so-called "dirty bomb," in which a conventional explosive device spreads radioactive material.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/86651.html>

Washington Post

February 18, 2003

Pg. 1

2-Week Window Frames Bush's Decision On War

By Mike Allen and Karen DeYoung, Washington Post Staff Writers

President Bush plans at least two more weeks of diplomacy before deciding whether to attack Iraq and may support a deadline for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to visibly destroy his chemical and biological weapons, administration officials said yesterday.

Officials said the United States and Britain are likely to push for an enforcement resolution in the U.N. Security Council this week. One option under consideration was a demand for "actual disarmament" by Iraq within a specified number of days, a senior administration official said.

"It would say, 'This is your last window,' " the official said.

Meeting in Brussels yesterday, the 15 European Union leaders agreed that U.N. weapons inspectors should be given more time to find and destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and declared that a war against Iraq "should be used only as a last resort."

Officials here and in London discussed how to regain momentum lost last week, when chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix told the Security Council that progress was being made, even though Baghdad was still not cooperating fully with disarmament demands. A majority of council members, including France, Russia, China and Germany, said that inspections should be given more time before there was any consideration of the use of military force.

As the administration has tried to sustain pressure on Iraq, it often has implied during the past two months that a final deadline was near. Officials suggested yesterday that Bush's rough timetable has always been slightly longer than many diplomats assumed when he announced Jan. 30 that the issue of how to deal with Hussein would be resolved in "a matter of weeks, not months."

But this time, the administration appears to have left little room for retreat from a timetable heading toward a final decision in about two weeks. National security adviser Condoleezza Rice on Sunday implied that what she called a "diplomatic window" would close following the next Security Council meeting at the end of this month, when members will again hear an assessment from Blix of Iraqi cooperation. She was dismissive of a French suggestion that the council schedule yet another meeting on March 14.

U.S. and British military deployments to the Persian Gulf region will then have reached levels more than adequate for an attack by early to mid-March. Although senior military officials have said that troops could remain in the region for "months" without any action, planners have expressed concern about fighting in the intense heat that falls over the region in early spring.

While the administration has consistently maintained that it does not need another Security Council resolution to launch an attack against Iraq, it has so far bowed to the wishes of Britain and Spain, its two main council allies. Dozens of other countries whose support the administration has claimed also have said they would prefer a U.N. imprimatur on any action.

In addition to a possible final deadline for Iraq, other possible provisions for a new resolution include declaring that Iraq already has violated the November council demand that it disarm immediately and completely. The resolution would not spell out any consequences requiring members to agree to military action, but the administration would assert that such approval was implied. Officials said they are not interested in a scenario where a further debate about the consequences would begin after a deadline or final "material breach" had been decided.

Among the tests for Iraq that officials are considering is insistence that weapons scientists and technicians be allowed to travel outside the country for interviews with U.N. inspectors. But administration officials, while saying it might be possible to write a list of tasks tightly enough, expressed misgivings about the deadline approach. Some pointed out that Bush might find himself in a box if Hussein complied. The real fear, a senior official said, is that even the appearance of compliance would encourage council members who have already said they believe progress is being made. Also, Bush's aides have said repeatedly that Iraqi cooperation thus far has been focused on process, such as allowing the inspectors access to suspected weapons sites, while the administration wants results on substance, such as the voluntary giving up and destruction of weapons it says Iraq is concealing.

The administration is hesitant to lobby for a new list of procedural demands, officials said, and is concerned that Iraq would use such an approach to further delay the process with attempts to negotiate. "The question is: Are they able to do enough on each [demand] to give the appearance of complying?" an official said. "You agree in principle, and then they try to drag it out for months."

But while all the diplomatic options have drawbacks, the administration also believes that a new resolution could greatly expand the support, including financial contributions, that the United States would receive from other nations for a post-Hussein occupation and reconstruction of Iraq. Officials made it clear that Bush is going to continue to work with the United Nations for several more weeks, after which he is prepared to go to war without U.N. approval if he is convinced no headway is being made, they said.

Bush's aides insisted that he will not be slowed down by opposition that was clear in Friday's Security Council meeting, or by the millions of protesters around the world who marched against war over the weekend. They said he is continuing to make alternative diplomatic and military plans in case the council fails to approve a resolution endorsing an attack on Iraq, his aides said.

"Sometimes the demonstration of pursuing the alternative plans helps push the likelihood of a resolution," the senior official said, adding that the alternative plans nevertheless are very real.

Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga said after meeting with Bush at the White House yesterday that "time is very short, and I think that we will be seeing developments within a matter of weeks." Bush "has reaffirmed his commitment and sees it as the responsibility of the United States to guarantee that Saddam Hussein is disarmed," the Latvian leader said in the snowy White House driveway. "And he says, 'We will see to it. We will do it.' "

Bush's meeting yesterday was indicative of the attention he is lavishing on smaller nations as he builds his coalition in the face of resistance from several of the traditional powers of western Europe. Latvia, a former Soviet republic, is one of 10 Central and Eastern European nations that have publicly expressed support for Bush's approach to Iraqi disarmament.

Bush's week of heavy diplomacy includes a meeting Wednesday in the Oval Office with NATO Secretary General George Robertson. On Saturday, at his ranch in Crawford, Tex., he will consult with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, and the two will hold a joint news conference.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A22630-2003Feb17.html>

N. Korea Ship Gets Arms In And Out

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

The North Korean ship that last year delivered Scud missiles to Yemen transferred a large shipment of chemical weapons material from Germany to North Korea recently, U.S. intelligence officials said.

The ship, the Sosan, was monitored as it arrived in North Korea earlier this month carrying a shipment of sodium cyanide, a precursor chemical used in making nerve gas, said officials familiar with intelligence reports.

The same ship was stopped by U.S. and Spanish naval vessels Dec. 9 as it neared Yemen. It was carrying 15 Scud missiles and warheads. After a brief delay and assurances from the Yemeni government, the ship was allowed to proceed to Yemen with the missile shipment.

After unloading the missiles in Yemen, the Sosan then traveled to Germany, where it took on a cargo of sodium cyanide estimated to weigh several tons. The ship then was tracked as it traveled to North Korea. It arrived at the west coast seaport of Nampo on Thursday, the officials said.

Disclosure of the chemical shipment comes amid heightened tensions between the United States and North Korea over Pyongyang's nuclear activities. The North Koreans were found to have violated a 1994 agreement to freeze plutonium production and other agreements prohibiting it from making nuclear arms.

The Bush administration is planning in the coming months to impose sanctions aimed at halting weapons shipments to North Korea and cutting off funds sent to the communist state by Korean residents in Japan, said an administration official. The plans were first reported yesterday by the New York Times.

North Korea's official media have said that any sanctions imposed on the country would be tantamount to a declaration of war.

The official Korean Central News Agency confirmed that the Sosan arrived at Nampo on Thursday.

At a press conference, the captain and crew answered questions for reporters and said that the Dec. 9 incident was an act of U.S. piracy.

The Sosan's captain, Kang Cholryong, told the news agency that the crew, not wanting to surrender their cargo to the United States, tried to set the ship on fire and sink it but were stopped by U.S. commandos who boarded from helicopters.

"The United States should be fully responsible for this piratical act and make a formal apology and due compensation to the [North Korean] government for it," the KCNA report stated.

The action against the ship was "part of the premeditated and brigandish moves of the U.S. imperialists to isolate and stifle [North Korea] and dominate the world with their policy of strength," it stated.

Sodium cyanide is a dual-use chemical. It is used to make the nerve gas sarin, as well as commercial products including pesticides and plastics.

The chemical is controlled by the 34-nation Australia Group, a voluntary coalition of states that agree to curb exports of dual-use chemicals that can boost the chemical weapons programs of states like North Korea. Germany is a member of the group.

A German Embassy spokesman could not be reached for comment.

South Korea's defense ministry stated last year that North Korea has a stockpile of between 2,500 and 5,000 tons of chemical weapons, including 17 different types of agents.

The ministry stated in a report made public in September that North Korea can produce 4,500 tons of chemical weapons agents annually. It also can produce a ton of biological weapons agent a year.

Sodium cyanide is an ingredient of the deadly nerve agent sarin, a small amount of which can kill a human.

The intercept of the Sosan near Yemen in December highlighted divisions within the Bush administration over how to act in curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile-delivery systems, U.S. officials said.

White House National Security Council officials supported seizing the missiles, but State Department officials opposed the idea, saying it would damage relations with Yemen, a growing ally in the war against terrorism.

The Sosan was seized after Yemen's government at first denied the missiles were theirs. The denial led U.S. intelligence officials to suspect the missiles could be headed for another country, such as Iraq, and they were seized.

The ship was stopped after a Spanish warship fired warning shots at the vessel. It then was boarded by U.S.

commandos who discovered the missiles, warheads and canisters of chemical used for the missile's solid rocket fuel.

The Yemeni government then acknowledged the missiles had been purchased legally by the San'a government.

Bush administration officials have described North Korea as a major supplier of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons know-how and missile-delivery systems.

Richard Armitage, deputy secretary of state, told Congress earlier this month that North Korea's nuclear and other programs relating to weapons of mass destruction are threats to the United States.

"North Korea's programs to develop weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery ... are also a threat to the international community, regional security, U.S. interests and U.S. forces, which remain an integral part of stability in the region," Mr. Armitage said.

"It is time for North Korea to turn away from this self-destructive course. They have nothing to gain from acquiring nuclear weapons — and much to lose. Indeed, every day, the people of that country are paying a terrible price for these programs in international isolation and misspent national resources."

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030218-330306.htm>

USA Today

February 18, 2003

U.S. Forces Ready To Sniff Out Iraqi Bioweaponry

By Steven Komarow, USA Today

KUWAIT CITY — If there's a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, specially trained U.S. forces are ready to step in where U.N. weapons inspectors leave off.

Unlike their United Nations counterparts, the American troops would fan out across the country to find sites suspected of harboring weapons such as nerve gas and anthrax. Instead of 115 searchers in a country the size of France, there will be thousands of troops charged with looking for weapons and tens of thousands more who could stumble over them.

Officials say that non-U.S. experts, including perhaps the same U.N. inspectors now in Iraq, would be invited back to ensure international credibility. But the U.S. military would do much of the initial work with its own analysts and equipment.

The Army already has sent chemical, biological and nuclear experts and equipment to the Persian Gulf area. Their basic mission is to help protect the troops. But the teams could quickly change their emphasis to detective work. After the Sept. 11 attacks, the Army created rapid-response teams in case of terrorist attacks on the United States and key allies. This same training has helped the military prepare teams for possible duty in Iraq.

The changes in Germany-based V Corps, now in Kuwait, is one example of the new effort. The V Corps created four teams called CMATs, or Consequence Management Assessment Teams. A team has 16 to 28 soldiers, depending on the threat. Millions of dollars was spent on new equipment and training. In peacetime, the teams are ready to respond within four hours. In a war, CMAT-trained soldiers would rush immediately to evaluate and if necessary decontaminate chemical, biological or nuclear contamination sites.

Wearing protective "space suits," the soldiers can enter even highly poisonous and low-oxygen atmospheres to collect evidence. Like the characters on CBS TV's *CSI* (Crime Scene Investigation) police dramas, they gather samples, catalog them and run them through special laboratory equipment.

"They can take air samples, oil samples, earth samples, liquid samples" or anything else, and save the evidence in the same manner as criminal investigators, says Col. Timothy Madere, who oversees nuclear, chemical and biological warfare preparations in the V Corps.

Their equipment is nearly identical to that used by U.N. inspectors, he says. They are trained to document caches of anthrax, nerve gas, and a host of other prohibited poison weapons that could be found in Iraq.

"We have sample-collection capability which follows chain of custody," Madere says. This means evidence is carefully documented, with a proper paper trail from the time it is collected and on through the laboratory process. They also videotape their work.

Not only do the teams detect weapons, they also can detect the precursor chemicals used for creating chemical or biological weapons, he says.

The CMATs are a small part of the system the military could bring to bear in the search for banned weapons in Iraq. Similar response teams have been created across the USA and are expected to deploy to the Persian Gulf with U.S.-based fighting units.

The Army recently sent its 520th Theater Medical Laboratory, the only one of its kind, to the Persian Gulf. The laboratory analyzes chemical and biological samples. It also has special laser equipment and other remote sensors to confirm the presence of chemical threats at a distance.

The Army also is expected to deploy hundreds of troops from its U.S.-based "technical escort units." Charged primarily with protecting fellow soldiers, they, too, can document chemical or biological weapons sites. These units

were sent to Afghanistan only a month after Sept. 11, 2001. And they were sent to Kuwait and Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War.

The emphasis on chemical and biological weapons this time comes from a desire both for evidence and to avoid previous mistakes. The post-Sept. 11 improvements come atop long-running efforts to improve training and equipment of soldiers on the battlefield.

<http://www.usatoday.com/usatonline/20030218/4874545s.htm>

Los Angeles Times

February 16, 2003

Military Drops Cremation Policy

Protests scuttle a plan aimed at curbing the spread of chemical and biological agents.

By Esther Schrader, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON --After an outcry from veterans groups, the Pentagon has backed off on a proposal to cremate any U.S. troops killed by biological or chemical attacks in a war with Iraq rather than bringing their bodies home for burial, defense officials said.

The Pentagon has also opted against a proposal to bury in mass graves the corpses of U.S. troops that might be health hazards.

The proposals -- part of a review of military burial procedures that concluded this month -- were meant to prevent the spread of chemical or biological agents from contaminated bodies to people on the home front. But they raised concern among veterans groups.

"The Department of Defense recently reviewed the policy and determined that cremation was not an option," the Pentagon said in a statement Friday. "Cases involving contaminated remains will be handled with the dignity and respect accorded to all remains."

For decades, the Pentagon has gone to great lengths to recover for burial the body of every U.S. soldier, sailor and airman killed abroad.

But the threat from chemical or biological agents in a war with Iraq led to the airing of the proposals, defense officials said.

Those contacted by the Pentagon about the proposals include the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the group said Saturday. "They told us that they needed to review the policy for safety reasons, and we understood, but we wanted to ensure that the dignity of every American fighter lost was preserved," said a senior member of the organization, who asked to remain anonymous.

U.S. intelligence officials believe that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's regime possesses chemical and biological agents, and the Pentagon is bracing for the possibility that his forces might use them against U.S. troops in a conflict.

Soldiers, sailors and airmen are being trained to respond to such attacks and are being outfitted with gear that would offer protection.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-crematel6feb16001517,1,3252705.story>

Air Force Times

February 24, 2003

Pg. 16

The Best Protective Gear In The World?

DoD says count on it

By Matthew Cox and William Matthews, Times staff writers

U.S. troops are better equipped and trained to survive and keep fighting if hit with chemical and biological weapons than when they faced such a threat in 1991, say equipment experts and congressional investigators.

But a chemical or biological attack still could intensify the already grueling task of combat — making early detection the best defense against Iraq's arsenal of deadly agents, according to military officials.

As America prepares for another war in the Persian Gulf, few threats are more significant.

"It's pretty clear that the Iraqis have access to lots of chemicals," said David Siegrist, a research fellow for the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies. "We need to take it very seriously."

While Saddam shelved his alleged stockpiles of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, nuclear-biological-chemical experts with the Army, which has the lead in providing multiservice chem-bio training, saw Desert Storm as a sobering warning that the U.S. military had waited too long to focus on this growing threat.

"At the beginning of Desert Storm, NBC still stood for nobody cares," said Army Brig. Gen. Steve Reeves, program executive officer for chemical and biological defense. "We had a wake-up call."

Lingering problems?

But NBC readiness came under attack in October when the General Accounting Office reported that 250,000 defective protective suits remained unaccounted for in the Army inventory. The same report also said military chem-bio training "continues to be a problem area" and gets a lower priority than other mission tasks.

"We don't train as much for protecting against chemical and biological agents as we should," agreed Amoretta Hoeber of AMH Consulting, a Washington, D.C., group that focuses on defense and environmental issues.

"When we do, the training is narrowly focused and does not lend itself to the kind of routine operations in which the risk of chemical and biological attack is a factor," said Hoeber, a former Army official with a background in chem-bio weapons.

However, the services are not equally lax in their training, said a House Government Reform Committee aide assigned to investigate military NBC preparedness.

"The Marine Corps gets the message," he said, while the Air Force and Navy rate in the middle and "the Army is still in denial."

Army officials contested the number of defective suits cited in the GAO report, maintaining that exhaustive inventory checks showed none were part of the service's war stocks.

Military officials also take issue with perceived deficiencies in training, pointing out that the Army's training of multiservice chemical-operations specialists at its Chemical School at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., involves a live NBC environment.

Having chemical specialists train in a contaminated environment "gives them the confidence ... that it can be done," said Brig. Gen. Pat Nilo, the school's commandant.

"There is some evidence that the training is better — when you get it," acknowledged the House committee aide.

"But we continue to hear from troops in the field that training [for chem-bio attacks] is hard to come by."

Suiting up for war

The debate over training aside, military officials insist the U.S. military now has the best protective gear in the world.

If troops deploying to the Gulf confront chemical or biological weapons, some will don the Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology, which is replacing the Battledress Overgarment. Both offer equal protection, but JLIST is lighter and more comfortable and durable.

JLIST is a major improvement, but the suits are "still encapsulating," said Robert Coughlin, a vice president at Battelle, a nonprofit research organization that developed the suits. "You've got to acclimate to them."

A JLIST-clad soldier demonstrated that last fall when he collapsed under hot television lights at a Pentagon news conference to introduce the new protective gear.

The JLIST garments protect for up to 45 days and can be laundered six times without reducing their efficiency against chemical agents, said Diane Phillips, manager of Battelle's operations at the Army's Soldier Systems Center in Natick, Mass.

The JLIST outer shell readily sheds liquids. The fabric is backed with a thin "liner laminate that incorporates carbon beads," Phillips said. The liner serves as a "selectively permeable membrane" that lets moisture out, but does not let chemical agents in.

The new suit weighs perhaps half as much as the BDO. More important, it eliminates the BDO's carbon-impregnated foam liner that troops say acted as a sponge for sweat and ground moisture.

Along with the JLIST, troops will wear new M40/42 series masks that military officials call a big upgrade over those available in the Gulf War.

Unlike the M17 masks, the new ones have a silicone rubber face piece that is more comfortable and provides a better seal. The mask is lighter, easier to maintain and offers a better field of vision, and it has a canister filter that is easier to replace than the M17 filters.

But the mask has a troubled past. Tests of almost 20,000 masks two years ago identified problems in more than half. The Pentagon blamed poor maintenance.

Keeping the masks in good shape "requires more than nominal training and maintenance," the House committee aide said. Masks that get dirty or rolled over during combat may not work in an attack and may not fit properly if soldiers have gained or lost weight or haven't shaved, he said.

Detection for protection

In the broad effort to upgrade military NBC gear, detectors have been a big area of emphasis.

During Operation Desert Storm, the M8A1 Automatic Chemical Agent Alarm was widely derided for its high false-alarm rate when exposed to so-called interferents — nonlethal chemicals such as insecticides, diesel-fuel smoke and even after-shave lotion. Troops soon lost confidence in the system, Reeves said.

The M22 Automatic Chemical Agent Alarm, fielded in the late 1990s, was designed to not mistake chemical interferents for the real thing.

The M93A1 Fox Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Reconnaissance System is a wheeled armored vehicle built to detect chemical agents at a distance and provide early warning to advancing forces.

The Improved Chemical Agent Monitor is a hand-held sensor for detecting nerve and mustard agents. The Pentagon says it is three times more effective than the monitor it replaces.

Chemical-agent detection wasn't the U.S. military's only weakness in Desert Storm. The other huge hole was in biological detection, Reeves said.

Until recently, the first sign of a biological attack likely would have been troops falling ill. Now the M31A1 Biological Integrated Detection System, or BIDS, fielded in the late 1990s, has replaced the "rudimentary" system used in the Gulf War.

Essentially a self-contained laboratory mounted on a Humvee, BIDS has a suite of detection systems capable of identifying biological aerosol attacks.

But having the right gear won't be enough, experts say. Knowing how Iraq might employ these deadly agents will be key.

Early in the 1980s Iran-Iraq war, Saddam launched chemical weapons on Iranian front-line troops to allow Iraqi tanks and armored vehicles to push forward.

Later, however, Saddam "started using nerve agents, a sarin agent ... to strike deep at logistics and command and control," which had a huge impact on Iran's ability to keep its war machine going, said Army Maj. Gen. John Doesburg, head of the Soldier, Biological and Chemical Command at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. "That's what I worry about," he said. "We just have to be careful, as we array our detectors, that we cover the whole battlefield."

Other experts worry about advancing U.S. forces wandering into chemical ambushes. Like minefields, these weapons can be used to deny approach to an area.

Vehicles such as the Fox and BIDS can patrol ahead of advancing forces to detect and mark contaminated areas.

But if troops must break out the protective gear, military officials are confident it will stand up to the task at hand.

"Compared to Desert Storm, I think we are light-years ahead," Nilo said. "If we do deploy and [NBC agents] are used, I think our troops will do very well."

Washington Post

February 17, 2003

Pg. B6

Specialized Marine Unit Readies To Respond To The Unthinkable

Force Trains for Chemical, Biological or Radiological Attacks

By Steve Vogel, Washington Post Staff Writer

The pagers sounded off in waves on the hips of more than 100 Marines late in the afternoon, just as many of them were heading home.

Some pulled U-turns in their cars, battling rush-hour traffic to hurry back to their base at Indian Head Naval Surface Warfare Center. Others, living in barracks and houses on the Charles County base, rushed to the headquarters of the Marine Corps Chemical Biological Incident Response Force.

They assembled in a large room, grabbing their chemical and biological protective uniforms, green rubber boots and oxygen tanks from lockers that lined the room. Information written on a white board laid out a training scenario:

Terrorists had attacked the Metro station at L'Enfant Plaza in Washington with an unknown chemical agent. A large number of victims were reported.

Sixty minutes to the dot after the alert sounded, a caravan of 20 vehicles carrying an initial response force of 130 Marines and Navy corpsmen along with all manner of equipment was lined up by the fence surrounding the headquarters, ready to go.

That was as far as they got when Col. T.X. Hammes, commander of the unit, called an end to the recall drill Wednesday evening. It was another of the periodic practice runs the commander holds to make sure the Marines in this one-of-a-kind, 400-person unit are ready if terrorists strike with chemical, biological or radiological weapons. Marines assigned to CBIRF (pronounced sea-berf) said they expect that one of these days, the pagers will signal a real-world emergency in the Washington area. "Unfortunately, I do," said Staff Sgt. James Sirmones, 29, speaking from behind a gas mask after he emerged from a pitch-black, smoke-filled building at the unit's training facility, dragging a child-size mannequin.

"Probably the number-one target for this type of attack would be Washington," Hammes said. "The thing we have to provide is being ready for whatever they throw at us."

The unit's uniqueness lies in its ability to detect agents, extract and decontaminate victims and provide emergency medical services in response to a chemical, biological or radiological attack. Other military units are capable of carrying out various aspects of that mission, but only CBIRF combines them in one unit.

"Do we answer the mail for everything?" asked Maj. Ron Dahart, the unit's operations officer. "We won't know until we have a real-world, no-kidding situation."

The Marine Corps created the response force in 1996 at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in response to growing concern about the threat of chemical or biological terrorism. The unit had its first test that year, responding to a pipe-bomb explosion at Atlanta's Centennial Park during the Summer Olympics.

In January 2000, Gen. James Jones, then the commandant of the Marine Corps, ordered the force moved to Indian Head so that it would be closer to the nation's capital.

At the time, little attention was paid. That changed after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001. CBIRF responded to the anthrax letters that terrorized Capitol Hill that fall, conducting chemical sampling, removing 12 tons of contaminated mail and helping to demolish unusable areas. During President Bush's State of the Union address at the Capitol in January, the response force was standing by in case of attack.

The high terrorism alert level in recent days has not changed the unit's readiness, which already was able to launch a 130-person response force from its base within one hour of receiving a call, as it is required to do.

The unit also is required to be able to send a second response force within several hours to support the first unit, or to respond to a second attack at another location.

"We're always prepared, but we certainly reevaluate ourselves and make sure we're ready at a time like this," said Maj. David Barnes, specialized training officer for the unit. "These young kids are glued to TV trying to glean what's going on. We fully assume we're not going to get any kind of a warning."

In the past year, the unit has taken steps to better prepare for local emergencies, including obtaining maps and overlays showing all of the area's subway stations.

The unit also has put more emphasis on being able to respond to a conventional attack, such as a truck bomb, according to Brig. Gen. Douglas O'Dell, commander of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, an anti-terrorism brigade that commands CBIRF.

The response force also trains to deploy rapidly across the country or overseas aboard aircraft at Andrews Air Force Base, 40 minutes from Indian Head. There has been discussion at the Pentagon about sending the unit to the Middle East to help protect U.S. troops preparing to invade Iraq, and in recent months, the unit has prepared for such a deployment. For now, the unit is staying in place in case of an attack in the United States.

Hammes said the unit could make a difference if there is a chemical, biological or radiological attack on the Washington region. In a domestic deployment, the unit's role is to support civilian emergency agencies, such as fire departments that have their own hazardous-material teams and that probably would be the first to respond to a disaster.

"What they lack is large numbers to bring people out and do mass decontamination," Hammes said.

The Marines have the numbers and equipment to do that, he said. CBIRF also has a technical rescue unit that, unlike civilian counterparts, can undertake search and rescue missions in a collapsed building even if it is in a contaminated "hot zone," officers said.

The unit also brings detection equipment that allows it to do lab-quality work in the field, Hammes said.

But Hammes acknowledges that there may be only so much the unit can do. "It's going to depend on the nature of the attack," he said.

"Smallpox scares me more than anything else," Hammes added. Agents used in a chemical attack would begin to dissipate as soon as they were released, he said, while a so-called dirty bomb, involving the spread of radiological material through a conventional explosion, would contaminate only a limited area.

"With chemical, it gets better from the moment it's used," Hammes said. "With nuclear, you know the extent of the damage almost immediately. With biological, it's silent. You don't know the extent of it until people start arriving in hospitals."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A18606-2003Feb16.html>

Homeland Security: Challenges Facing the Coast Guard as It Transitions to the New Department

by JayEtta Z. Hecker, director of physical infrastructure issues, before the Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, and Fisheries, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. GAO-03-467T, February 12.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-467T>

<http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d03467thigh.pdf>

Highlights

(Editor's Note: Hyperlink for document follows this press release.)

President Bush Releases National Strategy for Combating Terrorism

National Strategy for Combating Terrorism

Today I am pleased to issue the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. This strategy outlines the effort our nation is making to win the war against global terror.

The strategy complements important elements of the National Security Strategy, as well as our National Strategies for: Homeland Security, to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, to Secure Cyberspace, for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructure and Key Assets, and the National Drug Control Strategy.

Together these efforts establish critical goals for strengthening America's security against the threats of the 21st century.

The United States' strategy for combating terrorism focuses on taking the fight to the terrorists themselves. We are using all elements of our national power and international influence to attack terror networks; reduce their ability to communicate and coordinate their plans; isolate them from potential allies and from each other; and identify and disrupt their plots before they attack.

Our country works closely with every nation committed to this fight, and we will continue to help our allies and friends improve their ability to fight terror.

The war against global terror will be hard and long. Today, terror cells exist on nearly every continent and in dozens of countries, including our own.

Victory will depend on the courage, strength, and fortitude of America's people and our partners around the world. It will be measured through the steady, patient work of dismantling terror networks and bringing terrorists to justice, oftentimes one by one.

Our Nation is unalterably committed to protecting our citizens, routing terror wherever it exists, and building a safer, better world of greater opportunity and freedom for all peoples. We will not rest until we succeed.

National Strategy for Combating Terrorism

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/counter_terrorism/counter_terrorism_strategy.pdf

(Editor's Note: Click on hyperlink below for information on the military's smallpox vaccination program. Under the program's link is a few selected hyperlinks for information brochures and pamphlets.)

Smallpox Vaccination Program

<http://www.smallpox.army.mil/>

Smallpox Vaccine Trifold Brochure [09 JAN 03]

What Everyone Needs to Know About Smallpox Vaccine

<http://www.smallpox.army.mil/media/pdf/spTrifold.pdf>

Information Pamphlet [07 JAN 03]

Smallpox Information

<http://www.smallpox.army.mil/media/pdf/Smallpoxinfo.pdf>

The CDC Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) on Smallpox

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/vaccination/pdf/smallpox-vis.pdf>