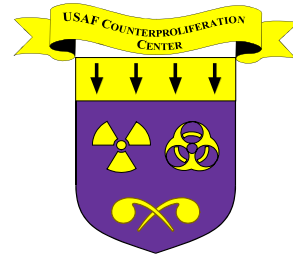


#241

26 Feb 2003

USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER

CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL



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New York Times

February 24, 2003

Pg. 1

Iraq Seeks Talks To Save Its Stock Of Barred Missiles

By Neil MacFarquhar

BAGHDAD, Feb. 23 — Iraq publicly held out the hope today that technical talks with United Nations weapons experts might stave off the forced destruction of its most potent short-range missiles. But the country's officials appeared to be bowing toward the inevitable by playing down the importance of those weapons in defending the country against a United States invasion.

Iraq's ambiguous reaction to a United Nations demand made on Friday for the destruction of the missiles came as diplomatic maneuvering intensified ahead of a Security Council resolution to be submitted by the United States and Britain. The resolution is expected to declare that Iraq is not in compliance with orders to disarm and would face military force.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, visiting Beijing, was expected to press China not to oppose the new resolution, which a Security Council diplomat said could be introduced as early as Monday. France bluntly demanded that Iraq comply with the United Nations order to destroy the missiles. And Russia sent a former prime minister, Yevgeny Primakov, an old friend of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, to Baghdad. The nature of that mission was not disclosed.

China, France and Russia, which have opposed war to disarm Iraq, are permanent members of the Security Council, giving them veto power over United Nations resolutions. If Iraq were to reject the demand that it begin destroying its entire stock of Al Samoud 2 short-range missiles by March 1, that could help the Bush administration win sympathy for a new Security Council resolution authorizing force.

Elsewhere, Turkey's foreign minister said his country's Parliament would probably vote on Tuesday on whether to allow American combat troops to use its territory as a base for an Iraq invasion.

In Iraq's first public reaction to the demand for the missile destruction, Lt. Gen. Hussam Muhammad Amin, the top liaison officer with the inspectors, said at a news conference here that Baghdad was still studying it.

"We hope that this issue will be resolved without interference from the Americans and the British," he said. "I believe that we will be able to resolve this issue without any intervention by those with evil intentions." He noted that the missiles had no connection with the United Nations operation here to find Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, which his government contends do not exist.

The general said that Iraq had proposed talks on the missiles before the Friday directive from Hans Blix, the chief inspector, to destroy them, but that Iraq had yet to receive a response. Ewen Buchanan, the spokesman for Mr. Blix's inspectors, said the letter demanding the destruction of the weapons and their components was the response.

Kofi Annan, the secretary general of the United Nations, endorsed the demand, telling reporters in Turkey, "I am confident they will destroy the weapons."

Behind the focus on the missiles, Iraqi diplomatic maneuvering continued around the region. Iraq requested that a summit meeting of Arab leaders due to convene on March 1 in Cairo be postponed at least two weeks, apparently wary that the Arab states allied with Washington would use it to increase the pressure on Baghdad.

The official Iraqi News Agency quoted Mr. Hussein as describing President Bush as lacking the gallantry needed to take on Iraq. "The Iraqis are angered by the behavior of their enemy, who has not kept within the minimum of manhood and chivalry," it quoted him as telling a visiting delegation. "Tell your brothers that the Americans can destroy buildings and facilities, but they will fail to humiliate Iraq."

Diplomats here believe that Iraq will follow practically any request made by Mr. Blix in hopes of giving him the tools to help stave off a United States attack. His demand that the Iraqis destroy their missiles and associated equipment seemed to present them with an opportunity to enhance Mr. Blix's assessment of their cooperation with disarmament.

General Amin seemed to set the stage for writing off the missiles, calling them an experimental weapon. He did not say how many Al Samoud 2 missiles Iraq possessed, but it is believed to be around 100.

Destruction of the missiles "would affect our fighting capabilities, but it would not finish them or affect them greatly," he said. "This missile represents only one aspect of our defensive capabilities. We have comprehensive capabilities."

President Bush said on Saturday that even if Iraq agreed to destroy all of its prohibited missiles, they were "just the tip of the iceberg" in its illegal arsenal.

The missiles were ordered destroyed because they exceeded the 92-mile range limit established under the cease-fire terms of the Persian Gulf war in 1991. Mr. Blix's March 1 deadline for their destruction coincides with his next report to the Security Council on Iraq's compliance.

The Iraqi general said there was no need for such a resolution because Iraq was cooperating with the weapons inspectors in every conceivable way. He said he could only surmise that criticism to the contrary just meant that the inspectors were not working fast enough.

The general noted that Iraq had begun to excavate sites where it claims to have destroyed nerve agents and biological weapons. The Iraqis say new technology in analyzing the soil will allow weapons inspectors to verify its assertion that it literally poured its stocks of VX nerve gas and anthrax into the ground in 1991.

A team of United Nations experts is due to discuss the matter here next Sunday. Lingering questions about the fate of various chemical weapons, nerve agents, missiles and other war matériel have fed suspicions that Iraq is still hoarding such weapons.

In addition, a French Mirage jet fighter to be deployed within days and low-flying German drones are due to join the U-2 spy planes that started this week to add to the inspector's air surveillance abilities.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/24/international/middleeast/24BAGH.html>

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London Sunday Telegraph

February 23, 2003

Iraq Has Poison Bombs

By Philip Sherwell and David Wastell

Saddam Hussein's air force has developed a more sophisticated delivery and detonation system for chemical weapons than previously known to United Nations inspectors, a former senior air force officer has told The Telegraph.

In an interview at a house in Amman in Jordan, where he has been hiding since he fled Baghdad last year, the former officer said that Baghdad was still pursuing the chemical armaments programme when he left Iraq - despite its insistence that it had abandoned its weapons of mass destruction project after the Gulf war.

"Ali" - The Telegraph knows his real name and former rank but promised not to disclose it in case his relatives still in Iraq are identified and punished - said that he was trained to handle binary-system bombs which mix lethal chemicals moments before detonation for maximum effect.

"Saddam will never surrender these weapons," said Ali. "They are as much a part of his life as eating and drinking." His alarming claims, which indicate a clear breach of UN resolutions, will fuel fears that Saddam may use chemical weapons against American and British forces in the event of war.

United Nations weapons inspectors based in New York said yesterday that they would like to debrief the former officer urgently. "We would be interested in talking to this man," said a spokesman for Unmovic, the weapons inspection agency.

Ali described in detail how the chemical bombs and sprays were fitted and operated, backing up his testimony with drawings and graphics, during clandestine meetings lasting several hours in the Jordanian capital, Amman.

"What he describes is a logical development of the techniques we know the Iraqis were working on," said one former senior weapons inspector contacted by The Telegraph.

Another said: "If what he says can be confirmed then this is a very big discovery. It would be proof that Iraq has continued with the development of a new type of weapon."

The chemical weapons previously known to inspectors were less advanced; their lethal contents mixed on the ground before the bombs were loaded on to planes.

At the time that Ali was trained, he was working at military bases at Habbaniya 50 miles west of Baghdad, and al-Qa'qa, 20 miles south of the capital.

He last witnessed the new bomb mechanism being tested - with water and oil rather than chemicals - at Habbaniya in 2000, after which the tests were switched to a different location. However, he said former colleagues with whom he remains in contact confirm that the programme is still running.

He said that the bombs were divided in two by an internal partition. When loaded with chemicals, there was a black liquid in one compartment and a yellowish one in the other.

The pilots were trained to hit a switch to open the partition when they approached their targets, allowing the two substances to combine and reach their greatest potency. A few seconds later, outer doors on the bottom of the weapon would open automatically, releasing the mixture.

Ali then drew a detailed diagram of another binary-system bomb, also divided by a partition that was designed to explode after its release in mid-air, again allowing the two substances to mix at the last moment. These weapons were intended for the Iraqi air force's more modern jets, but an alternative delivery method was developed for slower planes such as Sukhoi-25s and for helicopters, he explained.

[http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid\\$OQUV1PMSPLG45QFIQMGFFWAVCBQWIV0?xml=%2Fnews%2F2003%2F02%2F23%2Fwirq223.xml&secureRefresh=true&requestid=329414](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid$OQUV1PMSPLG45QFIQMGFFWAVCBQWIV0?xml=%2Fnews%2F2003%2F02%2F23%2Fwirq223.xml&secureRefresh=true&requestid=329414)

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Los Angeles Times
February 23, 2003

Iran Pledges Transparency In Its Nuclear Development

By Azadeh Moaveni, Times Staff Writer

TEHRAN -- Saying it wanted to ease international concerns, Iran pledged Saturday to be more open about its nuclear development plans, a day after it allowed outside inspectors to tour a key nuclear facility.

The visit by a team headed by Mohamed ElBaradei, director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, gave Iran a chance to distinguish itself from Iraq and North Korea, the other nations that make up what President Bush has called the "axis of evil."

The U.S. is seeking a diplomatic way to end North Korea's nuclear program and has been sending forces to the Mideast to back up its pledge to use force, if needed, to disarm Iraq.

"Iran intended to clarify that all doors would be open to the agency and its members and that Iran would proceed transparently," Gholamreza Aghazadeh, Iran's atomic energy chief, said at a joint news conference with ElBaradei.

"Tehran's progress is impressive," ElBaradei said. The U.N.'s chief nuclear inspector called for regular monitoring to "provide more assurance to the international community."

ElBaradei and his colleagues visited a uranium enrichment facility under construction at the city of Natanz on Friday, the first time outsiders had been allowed at the plant.

The Bush administration has said the site, about 200 miles from Tehran, is part of a covert effort to develop nuclear weapons. Iran insists that its nuclear program is only for energy production.

ElBaradei also had planned to visit a heavy-water processing plant at Arak, in western Iran, but he left the country after two days, leaving the rest of the inspection team to continue.

At the news conference, ElBaradei said the Iranian government agreed to provide information about new facilities "from the day the decision is taken." He said this early information would be a "welcome measure of transparency."

Aghazadeh said Iran extended an invitation to ElBaradei as an indication of its good faith. Forthrightness with international weapons inspectors, Iran hopes, will improve relations with the West and secure a better standing in the global community.

In meetings with President Mohammad Khatami, and key leaders such as Hashemi Rafsanjani, ElBaradei tried to persuade Iran to accept an "additional protocol" that would allow for more expansive and regular monitoring of Iran's nuclear program. He said Iran had developed a fuel cycle program sophisticated enough to warrant more inspections and more safeguards.

However, Iran appears reluctant, for now, to agree to more invasive inspections. Aghazadeh said too few nations had accepted the agency's additional protocol to make it a pressing obligation for Iran to do so.

"All our developments will be under the oversight of the IAEA, but we will leave the road open to the additional protocol in the future," he said.

The National Council of Resistance of Iran, an Iranian opposition group with close links to the militant organization Mujahedeen Khalq, revealed the existence of the Natanz and Arak facilities last fall.

The group alleged last week in Washington that Iranian officials removed equipment from the Natanz site before the IAEA team arrived, but ElBaradei made no mention of irregularities during his visit.

The reports of the previously undisclosed nuclear sites alarmed Washington, which contends that Iran's civilian nuclear program is a cover for its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. Russian assistance to the Iranian civilian nuclear program -- which has enabled its growth over the years -- is a contentious issue between Washington and Moscow, but recent signs of a more ambitious Iranian nuclear agenda have intensified U.S. concern.

In early February, the Iranian government made a surprising, public declaration about its nuclear fuel activities.

President Khatami announced that Iran had started mining uranium outside the city of Yazd and planned to convert the ore into fuel. A day later, Aghazadeh said Iran was embarking on an ambitious nuclear energy program and was close to processing uranium.

Those announcements worried the Bush administration enough that a top U.S. arms control official, Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton, is expected to travel to Moscow today to urge Russian officials to prevent Iran from acquiring full nuclear capability.

Iran is keenly aware that the crisis next door in Iraq has made weapons proliferation a grave concern for the world in general, and the Bush administration in particular. Tehran hopes that fuller cooperation with the IAEA will help alleviate Washington's suspicions.

"If a country has any doubt about Iran's nuclear programs, it should go to the agency rather than slandering Iran," Aghazadeh said.

For the last several years, the assessment of Western intelligence agencies has been that Iran is three to five years away from developing a nuclear weapon. But some European diplomats believe that years of Russian assistance have led to a significant evolution in Iran's nuclear operations.

"Now Iran is closer to having an indigenous ability to develop a weapon on its own," said a senior Western diplomat in Tehran.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iran23feb23004421.1.2309860.story>

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Gadsden (AL) Times

February 21, 2003

Incineration Critics Praise New Army Agency

By Jeffrey McMurray, Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Some of the harshest critics of chemical weapons incineration in Alabama and elsewhere are praising the creation of a new agency to oversee the program and the Army's choice of a director to lead it.

The Army announced this week that it is merging two tasks - the storage and demilitarization of the weapons - into the new Chemical Materials Agency, which will officially go under Army control by October. Its acting director will be Michael Parker, who currently serves as deputy commander of the Soldier Biological and Chemical Command, which had been handling the storage duties.

"The CMA brings all the parties under one roof necessary to carry out the mission of the safe storage and elimination of obsolete and aging chemical weapons," Parker said through an Army news release.

Parker's appointment, along with the reorganization announcement, drew rare praise Thursday from the Chemical Weapons Working Group - a watchdog organization that had been highly critical of the Army's handling of the weapons destruction.

"If it's salvageable, this is the best shot we've had in 20 years to get it right," said Craig Williams, the group's director.

"Mr. Parker's record reflects a real sensitivity to shooting straight, meaningful community involvement, straight-forwardness with the Congress and all the attributes necessary."

Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby, another outspoken critic of the incineration project, called Williams an "excellent choice."

Anniston houses an incinerator intended to destroy some 2,254 tons of outdated chemical agents and munitions, but state regulators haven't cleared it for a trial burn even though construction of the incinerator is finished.

Nationwide, the Army has destroyed 8,082 tons of the agents - about a quarter of the American stockpile. In addition to Anniston, there are incineration and neutralization sites in Utah, Oregon, Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland and Indiana.

Federal and local lawmakers have argued the Army has poorly handled the program and not given residents adequate safety information. Earlier this month, the Bush administration acknowledged the problems by listing it as "ineffective" in Bush's 2004 budget proposal.

In addition to his new duties, Parker will continue to serve as program manager of the Pentagon's Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment, where he has served since its inception in 1997. Williams says that program, under Parker's lead, has effectively identified alternatives to incineration at sites in Colorado and Kentucky.

<http://gt.us.publicus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/artikkel?SearchID=73127052292142&Avis=GT&Dato=20030221&Kategori=NEWS&Lopenr=302210330&Ref=AR>

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New York Times

February 22, 2003

Nigeria: Radioactive Material Is Missing

Nigerian authorities said they were searching for highly radioactive material used in the oil industry that had disappeared in the oil-producing Niger Delta. The Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority, in a public notice

broadcast on radio and television, warned people to avoid contact with the "highly radioactive, dangerous material," but would not identify the exact substance. An oil engineer in the country said it was probably either cesium 137 or sodium iodide, used in oil-well-mapping operations, and that "two parcels" of the material disappeared around Dec. 3.

--Reuters

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/22/international/africa/22BRIE2.html>

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Behind Duct Tape and Sheeting, an Unlikely Proponent

By STEPHANIE STROM

The man behind duct tape and plastic sheeting is not Tom Ridge, the homeland security secretary, nor some anonymous policy maven at a Washington research group.

Rather, the man responsible for increasing sales at do-it-yourself stores this month is Ralph E. Gomory, the president of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, one of the nation's largest private foundations. Even before the Sept. 11 attacks he was worried about terrorism and determined to find possible responses.

"The foundation has been absolutely essential to what we did yesterday," said Maj. Gen. Bruce Lawlor, Mr. Ridge's chief of staff. "Ralph in particular has been a catalyst for thinking about ways to protect people and doing it in a way that tries to take advantage of existing systems."

Or as Dr. Gomory puts it: "You can't ask people to agree that the threat of bioterrorism is huge and leave it at that. You have to give them something concrete they can do because their first question is going to be 'What can you do about it?'"

In the aftermath of the terror attacks and the anthrax scare that followed, the foundation, which had been studying bioterrorism for almost two years, suddenly was the reigning authority on heretofore unthinkable events. It began helping the Department of Homeland Security write a list of precautions, which was to be released on Feb. 19 as part of a public awareness campaign.

But the government suddenly raised the alert level to orange on Feb. 7 and began recommending some of those measures without a great deal of explanation. "Was it confused somewhat? Yes," General Lawlor said. "Did it throw us off our timetable? A bit."

America's initial response was caustic skepticism.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York called duct tape "preposterous."

Senator Robert C. Byrd, Democrat of West Virginia, said, "We did not create a new Department of Homeland Security just to be told, 'Buy duct tape and plastic.'" Late-night comedians had a field day. "This means the only people who are going to survive an attack are serial killers," Jay Leno said. "Who else has duct tape and plastic sheeting in their car?"

Many experts are die-hard skeptics and say the government is being irresponsible.

"If there were a serious large-scale attack with biological and chemical weapons, duct tape is not going to do anyone any good," said Dr. Barbara Hatch Rosenberg, chairman of the Federation of American Scientists' working group on biological weapons.

Also, Dr. Rosenberg said, "There are no terrorists who have the capability to launch that kind of attack." Dr.

Gomory takes the skepticism in stride, although he does point out, a bit testily, that duct tape and plastic were only 2 of more than 25 suggestions. After all, it was skepticism that got the Sloan Foundation into the business of finding possible responses to the threat of biological and chemical attacks.

Dr. Gomory, 73, who was the senior vice president for science and technology at I.B.M. when he retired in 1989, simply refused to accept the prevailing wisdom on the subject, which was either that there was no threat or that nothing could be done to respond to it.

"I was not impressed by either argument," Dr. Gomory said. "Experts could go up to a board and list 20 really very powerful diseases that could be spread relatively easily, but when you asked them what to do about it, they shrugged and said nothing could be done."

The ready availability of recipes for disaster on the Internet made Dr. Gomory almost certain that an attack would take place.

The foundation spent the spring of 2000 trying to learn as much as it could about biological and chemical terror, identifying experts on the subject and inviting them in to lead seminars with its staff. "It was not very helpful," Dr. Gomory said. "People didn't encourage us to get involved."

In the spring of 2001, the foundation made a grant to the Center for Law and the Public's Health, a joint effort of Georgetown University and Johns Hopkins, to come up with a legal response to bioterrorism.

The legal response to bioterrorism? "Who has the power to quarantine Manhattan, for instance," Dr. Gomory said.

"There are lots of issues relating to authority and power that bioterrorism touches."

In May 2002, Dr. Gomory sent General Lawlor "The Need for Demand," a report calling for more public awareness about terror precautions. And eventually, policy makers and political advisers came around to the idea of a national campaign.

Mr. Ridge unveiled the campaign on Wednesday.

"The duct tape thing is actually helpful," General Lawlor said. "The reality is that in 1991 during the gulf war, there were large purchases of duct tape and plastic by the Israeli government. So the people who are making fun of it don't know what they're talking about because people who have lived through one of these attacks have relied on it, and it has worked."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/23/national/23DUCT.html>

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Los Angeles Times

February 25, 2003

Banned Missile Might Well Be Used In A War

Undestroyed Iraqi arsenal could deliver chemical or biological warheads, experts say.

By Greg Miller, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON --The Al-Samoud 2 missiles that weapons inspectors have ordered Iraq to destroy would probably be among the first weapons fired by Saddam Hussein to slow or stop a U.S. invasion, military experts say.

The missile, which is at the heart of a standoff this week between Iraq and the United Nations, could hit Kuwait City or other nearby targets with chemical or biological warheads, experts say.

The Al-Samouds are the only short-range missiles that Iraq has tested extensively and deployed in significant quantities, with perhaps 50 to 100 positioned around the country. They also constitute one of the few systems Iraq has that would be capable of striking rear U.S. and allied positions in the event of an invasion, raising the possibility that soldiers beyond the immediate field of battle could face chemical strikes by Hussein.

"I think the Al-Samoud is one of the keys to his strategy," said John Pike, an analyst at GlobalSecurity.org. "As soon as the Iraqis decide that the U.S. 5th Corps is heading toward Baghdad, the bulk of the Al-Samouds are going to come flying out of Basra into Kuwait, tipped with an assortment of nasties."

Analysts say the strategic importance of the missiles helps to explain why Iraq has so far refused to destroy them, even though refusal could lead to war.

Hussein signaled Monday that he would not meet U.N. demands to eliminate the weapons, saying in an interview with CBS News that he does not believe the missiles' range exceeds the 93-mile limit imposed at the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix has said the Al-Samouds exceed that range limit by as much as 26 miles and has given Iraq a deadline of Saturday to begin destroying them.

The Al-Samoud is part of a system antiquated by Western standards. Jury-rigged out of Soviet-built SA-2 surface-to-air and Scud missile components, it is wildly inaccurate and capable of reaching only the closest of Iraq's neighbors. Missiles positioned near the border with Kuwait could reach much of that country, but they could not reach Israel, for example.

U.S. intelligence officials say it's not clear that the Al-Samoud, which translates as "steadfastness" or "endurance," has ever been tipped with weapons of mass destruction. But military experts say there would seem to be little other purpose for it.

"A missile with this type of accuracy has virtually no ability to strike targets using conventional weapons," said Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. "That means it only has military meaning if it carries chemical and biological weapons Iraq has denied it possesses."

Military experts say it is possible that Iraq has deployed Al-Samoud launchers around mosques, schools and other facilities in Basra and other cities, which would make it difficult for the U.S. to strike the launchers without inflicting civilian casualties.

Experts also say U.S. antimissile defenses could be overwhelmed by a volley of incoming Al-Samouds.

"I don't know how many [antimissile] Patriot batteries the United States currently has in Kuwait," Pike said. "But it's possible [Hussein] can fire these Samouds faster than we could shoot them down."

Iraq is thought to have other missiles capable of carrying biological or chemical payloads, including a small number of Scuds, which were banned after the Gulf War. It also is developing a more advanced short-range missile, the Al-Fatah. But experts say it does not appear to have tested that system and might have only a few of those missiles because they are complicated to assemble.

A U.N. official said Monday that the distance selected by the United Nations as the limit for the range of Baghdad's missiles -- 93 miles -- might have been chosen simply because it is about half the effective range of a Scud.

Blix said last week that U.N. inspectors had used four different computer simulations to calculate the range of the Al-Samoud. He said all the tests concluded that the missile exceeds the range limit by significant margins.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-missile25feb25001450.1.5991431.story>

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Washington Times

February 25, 2003

Pg. 3

Saddam Seen Using Proxy Groups To Attack The U.S.

Reports cite Hezbollah, Hamas as likely surrogates

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

A recent CIA analysis concluded Saddam Hussein is highly likely to use a "third party" terrorist group to conduct a proxy attack on the United States in advance of American military operations, according to U.S. officials.

Analysts within the CIA's intelligence directorate reached the conclusion based on a complicated process that applied statistical probabilities to unknown threat scenarios, said officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity. According to one U.S. official, the CIA estimated there is better than an 85 percent chance that Saddam would use proxy terrorists to strike the United States and that the likelihood would increase after any U.S. military action were to begin.

The exercise was conducted several months ago and the analysts stated in a report that Saddam could order a terrorist attack against the United States before U.S. forces start operations to oust him.

"It didn't specify what groups" would be used to carry out the attacks, another U.S. official said.

The analysis stated that if Saddam felt the end of his regime is inevitable that he could "strike out against us using a third party," the second official said.

The first official cited the assessment as saying that the pre-emptive terrorist attack could involve the use of chemical, biological or radiological weapons.

The intelligence assessment coincided with President Bush's decision announced Feb. 7 to raise the terrorism-alert status from yellow, "heightened," to orange, or "high" danger of terrorist attack, primarily from al Qaeda.

U.S. officials said the heightened alert is expected to last through March, which would coincide with any U.S. military action against Iraq.

The CIA analysis also preceded the arrest last week of four persons in Tampa, Fla., who law-enforcement officials say were part of a clandestine cell of Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists who provided financing and other support for anti-Israel suicide attacks.

The formula used by the analysts to reach the conclusion involved what officials called a "Bayesian analysis" of Saddam's options. The analytical model is derived from the statistical-probability theory of 18th-century mathematician Thomas Bayes.

U.S. intelligence officials said there have been recent reports that Saddam would try to use Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed terrorist group and Hamas, the Palestinian terrorist group, to conduct operations in the United States and against the United States abroad.

The reports said that the two groups could carry out strikes in support of Iraq after the start of military operations, which could begin as early as mid-March, the officials said.

Meanwhile, the FBI has sent a notice to law-enforcement agencies to be on alert for "lone extremists," according to a law-enforcement official.

The FBI believes there is a threat from extremists who could act on their own and not in connection with an organized terrorist group. The notice mentioned the 1993 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City by Timothy McVeigh.

"Lone extremists represent an ongoing terrorist threat in the United States," the FBI notice stated. It was first reported Sunday in the New York Times.

"Lone extremists may operate independently or on the fringes of established extremist groups, either alone or with one or two accomplices," the notice stated.

The danger of terrorist attack in the United States remains real. U.S. intelligence officials said the CIA has concluded in classified assessments that al Qaeda has all the materials needed to carry out a chemical, biological or radiological terrorist attack.

The assessment that an attack is near is based on multiple sources close to al Qaeda, including some prisoners held at the U.S. Navy's Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, base and other locations.

Still, U.S. intelligence agencies do not have specific information on where an attack would take place.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell released detailed intelligence on Iraq's links with terrorists at the United Nations in New York on Feb. 5.

"None of this should come as a surprise to any of us," Mr. Powell said. "Terrorism has been a tool used by Saddam for decades. Saddam was a supporter of terrorism long before these terrorist networks had a name, and this support continues."

Mr. Powell said Iraq's links to terrorist groups includes support from Palestinian terrorists and financial support to the families of suicide bombers.

He also disclosed that Iraq has provided safe haven to al Qaeda terrorists connected to Abu Musaab Zarqawi, an associate of Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda supporters.

Al Qaeda terrorists last year "bragged" that Iraq was a good place that could be transited quickly, Mr. Powell said in a presentation on Iraq.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030225-830684.htm>

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Washington Post

February 25, 2003

Pg. 16

In Autonomous North, Preparing For The Worst

Worried About Chemical or Biological Strike by Baghdad, Kurds Buy Masks and Plan Escape

By Karl Vick, Washington Post Foreign Service

SULAYMANIYAH, Iraq, Feb. 24 -- Iraqi Kurds have begun improvising civil defense strategies and making plans to escape cities because of growing fears that President Saddam Hussein's military could attack this Kurdish-controlled region with chemical or biological weapons if the United States invades Iraq.

Gas masks have grown scarce. In the military surplus stalls of Sulaymaniyah's downtown bazaar, prices of the few, mostly used models still available have jumped tenfold in a month to \$30. Buyers have made a run on disposable diapers, merchants report, because local civil defense officials publicized instructions for fashioning improvised gas masks by sprinkling crushed charcoal and salt between the absorbent layers. Plastic sheeting and rolls of wide tape also flew out of hardware shops following a public advisory to construct a sealed room in which to ride out a gas attack.

But residents questioned the value of homemade countermeasures against weapons many Kurds know firsthand. Hussein's forces gassed scores of Kurdish villages in the late 1980s, killing thousands of people.

"It's just for people's comfort, using these materials," said Ako Ali, who was peddling thick rolls of plastic from a hardware store in Sulaymaniyah's central bazaar last week. "It's something people do because their neighbors are doing the same thing."

His brother Mustapha agreed. "It is a city of fate," he said.

Senior Kurdish officials, struggling to promote public safety without promoting panic, said local history and recent intelligence underscore the gravity of the threat. Barham Salih, prime minister of the half of northern Iraq that is administered by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said his government has received credible reports that chemical weapons specialists have arrived on the Iraqi military's front lines facing the Kurdish zone.

The specialists, wearing uniforms of the Republican Guard but no patch identifying a specific unit, joined units manning freshly placed missile batteries, said Faraidoon Abdul Qadir, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan interior minister. Qadir said the missiles could reach the cities of Arbil and Sulaymaniyah, where more than half of the region's 3.5 million Kurds reside.

The officials expressed confidence in the quality of the intelligence, which they said came from multiple sources who have been reliable in the past. But they acknowledged that the chemical weapons specialists may have been moved to the front lines in the knowledge that their presence would be noted by Kurdish informants whose reports would unnerve an already edgy Kurdish population.

Salih said a tribal official quoted a senior Iraqi security official as saying that "hundreds of thousands will die. This will not be a picnic." Another source quoted a senior official declaring, "The Kurds will be eliminated."

Regardless of the veracity of the reports, Kurdish leaders say they have intensified already urgent efforts to prepare the autonomous area for a possible attack. Salih said all but a core of essential ministries will close in coming days in anticipation of a U.S.-led invasion early next month. "I'm worried about anthrax more than anything else," Salih said.

Qadir said the Kurdish administration is operating on the assumption that the Iraqi government would hope to sow panic in the Kurdish zone to impede the progress of U.S. forces moving south from Turkey. In 1991, a government crackdown on a Kurdish uprising in the last days of the Persian Gulf War prompted more than a million Kurds to flee northward on the main road toward Turkey, exactly the route U.S. armor and troops are expected to arrive by. To avert such a move, the Kurdish civil defense department has urged the approximately 1 million residents of Sulaymaniyah to consider moving their families to outlying villages. That option did not exist in 1991. Three years earlier, Hussein's government had razed most Kurdish villages in a counterinsurgency sweep that included repeated chemical attacks, and the population feared such attacks might come again.

"We want to hide here from Saddam Hussein," said Khadeji Ahmed, who recently traveled from the oil center of Kirkuk in government-held Iraq to Gobtappa, the Kurdish village where 10 of her siblings died in a 1988 chemical attack. "People now say people in villages will live, not the people in towns. This time."

In Sulaymaniyah, meanwhile, officials are putting in place an emergency plan that would allow security forces, health care and the top layer of government to function after an attack. After increasingly vocal protests of "empty" U.S. promises of material support, the United States has promised anew to provide protective suits, gas masks and other emergency equipment for members of essential services, according to an informed source.

Most residents, however, will have to improvise. In Sulaymaniyah's central market, people without small children suddenly have been buying diapers, said Hamin Muheddin, who rearranged his stall to highlight the "affordable gas masks" -- just \$1.50 for a packet of 15.

"It should be a large or regular," said Muheddin, demonstrating how to layer in the crushed charcoal and salt as the radio advised. "I actually experimented at home but had difficulty breathing, so I put it aside."

Tahir Tofik considered a roll of the wide tape stacked for sale on the sidewalk, a recent addition to kiosks that formerly sold only batteries. Rolls of plastic sheeting stood for sale next door, at 75 cents a yard.

"What can I do?" Tofik said. "My family can't sleep. We have nightmares at night. We are worried, especially for the little ones."

The advice from authorities is specific: Choose one room, as high in the house as possible, because gas settles. Seal the windows, and lay in water, food and bedding for several days.

In a sprawling home in one of the city's best neighborhoods, Sheelan Susey's mother followed the instruction to the letter, even sewing homemade gas masks for Deia, 9, Lala, 3, and their baby cousin Mustafa. Like many poorer residents who cannot afford to travel to a village, the family plans to stay put, but for a different reason.

"We're afraid we'll lose our home to looters," said Susey. They have more to lose than most, she said. But the possession Susey values most is the satellite television system that delivers the stream of information they lacked in 1991, when Kurds could see only state-controlled TV.

"In '91 we didn't know anything about the war," Susey said. "Now we have the dish and see everything. Now we see the buildup in Kuwait. And we are afraid."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A62260-2003Feb24.html>

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Baltimore Sun
February 23, 2003

Parker, APG Manager, To Head New Army Unit

Agency to oversee stores of chemical weapons

By Lane Harvey Brown, Sun Staff

Michael A. Parker, deputy commander of one of Aberdeen Proving Ground's key commands, has been named acting director of a new Army agency designed to streamline and improve the storage and destruction of the nation's chemical weapons stockpile.

The Chemical Materials Agency, a provisional agency expected to become a permanent entity in October, brings destruction and storage functions together under one umbrella, said Mickey Morales, spokesman for the Soldier and Biological Chemical Command.

Parker has been the program manager for the Pentagon's Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment (ACWA) program since its inception in 1997. The ACWA program helped identify and develop alternatives to incineration for chemical weapons disposal at sites in Colorado and Kentucky.

Craig Williams, director of the Chemical Weapons Working Group, a Kentucky-based group that monitors the Army's destruction activities, said that "Mr. Parker has earned the respect of federal and local elected officials and community members because he has treated everyone with respect, rather than secrecy or contempt.

"We are confident Mr. Parker will maintain his commitment to true community involvement."

Parker said combining activities once divided under disparate commands is a positive step for chemical demilitarization.

"The CMA brings all the parties under one roof necessary to carry out the mission of the safe storage and elimination of obsolete and aging chemical weapons in the United States," said Parker, adding that he plans to work closely with community members at the nation's eight stockpile sites.

"I have learned that establishing and promoting a cooperative working relationship between a broad spectrum of stakeholders can and will yield positive results," he said.

Morales said Parker brings experience in research, storage and destruction of chemical weapons to the new job. He also has a good working relationship with communities at the sites.

"Mr. Parker has gained the confidence of communities all around the country in his role with the assembled chemical weapons program," Morales said.

Parker will retain his role in ACWA, which means he will oversee sites using both incinerators and alternative technologies.

"Even sites which now have incinerators can benefit from the kind of honesty and transparency Mr. Parker has established in the ACWA program," said Brenda Lindell of the Anniston, Ala., group Families Concerned About Nerve Gas Incineration.

The agency's creation is part of a reorganization of the chemical demilitarization program ordered in January by Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White.

The Army's stockpiles are located in Tooele, Utah; Pine Bluff, Ark.; Anniston, Ala.; Pueblo, Colo., Richmond, Ky.; Newport, Ind.; and Aberdeen, where destruction of the mustard agent stocks is scheduled to begin next month.

Morales said the Army has destroyed 8,082 tons of chemical agent, more than 25 percent of the original stockpile.

<http://www.sunspot.net/news/local/harford/bal-ha.apg23feb23.story>

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USA Today

February 25, 2003

Pg. 4

S. Africans Coach Iraq On Disarmament

Scientists share their expertise with Baghdad

By Sarah Crowe, Special for USA Today

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — A team of seven South African scientists is in Baghdad this week to offer Iraq a model on how to disarm and avoid a new Gulf War.

The scientists are among many who helped South Africa voluntarily dismantle its own extensive nuclear, biological and chemical arsenal 11 years ago.

"We are coming here to give the Iraqis our own experiences on disarmament. ... We hope to contribute in stopping a war," the group's leader, Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad, said upon arriving Sunday in Baghdad.

Iraq denies having any banned weapons. However, the United Nations says Baghdad has not provided unfettered access to Iraqi scientists and not explained what happened to hundreds of tons of weaponry it had admitted having after the Gulf War. The South African envoys are expected to try to persuade Iraqi officials to copy their example and cooperate more fully with U.N. weapons inspectors.

"I don't say that we will definitely succeed, but we might still avoid a war this way," former South African foreign minister Pik Botha said last week. "It's up to the Iraqis then to follow our advice." Iraq has welcomed visits by delegations from South Africa, a country that has been outspoken in its opposition to a war.

The experts plan to explain how, in the early 1990s, South Africa became the first and only country to voluntarily destroy its nuclear, biological and chemical and missile capabilities. Pretoria signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1991

South Africa developed its weapons programs in response to the spread of socialism in surrounding countries beginning in the 1970s. The clandestine South African programs went on despite an international arms embargo and trade sanctions imposed in response to the white-dominated regime's racist policies.

When the government of President F.W. de Klerk moved towards ending the 46-year policy of apartheid that denied black South Africans full political and economic rights, officials also decided to eliminate the illegal weapons programs. It was part of an effort to restore international confidence. Botha said the disarmament efforts "helped our international credibility enormously."

The International Atomic Energy Agency sent inspectors to South Africa in 1993 to verify the dismantling had taken place. The IAEA inspectors confirmed that six nuclear bombs and a seventh incomplete nuclear device were dismantled, but there were no international experts available to completely validate South Africa's claim that it had dismantled an undisclosed number of biological and chemical artillery projectiles and facilities.

That failure worries some here. "There are scientists still wandering about with all kinds of secrets in their pockets, and neither this government nor the previous South African government has shown enough vigilance on this matter," said Laurie Nathan, executive director of the Center for Conflict Resolutions, a think tank in Cape Town. He was in Baghdad two weeks ago to discuss with Iraqi officials how they could stop a war. His visit was one of many by South African experts that gave impetus to President Thabo Mbeki's announcement last week that he was sending scientists to Iraq.

The South African scientists say they have another task while they are in Iraq. "There is severe suspicion amongst Iraqis that the U.N. weapons inspectors might be spying on their stockpile of conventional weapons and this must be taken into account," Botha said.

The United States has said it is not suspicion, but an Iraqi attempt to hide banned weapons, that is hampering inspections.

Contributing: Wire reports

http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2003-02-24-safrica-usat_x.htm

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Los Angeles Times
February 26, 2003

Canadians, Iraq Don't Sway The U.S.

White House says it won't alter plans after Baghdad turns over two bombs and data and Ottawa tries to bridge gap in Security Council.

By Maggie Farley and Robin Wright, Times Staff Writers

UNITED NATIONS --Iraq has offered its first signs of "substantive cooperation" by turning up two bombs, one possibly filled with a biological agent, inspections chief Hans Blix said Tuesday as Canada offered a compromise proposal designed to bridge the gap between the United States and France.

But U.S. officials said that neither cooperation nor compromise offered enough to persuade them to change their plan to ask the Security Council for a mid-March vote to disarm Iraq by force. They said they will continue intensive diplomatic efforts to win badly needed support.

Blix said Tuesday that he has received eight letters from Iraq in the last several days with information on past weapons programs, including the recent discovery of two R-400 aerial bombs at a site where Iraq had disposed of biological weapons before. One of them is filled with "a liquid that appears to be biological," he said, adding that it would be tested soon.

After denying in 1991 that it had a biological weapons program, Iraq admitted in 1995 that it had produced 155 R-400 bombs that were filled with anthrax, aflatoxin and botulinum toxin. It said that the bombs were buried during the 1991 Persian Gulf War and later destroyed and that most of the related documents were destroyed with them. But in a letter delivered to Blix over the weekend, Iraqi authorities said they recently discovered handwritten documents about the disposal of prohibited items in 1991.

"There are pieces of evidence that are coming forward, but we still have to see this evidence," Blix said. He added that he regarded the disclosures as "positive" steps by Iraq, which he said had previously offered only help with the inspections process, not substance.

"This is cooperation on substance," he told The Times. "Substance is if you find weapons, you can destroy it; if you find documents, it may constitute evidence. That's not process."

Iraq has yet to agree to begin destroying by Saturday dozens of Al-Samoud 2 missiles whose range experts found to exceed a U.N.-mandated 93-mile limit. CBS News said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein hinted in an interview with anchor Dan Rather that he would not dispose of the missiles, but Iraqi leaders said Tuesday that the question was unresolved. Iraq maintains that the missiles would not travel beyond the limit when weighed down with a payload, fuel and a guidance system, and asked for more technical talks. But Blix said the matter was not open for negotiation.

"We told them what they need to do," he said. Blix will include the letters in a written report to the council due by Saturday and answer ambassadors' questions in a special meeting March 7.

U.S. officials say the report may be Blix's last before they ask the council to decide that Iraq is not serious about disarming and to authorize military action. The White House rejected Iraq's sudden weapons revelations as too little, too late.

"I suspect we'll see him playing games. The world will say, 'Disarm,' and he will all of a sudden find a weapon that he claimed he didn't have," President Bush told reporters after meeting with the National Economic Council.

But the Security Council remains deeply divided over whether inspectors have had an adequate chance to rid Iraq of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, along with any bombs and missiles to deliver them.

Canada, although not a member of the council, has suggested that Iraq be required to answer unresolved questions about its weapons programs by March 28. If Iraq did not fully comply with inspectors by then, the council would authorize "all necessary means" to disarm the country by the end of the month. The deadline would be close enough to keep pressure on Iraq to disarm, a Canadian position paper says, but would allow sufficient time for judging whether Iraq was offering substantial evidence that it has disarmed.

The proposal splits the difference between the two choices now facing the council: to declare within three weeks that Iraq has squandered its final chance to disarm voluntarily, as the U.S., Britain and Spain proposed Monday, or to strengthen and extend inspections for at least four months, as France and Germany suggest.

The compromise proposal has caught the interest of many of the 10 rotating council members, which are seeking a solution to the standoff among the five permanent members: the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China. French Ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sabliere met with the 10 on Tuesday to push the French-German proposal. Today, it is the U.S. and Spain's turn to lobby them. The resolution needs at least nine votes -- and no vetoes from the permanent members -- to pass, and some of the 10 have been threatening to abstain in a bloc until the council can reach a consensus.

"We have to test the middle ground," said a representative of one of the nonpermanent council members, which favors the Canadian proposal. "It's an interesting idea. It's incomplete, but it's a beginning."

But the U.S. is distinctly cool to the Canadian idea, and British diplomats called it a "nonstarter" Tuesday. They were even more dismissive of the French-German proposal.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair told the House of Commons Tuesday that it would be "absurd" to give Baghdad more time to disarm unless it offered complete cooperation. And Bush urged the United Nations to "honor its word" and support tough action against Iraq. In the face of stiff opposition, Bush also said again Tuesday that a new resolution would be "helpful and useful" but that the United States does not believe one is necessary for it to act. But U.S. officials say the administration has not yet made a decision about whether it would pull back its proposed resolution if one of the three veto-wielding members of the Security Council likely to exercise that right -- France, Russia or China -- decided in the end to block passage. The decision on whether to let the process face a veto will be left largely to Blair, who badly needs the cover of a new U.N. resolution because British public opinion is so intensely opposed to the use of force.

In a pitch to win backing for both a new resolution and U.S. intervention in Iraq, Bush will use a speech tonight at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington to reassure both allies and the Arab world of the long-term U.S. commitment in the region, U.S. officials said Tuesday. To Iraqis, Bush is expected to stress that the United States intends to return power to Iraq as soon as possible and in the meantime ensure that humanitarian concerns are addressed.

"He'll say Iraq belongs to the Iraqis, not outsiders," said a European envoy briefed on the speech.

Bush is also expected to pledge renewed U.S. commitment, now that a new Israeli government is in place, to generating movement on the Mideast peace process "road map."

The speech will address a range of listeners, from Blair, who has been under pressure to get the United States to act on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to the Muslim world. Pakistan, one of the rotating Security Council members, wants the United States to address Islamic concerns in its plans for Iraq. The U.S. and Britain have been dispatching envoys to council members' countries to press their case that the U.S. will move to disarm Iraq with or without the U.N. and that it would be better for the council's integrity if it was united behind the effort.

Most of the uncommitted ambassadors say that there have been no threats or incentives at this early stage in the negotiations and that their votes could not be bought anyway.

"Don't think because we're from African countries or underdeveloped countries that we will accept everything," said Guinean Ambassador Mamady Traore. "We have our dignity."

Farley reported from the U.N. and Wright from Washington. Times staff writers Edwin Chen and John Hendren in Washington, David Holley in Moscow, Janet Stobart in London and John Daniszewski in Baghdad contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-usiraq26feb26,1,1161570.story>

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Washington Post
February 26, 2003
Pg. 4

Pentagon Workers Being Trained To Use Emergency Masks

The Pentagon began training employees yesterday to use emergency gas masks being distributed to prepare for possible chemical or biological attacks. Some suggestions from Defense Department experts: Begin breathing through the mouthpiece before putting the hood over the head; ensure the rubber opening seals securely around the neck; take off eyeglasses.

The masks are designed to give wearers 15 to 30 minutes to flee chemical or biological contamination, and have provided protection for about an hour in testing. By the end of the week, officials expect to be handing out 500 masks a day to the 24,000 Pentagon workers and stashing hundreds of the masks in high-traffic areas such as cafeterias.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A2711-2003Feb25.html>

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Christian Science Monitor
February 26, 2003

Gassed Once, Kurds Fear Reprise

Iraq killed 5,000 people in Halabja with chemical weapons in 1988. Locals still lack masks, and no nations have offered help.

By Cameron W. Barr, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

HALABJA, IRAQ – When Roukhosh Arif climbed out of her basement, past the metal door draped with a wet towel that had kept out the gases, the light of a chilly, cloudless dusk was tinted yellow.

Covering the mouth of her 1-year-old daughter, Ms. Arif and her husband rushed through the streets of this small city in northeastern Iraq. The poisoned air, smelling of onions and apples, crept into their eyes and nostrils.

They saw its effects everywhere. Bodies lay on the street. People sat down, unable to run. A neighbor shouted prayers mixed with nonsense.

These are Arif's memories of March 16, 1988. The Iraqi military, waging a genocidal campaign against this country's ethnic Kurds, killed 5,000 people in Halabja that day, according to human rights organizations.

Today, she and other Kurds fear that Iraq may use chemicals against them again if the US leads a war against the regime of President Saddam Hussein. But Kurds are no more ready to protect themselves against such an attack than they were 15 years ago.

While Israelis, Kuwaitis, and even some Americans acquire gas masks, stock up on plastic sheeting, and learn when to inject an antidote, Kurds are left to rely on wet towels. They say their appeals to US and European governments for the means to protect themselves from chemical or biological attack have yielded sympathy, but not action.

Many Kurds worry that Mr. Hussein might strike at them again to provoke an exodus of refugees to Turkey - as occurred in 1991 - that could complicate a US war effort. But although the US and Britain say that disarming Iraq of its chemical and biological weapons is a moral necessity, they have not made efforts to protect the Kurdish victims of such weapons from future attack.

Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of two parties that administer the Kurdish zone in northern Iraq, says US and European officials have responded with "positive answers" to Kurdish requests for protective material. He also concedes that nothing has happened.

Invoking an Iranian expression, he says that Kurds must practice "revolutionary patience."

Abdel Qadir Faraidoon, the PUK interior minister, concludes that there is a lack of American and European resolve to help protect Kurdish civilians. "They didn't want to or they would have done it," he says. He adds that US officials could turn another mass killing of Kurds into political advantage - "so they can point to the world [and say] that they were right that Saddam has weapons of mass destruction."

"It's terrible," adds Hoshiyar Zebari, foreign-policy adviser to Massoud Barzani, the head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), referring to Kurdish vulnerability. The KDP controls the western half of northern Iraq; the PUK is responsible for the east, which includes Halabja. He, too, says that US and European governments have not fulfilled promises of aid.

At the same time, Kurdish officials do not seem too shocked that their requests have gone unfulfilled. That may be because Kurds - a stateless ethnic group spread across Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria - have a long history of being trampled upon by neighbors and great powers alike.

Spokespeople for the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency said they were unable to comment on the situation in northern Iraq.

In Halabja, Arif says the prospect of another chemical strike is "the worry of our day and night." To listen to her account of March 16, 1988, is to understand why. The attack remains the most devastating use of chemical weapons against civilians since the Nazi exterminations of Jews during World War II.

At midday, Iraqi forces began bombing the city, a front line in the Iran-Iraq war and an area of Iranian infiltration. Roukhosh Arif, her husband, Abdullah, and their daughter Parwa descended into their basement with 23 others. The bombing was so intense that one blast jarred their lantern and extinguished its flame. After another explosion close by, they heard a neighbor screaming that four people in his house had died.

"We had a miserable time," says Abdullah, a placid man who parts his hair neatly over his rectangular face. "The young cried and shouted and demanded to go out and the adults prayed and raised their hands to God to save us." At one point, they thought the Iraqis were firing duds, since munitions were landing without an explosion. Then they realized the rumors of the past few days had been accurate. The Iraqis were using chemical weapons. The Arifs and others in the basement could smell traces of the gases.

The four families waited for the attack to subside.

At about 6 p.m., the Arifs and another family decided to flee. Abdullah carried a bundle of food and clothes.

Roukhosh held Parwa. They opened the door and went up the stairs to the outside world. They found the streets clogged with the dead and the dying.

Roukhosh remembers passing a stream where people had tried to rinse their burning eyes and cool their faces. They were bent over the water, but they weren't moving. Too tired to lift their heads, the people had drowned.

Disoriented, her eyes hurting and her vision failing, Roukhosh quickly felt too exhausted to carry the baby. Other parents were also fading, begging those still on their feet to take children to safety. "You couldn't help them, so you just ran away," recalls Roukhosh, an engaging woman with thick eyebrows and round cheeks. "Nobody was in the business of helping others."

Two relatives saved her - one took Parwa and another led Roukhosh and Abdullah out of the city. By the time they reached a nearby village, they were blind, but regained their sight several weeks later.

Today, the Arifs have other health problems they attribute to the Iraqi gas: Abdullah's lungs bleed and Roukhosh has had an operation to remove tissue from her eyes. They know that if they have to face another attack, they will not be able to flee. Parwa, now a teenager, has a sister and three brothers. The Arifs say they won't be able to carry their little ones.

This realization stirs a memory of March 16. The two families who stayed in the shelter that evening did so because they had too many small children to carry. All of them - 14 people - died.

"The only preparations we have now are the same as we had 15 years ago. Nobody has helped us. Nobody has given us a hand," says Abdullah, who has seen television coverage of Israeli and Kuwaiti programs to protect their citizens from chemical attack.

If the worst happens, he says, he and his family will make do with "just the wet towels and the wet blankets and whatever else we have."

Staff writer Faye Bowers contributed to this report from Washington.
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0226/p06s01-woiq.html>

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Wall Street Journal
February 26, 2003

Kuwait Isn't Ready For Attack Of Chemical, Biological Nature

By Yaroslav Trofimov, Staff Reporter Of The Wall Street Journal

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait -- In the lobbies of Kuwait's hotels, a glance toward the hips of the American soldiers and defense contractors reveals the most recent and grim of fashions: gas masks, an indispensable accessory amid growing concerns that Iraq may strike back with chemical or biological weapons in the event of a war.

In the desert northern half of Kuwait, declared a closed military area since Feb. 15, more than 110,000 U.S. and British troops are honing their ability to get the masks on in nine seconds -- a sufficient time to stay alive. Some Western companies and embassies here already have distributed chemical and biological protective kits to their employees and citizens who decide to stay on despite advice to evacuate all nonessential personnel.

By contrast, little war fever is evident among Kuwaitis. The overwhelming majority of the 2.3 million residents of Kuwait don't even have a basic gas mask, even though Iraq already has threatened to strike back at the oil-rich emirate if it is attacked by U.S. and British forces. Western intelligence officials say Iraq has pre-positioned missiles that could carry chemical or biological agents along the Kuwaiti border, and may fire them pre-emptively in a "use it or lose it" scenario. Kuwait City is only about 70 miles from Iraq, which has used lethal gas against Iran and the Kurds but denies possessing nonconventional weapons now.

The Kuwaiti civil-defense department has yet to import large amounts of masks or set the subsidized price for selling them. It advises in newspaper advertisements to use wet towels as protection against chemical weapons. Rather than urging citizens to prepare for the worst, the emirate's acting ruler, Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah al Sabah, has already announced that he won't be getting a mask for himself.

"No chemicals will reach us... I am sure that Kuwait is protected by God and its people and its friends," Sheikh Sabah said on Kuwaiti TV last week.

Another prominent member of the ruling family, former oil and information minister Sheikh Saud Nasser al Sabah, was equally relaxed as he sipped lemon juice on the terrace of his seaside home. "You won't even feel in Kuwait that there is war going on," said Sheikh Saud, who served as Kuwaiti ambassador to Washington during the previous Gulf War. "Why panic, why worry? People are confident. And we sure don't expect one Iraqi soldier to cross our borders."

To some Kuwaitis, such nonchalance is reminiscent of the government's handling of the August 1990 crisis with Iraq, which officials at the time dismissed as a "summer cloud that will go away" -- until the invading Iraqi army seized the country in just a few hours, and the ruling family found itself fleeing to Saudi exile. Israel, which, unlike Kuwait, lies outside the range of missiles that Iraq admits to possessing, has long equipped its entire population with gas masks, nerve-gas antidotes and other equipment needed in case of chemical or biological attack.

"Israel is continuously in a state of war, it's part of their lives, and Kuwait is not like that," says Ahmed Bishara, a Kuwaiti professor and business consultant. "This country is not on a war footing by any means."

And this means that most Kuwaitis are relying on the U.S. to protect them, putting blind faith in the batteries of American Patriot anti-missile missiles scattered around the country -- even though an earlier generation of Patriots failed to deflect most Iraqi Scud missiles back in 1991.

Even if Iraq retaliates only against U.S. military targets here, some American facilities in Kuwait are located close to civilian population centers. Just one stray Scud loaded with chemical or biological agents could, under the right weather conditions, kill hundreds of people. That's why U.S. troops themselves don't just rely on the Patriot defense; at the U.S. Army's Camp Virginia, a growing tent city in northern Kuwait, chemical and biological protection drills are conducted every day.

Taking a break from teaching soldiers of the 22nd Signal Brigade how to use the new protective suits next to a newly dug Scud shelter, instructor Sgt. Holly Wallace says she has nightmares about nonconventional agents, especially of the biological kind.

"Think of it -- if you can ferment beer, you can make biological weapons," she says, adding that such agents could be delivered from Iraq by such means as infected animals, or the Pakistani and Filipino civilians that man the camp's kitchens and clean its toilets.

"I've always taken this seriously, but it's the first time everyone else is also taking it seriously," Sgt. Wallace says before explaining to the troops the features of a portable nerve-gas detector.

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Santa Fe New Mexican

February 24, 2003

Pg. 1

New Bombs Amid New Threats

Nuclear planners working on ability to conduct small-scale atomic warfare

By Jeff Tollefson

Nuclear-weapons planners want to revive a dying art -- the design and development of thermonuclear bombs -- to counter new threats in a post-Cold War world.

Nuclear experts plan to meet this summer to discuss the potential new weapons, which could be built in small quantities, as well as the costs and benefits from a resumption of nuclear testing. New weapons might include so-called "bunker busters," other small-yield bombs and high-radiation bombs, according to the documents.

The proposed meeting appears to build on the Bush administration's nuclear strategy, which calls for enhancing the nuclear complex and shifts U.S. policy to allow for targeted nuclear strikes in countering enemy efforts to produce chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.

The Los Alamos Study Group obtained the documents about possible nuclear options and released them last week.

Greg Mello, who heads the disarmament group, sees the discussion of new weapons and full-scale nuclear tests as evidence that nuclear planners, once tempered by Congress and previous administrations, have taken hold of the reins under President Bush.

"This administration doesn't believe in treaties or the rule of law. In this meeting, they are undercutting the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and they are also undercutting the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty," Mello said. "These are the primary tools with which nuclear proliferation in the world is prevented."

National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) officials say such a meeting of nuclear scientists is part of the standard defense-planning procedures. In part, they say, the conference is designed to "take stock of Stockpile Stewardship," the core program for maintaining the current arsenal without nuclear tests.

"We have no requirements for new nuclear warheads, and we are not developing nuclear warheads," said John Harvey, director of the policy planning staff for NNSA, an arm of the U.S. Department of Energy that is responsible for the nuclear weapons complex. "That said, part of our responsibility is to understand what the options are."

The administration's nuclear policies received a boost this month from the House Policy Committee, which released a report titled "Differentiation and Defense: An Agenda for the Nuclear Weapons Program."

The report calls for establishing ballistic missile defenses and ramping up nuclear capabilities. The House panel also called for the repeal of a 1993 law prohibiting research on low-yield weapons and endorses the creation of "an active advanced development program" to explore ideas for new or modified nuclear weapons.

As chairwoman of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, New Mexico Republican Heather Wilson led the review. In a foreword to the report, she credited the assistance of Gary Laughlin, a Sandia National Laboratories engineer who is serving on her staff as a congressional fellow from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

The report asserts that the notion of "mutually assured destruction," which held both the United States and the former Soviet Union in check during the Cold War, is no longer valid. While the United States is now the single superpower, threats to the nation are "numerically smaller but more diverse and less inherently stable." Wilson was unavailable for comment.

Harvey explained it this way: It would be difficult to justify the use of the current arsenal of larger nuclear weapons against non-nuclear powers, which hampers our deterrence against nations like Iraq. An effective nuclear deterrent would necessitate smaller, "useable" nuclear weapons, capable of hitting underground bunkers and hurting rogue nations where it will hurt them most -- without wiping out the general population.

It's a significant shift in policy. The old deterrence relied on restraint for fear of an all-out nuclear holocaust. This new U.S. policy relies on an apparent willingness to use nuclear warheads, even as a first strike, to counter the development of similarly destructive weapons.

"We are talking about nuclear weapons in a fundamentally different way," said Steve Schwartz, publisher of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, a watchdog publication dedicated to nuclear and security issues. "Anything that makes it easier to contemplate the use of nuclear weapons is an enormous step in the wrong direction and will come back to haunt us in a very real way, because other countries will emulate us."

As part of this year's appropriations, Congress allotted \$21 million for research into "advanced concepts" for nuclear weapons. This includes \$15.5 million for the research and design of the "Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator," which is likely to occur at Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore national laboratories.

The bunker-buster design might encase the insides of an existing thermonuclear bomb in a harder shell designed to smash deep into the ground before exploding. In theory, this would destroy underground bunkers while confining most of the blast and radioactivity below ground.

This would not be the nation's first bunker buster, but the proposal has sparked a sizeable debate in the last year. Many scientists have opposed the idea on technical grounds: It's tough to make a bomb penetrate deep into the earth without destroying itself in the process. Critics argue such a feat is outright impossible unless you carry the bomb down by hand, in which case a conventional weapon would work just as well. Schwartz sums it up as a "total fantasy."

U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman, a New Mexico Democrat, opposed funding the bunker buster this year. Bingaman believes the United States should push for nonproliferation and rely on its absolute superiority in conventional weapons rather than breathe any life into nuclear warfare.

"We don't need to be threatening rogue nations with nuclear attack in order to deter them from pretty much anything they might try," he said.

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., has supported exploring new bunker-buster designs and more generally the administration's nuclear policies. He could not be reached for comment.

An underlying fear of developing new weapons resides in the certification. It's easier to ensure an existing bomb remains functional than to prove the reliability of an entirely new design. As such, the advent of new designs might necessitate nuclear testing, which could in turn open the doors for testing in countries like China, Pakistan and India, critics say.

While it hasn't called for a resumption of nuclear testing, NNSA is moving to decrease the amount of time it would take to conduct a test from two or three years to 18 months, just in case an unforeseen problem arises, according to Harvey. "There are no guarantees in this business."

The last nuclear test took place in 1992 at the Nevada test site. Although the Senate has not ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the nation maintains a voluntary ban on nuclear testing.

Harvey said the president opposes the treaty, arguing that it does not allow for sufficient verification or flexibility in case the United States needs to conduct a test at some point. Nonetheless, the president supports the voluntary ban, Harvey said.

But that kind of assurance leaves many uneasy. Schwartz believes that the push for testing among nuclear strategists is real and that it will eventually come to pass if the executive branch places as much focus on nuclear weapons as it has under President Bush.

Earlier this month, 89 lawmakers, including U.S. Democratic Rep. Tom Udall of Santa Fe, signed a letter to the president calling for assurances that the nation will not resume nuclear tests. The letter cites a statement by Pete Aldridge, a top Defense official, calling on the national laboratories to "readdress the value of a low-yield testing program."

Given that the United States is preparing for war with Iraq over weapons of mass destruction while trying to defuse nuclear agendas in North Korea, India and Pakistan, the letter said, it is especially important that the United States walk a straight line and support international efforts at nonproliferation.

"Instead of considering a resumption of nuclear explosive testing, your administration should be pushing for ratification of the CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) to provide for the safety and security of all Americans," the lawmakers wrote.

A National Academy of Sciences report last summer indicated that the United States would be able to maintain its current stockpile without nuclear tests, as required by the international treaty. Given the nation's technology and resources, the Academy report said the treaty could benefit the United States, in that it would be easier for us to maintain an arsenal without testing than it would be for other nations to build an arsenal without testing.

Nonetheless, Wilson's report cites "uncertainty" about whether the Stockpile Stewardship program can achieve its primary goal: a simulation-based method for certifying nuclear weapons without actually blowing them up.

Moreover, it could be 10 years before we know one way or the other, according to the report, which endorses the administration's proposal to boost preparations for possible nuclear tests in the future.

The report also raises concerns about declining expertise in nuclear testing, indicating that more than half of the nuclear scientists with such experience have retired or left DOE. This is also cited as a reason for re-establishing a weapons-design program.

"If augmented with advanced development programs, the combination of challenging work should be sufficiently enticing and genuine to train a new generation of weapons scientists and engineers," the report states. While sympathetic with such a plight, the disarmament activists feel it's a poor standard for making decisions about global security.

"The weapons program has more than doubled in size during Stockpile Stewardship, and now it's hungry," said Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group.

Schwartz says the nuclear labs -- as opposed to military planners -- have always driven the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The labs would develop new weapons and then sell them to the military, which would then integrate them into war plans, he said, citing the Pentagon documents as evidence that this framework remains in place today.

"There ought to be some kind of public debate. This is all taking place underneath the surface," Schwartz said. "If these weapons are necessary and these policies are appropriate, they ought to be able to withstand congressional, media and public scrutiny."

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Washington Post
February 26, 2003
Pg. 8

Vaccine Contracts Awarded

U.S. Seeks Development of a Safer Smallpox Inoculation

By David Brown, Washington Post Staff Writer

The federal government awarded contracts to two companies yesterday to develop a safer smallpox vaccine -- one that might even be suitable for immuno-compromised people, such as those who have had organ transplants or are infected with the AIDS virus.

The vaccine will be a virus called "modified vaccinia Ankara" (MVA), a severely crippled version of the microbe used as a smallpox vaccine. MVA is unable to replicate in mammalian cells, although it does grow in chicken cells, which is where it is made.

The two companies, Acambis of Cambridge, Mass., and Bavarian Nordic of Copenhagen, will receive a total of \$20 million to grow the virus and test it in animals and healthy volunteers. That work should be done by the end of this year, said Gordon Cameron, an executive of Acambis, which received a \$9.2 million grant.

Studies will be done next year on people whose immune systems are compromised. Before the studies are complete, however, the government is expected to order 30 million doses of the vaccine as a stockpile for people who could not use the traditional vaccine in the unlikely event that smallpox, eradicated in the 1970s, reappears.

The traditional vaccine, which is also being made and stockpiled, produces a short-lived vaccinia infection in people receiving it. That infection can get out of control, occasionally with fatal consequences, when it occurs in people with damaged immune systems.

MVA was developed by German researchers, who used it in the 1970s to vaccinate people with eczema, a skin condition that can lead to severe reactions from the traditional vaccine. It was found to be extremely safe in them. However, it has never been used in a place where smallpox was circulating, so its protective effects are unproved. MVA is considered so safe, in fact, that it is being tried as a vector -- a live delivery vehicle -- for numerous experimental vaccines.

At a recent international meeting of AIDS researchers in Boston, Thomas Harrer of the University of Erlangen, in Germany, described an experiment in which 14 people infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) were given an MVA-based vaccine, with only mild side effects, such as fever and headache. A French and Swiss team is testing MVA as the basis for a therapeutic vaccine in 10 cancer patients.

Immune deficiency diseases, however, often impair a person's ability to mount a protective effect from a vaccine. The usefulness of MVA in people suffering from them is an open question.

"Whether at the end of the day there will be an effective vaccine to protect them, I don't know," said Mark B. Feinberg, an AIDS vaccine researcher at Emory University. "Coming up with an effective vaccine to protect immuno-deficient people will be a difficult task."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A2314-2003Feb25.html>

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