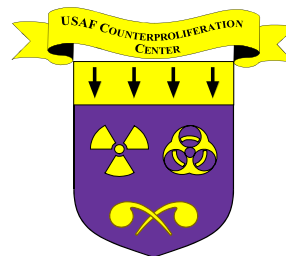


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USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER

CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL



Air University

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Maxwell AFB, Alabama

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Jerusalem Post
March 24, 2003

US Troops Capture Chemical Plant

By Caroline Glick

About 30 Iraqi troops, including a general, surrendered today to US forces of the 3rd Infantry Division as they overtook huge installation apparently used to produce chemical weapons in An Najaf, some 150 kilometers (90 miles) south of Baghdad.

Asked to confirm *The Jerusalem Post's* exclusive coverage of this development, US Lt. Gen. John Abizaid, Deputy Commander of Central Command, told reporters: "I'm not going to confirm that report, but we have one or two generals officers who are providing us with information."

One soldier was lightly wounded when a booby-trapped explosive went off as he was clearing the sheet metal-lined chemical weapons production facility.

The huge 100-acre complex, which is surrounded by a electrical fence, is perhaps the first illegal chemical plant to be uncovered by US troops in their current mission in Iraq. The surrounding barracks resemble an abandoned slum. It wasn't immediately clear exactly which chemicals were being produced here, but clearly the Iraqis tried to camouflage the facility so it could not be photographed aerially, by swathing it in sand-cast walls to make it look like the surrounding desert.

Within minutes of our entry into the camp on Sunday afternoon, at least 30 Iraqi soldiers and their commanding officer of the rank of General, obeyed the instructions of US soldiers who called out from our jeep in loudspeakers for them to lie down on the ground, and put their hands above their heads to surrender.

Today's operation is the third engagement with Iraqi forces by the First Brigade of the US army's 3rd Infantry Division, since Saturday afternoon.

So far in the campaign, the brigade has suffered no losses. But two were wounded Saturday night in an ambush on the outskirts of As-Samwah in southern Iraq.

The US battlefield success was tempered by pictures shown on Arab television of bodies in US uniforms lying in a makeshift Iraqi morgue and of prisoners being interviewed who were said to be Americans.

Before the graphic scenes were shown on Qatar's Al-Jazeera television, Iraq's vice president, Taha Yassin Ramadan, claimed his forces had taken allied prisoners of war and would show them on TV.

The station said the prisoners were captured around Nasiriyah, a major crossing point over the Euphrates River 200 miles (320 kilometers) southeast of Baghdad that was seized by the US Army Saturday. It said the film footage came from Iraqi television.

In another unsettling incident for the US -led coalition, British officials confirmed that a Royal Air Force Tornado aircraft was shot down accidentally Sunday by US Patriot missile near the Kuwaiti-Iraq border while returning from a mission. The aircraft's crew was missing; details about those on board were not disclosed.

"This is a tragedy and we are taking rapid steps to ensure there is no repetition," said Group Capt. Al Lockwood, a spokesman for British forces.

In their drive to Baghdad, US and British forces captured territory, towns and military installations, often with little or no opposition. But in some locations, Iraqi forces fought back with artillery fire or guerrilla-style counterattacks. Coalition troops were still trying to mop up resistance at the main Gulf port of Umm Qasr so it could be used for humanitarian shipments. They engaged in street-to-street battles against guerrillas, including paramilitary fighters of the Baath party.

Television footage of the Umm Qasr fighting was broadcast worldwide, and Iraqi officials hailed the resistance as proof coalition troops could be repelled.

Near the Gulf, Marines seized an Iraqi naval base Sunday morning at Az Zubayr. In the command center, Marines found half-eaten bowls of rice and other still-warm food.

In Baghdad, a series of air raid sirens and explosions were heard on the outskirts of the city at midmorning Sunday. A cloud of smoke hung over the capital; residents believed it was created in part by fires set to conceal targets from bombardment.

Iraqi television reported that Saddam Hussein's home town, Tikrit, had been bombed several times.

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Los Angeles Times
March 24, 2003

Seized Facility Attracts Interest

A possible chemical plant south of Baghdad is one of several under scrutiny, officials say.

By Esther Schrader, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON --U.S. troops are investigating a seized facility for evidence that may have been involved in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction, U.S. officials said Sunday.

The plant is near the city of Najaf, about 90 miles south of Baghdad, and is one of several suspected weapons facilities the military is investigating, a senior defense official said.

"We are looking into sites of interest," the U.S. Central Command in Doha, Qatar, said in a statement late Sunday when asked to confirm the seizure of the factory in Najaf, which was first reported in today's Jerusalem Post.

A reporter from that paper is traveling with the 1st Brigade of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, and she wrote that she accompanied the U.S. forces when they took control of the facility. About 30 Iraqi troops, including a general, surrendered at the plant, the newspaper reported.

One U.S. soldier was slightly wounded when a booby trap exploded as he was clearing the sheet metal-lined facility, the Post said.

A defense official in Washington said it was too early to call the factory, which the Jerusalem Post reporter described as a 100-acre complex surrounded by an electrical fence, a chemical facility. He called the Israeli newspaper report "premature."

"It is a site of interest, one of the sites of interest that we are looking into," the official said.

Asked at a news conference in Qatar on Sunday about reports of the chemical plant, Lt. Gen. John Abizaid of U.S. Central Command declined to comment. He said top Iraqi officers have been questioned about chemical weapons.

"We have an Iraqi general officer, two Iraqi general officers that we have taken prisoner, and they are providing us with information," Abizaid said.

If the plant is found to be a chemical-weapons factory, it would be the first find by the invasion force to validate U.S. claims that Iraq retained the ability to create chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

President Bush has said that eliminating Saddam Hussein's capability of producing and using chemical and biological weapons is a main objective of the war. Much of the international criticism of the U.S.-led invasion has ridden on the fact that U.N. weapons inspectors had not found any banned weapons in Iraq.

Iraqi officials have insisted that they destroyed all of the chemical and biological weapons after the 1991 Persian Gulf War. United Nations weapons inspectors have questioned that claim.

In Washington, Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Sunday that U.S. forces in western Iraq had found some "documentation" of interest, potentially related to chemical and biological weapons production.

Myers said U.S. special operations forces found the papers, along with a cache of millions of rounds of ammunition, after a firefight on Saturday, and the discovery "might save thousands of lives if we can find out exactly where and what they have."

"I just know that they have some papers that they want to exploit as quickly as possible, and we're going to do that," Myers told ABC's "This Week."

Myers told "Fox News Sunday" that military investigators are reviewing the documentation "right away."

"We did come across some documentation in a raid out west here in just the last several hours that we're going to exploit." Myers cautioned that he didn't know what the documents said.

"We're just beginning to exploit it," he said. "But they thought it was important enough where they should exploit it right away. And we have teams ready to do that."

He added: "There is no doubt in my mind, from all the intelligence that we've seen, from what we've known that the regime has had before, that the Iraqi regime has chemical and biological weapons."

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Chicago Tribune
March 23, 2003

Hussein Always Feels Lucky, Experts Say

By Christine Spolar, Tribune foreign correspondent

TEL AVIV -- If Saddam Hussein survived the bone-shaking bomb that hit his bunker Thursday, he has had to hunker down to a deafening cascade of other explosives. He has also seen foreign troops barrel over his borders and his own soldiers wave white flags.

War has gone badly so far for Hussein, but two experts on the Iraqi dictator are betting that if he's alive, he's feeling lucky.

"He's a hopeless optimist. Somehow he always feels he will manage," said Amatzia Baram, a professor at Haifa University and an authority on Hussein. "Saddam started out as a peasant boy--no land, no stability, no nothing--and he rose to become the leader of one of the most powerful Arab countries.

"He feels lucky in life, and I would say, even now, he figures his luck hasn't run out yet."

Hussein has fascinated Israeli historian Baram and American analyst Jerrold Post for more than 20 years. Baram, as a young doctoral student, began studying Hussein in 1978, months before the Iraqi became president. Post, a psychiatrist, founded the Central Intelligence Agency's personality assessment center 20 years ago and focused on Hussein during the 1991 Persian Gulf war.

The two men have collaborated--most notably in a new book edited by Post, "The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders," which profiles Hussein. Both believe that in Iraq's latest drama, Hussein would rather fight than quit.

"Remember who you are dealing with. In the last war in 1991, after three days of massive air strikes, he tried to declare victory to his aides," Post said.

"More recently, I was struck by what he said to Dan Rather: To leave would be a dishonor to the Iraqi people, and an injustice to the Iraqi people. He sees himself in historic terms. ... He also sees himself as a survivor."

Neither Baram nor Post would describe Hussein as a madman. They argue that Hussein makes political calculations focused on how he, not the Iraqi people, will benefit.

These past few days are just part of the equation in a life studded with rational, if misguided, political calculations, they said. He is willing to hold out to see if world sympathies "turn his way," Baram said, adding, "It's very optimistic on his part, but it's not delusional."

Hussein's greatest miscalculations--the invasion of Kuwait and war with Iran--were not sparked by anger or rage, each man said. Rather, Hussein was inspired by "dreams of glory."

His political calculations are made with an eye toward a self-proclaimed destiny, Post said. Hussein sees himself as an heir to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, and Saladin, a conqueror of Jerusalem. As Post wrote in his psychological profile: "All actions are justified if they are in the service of furthering Saddam Hussein's needs and messianic ambitions."

"I have no doubt he'd use weapons of mass destruction when he's backed into a corner," Post said. "The question is now: Would his soldiers follow his orders?"

Baram believes that if Hussein watched news broadcasts of American and British troops crossing into Iraq, the dictator was calculating the odds of political survival.

Hussein is counting on the anti-war sentiment to save him, Baram said.

"Saddam's watching TV and he knows he needs to provide his own pictures of what is going on. He wants to suck the American troops into a battle and show civilian blood on their hands," Baram said.

"He needs the world to see Iraqi blood."

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Time

March 31, 2003

Chemical Ali: Saddam's Henchman

By Daniel Eisenberg

His nickname alone is enough to make many Iraqis shudder, which is not to mention the gruesome memories of how he came by it: overseeing the deadly gassing of thousands of Iraqi Kurds in 1988. So it's no wonder that when Ali Hassan al-Majid was put in charge of defending southern Iraq in the prelude to Gulf War II, some U.S. officials had much the same reaction. Who, after all, would be more qualified to launch a poisonous-gas attack on U.S. forces than the accused war criminal known as Chemical Ali?

In a regime built on terror, al-Majid, 62, has stood out as one of the most ruthless members of Saddam Hussein's inner circle. A cousin of Saddam's, he presided over the occupation of Kuwait before the first Gulf War, crushed the 1991 Shi'ite rebellion in the south and oversaw the execution of two Iraqi officers — who were also his nephews and Saddam's sons-in-law — after they defected to Jordan and returned to Iraq.

A squat, chain-smoking diabetic and former army driver, Chemical Ali has been outranked as a trusted deputy to Saddam only by the Iraqi leader's younger son Qusay. At Saddam's 65th-birthday celebration last year in his hometown of Tikrit, al-Majid stood in for the dictator who was fearful of an assassination attempt. As part of a last-ditch diplomatic effort to shore up support for Baghdad, alMajid made recent trips to Libya and Syria but reportedly spent part of the time handing out millions of dollars to build support for his having a leadership role in post-Saddam Iraq. Considering his atrocious record, it seems a sure waste of time and money.

Reported by Scott MacLeod/Cairo

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1101030331-435967,00.html>

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Moscow Times

March 24, 2003

Pg. 3

Ukraine Sends First Chemical Unit

By Associated Press

KIEV -- The first unit of a Ukrainian anti-chemical weapons force headed to Kuwait on Saturday to standby in case their help is necessary to neutralize the effects of any Iraqi attack.

A plane carrying 10 officers left from Sknyliv air base in western Ukraine, said Konstantyn Khivrenko, spokesman for the Defense Ministry. Officials said that more members of the 531-man volunteer unit are expected to arrive in Kuwait over the next few days.

President Leonid Kuchma has said the 19th Army Battalion would only be used for humanitarian work.

Kuchma offered to send the troops in a bid to repair relations with the United States, which nose-dived last year following U.S. claims that he approved the sale of radar systems to Iraq in 2000.

Ukraine's parliament approved the deployment Thursday but insisted that it should be seen as an effort to minimize the consequences of the fighting and not as support for U.S.-British action.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2003/03/24/016.html>

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New York Times

March 25, 2003

Officials Fear Iraqis Plan To Use Gas

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, March 24 — Senior administration officials said today that they believe that the Iraqi leadership may be holding its chemical weapons in reserve until American forces approach Baghdad, while other officials said intelligence suggests that Saddam Hussein may have authorized one of his key commanders to use those weapons against Shiite Muslims in the south of the country.

But so far, Iraq has used no chemical weapons, and American forces have found none. Suggestions on Sunday that a chemical plant in Najaf might be a weapons site have turned out to be false.

Nonetheless, Pentagon officials, noting that Iraqi prisoners of war captured in recent days carried gas masks with them, say they believe that the weapons may be intended for use when American forces are in close quarters — and at that time, they may blame the United States for unleashing them.

Earlier in the day, administration officials said they believe, based on intelligence reports received during the past month, that such an attack could be authorized in the south, though they have no evidence it is imminent. "There are such reports," Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said today, shortly after administration officials began telling reporters of the intelligence.

"I have no doubt that he would do such a thing if he thought it served his interest," Mr. Powell said today on Fox Television. "And so we are concerned about it."

Rumors of the reports have circulated for several weeks, and they may explain why, in the opening hours of the war, American Special Forces and Australian commandos flew into Iraq to seize command and control centers that American officials say are linked to chemical weapons sites.

The quality of the intelligence that Mr. Powell and other officials referred to today is unclear. When pressed, administration officials said that they had no evidence that any such attack was imminent. "The conclusion is that Chemical Ali may have the authority to launch such an attack — not that he has an operation planned," said one senior administration official, referring to Ali Hassan al-Majid, a top aide to Saddam Hussein, who is believed responsible for a mass killing of Kurds with chemical weapons in Halabja, Iraq, 15 years ago this month.

President Bush gave an extensive description of that attack in his radio address on Saturday. But he made no reference at that time to the authorization orders that Mr. Hussein allegedly issued.

That attack killed about 5,000 Kurds, according to American officials, mostly children and women who remained in the northern town.

But using chemical weapons against the Shiite population in the south, particularly when American forces are in the area, would be a major departure in strategy. If Mr. Hussein's forces executed such an attack, it would prove that he has the weapons that the United States has accused him of holding, and thus help justify the war.

That could explain, officials here say, why no chemical weapons have been used so far.

By making the allegation public, Mr. Powell and other officials seemed to be trying to defuse the possibility that such an attack would be carried out — or at least that it could be attributed to American troops. Mr. Powell said of Mr. Hussein, "He has to be careful here, because the world knows he's done it before, and were he to do it again, it would be immediate acknowledgment of the fact that he has weapons of mass destruction of the kind he has been swearing he does not have."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/25/international/worldspecial/25INTE.html>

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USA Today
March 25, 2003
Pg. 4

U.S. Under Pressure To Find Banned Weapons

By Bill Nichols, USA Today

WASHINGTON — U.S.-led forces in Iraq are under mounting pressure to find chemical or biological weapons, given that Saddam Hussein's alleged possession of doomsday weapons has been President Bush's key justification for war.

Six days into the war, though, no such weapons have been found by allied forces or used against them by the Iraqis. Media reports Sunday that U.S. forces had found an Iraqi chemical weapons facility turned out to be premature or incorrect. And though the situation could change at any moment, U.S. officials are lowering expectations that banned weapons will be found quickly.

"It's a bit early for us to have any expectation of having found them," war commander Gen. Tommy Franks told reporters Monday at U.S. Central Command in Qatar "We'll wait for the days ahead."

The Bush administration argued for months that Iraq had concealed extensive chemical and biological weapons programs in violation of U.N. sanctions, and that force would be necessary to disarm Saddam's regime. If coalition troops don't find evidence of such weapons, the administration risks being accused of waging war under false pretenses.

"It may turn out that the Iraqis have significantly less weapons of mass destruction than the Bush administration has claimed," said David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security and a former U.N. arms inspector. "It's certainly become a legitimate question now."

Administration officials and arms experts say there are plausible reasons why allied forces haven't found chemical or biological weapons, or why Saddam hasn't used them or banned missiles. Examples:

*The U.S.-led invasion may have crippled Iraq's ability to use weapons of mass destruction. The most accurate way to deliver biological or chemical munitions is to drop them from the air, but the Iraqi air force has been virtually grounded by allied air attacks.

*Any weapons of mass destruction Saddam might possess — or senior Iraqi officials with extensive knowledge of illicit weapons — would be kept near him in Baghdad, not in southern Iraq, where coalition forces have been. Experts suggest that Saddam would never entrust doomsday weapons to regular Army units, but only to Republican Guard forces near Baghdad.

"To find this stuff, you'll probably have to get people in the production network to take you to sites where it's well hidden," said Gary Milhollin, director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control. "To run into one of them in the middle of the desert is probably not going to be very likely."

*Saddam may believe that international opposition to the war will force an 11th-hour diplomatic effort to broker a cease-fire. But if he uses weapons of mass destruction that he has denied possessing, virtually all world support for Iraq will vanish.

Under that theory, Iraq would not use any chemical or biological weapons until all hope is lost. "If they use them, they'd have to admit they have them," said former arms inspector Jonathan Tucker, now a fellow at the U.S. Institute for Peace.

"If they do use them, it will be a last-ditch effort in which they throw the kitchen sink at advancing forces."

U.S. officials have long insisted Iraq never destroyed all the weapons it was known or suspected to have in the years after the 1991 war. During their six-month attempt to win United Nations backing for the war, for example, U.S. officials claimed Iraq has 1.5 tons of VX nerve gas, nearly 20,000 liters of anthrax and 30,000 artillery shells or rocket warheads that could carry chemical or biological agents.

Many of those claims were based on what U.N. inspectors believed Iraq possessed when inspections were halted in 1998.

Several media reports Sunday night claimed that soldiers from the Army's 3rd Infantry Division uncovered an Iraqi chemical installation near the town of Najaf. The *Jerusalem Post* reported that 70 Iraqi soldiers, led by a general, were guarding the facility and surrendered to U.S. forces.

Defense officials said the plant was suspicious and was being investigated, but they played down any prospect for the immediate discovery of chemical or biological weapons there.

"I can say it would not surprise me if there were chemicals in the plant, and it would not surprise me if there weren't," Franks said.

A senior U.S. intelligence official said that if anything illegal were discovered, the likeliest find would be precursor chemicals, which can be used to make chemical weapons but aren't deadly by themselves.

U.S. officials said they also are following up on documents found by commandos in western Iraq, and they said U.S. troops have been examining several "sites of interest."

Secretary of State Colin Powell told Fox News that the administration has received reports indicating Iraqi authorities plan to use chemical weapons against Shiite Muslims in southern Iraq and blame it on the United States.

"We are concerned about it," Powell said.

Experts say they also are perplexed as to why Saddam would not use the Scud missiles he is believed to possess, given that he has fired inferior missiles with a more limited range — primarily the Ababil-100 — at targets in Kuwait.

Contributing: John Diamond

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Los Angeles Times

March 25, 2003

Bioterrorism Attack Simulated In Radar Test

By Times Wire Reports

A crop-duster sprayed a harmless substance above a field to see if weather radar could detect a bioterrorist attack.

The mix of grain alcohol, clay dust and water and polyethylene glycol was chosen to produce a mist resembling the airborne particles that might be produced by a bioterrorism attack.

The Army chose Oklahoma because of its advanced weather radar system. The three-week test will help scientists determine how well radar can detect such materials.

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San Francisco Chronicle

March 24, 2003

Pg. 5

Hunting Down Tons Of Anthrax On A Remote Island

Last summer, a Pentagon team destroyed Soviet-era stockpile

By Christopher Pala, Chronicle Foreign Service

Almaty, Kazakstan --In one of the most remote spots on Earth, Brian Hayes led an expedition last summer to neutralize what was likely the world's largest anthrax dumping grounds.

Hayes is a biochemical engineer with the Pentagon's Threat Reduction Agency, which is charged with carrying out the hunt for unconventional weapons. He recalled how his team dug up, tested, killed and reburied between 100 and 200 tons of military-grade, antibiotic-resistant anthrax last May, June and July on Vozrozhdeniye Island in Central Asia's Aral Sea.

In the 1930s, Vozrozhdeniye, or "Renaissance," was the site of the most extensive biological weapons testing in history after Josef Stalin decided that he needed such weapons to load onto bombs. Anthrax, plague, smallpox and a half-dozen other diseases, in addition to vaccines against them, were tested on animals.

The island's 120-degree summer heat, dry climate and remoteness from population centers made it an ideal place to test deadly germs on monkeys, horses, guinea pigs, rabbits and donkeys.

First used in 1936, the island was abandoned by the Red Army after the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, becoming the property of the new nations of Kazakstan and Uzbekistan.

But because of its remote location, neither country sent military forces to occupy the uninhabited island and occasional visitors have been scavenging ever since 1996, taking anything from floorboards and sinks to pipes and electrical wiring.

The anthrax was hastily buried on the island in 1988 after Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev decided that the discovery of a stockpile of anthrax in eastern Siberia would be an embarrassment if Western countries ever found it. The West had suspected the Soviet Union was in violation of a 1972 treaty banning biological weapons ever since a 1979 accident at Sverdlovsk, 850 miles east of Moscow, released anthrax spores that killed some 70 people.

SOME 200 TONS BURIED

In utmost secrecy, the Soviets sent the spores by train to Aralsk, and then by ship to the Vozrozhdeniye Island, according to Kazak officials. Russia won't say exactly how much anthrax was moved, and Hayes says it is difficult to determine. But Western estimates vary between 100 and 200 tons buried at a depth of 5 feet to 8 feet.

"The purpose of the expedition was to prevent potential adversaries from acquiring biochemical materials that could pose a significant risk and danger to Uzbekistan and the United States," Hayes said.

Gennady Lepyoshkin, who ran a huge anthrax factory in northern Kazakstan under the Soviet Union and spent 18 summers on the island, disputed the risk.

"It's much easier to get anthrax spores from laboratories than from the island," he said "It's very remote and not many people know where the anthrax was buried."

Lepyoshkin noted that the anthrax used in the 2001 attacks on lawmakers in the United States was developed by the U.S. Army.

The island's remoteness was very much on Hayes' mind when he and a handful of Americans assembled in Nukus, Uzbekistan, last year for one of the most challenging expeditions in the history of biological weapons.

With a team of 113, Hayes flew to Moynak, once a prosperous fishing port on the Aral Sea and now a dying town 50 miles from the sea's coastline, in a single-engine An-2 biplane, the workhorse of the former Soviet hinterlands. The operation cost about \$5 million.

Three helicopters carried their equipment to Kantubek, Vozrozhdeniye Island's only town, built for the 2,000 people who staffed the top-secret testing ground. Today, Kantubek lies in ruins.

Once Hayes and his team got to work, they discovered the Soviets had apparently mixed the anthrax with calcium hydrochloride in what he called "a smaller version of the 55-gallon drum" before emptying the mixture into 11 pits, taking nearly all of the drums back with them.

"We did some testing and when we found that some spores were alive, we didn't go any further," he said. "We just went on the assumption that all the earth in the sample area contained live spores."

TESTING FOR LIVE ANTHRAX

The team used high-tech laboratory equipment to test more than 1,000 samples for live anthrax spores. Hayes also bought a cement mixer to mix the contaminated earth with calcium hydrochloride, which kills anthrax spores. But when the machine proved too heavy for an Mi-8 helicopter to lift, it was disassembled. Once on the island, his team couldn't put it back together.

So Hayes devised an alternative way to kill the anthrax: he used backhoes to dig trenches and then threw the contaminated earth into pits lined with thick plastic filled with calcium hydrochloride. The earth was then submerged for six days before being covered up again after tests revealed no living spores.

Near an old laboratory complex overgrown with weeds, lays a lone unmarked grave of a woman who died several decades ago of an infection from handling germs.

"I used to drive up there every day and say a prayer for her," said Hayes. "And when I left, I thought that all the people who used to work there have gone home, and now we were going home, but she was going to stay there forever.

I never even knew her name."

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/03/24/MN148620.DTL>

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Washington Times

March 26, 2003

Pg. 3

Switch To Radiation, Nuke Monitors 'Dangerously Slow'

By Audrey Hudson, The Washington Times

The Bush administration's deployment of technology to detect nuclear and radiological materials and weapons smuggled into the country is "dangerously slow," key lawmakers said yesterday.

The government began installing radiation portal monitors along the borders and at ports in November, but, by the U.S. Customs Service's own assessment, only 5 percent of border entry points will be operational by the end of March.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers wrote a letter to their colleagues and administration officials, including Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, calling the security measure a "fledgling effort."

"Given the war in Iraq and heightened risk of terrorist attack in the United States, existing gaps in our system to detect radiological and nuclear materials moving across our ports and borders require particularly urgent attention," the letter said.

It was signed by Reps. Billy Tauzin, Louisiana Republican and chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and John D. Dingell, Michigan Democrat and the panel's ranking member. Also signing the letter were Reps. James C. Greenwood, Pennsylvania Republican, and Peter Deutch, Florida Democrat and chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee on oversight and investigations.

A spokesman for the Homeland Security Department declined to comment.

House committee staffers conducted an 18-month investigation to assess the threat of nuclear terrorism. They visited three foreign countries and toured two dozen ports of entry into the United States.

While the initial strategy to uncover nuclear threats was found to be "well-conceived," investigators reported an "inability to detect radiological or nuclear weapons imported into the United States."

The majority of ports rely on personal radiation pagers, devices small enough to wear on belts to signal when gamma radiation exceeds natural background levels.

However, the General Accounting Office has told the committee that the pagers have "limited range and are not designed to detect weapons-usable nuclear material."

Vehicles are directed to drive through the radiation portal monitors. The lawmakers said such monitors are needed immediately for the borders, and they urged Mr. Ridge to ask Congress for emergency funding.

Asa Hutchinson, Homeland Security undersecretary, told Congress last week that the administration wanted to spend \$60 million to purchase the radiation-detecting portals in the next fiscal year.

The cost to outfit all major points of entry is estimated as high as \$500 million.

The Republicans and Democrats suggested the administration ask for half of the total funds in the emergency supplemental spending bill.

"Lack of adequate funding threatens to stymie the current efforts to secure our nation against nuclear terrorism," the letter said. "There is no doubt the risks are real. It has been widely reported that the CIA believes that nuclear terrorism is the number-one threat facing our country today."

The lawmakers noted progress with the continued installment of the portals but said "more needs to be done."

The Port of Norfolk, operated by the Virginia Port Authority, was the first to install the monitors last fall. A total of nine radiation portal monitors will be installed through the \$1 million private-sector initiative.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030326-28688410.htm>

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Wall Street Journal

March 26, 2003

Government Seeks Volunteers For Trials Of Anthrax Vaccine

By Greg Bluestein, Staff Reporter Of The Wall Street Journal

Worried about another round of anthrax letters if terrorists strike again?

The more than 200,000 troops in the Persian Gulf don't need to worry about getting a vaccine to fend off the deadly bacteria. They and other high-risk people, from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials to some veterinarians, can receive injections administered in an six-shot sequence over a year and a half, plus regular boosters.

But there is an option for the rest of us. In a government-sponsored clinical trial, five major hospitals around the country are recruiting civilian volunteers for a test of the vaccine. The goal is to figure out how many shots are required, and where they should be administered in the arm, in order for the vaccine to be more effective.

Yet curiously, even as the war against Iraq heightens the threat of a biological attack, recruiters are struggling to find enough volunteers to roll up their sleeves. "I'll be honest with you. I thought after putting our ads out, we'd be swarmed," says Col. Janiine Babcock, a lead investigator at the Army's Walter Reed Institute of Research in Silver Spring, Md. Her hospital, along with Emory University, the University of Alabama-Birmingham, the Mayo Clinic and Baylor College of Medicine, is rounding up a total of 1,560 volunteers for the 43-month study.

Researchers are looking for people age 18 to 61 years old, in good health. Volunteers must be willing to receive six injections of the vaccine over a period of 18 months, followed by two years of clinical visits and booster shots.

Depending on which clinic administers the shots, participants can be paid up to \$2,000.

Some are volunteering for the money, while others hope to get protection from the potentially deadly disease. Others are doing it as a show of patriotism.

"The men and women over there are doing a lot for us and it seemed to be a minimal thing that we could help them with," says Kay Vydareny, who is participating in the trial. Her son is in the U.S. Army in the Persian Gulf region. Without vaccination or powerful antibiotics, anthrax can be fatal after entering the body's respiratory system, infecting lymph tissues in the chest with toxins that attack cells. But the only way for the general public to get protection is to take part in the clinical trial.

Saltwater Placebo

One possible deterrent to signing up: Participants aren't guaranteed that they'll get protection from the deadly bacteria. One-sixth of them will be given a saltwater placebo, while others will be given different doses to determine if fewer than eight injections are adequate. Some shots will be given in muscle as opposed to under the skin to see if the typical side effects of redness or irritation are lessened.

So who would be willing to weather multiple injections, keep a diary, have blood regularly drawn, meet with doctors for 26 study visits, and possibly suffer from side effects like soreness, itching, redness and swelling, among others? While the health risks for volunteers are minimal, the final decision may boil down to how concerned you are of an anthrax attack. Says 47-year-old Angel Candelario, minutes after his third injection, "You have no idea what a good feeling I have. It gives me a little relief, a lot of confidence, that something's in my body, just in case. Even if I just got the placebo."

Scientists insist the risks are minimal. Among the side effects: pain, swelling and, less frequently, headaches and more severe reactions. Brad Perkins, CDC's principal investigator of the anthrax trial, says these possibilities are "very much in line" with other vaccines routinely given to adults. Col. Babcock says trial volunteers have suffered no serious reactions so far.

The anthrax vaccine test actually predates the fatal anthrax mailings of the fall of 2001, just after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. In 1999, Congress provided \$20 million for the CDC to oversee trials designed to improve the existing vaccine, AVA, which the Food and Drug Administration approved 33 years ago.

Research on AVA gained momentum after the deadly 2001 attacks, for which no suspect has been implicated. That string of mailings killed five people from Florida to New England, sickened more than a dozen others, and panicked Americans nationwide. While anthrax spores don't spread easily through air -- health officials worry more about contagious viruses such as smallpox -- government officials do fear that terrorists are stockpiling the bacteria. Since 1998, more than 800,000 soldiers have received the vaccinations, as have other at-risk Americans. After the 2001 mailings, 10,000 congressional staffers and mailroom workers were offered the vaccine, but fewer than 100 chose to receive them -- a harbinger, perhaps, of the dearth of volunteers for the current study.

Yet for 23-year-old Sami Hamed, whose daily duties include opening mail for Rep. Raul Grijalva, a Texas Democrat, joining the trial made sense. "It didn't bug me too much, but with all these news stories of anthrax here and there, you can never be too safe," he says.

Looking for More

Col. Babcock expects to reach full capacity at her clinic in two months; nationwide, researchers still hope to sign up 400 more participants by July. But it has been tough going finding enough volunteers lately. Plastering a few bulletin boards with ads is usually enough for most studies, she says, but she has already spent \$75,000 -- more than double the allotted budget -- for ads in places such as the Washington Post and Roll Call, a periodical read by congressional staffers and lobbyists on Capitol Hill.

For now, the AVA vaccine is the only option. The biotech company Human Genome Sciences Inc. says it has developed a potentially more effective drug called ABthrax that could protect against and treat exposure to anthrax, but it is still in development.

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USA Today
March 27, 2003
Pg. 15

Will Saddam Use All His Weapons?

The Bush administration premised its case for pre-emptively attacking Iraq on its claim that dictator Saddam Hussein possesses weapons of mass destruction. Will Saddam deploy them as U.S. troops close in on Baghdad? Probably not, says Khidhir Hamza, who was the head of Saddam's nuclear-weapons program before defecting to the USA in 1994. He was interviewed this week by USA TODAY Forum Page Editor Glen Nishimura. His comments were edited for length and clarity:

Question: Why haven't U.S. troops found any chemical or biological weapons yet?

Answer: They have not yet reached near Baghdad. The depots are hidden where Saddam's most trusted troops - the SSO and the Republican Guard - can control them. Saddam has probably moved everything north, in the Baghdad vicinity and Tikrit. But we won't know until U.S. troops get to Baghdad.

Q: What is the SSO?

A: The Special Security Organization has three main purposes: to guard Saddam and his immediate family and the senior Iraqi officials and hierarchy; to be present in the various army units to ensure that commands given by Saddam are carried out; and, most importantly, to actually possess the weapons of mass destruction. It doesn't have deployment capability; the armed forces do. But the weapons cannot be deployed until the SSO gives the armed forces the weapons as well as the exact target on which to use them and when.

Q: How soon could Iraq use chemical weapons?

A: Saddam cannot use weapons of mass destruction this early in the game. It would show that the U.S. has been telling the truth all along and force Saddam's friends to abandon him. Saddam will use them only as a last resort.

Q: You were in Iraq during the 1991 war. What were the plans then for such weapons?

A: Last time, they tried to put the weapons of mass destruction in the way of advancing U.S. forces, on the theory that if they came nearer to Baghdad, this would impede them. There was no plan of a direct hit on U.S. forces. They were just going to blow the weapons up during the U.S. advance and accuse the U.S. Air Force of blowing them up. They were not going to put them in warheads and shoot them at U.S. troops because if they did that, then they knew the end of the regime would be certain.

Q: Could they use the same strategy this time?

A: I don't think that would work. The whole situation now is different.

Q: How so?

A: In 1991, it was not clear that the Saddam regime was going to end. The goal was getting Saddam out of Kuwait. The war this time is about weapons of mass destruction and disarmament. So if he shows his hand now, this early, he will lose all international support, and any measure the U.S. would then take would be justified. That would make the results much harsher for Saddam and his immediate family. So I expect that he'll just hold these cards and not use them.

Q: If U.S. troops were about to overrun Baghdad, would Saddam then use these weapons?

A: My expectation is that he will not. He would want to bargain them for his life and those of his family members. Not even a dictator like Saddam can just kill everyone. Even if he gives such an order, it will not be carried out. Instead, he will try to get international sympathy on his side, get his old allies such as France and Russia with him as long as possible. If there is any use of these weapons, they'll drop him. The U.S. would come back with a ferocious response; Iraq's leadership is terrified of what that response could be.

Q: Is it possible that the U.S. will not find all of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction?

A: I doubt that. Too many people know where they are. At a minimum, the scientists who worked on them and the production-factory people who worked on them will talk; the U.S. will get evidence from them. These witnesses will tell how they were produced and where they were hidden.

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New York Times
March 27, 2003

U.S. Hunts For Bio-Agents And Gas At An Iraq Depot

By Judith Miller

WITH THE 75TH EXPLOITATION TASK FORCE, northern Kuwait, March 26 — American military officials have found no traces of chemical or biological agents at a sprawling Iraqi ammunition storage facility south of Baghdad, weapons experts and military officers said today.

But officials said the site at Najaf, about 90 miles south of the Iraqi capital, remained suspicious because there were several indications that chemical or germ weapons might have been made or stored there.

Of greatest interest to intelligence officials is information being provided by an Iraqi general who was a senior official there and who surrendered to American forces when they entered the complex about four days ago. Officials said the general, who claims not to have had any involvement in Iraq's chemical warfare program, told military intelligence analysts that there were special bunkers and underground tunnels in the compound that neither he nor other senior staff were permitted to enter.

In addition, a site survey team found a biological hazard sign on a wooden pallet with a crate in bunker No. 36, and markings on other crates in bunker No. 37 indicating "CN-1," which is sometimes used to identify riot control agents. They also found wax on the surface of an artillery shell, a substance used at times in shells containing chemical agents. The soldiers and experts also found 40 Soviet-style gas masks with extra filters.

Hydraulic triple-locked doors barred the entrance to some of the more than 100 bunkers in the three-square-mile complex, much of which is protected by an electrical fence and trenches.

Weapons experts said they had reached no conclusions about whether chemical or germ warfare agents or weapons were stored at the facility. "Methodically exploring a site of this size and complexity shows how painstaking and slow a meticulous survey can be," said an officer with the 75th Exploitation Task Force, a group of weapons specialists, intelligence officers, Special Forces and other experts commanded and supported by part of an Army artillery brigade based in Fort Sill, Okla.

The team's work was further delayed when American intelligence officers transferred the Iraqi general, two colonels and two majors to an undisclosed location for questioning. That decision meant that the team of experts sent to follow up on initial reports of suspected chemical or biological weapons were unable to question the Iraqi officers in person, or to have the general show the team where the off-limits parts of the facility were located.

"We have never conducted a systematic hunt for weapons of mass destruction in a combat situation on such a large scale," said one weapons expert who has studied the reports filed by the site survey team working at Najaf. "We're still feeling our way."

The site was on a list of suspected facilities compiled by weapons experts and other government officials who are hunting for weapons of mass destruction. But it was not initially visited by either the small teams of Pentagon experts who are charged with surveying suspected sites, or by those responsible for studying such facilities in greater detail.

Instead, it was entered by forces of the Army's Third Infantry Division as they pushed north toward Baghdad. Reports from the field said that some 300 Iraqis were taken prisoner at the site, and that about 30 Iraqi troops, including the general and four other senior officers, surrendered to the Americans.

The Jerusalem Post, which has a reporter with the Army forces that initially entered the site, reported at the time that an American soldier was slightly wounded by an explosive that detonated as he was trying to clear part of the facility.

On Sunday, Lt. Gen. John Abizaid of the Army confirmed that an Iraqi general and two other officers were being held and were providing information. But he added that it was too early to say whether American forces had found chemical or biological agent at the site. "Suffice it to say," he added, "that so far we haven't found any conclusive evidence."

The small teams of weapons hunters consist mainly of representatives from several different government agencies, and include explosives experts, intelligence analysts, Special Forces operatives, scientists, laboratory technicians and former nuclear and other unconventional weapons inspectors.

British planners and experts are also working with the American teams and officers of the 75th XTF, as the task force is known. For this mission, they are employing a wide range of sophisticated new technology, some of which is being tested in the field on a large scale for the first time. They agreed to discuss this and other weapons sites only if they were not identified by name.

Their equipment includes highly sensitive detectors and two transportable laboratories that can test for the presence of chemical and biological agents, identify their composition or strain and conduct DNA fingerprinting.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/27/international/worldspecial/27INSP.html>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

March 27, 2003

Scientists Follow Soldiers, Testing Chemical Sites

High-tech devices could help to determine the presence of anthrax or other such dangers in Iraq.

By Faye Flam, Inquirer Staff Writer

In the Iraqi desert, teams of U.S. scientists are right behind the troops, looking for evidence of chemical or biological weapons.

Their findings may prove critical not only to the survival of the troops but also to the Bush administration's justification for the war. The President said war was necessary to eradicate the threat to world security posed by weapons of mass destruction.

On Sunday, news accounts said evidence of such weapons may have been found at a chemical factory in Najaf.

Now, though, officials are backing away from such claims.

"That was an overexaggeration," said Lt. Cmdr. James Brooks, a spokesman for the Defense Intelligence Agency.

"It's a suspect site - a chemical fertilizer plant which could be a dual-use facility," he said.

Figuring out what was actually going on at the camouflaged and fenced complex will take more detailed analysis.

That's a task for several military Mobile Exploitation Teams.

One of these, the Chemical Biological Intelligence Support Team, associated with the Defense Intelligence Agency, is traveling the desert in humvees with analytical tools.

Though Brooks would not elaborate on the equipment the teams use, the state-of-the-art machine for finding chemical weapons would be a gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer.

"That's a highly accurate means of analyzing chemical agents," said Jonathan Tucker, a former U.N. weapons inspector working at the Institute for Peace in Washington.

Such a device can take a small sample of material, separate it into the different component molecules, and create a unique fingerprint for each one. A computer can compare those fingerprints with those of all known chemical-warfare agents, he said.

Such an analysis is extremely accurate if it is used directly on a suspected agent. It might work on a soil sample near an alleged chemical-weapons factory but can give ambiguous results.

In Iraq, troops will also be doing some analytical chemistry but with smaller, lighter devices, said Ivan Oelrich, a physicist and research fellow at the Federation of American Scientists. He said they would probably be using an ion mobility spectrometer - a battery-powered detector about the size of a portable radio. It uses a small air pump to take in air. The air flows over an electric field that roughly measures the mass of different impurities. The devices can be set to sound an alarm if the masses match known chemical agents.

If the Iraqis use something completely unknown, Oelrich said, the device would not work.

Other portable devices test a substance on a sheet of paper that changes color when exposed to certain chemicals, he said.

Germ weapons are much harder to detect in the field.

"If you see spores, how do you tell the difference between that and dust or pollen?" he said. There are some devices that rely on the fact that a component of anthrax fluoresces under ultraviolet light.

Smart tickets

For analyzing a factory such as at Najaf, scientists can use handheld devices called smart tickets, said Calvin Chue, a biochemist at the Center for Civilian Biodefense at Johns Hopkins University.

These small devices can determine whether anthrax is present in a factory by analyzing material on a swab.

The technique uses an antibody - a protein that clings to anthrax or some other designated agent. The antibodies are connected to a tracer that turns red when it finds the target.

For a more thorough analysis, specialists in the field would need to analyze the DNA of suspect organisms with a technique called PCR, for polymerase chain reaction, Chue said.

PCR, which makes multiple copies of the DNA found in a sample, helped catch Iraq in a lie about an anthrax factory found by U.N. weapons inspectors in the mid-1990s. The Iraqis said they were making vaccines, which would require the use of pathogens, including a disabled form of anthrax. But such a disabled virus would have been missing one of several genes necessary for the anthrax bacteria to create a deadly toxin. Chue was sent a sample, and PCR testing revealed the anthrax had all the genes necessary to kill.

Iraq was forced to destroy the facility, called Al Hakam.

'Easy to switch'

In this and other instances, Iraq has produced chemical and biological weapons in dual-use plants that can also create vaccines, drugs, pesticides, and other legitimate products.

"It's easy to switch from making BT [a pesticide] to making anthrax," Tucker said.

Inspectors have looked for special storage equipment used for highly toxic substances, as well as protective suits and gas masks.

On Tuesday, Marines took over a hospital near Nasiriyah. The hospital was reportedly being used by Iraqi troops, who had stored 3,000 chemical-protection suits as well as a supply of atropine, a nerve-gas antidote.

"That is troubling," Tucker said. "If Iraq is going to use these offensively, they need to protect their own troops from blow back."

To truly justify a war, Tucker said, coalition forces need to find significant amounts of these agents.

"They would have to find a militarily significant capability," he said. "Kilograms of dried anthrax or tons of a chemical agent."

To convince the world community, he said, the United States may have to get a second opinion from an objective laboratory in Finland or Switzerland.

Fellow inspector Terry Taylor, now at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, said the Iraqis may have learned from mistakes and found ways to better conceal their arsenal.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/5490157.htm>

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New York Times

March 28, 2003

Army Reports Iraq Is Moving Toxic Arms To Its Troops

By Bernard Weinraub

WITH V CORPS HEADQUARTERS, near the Kuwait border, March 27 — Statements from Iraqi prisoners of war and electronic eavesdropping on Iraqi government communications indicate that Saddam Hussein has moved chemical weapons to the Medina Division, one of three Republican Guard divisions guarding the approaches to Baghdad, Army officials said.

The Army officials said they strongly believed that Mr. Hussein would use the weapons as allied troops moved toward Baghdad to oust him and his government.

Officials with V Corps said intelligence information pointed to Mr. Hussein deploying 155-millimeter artillery weapons with shells carrying mustard gas as well as sarin, or nerve agents, an especially deadly weapon. Mr. Hussein used these chemical agents against the Iranians and the country's Kurdish population in the 1980's.

Army officials said monitoring the movement of chemical weapons was sometimes difficult because Mr. Hussein often hid chemical pellets inside bunkers that carried conventional armaments.

But some military officers said Mr. Hussein had, in the last week or so, moved the artillery pieces that could fire chemical weapons into hiding, not only near the Medina Division, south of Baghdad, but in western Iraq. Officials said Iraqi officers had been warned by the United States, through leaflets and other means, that they would be held responsible for war crimes if they participated in a chemical attack.

Intelligence officers said the apparent deployment of chemical weapons by Mr. Hussein was not merely a sign of rage by the Iraqi leader toward the Americans. Although deployment of the weapons would give the lie to Mr. Hussein's denial that he had them, officers said that Mr. Hussein might be calculating that the step would actually turn to his advantage, and stunt the American assault.

Military officials said that, in the event of a chemical attack, American forces might receive an early warning if satellite photos picked up Iraqi units wearing protective gear against chemicals at a weapons site. Officials said the

protective clothing was usually worn at least one hour before the launching of a chemical weapon. But officials also said that well-hidden Iraqi artillery sites about to launch such a weapon could possibly avoid detection. Since the war started, American soldiers in Iraq and Kuwait have been threatened by Iraqi missiles, but any missiles that may have been launched have so far been intercepted and destroyed by Patriot missiles. No chemical weapons have been used against allied troops to date.

Col. Tim Madere, the V Corps chemical officer, said he was not alarmed about the potential for a chemical attack. "The soldiers have gone through training and know what to do and know how their equipment works in the event we get hit," he said. "But it's a concern because most soldiers have not experienced real agents."

Colonel Madere said such an attack would slow down the advance on Baghdad, but not seriously set back the effort to depose Mr. Hussein.

There are reports that Iraqi forces killed or injured more than 20,000 people in attacks against Kurds and other Iraqis in the 1980's that involved nerve and mustard agents.

Mustard gas is a blister agent that causes medical casualties by burning or blistering exposed skin, eyes and lungs. It can remain a serious hazard for days and, if inhaled, may lead to death.

Nerve agents such as sarin, cyclosarin and tabun act within seconds of absorption through skin or inhalation.

Untreated, the agents cause convulsions, loss of consciousness and death.

The United States military in Kuwait and Iraq not only carry protective gas masks and protective clothes, boots and gloves, but also antidote kits for nerve agents. These include atropine as well as pralidoxime, which must be injected quickly after exposure to the gas.

In a report last year, the Central Intelligence Agency said that Iraq had not accounted for 15,000 artillery rockets. In the past, these rockets were the preferred means for delivering nerve agents. Iraq has also not accounted for about 550 artillery shells filled with mustard agent.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/28/international/worldspecial/28CHEM.html>

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution

March 27, 2003

Iraqis Most At Risk In Chemical Attack

By Elliot Jaspin, Cox Washington Bureau

Washington -- Thousands of civilians could be killed and tens of thousands injured if Iraq launches a chemical attack during the next 48 hours against U.S. troops just south of Baghdad, according to a Pentagon computer model. But U.S. officials say they doubt that such an attack would cause many casualties among coalition forces.

The estimate of civilian casualties is based on a computer model called the Hazard Prediction and Assessment Capability (HPAC) developed for the Pentagon in the 1990s.

The software is designed to tell military commanders what would happen in an attack using chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons. Among other aspects, it estimates damage to buildings and predicts casualties. It also produces maps showing how areas would be affected.

The model of an Iraqi chemical attack was developed by Dexter Ingram, a threat-assessment specialist working for the Heritage Foundation, a Washington research center.

Ingram, a former Navy pilot, was trained by the Pentagon to use the HPAC software. Although he is now a civilian, the military allows him to continue to use the software, which runs in part on the Pentagon's computers.

After the Gulf War, Iraq acknowledged it had produced 750 tons of the chemicals used to make VX nerve gas.

Although the Iraqi government says it possesses no weapons of mass destruction, United Nations inspectors say they have been able to confirm the destruction of only 170 tons of the chemicals.

The effects of a chemical attack on civilian residents would depend on the type and concentration of chemical weapons used and weather conditions at the time of an attack.

Weather reports for the Baghdad area for the next 48 hours say that, after this week's intense sandstorm, the wind will moderate to between 7 and 11 mph and shift from the southwest to the northwest.

By this morning, the wind was predicted to be blowing down the Tigris River valley southeast of the Iraqi capital and would continue in that direction through Friday.

Ingram said Wednesday the worst-case scenario would be an Iraqi attack on coalition forces 10 miles south of Baghdad using 75 artillery rounds loaded with VX. VX has the consistency of motor oil and is lethal for up to three weeks. A drop on the skin can kill a person.

The HPAC model says that under currently predicted weather conditions, as many as 2,200 unprotected civilians living along the river would be killed and 33,000 injured in a VX attack.

In a similar scenario in which Iraq uses 75 artillery shells containing sarin, about 360 people would be killed and 38,800 injured.

"A biological or chemical attack would have little effect on U.S. troops," Ingram said, "but would pose a lethal threat to Iraqi civilians, and possibly even the Iraqi infantry, who are less prepared."

U.S. forces are equipped with gas masks, chemical-weapons suits and vehicles designed to filter outside air.

"Where chemical weapons are effective is when people are unprotected," said Mickey Morales, a spokesman for the Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

Morales said U.S. troops have the best equipment in the world to protect against such attacks. "For our soldiers, once they have the gear on, they just move on," he said.

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Time.com

March 27, 2003

Iraq's WMD: How Big A Threat?

A U.N. inspector assesses the danger posed by Baghdad's biological and chemical weapons and ponders where they may be hidden

By Stewart Stogel, The United Nations

"U.S. troops in Iraq will not find any facilities with weapons of mass destruction (WMD). I am sure of that," says a former chemical and biological weapons expert of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) who remains close to and intimately informed about the recent U.N. arms inspection effort in Iraq. The expert (who requested anonymity) says that Baghdad "most likely" has shut down any WMD operations. He added that any munitions it may still possess "are most likely now in the field and being moved around the country."

"They (the weapons) could be in railroad cars, barges or refrigerator trucks. They are being kept on the move," explained the former arms inspector. The arms expert says by keeping the weapons on the move, they make an attack by coalition forces more difficult. Furthermore, he explained they could be shifted around the country as "conditions warrant."

The Pentagon has repeatedly complained to the U.N. about suspected bio agents being shuffled around Iraq in "refrigerator vans." Chief U.N. arms inspector Dr. Hans Blix told the Security Council in February that his teams "had been unable to track down the refrigerator vans in question."

The U.N. inspector says that the Pentagon must be careful not to fall into an Iraqi trap. He suspects that the movement of substantial numbers of Iraqi Republican Guard units southwards from Baghdad to confront advancing U.S. forces may be an attempt to create a battlefield situation favorable to the use of weapons of mass destruction.

"If Iraq still has chemical weapons it wants to use," he says, "it would want to cause as much damage as possible in one short attack. Therefore, the U.S. needs to be careful not to amass large numbers of troops in any central location." The most likely attack, he says, would come from more than "800 unaccounted for 155mm artillery shells which may contain mustard gas."

However, says the U.N. inspector, "the Iraqis have problems delivering their WMD in a militarily effective manner." He reveals that more than 70% of Baghdad's declared and suspected WMD were in "aerial" form—meaning they were designed to be delivered by aircraft. Since Operation Desert Storm, the Iraqi Air Force has almost ceased to exist. The U.N. inspector also added that any biological weapons that Iraq might still possess would "not cause much of a problem for the U.S. forces." He explained that the Pentagon is familiar with most or all of Baghdad's suspected bio weapons and has procedures to protect its soldiers against such an attack.

He added that Iraq's exotic weapons programs also involved the use of psycho-tropic agents similar to LSD. "They were not meant to kill, just incapacitate, confuse," says the inspector. This had been designed, he says, as a means to fight off rag-tag Iranian forces in the late 1980's during the long war between Baghdad and Tehran. The other WMD weapons Iraq may still have were initially designed to "fight off Iranian human wave attacks, they really weren't meant against a force like the U.S. military."

He adds that biological weapons in this war at this time are of little use. Iraq's suspected bio-weapons (anthrax, botulism) take days to weaken the human body and would do little to blunt a fast moving force. He also says coalition troops have biological and chemical weapons detectors and decontamination units in the field, making it tough for bio-weapons to be much of a factor.

“My guess is that the probability of a WMD attack is small,” says the UN official. “Right now, Saddam has 80% of the world supporting him. If he used WMD, that support would dissolve. So, he has no incentive. Even if he did, it would not cause enough damage to change anything. About the only thing he may accomplish is to scare you reporters.”

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,437398,00.html>

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution

March 27, 2003

U.S. Military Well-Prepared For Chemicals

Protective gear ready in event Iraq uses agents

By Charles Seabrook, Staff

An American general said Wednesday the discovery of 3,000 chemical suits in a hospital in central Iraq heightened fears that Saddam Hussein's regime was ready to use chemical weapons on the battlefield.

The hospital near Nasiriyah had been used as a military staging area for Iraqi paramilitary forces, said Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks. U.S. officials also reported that Marines found gas masks and nerve gas antidote in the hospital.

"What we found at the hospital reinforces our concern," Brooks said.

U.S. and British officials have steadfastly maintained that Iraq has stocks of deadly chemical weapons. Iraq says it destroyed its stockpiles after the 1991 Gulf War, but weapons inspectors were never able to verify those claims.

The agents that Iraq is suspected of stockpiling include:

*Sarin, probably the most feared chemical agent, because terrorists have used it before. The Aum Shinrikyo group released sarin gas in the Tokyo subway in 1995, killing 12 people and injuring thousands. A few inhaled drops can be lethal. Sarin is a nerve agent that disrupts nerve cell communication.

*Cyclosarin, closely related to sarin. It is not as toxic as sarin when inhaled, but is more toxic when absorbed through the skin.

*VX, which is similar to sarin but even more toxic. As little as one drop on the skin can kill a person.

*Mustard gas, which has been around since World War I. It blisters the skin and corrodes lung tissue. About 10 small drops in the lungs will kill a person.

*Lewisite, also a blistering agent. It also has been around since World War I.

Of those agents, the ones Iraq most likely would use are mustard gas and sarin, said Jeff Taliaferro, a political science professor at Tufts University in Massachusetts. Iraq used those agents in its war with Iran in the 1980s and to quash the Kurdish uprising in northern Iraq in 1988.

Against U.S. troops, Iraqi forces could deliver chemical weapons with artillery shells and missiles. It also could drop bombs from planes or use airborne spray machines, although the coalition's dominance of Iraq's skies makes that less likely. Each delivery system, however, probably would have limited effectiveness, military experts said.

Brooks said Wednesday that coalition troops "are well-prepared to deal with the potential use of chemical weapons." American tanks and armored vehicles have filters designed to keep the troops inside safe from the deadly agents.

Anticipating the possibility of chemical combat, U.S. troops have trained extensively on operating in a contaminated environment. They have chemical protection gear and equipment that can detect chemical agents up to three miles away. The detectors are designed to avoid the false alarms that plagued U.S. troops in the Gulf War 12 years ago.

Each member of U.S. military units deployed to the Gulf region gets at least two new suits; Marines get three. The two-piece suits, similar to light ski outfits, are lighter and more durable than those available in the Gulf War. They also are lined with charcoal to neutralize the toxic agents.

The gas masks seal tighter to the face and have a straw-like device that enables the wearer to draw water from a canteen without exposing the skin.

The suits, once removed from their vacuum seal packs, are worn over a soldier's combat uniform. Boot covers and gloves complete the outfit.

"This equipment does a good job of protecting a soldier," said Robb Pilkington, an instructor with the University of Missouri's Fire and Rescue Training Institute. "It is important that it be durable, because you can't afford to have it rip or tear."

The suits can be worn for more than a month, but once they are exposed to a chemical or biological agent, they must be discarded within 24 hours.

Pilkington, a commander in the Naval Reserves, said the biggest drawback is that the suits can become very uncomfortable, especially in hot weather. That could be a serious problem if the troops are still fighting in Iraq in the summer, when daily temperatures can soar above 100 degrees

"It would be important to make sure that everyone takes in enough liquids," Pilkington said.

Aside from the United States' level of preparedness against chemical attack, Iraq would face several obstacles in launching an attack. Weather would be a major factor. Heat, humidity and other conditions would affect the lethality and dispersal of chemical agents.

"Obviously, you wouldn't deploy chemical weapons during a sandstorm," said Tim St. John, a Georgia Tech earth and atmospheric sciences professor.

--- *The Associated Press contributed to this article.*

GUARDING AGAINST BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL ATTACKS

U.S. forces involved in the war against Iraq may be the best-trained and best-equipped troops in the world to face a chemical or biological attack.

The centerpiece of a soldier's protective equipment is a specially designed suit developed for use by all branches of the military. The protective suit consists of a two-piece overgarment, gloves, overshoes and a mask. It utilizes carbon technology to protect the body, hands, feet and face from chemical vapors, aerosols and droplets and from all known biological agents.

FEATURES

Fabric: Outside layer is treated cotton

Protection period: 24 hours

Durability: 30 days of continuous wear

Weight: 4.7-pound overgarment / 9.6 pounds with overgarment, boots, gloves and mask

Maximum effective temperature: 120 degrees

Washable: Up to three times

Reusable after contamination: No

Worn: Over a soldier's battle uniform or over underwear

Replacement cost: \$184

*Sources: Defense Department Chemical and Biological Defense Program, U.S. Marine Corps
Research by Wayne Snow, Staff; Vernon Carne, Staff*

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Pacific Stars and Stripes

March 28, 2003

U.S., S. Korea Prepare For Chemical Warfare

By Franklin Fisher, Stars and Stripes

TAEGU, South Korea — Ask one platoon sergeant in a U.S. Army chemical unit in South Korea how his troops benefit by training with their South Korean counterparts and he starts by talking about blind dates.

"You ever been on a blind date?" asked Sgt. 1st Class Walter Koski of 2nd Platoon, 267th Chemical Company, 23rd Chemical Battalion, from Camp Carroll. "It's kind of like bein' on a blind date. When the balloon goes up, you don't want to be comin' out here and having a blind date with the ROK Army.

"This way, when the chemicals come across the DMZ, we know what the ROK Army is capable of, they know what we're capable of. We know their tactics, techniques and procedures, they know our tactics, techniques and procedures. And if we have to come together to do a joint decon, we can do that. We're not learning at the last minute."

The battalion's main wartime job is decontaminating highways, airfields, supply depots and other "fixed sites" the enemy might hit with chemical agents. The troops would work closely with South Korean Army chemical units, spraying down those areas with decontaminants, especially in a war's early stages.

On Tuesday, about 30 members of the 267th Chemical Company were on a South Korean Army installation in north Taegu with soldiers from South Korea's 50th Homeland Reserve Division to practice decontaminating vehicles and troops.

Under the afternoon's mock-battle scenario, the enemy had fired "WMD," or weapons of mass destruction, hitting an important roadway with chemical agents. The U.S. and South Korean chemical troops had to move chemical trucks through the area, spraying water to simulate decontaminants.

In the final phase, the troops moved to a separate “clean” area, where the South Korean and U.S. trucks and troops were decontaminated.

“If the enemy uses WMD, these are the folks that are going to clean it up,” said Lt. Col. Bill Barnett, the 23rd Chemical Battalion’s commanding officer.

“Our wartime mission is going to require us to work with Korean units,” said Capt. Douglas Delp, the 267th Chemical Company’s commanding officer.

One major benefit of these exercises is an exchange of insights.

Koski, for example, picked up a few things Tuesday. When his unit decontaminates vehicles, a soldier with a hose sprays from the bottom of the vehicle and works up, eventually having to scale a ladder to get at its upper parts. But the South Koreans set up a metal arch-like rack fitted with spray nozzles at various points, some high enough to cover the vehicles’ tops.

And when the Americans decontaminate troops, the process ends with the soldier still wearing the battle dress uniform, or BDUs. But Koski saw that the South Koreans decontaminate soldiers all the way to their underwear, with a shower to follow.

“Ours doesn’t extend that far so that might be something we might want to look into,” Koski said.

Pvt. Tricortney Blandin is a chemical operations specialist in Koski’s platoon. For her, the benefit was getting a first-hand look at how her unit would have to work chemical operations with the South Koreans in wartime.

“It’s practice,” said Blandin. “Like if it really happens in the real world, or they need us, we’ll actually know how to do everything.”

<http://www.estripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=13466&archive=true>

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Washington Post

March 29, 2003

Pg. 7

2 States Halt Smallpox Shots

Pentagon Reports First Post-Inoculation Fatal Heart Attack

By Ceci Connolly, Washington Post Staff Writer

At least two states suspended smallpox immunizations, and the Pentagon reported its first fatal post-inoculation heart attack yesterday, even as federal scientists struggled to figure out whether the vaccine was triggering a series of cardiac-related problems.

Also yesterday, the government's leading vaccine experts recommended that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention take additional precautions in the beleaguered program by screening out anyone volunteering for inoculation with known heart disease or risk factors such as hypertension, diabetes or high cholesterol.

Altogether, federal health experts are investigating at least 18 cases of possible cardiac reactions, including three fatal heart attacks in recently immunized military personnel and civilian health care workers. But William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said the heart attack death of a 55-year-old National Guardsman was more likely related to the man's high cholesterol and smoking than the vaccination.

"That is very noteworthy in this case," Winkenwerder said in an interview. The evidence at this point, "indicates smallpox vaccination was not likely to be the cause of his death." More than 350,000 Defense Department employees have been inoculated since December.

Although historically the smallpox vaccine has not been linked to heart attacks or angina, the recent cases have added to widespread reluctance in the medical community to be immunized against a disease that has not been seen in three decades.

In the District, only three of the 11 health department workers scheduled for inoculation yesterday showed up, said Michael Richardson, the city's senior deputy director, medical affairs.

Illinois and New York suspended immunizations entirely, as did some individual hospitals such as Dartmouth Medical Center in New Hampshire. Other states, such as Florida, postponed inoculations until they could update volunteers on new safety measures relating to heart risks.

At the CDC offices in Atlanta, staffers were fielding nervous phone calls from people who had been vaccinated and worried they may be at risk for heart failure, said Dixie Snyder, associate director for science at CDC.

At the two-month mark, the Bush administration's effort to immunize millions is stalled, hampered by fears of the vaccine itself, doubts about the risk of a smallpox attack and the lack of compensation for people who suffer complications from the vaccine.

So far, 25,000 people have responded to President Bush's call for medical personnel to be inoculated, a tiny fraction of the 450,000 that state officials estimated they would need to set up mass vaccination clinics in the event of a bioterrorism attack. The House has rescheduled a vote on a compensation proposal for Monday, although Democrats complain the Republican bill falls far short.

"I think it's time to stop the program," said one early skeptic, Richard Wenzel, chief of internal medicine at the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center in Richmond. "Now is the time to say let's err on the side of caution until this is really sorted out."

A safety subcommittee of CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended screening out anyone over age 50 and people under 50 with risk factors for heart problems, said John Neff, cochair of the smallpox vaccination safety working group and a physician at Children's Hospital in Seattle.

"This would provide the maximum degree of safety for the population," he said. "That is our major concern."

In an emergency two-hour meeting, however, the full committee stopped short of that position yesterday, in part because it fears the vaccination program would come to a standstill.

Eliminating everyone over 50 would make it "infeasible to develop the numbers we need for preparedness," said Guthrie Birkhead, a committee member and director of the Center for Community Health at the New York State Department of Health. "We are taking extraordinary precautions because of a theoretical concern."

A few committee members said they preferred to wait for more data before proceeding with the program.

"You can make the case the risks of this vaccine may be outweighing its benefits, and at least for the moment, we should temporarily suspend this program," said Paul Offit, chief of infectious diseases at Children's Hospital in Philadelphia. But his proposal for a temporary halt to the program was quickly dismissed.

CDC spokesmen said they did not know whether officials would adopt the committee's recommendation or stick to its decision this week to only weed out people with known heart disease, such as a previous heart attack.

While experts study the recent cases in hospital workers, growing evidence suggests that the 10 cases of heart inflammation in healthy, young Defense Department employees were related to the vaccine, military and CDC experts said. In every case, the sharp heart pains subsided after patients received painkillers, and physicians do not expect any long-term damage.

That discovery raised another challenge for administration officials trying to refine the civilian vaccination program.

Until now, states have targeted older volunteers because research has shown the rate of serious reactions is much lower in people who had been previously vaccinated. But if the cardiac cases result in fewer older volunteers and more younger, first-time vaccinees, it is likely the number of heart inflammation cases is likely to rise, experts said.

Whatever the CDC decides, many physicians, hospitals and health departments are charting their own course. David Pearle, a cardiologist at Georgetown University Hospital, said he would err on the side of caution.

"The worry would be not so much the 35-year-old who smokes, but perhaps the 55-year-old who smokes and has a family history," he said, describing the complex set of factors to consider in deciding who could safely get the vaccine. "If there is a strong constellation of symptoms, I certainly would withhold vaccine until we know more."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A44240-2003Mar28.html>

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Washington Post

March 30, 2003

Pg. 30

Citing Iraq, N. Korea Signals Hard Line On Weapons Issues

By Doug Struck, Washington Post Foreign Service

TOKYO, March 29 -- North Korea signaled today it is learning a lesson from the war in Iraq -- though not the one the Bush administration had wanted. The government's official party newspaper said that Iraq's experience proves that North Korea must not submit to international nuclear inspectors or agree to disarm.

North Korea "would have already met the same miserable fate as Iraq's had it compromised . . . and accepted the demand raised by the imperialists and its followers for nuclear inspection and disarmament," said a commentary in the ruling Korean Workers' Party newspaper, Rodong Shinmun.

The newspaper's editorials, though often blustery with propaganda, are watched closely by foreign officials as a sign of the thinking of officials in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang.

"It is clear that the destiny of Iraq is at stake due to its concession and compromise," the paper said. "No one should expect [North Korea] to make any slightest concession or compromise."

The editorial appeared to offer little hope for resolution of the impasse over North Korea's nuclear programs. U.S. officials have demanded that North Korea agree to dismantle the programs, which it charges are aimed at building nuclear weapons, to reduce some conventional military forces and agree to submit to tight verification procedures before any negotiations between the two governments begin.

In November 1994, under an agreement with the Clinton administration, North Korea began permitting limited oversight of a shuttered nuclear plant and stored nuclear energy rods by inspectors from the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency. They were expelled in December, two months after the Bush administration demanded an end to what it said was a separate program by Pyongyang to try to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons.

Today's commentary follows another warning that officials in Pyongyang believe North Korea is next on the Bush administration's list of preemptive wars.

"After the Sept. 11 incident, [the Bush administration] formulated the 'anti-terrorist' strategy as the military strategy . . . and opened its first act with the Afghanistan war, and its second with the Iraqi war," said a Rodong Shinmun commentary Friday, according to North Korea's Central News Agency. "There is no doubt that they will open its third act on the Korean Peninsula."

South Korean officials have been trying in recent days to calm what they see as acute fears in North Korea of an invasion by U.S. forces. South Korea's new foreign minister, Yoon Young Kwan, appealed in Washington Friday for a bold strategy from the Bush administration to reach out to North Korea with a dramatic act similar to President Richard M. Nixon's surprise visit to communist China in 1972.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell quickly dismissed the idea. After meeting with Yoon Friday, he repeated the U.S. demand that North Korea first agree to dismantle its nuclear programs and enter multilateral negotiations, which North Korean officials have repeatedly rejected.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A49387-2003Mar29.html>

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New York Times

March 29, 2003

Chemical-Warfare School Is Found In Iraqi Barracks

By David Rohde

KARA HANJIR, Iraq, March 28 — Khalil Ismail, an Iraqi soldier, completed his "chemical alert" course on Feb. 16, 2002, according to a handwritten evaluation form found in an office here today. His instructor, Muhammad Wahabi, had no negative comments about his students, described as "all members of infantry brigade," and he was effusive about his pupils' ability to perform a crucial task.

"The fighters have shown a quick response," the instructor wrote, "to putting on their gas masks in the required time."

The course evaluation was found today in the abandoned headquarters of the Iraqi Army's Eighth Infantry Division Chemical Warfare Unit, outside the city of Kirkuk in northern Iraq.

Gas masks, chemical weapons decontamination kits and detailed instructions on how to use chemical weapons protective suits were found at the site, which appeared to be a training center.

No evidence of instruction in the use chemical agents as offensive weapons was found in an hourlong search of the complex.

The course work appeared similar to what American and NATO soldiers are taught about the use of chemical suits and gas masks as protective equipment.

Iraqi soldiers abandoned the building — part of a dilapidated Iraqi Army barracks here — on Thursday after several days of intensive American bombing of Iraqi positions.

In one building, a chart titled "the duty and function of chemical equipment" listed a military unit's inventory of 148 gas masks, 100 sterilization kits and 90 protective boots. A few inches away, a chart listed emergency radio codes to be used in the event of chemical or nuclear attack.

The discovery of the barracks came as Kurdish fighters explored perhaps a dozen miles of territory abandoned by the Iraqi Army. A tour of the area today suggested that the sudden pullback, which occurred after no ground attack by Kurdish or American forces, was an organized withdrawal and not a headlong retreat.

Rifles, trucks, munitions, equipment, papers, uniforms, food and thousands of other items all appeared to have been systematically removed from the complex of crude cinder block buildings by Iraqi forces before they left.

At dusk today, Iraqi forces fired at least four rockets into the trenches they had just abandoned and into the Kurdish-controlled town of Chamchamal.

Sadia Kareem, whose 11-year-old son, Ahmed, was wounded in the head by a rocket, said the surge of joy she felt from the Iraqi withdrawal had quickly ebbed.

"When the Iraqi Army retreated, I was happy," said Ms. Kareem, who had lived under Iraqi gunners for the last 12 years. "Always his effect is present. Now he bombs us."

The local Kurdish commander, Rostam Homed Rahim, said that Iraqi soldiers remained in the position they took up on Thursday just outside Kirkuk, an oil-rich city that is a strategic prize in northern Iraq. Regular army troops are guarding the approach to the city, he said, and Republican Guard forces remain in place south of Kirkuk.

Mr. Rahim said the Iraqis may have pulled out of the dozens of fortified bunkers, trenches and artillery positions they built along mile after mile of the main road for military reasons. He said Iraqi forces may believe that positioning themselves in and around the city will protect them from American bombing, but added that they were mistaken.

"Probably they will plan for urban warfare," he said. "They will not be able to defend themselves."

The barracks offered a glimpse into the lives of Iraqi soldiers and a world of indoctrination. Slogans hailing Saddam Hussein blanketed most buildings. One exhortation said: "Distrust your friend before your enemy."

Another reflected total obedience: "Yes, yes for President Saddam Hussein," it said. "And death for America and Zionism."

The tentacles of Mr. Hussein's spying apparatus could also be seen. Offices in a building up the hill from the chemical warfare headquarters labeled Fourth Division Headquarters had a chart titled eavesdropping center, with blank spaces for soldiers working "morning, evening and night."

In a destroyed Iraqi frontline bunker, an inscription written on one wall read: "The intelligence are the eyes of the nation."

Amid ominous references to some of the most terrifying forms of modern warfare and ceaseless surveillance were signs that Iraq's regular army is a ramshackle force.

The base was made of dozens of small, crumbling one-story buildings. White paint peeled from cinder walls. Slapdash electrical wiring hung from ceilings and ran across floors. Bricks had been crammed into windows, apparently for protection against American bombs.

There were also human touches. All around the base were scores of small rooms where soldiers had bunked. Pots for making tea sat ready for use. Rooms reeked of the kerosene heaters soldiers crouched over only 48 hours earlier. In one hallway, a pair of empty combat boots, some crumpled packs of cigarettes and a dozen orange peels made it seem as if Iraqi soldiers had just stepped away for a moment and would soon return.

Back in the chemical warfare unit headquarters, a detailed 10-foot by 15-foot scale model of the area, replete with rolling hills and green farmland, filled one corner of a large room. Lists describing officers' responsibilities were painted on the walls in white and red paint.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/29/international/worldspecial/29CHEM.html>

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Chicago Tribune

March 28, 2003

Troops' Fear Of Chemical Attack Grows

Levelheadedness emerges as key

By Ray Quintanilla, Tribune staff reporter

IN CENTRAL IRAQ -- Twice in the last two days, the soldiers of the 2nd Armor Battalion of the U.S. 3rd Army Infantry Division scrambled for their gas masks as sergeants ran through the camp yelling "Gas! Gas! Gas!"

The scrambles turned out to be false alarms, but they were far from the kind of simple drills the soldiers had practiced at training camp only a week ago.

As troops advance toward Baghdad and U.S. forces discover that Iraqis have stored protective gear that can be used against poisonous chemicals, fears of a chemical attack have been growing.

The drills this week, including one at an artillery range Thursday night, indicated that no matter how much the soldiers had practiced, split-second levelheadedness could play a key role in who would live or die if the worst predictions come true and the Iraqi army unleashes a chemical attack.

"We don't do drills anymore," said Army Sgt. Maj. Vias Williams of the 3rd Infantry. "This is the real thing, and how you respond can save your life. Period. If it turns out to be a false report, then at least you were safe and able to fight another day."

Since arriving in the region, U.S.-led troops have carried gas masks at the ready, and almost all are equipped with chemical-protection suits. But preparations for a possible attack took on renewed meaning with the discovery in recent days of the chemical-protection gear in southern Iraq.

Troops found 3,000 protective suits in a hospital in Nasiriyah, along with injectors of atropine, an antidote for nerve gas. On Thursday, British forces said they had made a similar discovery of such gear in the Rumailah oil field outside Basra.

U.S. officials quickly seized on the discoveries to augment their efforts to portray Saddam Hussein's regime as willing and capable of doing anything to preserve itself. U.S. commanders have expressed confidence all week that they will find the regime's "weapons of mass destruction," but so far their searches of suspect sites have turned up nothing.

"What it tells us, first, [is that] there is a certain knowledge in the Iraqi forces that chemical weapons will be used," Army Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks said Thursday at U.S. Central Command headquarters in Doha, Qatar. "There's obviously distribution to outlying units. Perhaps there's already a decision that's been taken that at some point chemicals will be used."

Brooks said that U.S. forces do not have chemical weapons. But it is possible Hussein's regime had persuaded the Iraqi people in recent years that they do.

The scene earlier this week seemed to indicate there is still much for U.S. troops to do to prepare for a biochemical attack--especially as troops move closer to Baghdad. For instance, during the recent scare, some soldiers sat in their vehicles, oblivious to what was happening while other soldiers ran about shouting "Gas! Gas! Gas!" at the top of their lungs.

During a nighttime biochemical warning at another battalion, the scene was even more chaotic because many military campsites do not allow soldiers to use white lights.

"People just scurry about in the dark and they knock into each other," said Capt. Don Brooks, a native of Daytona Beach, Fla. "But the bottom line is, those who approach this as an urgent warning will live."

The captain, a member of the 2nd Battalion of the 4th Field Artillery, was speaking after the all-clear signal was given and about 200 soldiers were taking off their gas masks.

Nerves are on edge, Brooks said, because troops are inching closer to Baghdad, where many believe the threat is the greatest. "Sure, the fear has been growing among the troops," he said. "But they all know their lives are in their own hands."

The U.S. military says the suits--boots, charcoal-lined fatigues, gas mask--must be put on within 8 seconds of an alarm about a possible strike.

Not everyone responds with such urgency: On Wednesday, one soldier using an outdoor toilet chose to stay where he was rather than hurry back to his tent for his chemical-protection gear.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0303280335mar28,1,1254284.story>

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Washington Post

March 29, 2003

Pg. 22

Lotion Approved For Chemical Exposure

By Associated Press

The government has approved a special skin lotion for U.S. soldiers to apply immediately after a chemical attack to neutralize otherwise potentially deadly chemical weapons.

A sponge soaked in the lotion is packaged in a special foil pouch that soldiers can carry and rip open, then wipe the sponge on any exposed skin as soon as possible after exposure to a chemical attack, the Food and Drug Administration said in approving the lotion Friday.

"If used in time, this lotion can help prevent the serious burns and deaths that result from exposure to chemical warfare agents," said FDA Commissioner Mark McClellan.

The lotion is called RSDL, for "reactive skin decontamination lotion." It is made by a Canadian company, O'Dell Engineering Ltd., which says the lotion has been used for years by the Canadian military.

Some chemical weapons kill not just if they are inhaled but if they're absorbed through the skin as well. Immediately washing off exposed skin, with soap and water or with different agents that target particular chemicals, is a crucial part of decontamination.

O'Dell said its RSDL lotion rapidly covers exposed skin and mixes with a broad range of chemical warfare agents, including sarin, VX and mustard gas, to break them down. The FDA said it also works against a fungal toxin.

RSDL leaves a nontoxic residue that can be washed off later, O'Dell says.

The FDA said it approved the lotion for military use based on U.S. Army studies that found it successfully treated animals exposed to chemical agents, and that it appeared safe when applied to the skin of 300 people.

FDA and Army spokesmen did not return calls seeking details on how effective the lotion is expected to be.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A44795-2003Mar28.html>

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Washington Post

March 29, 2003

Pg. 22

Chemical Threats Distract U.S. Troops

Tanker Attack Forces GIs to Don Gas Masks

By William Branigin, Washington Post Foreign Service

WITH U.S. FORCES IN CENTRAL IRAQ, March 28 -- The warning came over military radios as soldiers of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division were cleaning their weapons, servicing their vehicles and bringing in food and water. The Air Force was about to bomb suspected Iraqi chemical weapons trucks. Put on your gas masks, the soldiers were ordered, get in your vehicles and button up.

They did, scrambling into Humvees, trucks and armored vehicles and closing the doors. Shortly afterward, the all-clear was given. But an hour and a half later came another radioed warning: "Gas! Gas! Gas!" The soldiers dutifully took cover again.

This is life in the desert for men and women of the 3rd Infantry Division as they pause in their advance on Baghdad to regroup and try to rest.

The Air Force struck three tanker trucks in the nearby desert, setting them on fire. Commanders said it was not immediately clear what the tankers contained, but said that the trucks were moving dangerously close to U.S. lines in the desert southwest of the Iraqi capital.

They said the all-clear was sounded despite the uncertainty about the trucks' contents because the wind was blowing smoke from the burning tankers away from them.

"We felt there were potential WMD [weapons of mass destruction] products out there," said Capt. Felix Almaguer, 29, of Summit, N.J., intelligence officer for the division's 3rd Battalion, 15th Regiment. "Anything with a tanker associated with it moving out there on its own" is suspicious, given that the Americans are camped out in the middle of nowhere, he said.

All afternoon, black smoke billowed into the clear sky from the trucks, possibly indicating that they contained fuel. But the possibility of chemical attack continued to preoccupy U.S. commanders, especially after a patrol found an Iraqi observation post in the zone of one of the 3rd Infantry Division's tank-heavy battalions. Two Soviet-style gas masks and chemical suits were discovered in the post, along with a sophisticated French-made radio, officers said. Some soldiers in the division, which has suffered few casualties, are griping over the extended stop in the desert. But commanders say the unit is making good progress.

"Although we have slowed down our movement, the war continues to be going well," Lt. Col. Stephen Twitty, commander of the 3rd Battalion, told his company leaders today. But he warned, "Every day we sit here, we continue to get vulnerable. The potential for an artillery strike is pretty high."

So he ordered stepped-up "counter-reconnaissance patrols" every hour in the evening to try to intercept any attempts to probe the U.S. perimeter. The Iraqis are going to "probe our lines to try to get the first read" on which units will lead an upcoming attack and where they will strike, he said.

And he issued another warning: vipers and scorpions have been found in some of the battalion's positions. "The vipers are extremely poisonous," he said. "Tell your soldiers to leave the critters alone."

Despite having to drop its original plan to race north straight to Baghdad and trigger the fall of President Saddam Hussein, the division remains in a strong position, the intelligence officer said, and is adapting to new conditions.

"We're not trying to put a square peg in a round hole," said Almaguer. "We're not blindly following a plan. If anything, in the Army we're flexible. There's nothing to indicate anything but the fact we're having tremendous success. I see us overwhelmingly hammering [Hussein] and him having almost no effects on us."

The basic plan hatched while the units waited in Kuwait was to race north so rapidly that the Hussein government would be panicked into collapse.

The 3rd Division's 2nd Brigade, commanded by Col. David Perkins, sped north in two main groups. One, called "Heavy Metal" and consisting mainly of M1-A1 Abrams tanks and M2-A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, barreled across the desert from Kuwait at top speed.

The other group, code-named "Rock 'n' Roll" and including the wheeled vehicles, supply trucks and slower tracked vehicles, swung out to the west and linked up to little-used roads that took it north. The lead elements of the columns met up near Samawah and headed further north.

"We outran our logistics supplies, and now we're waiting for them to catch up," said Capt. Ronny Johnson, commander of Bravo Company of the 3rd Battalion. Meanwhile, the units will take the opportunity to build their combat power back to full strength and give airstrikes a chance to further pummel Republican Guard troops protecting the southern approach to Baghdad, he said.

According to Almaguer, airstrikes already have reduced key units of the Republican Guard's elite Medina Division by a third or more. "They're taking a well-deserved beating right now," he said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A45201-2003Mar28.html>

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Washington Times

March 31, 2003

Pg. 1

Pakistan Purchases N. Korean Missiles

By Nicholas Kravev, The Washington Times

Pakistan has purchased No Dong missiles from North Korea — fully assembled and ready to fly — prompting the Bush administration to impose sanctions on the Pakistani company in charge of the nation's nuclear weapons program.

U.S. officials, who disclosed the transfer to The Washington Times, said American-made C-130 aircraft were used to transport the missiles to Pakistan.

"This is a very serious matter," a senior administration official said. "We are not talking about missile technology or components but full-fledged No Dong missiles that can deliver nuclear weapons — and they used aircraft we gave them to bring the missiles home."

The nuclear-capable missiles have a range of up to 900 miles and can reach virtually every major Indian city.

A private Pakistani company, Kahn Research Laboratories (KRL), also known as Kahuta Research Laboratories, is the direct target of the sanctions. But U.S. officials said the transfer took place with the knowledge of the highest levels of the Pakistani government.

The penalties, which are to be published in the Federal Register as early as today, ban any business activities for two years between the U.S. government and KRL, which, according to the official, is primarily responsible for Pakistan's nuclear program.

Another official said the transfers occurred "during a period of time ending in August, and we've been in close contact with the Pakistani government since November, urging it to stop this behavior."

Earlier reports, including a CIA document obtained by The Washington Times last year, suggested North Korea's missile-related transfers to Pakistan included equipment, components, materials and technical expertise but not entire missiles.

Washington has also imposed two-year Category 1 missile sanctions against North Korea, through the state-owned Changgwang Sinyong Corp., under the congressional Arms Export Control Act, one official said.

"That has no huge practical impact because there is no trade between the United States and North Korea, but it's an important symbolic act that shows our focus on the North's proliferation behavior and also tells the buyers how serious we are about this," he said.

Because the end-user of the missile purchase cannot be sanctioned under the Arms Export Control Act, known as the missile law, the penalty against the Pakistani company was enacted by a State Department executive order signed last week by John Bolton, assistant secretary of state for arms control and international security.

While the Bush administration has discussed the issue with authorities in Islamabad, it has not approached North Korea about it, the official said.

A senior State Department official said Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf about the sanctions in a telephone conversation Tuesday.

"The secretary said that we have to follow our laws, but our bilateral relationship remains strong," the official said. "I think the Pakistanis understand that we are doing what is necessary legally and that this is not a political step."

The Pakistani government has repeatedly denied any purchases from North Korea, but over the weekend it acknowledged that KRL has been sanctioned.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the sanctions are unjustified but it would not affect "our determination to pursue our indigenous missile program."

Islamabad, which did not cite the reason for Washington's action, also sought to downplay its significance, saying KRL has never depended on foreign assistance and the U.S. ban would have little impact.

After September 11, 2001, the United States lifted most sanctions previously imposed on Pakistan because of its nuclear program. Since then, Gen. Musharraf's government has been one of Washington's most important allies in the fight against terrorism, arresting some of al Qaeda's most senior leaders.

Pakistan's reliability as an ally was called into question late last year amid reports it had provided nuclear-bomb-making technology to North Korea in exchange for missile parts and technology. Pakistan is developing several types of missiles on its own.

North Korea's No Dong missile is an improved version of the Soviet-made Scud, with an extended range and increased reliability.

U.S. officials said what aggravated the situation in the No Dong transfer was the use of American-made planes for North Korean proliferation purposes.

The C-130 aircraft belong to the Pakistani government, which means that the Pakistani air force signed off on the operation, the officials said.

The No Dong purchase is expected to increase already high tensions with India because the missiles provide a delivery system for Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

On Wednesday, India and Pakistan conducted tit-for-tat missile tests, prompting a joint condemnation from the United States and Britain.

The missile supplier, North Korean arms firm Changgwang Sinyong, has been sanctioned by Washington before. In August, it was punished for a missile transfer to Yemen; in June 2001, for selling chemical-weapons materials and missile engines to Iran; and in April 2000, for missile-technology sales to Syria.

In December, two Spanish warships seized a North Korean Scud missile shipment destined for Yemen on behalf of the United States.

But Washington allowed the delivery to pass after the Yemeni government promised the missiles were only for defense and that it would not purchase arms from Pyongyang again.

Although the Bush administration was forced to acknowledge that the transfer, which Yemen said was the last in a series contracted several years earlier, violated no international laws or regulations, it said something must be done to prevent weapons proliferation by North Korea.

The administration has accused the North of parading its missiles in "glossy brochures" around the world and selling them to anyone who will pay.

Washington and Pyongyang have been locked in yet another nuclear standoff since October, when the North admitted to having developed a secret uranium-enrichment program while at the same time receiving free fuel oil from the United States for having agreed in 1994 to abandon all attempts to make nuclear weapons.

The Bush administration refuses to engage in bilateral talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's regime and is trying to put together a forum with the participation of other regional powers. It insists the problem of North Korea's nuclear ambitions is international and not one between the United States and North Korea alone.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030331-55366.htm>

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London Times
March 29, 2003

Iraq's 'Mrs Anthrax' Sits With Saddam

By Elaine Monaghan, Washington

THE only woman at Saddam Hussein's leadership table looks self-possessed and almost demure, sitting with her head covered and hands folded neatly in front of her. US intelligence officers call her Mrs Anthrax.

The appearance of Baghdad's reputed germ warfare expert, Huda Salih Mahdi Ammash, on Iraqi television on Thursday sent a chill down collective spines in Washington and London.

US officials studying Saddam's appearances wondered yesterday why she was shown sitting three seats away from him, complete with military epaulettes, the well-groomed face of Iraq's biological weapons programme. They are already trying to absorb the discovery of 3,000 Iraqi chemical and biological weapons suits and masks at a hospital in al-Nasiriyah that had been used by Iraqi paramilitaries.

US officials believe that Dr Ammash, who earned a PhD in microbiology at an American university and was appointed to Saddam's Revolutionary Command Council in May 2001, helped to rebuild Iraq's bioweapons programme in the mid-1990s. As the camera panned repeatedly past her face, it seemed as if Baghdad wanted to send a warning to the US and British forces.

"Mrs Anthrax" learnt some of her apparently deadly science at the University of Missouri, where her 1983 doctorate focused on the poisoning effects of radiation, paraquat and adrimycin, a chemotherapy drug, on bacteria and mammals, a university official said.

Geoff Hoon, the Defence Minister, says meanwhile that US-British forces now have categorical evidence that Saddam is ready to use weapons of mass destruction.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-6047-627248,00.html>

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European Stars and Stripes
March 29, 2003

Chemical Weapons Stored Near Capital, Captured Iraqi Claims

By Mark Oliva, Stars and Stripes

SOUTHERN IRAQ — An Iraqi soldier captured in the battle for An Nasiriyah claims that Saddam Hussein's chemical weapons are stored closer to Baghdad.

The soldier, a major, was captured by members of the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment. The battalion is part of Task Force Tarawa, which has been fighting in An Nasiriyah for nearly a week.

Marines briefly interrogated the 35-year-old soldier when he and another soldier surrendered along the highway into the city, said Capt. Aaron Robertson, intelligence officer for 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines.

The captured Iraqi officer was in uniform, wearing a sweater and beret. Marines flex-cuffed both prisoners before whisking them away in an armored Humvee.

The man claims to be a chemist, Robertson said.

"He said nothing of the chemical capabilities [near here]," Robertson said. "He claimed most of the chemical munitions are being stored closer to Baghdad."

The man is now in the hands of the Marine intelligence personnel, who are interrogating him, Robertson said.

The battle for An Nasiriyah, about 200 miles south of Baghdad, began Sunday. The Marines' objective is to seize two bridges over the Euphrates River needed to keep moving troops and supplies north toward Baghdad.

After hearing reports of thousands of Iraqi soldiers surrendering in the early days of war, Marines expected little resistance in An Nasiriyah. But the battle has proved to be more difficult. The forces opposing the Marines aren't conventional forces, but groups known to be loyal to Saddam Hussein.

The captured Iraqi major said "Ba'ath Party irregulars and Fedayeen Saddam forces" are taking part in the fight, according to Robertson.

"They were well organized and well prepared," Robertson said. They were ready to fight, and they will fight to the death, he added.

Robertson said the Iraqi irregulars were dressed in civilian clothes and heavily equipped. They are armed with tanks, mortars, anti-aircraft guns as well as rifles. Many have been fighting from bunkers in the city.

— Stars and Stripes reporter Mark Oliva is embedded with members of the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, which is fighting in southern Iraq.

<http://www.estripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=13495&archive=true>

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March 31, 2003

Profile: 'Chemical' Ali Hassan al-Majid

BY RICHARD COLWILL

Ali Hassan al-Majid, one of Saddam Hussein's inner circle, is sought by US Marines in an area of southern Iraq around the town of al-Nasiriyah. We look at the background of the man better known as "Chemical Ali"

- Ali Hassan al-Majid is nicknamed "Chemical Ali" after his use of chemical weapons to attack Kurds in northern Iraq in 1988.
 - He is a cousin of Saddam Hussein and was made commander of Iraqi forces in the south of the country before the US-led invasion. He is also one of Saddam Hussein's closest advisers, possibly outranked only by Saddam's son, Qusay. He is also a member of the Revolutionary Command Council.
 - As the regional commander he may have been behind Saturday's suicide attack on a US Army checkpoint that killed four US soldiers. He may also have been behind the incidents of Iraqi paramilitary group firing on civilians in Basra.
 - According to Iraqi opposition activists and refugee testimony, al-Majid played a leading role in the campaign against Iraq's Marsh Arab population during the 1990s, a campaign that included the systematic bombardment of villages, torture, "disappearances" and forced displacement.
 - The campaign reduced a community that once numbered over a quarter of a million in the area to fewer than 40,000 today.
 - In 1995, Lieutenant General Hussein Kamel al-Majid, Saddam Hussein's son-in-law and Ali's nephew, defected to Jordan with his brother. He was the head of Iraq's clandestine weapons programme and revealed its extent to the US Government in an attempt to win support to overthrow Saddam Hussein.
 - Although he conceded to King Hussein of Jordan that the weapons had been destroyed, he would not say precisely where, because the site also held a mass grave.
 - Hussein Kamel and his brother were persuaded to return to Iraq in 1996 on promises that all had been forgiven. US intelligence suggests that Ali Hassan al-Majid was responsible for the execution of his nephews after they reached Iraq.
 - It has been suggested that he executed them in order to demonstrate his loyalty remained with Saddam Hussein.
 - After the 1991 Gulf War, al-Majid served as Iraq's Interior Minister. He was responsible for crushing the Shia Muslim rebellion in southern Iraq. The rebellion had been encouraged by the United States in the hope that it would lead to the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime.
 - Al-Majid was appointed governor of Kuwait during Iraq's occupation of the emirate in 1990 and 1991. His tenure was marked by executions, arbitrary arrests, "disappearances", torture and other atrocities, according to Human Rights Watch. Some 600 Kuwaitis are still "missing".
 - Al-Majid's most brutal role, and the one that earned him his nickname, remains as the secretary general of the northern bureau of Iraq's Baath Party during the late 1980s. This role gave him authority over all agencies of the state in the Kurdish region from March 1987 to April 1989.
 - During this time al-Majid commanded the notorious "Anfal" campaign, which resulted in the murder and "disappearance" of some 100,000 Kurds and was marked by the use of chemical weapons.
 - Arguably the most infamous event during this brutal suppression was the gassing of the Kurdish village of Halabja in 1988, in which as many as 5,000 civilians were killed.
 - According to a 1988 audiotape of a meeting of leading Iraqi officials published by Human Rights Watch, al-Majid vowed to use chemical weapons against the Kurds, saying: "I will kill them all with chemical weapons! Who is going to say anything? The international community? **** them - the international community and those who listen to them!"
 - Al-Majid, 62, is described as a short, chain-smoking diabetic. He is thought to have little formal education. His first military role was as a motorcycle courier before the 1968 revolution.
 - Before the current invasion of the US-led coalition, al-Majid made trips to Libya and Syria in an attempt to shore up support for Iraq. He was reported to have spent much of this time handing out millions of dollars to ensure that he had support for a leadership role in post-Saddam Iraq.
- <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,343-630320,00.html>

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