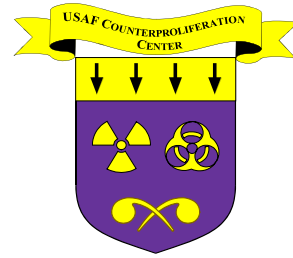


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USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER

# CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL



*Air University*

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Dallas Morning News

April 18, 2003

## **Pushing North From Baghdad, Unit Finds Possible Scud**

By Ed Timms, The Dallas Morning News

NORTH CENTRAL IRAQ – Soldiers with the 4th Infantry Division on Thursday discovered what may be an operable Scud missile, endured drive-by shootings and sniping, and confronted gunmen who tried to use a baby as a shield.

As G Troop, 10th Cavalry moved north from the Baghdad area on Thursday, its soldiers found a large surface-to-surface missile hidden in a tree line and a smaller missile in a nearby Iraqi military compound. They also discovered a large cache of artillery munitions.

Scuds and other long-range missiles are among the weapons of mass destruction proscribed by the United Nations. Before hostilities began, Iraqi officials denied that any Scuds remained in their military arsenal.

If the missile discovered Thursday is confirmed to be a Scud, it would be the first found in Iraq since the United States launched a military campaign to rid the country of weapons of mass destruction and to topple dictator Saddam Hussein's regime.

Sgt. 1st Class Jason Washburn, 31, of Lake, Mich., one of the soldiers who found the missile on Thursday, said it was on a large truck rig covered with camouflage tarps and tree limbs.

He described it as "huge" and estimated that the weapon has a diameter of roughly 4 feet, and is about 30 to 35 feet long.

1st Lt. Tyson Mangum, 25, of Pleasanton, Texas, said an Iraqi farmer approached the column and "kept telling us 'Danger! Danger!'"

Lt. Mangum, who commands G Troop's 1st Platoon, said the farmer "kept motioning his hands like an artillery piece, putting it up in the air and then back down. But then he said, 'Scud.'"

The vehicle loaded with the missile and another launcher were recently moved to the site, Lt. Mangum said. "There's still mud on the tires," he said. Rain fell in the area on Wednesday.

G Troop soldiers were assigned to guard the Scud on Thursday night until the arrival of experts who will conduct a closer examination.

Soldiers with G Troop's 2nd Platoon discovered a large cache of artillery shells in the same area. And on the grounds of the Iraqi military compound, Sgt. 1st Class Rick Michaud, 37, who's originally from Lewiston, Maine, and Staff Sgt. Jose Marroquin, 25, a South Texas native, discovered a smaller missile, some mines, and a room full of partially burned documents. A truck-mounted missile launcher was also abandoned inside the complex.

"Based on the way things look and the types of books that are laying around ... I think a surface-to-surface missile unit was here," said Capt. Timothy Jacobsen, G Troop's commander.

Farther south, more than 30 Iraqis who tried to make off with weapons and ammunition from bunkers were taken into custody on Thursday. Col. Don Campbell, who commands the division's 1st Brigade, said that the prisoners attempted to load up "AK-47s, RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades] and other types of weapons" in six to eight "SUV-type" vehicles.

In another incident Thursday, two Iraqi teenagers fired on a lead element of U.S. soldiers during the push north from Baghdad.

"They tracked those two kids to a house, where they grabbed a baby, held it up in the window to tell us, hey if you shoot the house, this baby will die with us," Col. Campbell said.

The U.S. troops backed off and tried to surround the house, Col. Campbell said, but the two gunmen managed to escape.

The baby and its family were unharmed.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dallas/world/stories/041803dnintfourth.1e161.html>

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New York Times  
April 18, 2003

## **Some Skeptics Say Arms Hunt Is Fruitless**

By William J. Broad

While many analysts say it is just a matter of time before American searchers uncover unconventional arms in Iraq, a few experts consider that unlikely. Before the war, they argued that Iraq probably had no weapons of mass destruction; that is why, they say now, the search has ended so far in failure.

Some of the doubters say they feel vindicated by the fact that the government of President Saddam Hussein did not use chemical, biological or nuclear arms during the war and that no sign of these arms has turned up so far. Others express sadness at what they see as the false rationale for the invasion.

One of the most vocal skeptics is Scott Ritter, a former Marine Corps major who worked as a United Nations inspector in Iraq for seven years. Mr. Ritter became deeply skeptical of American charges that the Baghdad government had weapons of mass destruction.

"If we find something, great," Mr. Ritter said of search efforts now under way. "But professionally, I don't see how these weapons could exist. They defy the laws of industry, the laws of science and technology."

Mr. Ritter, author of "War on Iraq: What Team Bush Doesn't Want You to Know" (Context Books, 2002), argues that Iraq once possessed many unconventional arms but they have either been destroyed or degraded.

The Bush Administration asserts that Iraq never accounted for many of the weapons it said it had destroyed, suggesting they may be cached somewhere. But even if they are, Mr. Ritter maintains, by now they would be worthless.

"They have no shelf life," he said.

He said no evidence has come to light suggesting that Iraq ever rebuilt its manufacturing base for weapons of mass destruction.

Another skeptic is Glenn Rangwala, a lecturer on Middle East politics at Cambridge University.

Before the war began, Dr. Rangwala described evidence that Iraq continues to hold unconventional weapons as "shaky at best."

In an interview, Dr. Rangwala said he was not surprised that there had been no attacks with unconventional weapons or spectacular finds afterward. "Maybe they'll find technology, which could have been used in the future for making weapons, but not substantial stocks," he said.

Another skeptic, Matthew S. Meselson, had tended until now to keep his doubts to himself. But Dr. Meselson, a Harvard professor and expert on biological weapons, said in an interview that logic suggested that searchers scouring Iraq for unconventional arms would come up empty-handed. For instance, he said, if Washington had had any hard evidence of such arms it would have presented it to the United Nations.

In fact, he said, if weapons are found, there are many who will conclude that the United States planted them. "The real problem will be now to convince people," he said, adding that independent confirmation of any reported findings would help persuade doubters that the war was justified.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/18/international/worldspecial/18SKEP.html>

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## **U.S. Response: Health Plans Search for Bioterror Symptoms**

By Marilyn Werber Serafini

*National Journal*

WASHINGTON — In matters of homeland security, experts on all sides have long been saying that more cooperation is needed among various levels of government and the private sector in preventing and coping with terrorist attacks (see [GSN](#), April 15).

It now looks as if a pilot program of teamwork between the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and some private health plans is bearing fruit.

The CDC and a handful of health plans are about a year into a collaborative project whose aim is earlier and better detection of potential bioterrorism attacks—spotting disease outbreaks before emergency rooms are suddenly flooded with victims. In essence, the streams of data coming into health insurance plans—phone calls to nurse-help lines and doctors' diagnoses, for example—are sifted by computer programs to look for disease and symptom patterns sorted by ZIP code. Such a system may already be proving valuable in tracking early signs of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, as the dreaded and sometimes-deadly illness begins creeping into the United States.

The CDC awarded a grant of \$1.2 million about a year ago to Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, a large health plan that serves New England, to begin collecting and analyzing information about certain respiratory and gastrointestinal symptoms that might mark the beginning of a bioterrorism attack. Soon, a handful of other large health plans will begin feeding their patient information to Harvard Pilgrim, which will act as the data-processing hub. New participants will include United Healthcare, HealthPartners in Minnesota, and Kaiser Permanente in Colorado. Even before this project began, many state-level public health agencies were upgrading their tracking techniques to monitor emergency-room visits and sales of over-the-counter drugs such as anti-diarrhea medicine. The hope is that conducting surveillance through health plans will be quicker than tracking emergency room visits. "A lot of people are looking at emergency rooms and hospitals, but perhaps the nurse call-in lines and primary-care physicians may be a day or two ahead in the epidemic," said Blake Caldwell, a CDC contractor who is the senior consulting epidemiologist for this pilot project, called the National Bioterrorism Syndromic Surveillance Demonstration Program.

Karen Ignagni, president of the American Association of Health Plans, which worked with the CDC to set up the project, has been considering such collaborations since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. "As we began to talk about this issue with medical directors, it became clear that we had a unique set of skills and a unique set of competencies that could provide a real public health benefit," she said.

Members often report symptoms to their health plan first, Ignagni said-sometimes more than a week before they might go to an emergency room.

The symptoms of most communicable diseases that could indicate a coming epidemic begin slowly and quietly, she explained; they are not major life-interrupting events, such as heart attacks, that can collapse a patient in short order. Some of the symptoms associated with the most-feared potential biological weapons, such as smallpox and anthrax, may resemble the flu for days before more-telling signs set in.

"When you first start having symptoms, they're not serious enough to drive to the emergency room," Ignagni said. "But you have symptoms, and you feel strange and you don't understand why they're occurring, so you want to talk to somebody." More often than heading for the emergency room, people visit their doctor or seek advice from the nurse call-in lines that many insurance plans make available to their members as a kind of first-line triage.

Early evidence shows that the project is working to spot spikes in the rates of natural disease in Massachusetts, said Richard Platt, principal investigator, and professor of the Ambulatory Care and Prevention Department at Harvard Pilgrim. According to Platt, Harvard Pilgrim has already anticipated increases in hospitalizations for respiratory infection. During this winter's flu season, he said, his system was able to predict an upswing in respiratory infections about two weeks before hospital admissions started to rise.

The idea behind the CDC/Harvard Pilgrim demonstration is to collect information in a variety of ways and then merge it all to reveal trends. A participating doctor's practice, for example, installs sophisticated computer technology that essentially scans the diagnoses that doctors assign to the patients they see in any given day, looking for symptoms associated with commonly suspected bioterrorism agents.

With more doctors keeping patient information electronically, such reporting and collecting should be able to grow quickly, according to Ignagni. Currently, only those physicians who store patient medical records electronically can participate. However, Caldwell said she hopes that the program will soon expand to include physicians who file insurance claims electronically.

Here's how the system works: At the end of each day, the computer at the doctor's office, clinic, or nurse call-in line automatically checks the day's records for specified symptoms. The findings from each office are transmitted-without any names or identifying information-to Harvard Pilgrim, which combines all the data. Harvard Pilgrim sorts the final data by ZIP code and compares it to epidemiological norms for the region and the time of year.

Caldwell noted that health plans and patients should not be concerned about confidentiality. The health plans initially report only the number of people in a particular ZIP code with either respiratory or gastrointestinal trouble. If a worrisome number of people within a particular ZIP code report similar symptoms, Harvard Pilgrim and public health officials can go back to the health plan and ask for more information. The health plan can then look at the individual patient records in question and determine if there is a reasonable explanation for the illness, or whether the patients can be linked in some alarming way.

If there is reason to fear an outbreak, the local public health agency then has the right to ask for the identities of the affected patients.

So far, about once a month, Harvard Pilgrim has notified public health officials about spikes in respiratory or gastrointestinal symptoms. In the end, none of those spikes has turned out to be related to bioterrorism.

The beauty of the effort is that collecting and sorting the information is mostly automatic, Platt said. "There's no active human involvement in this. The computer program runs every night and extracts the information that's needed ... It's not asking any of the clinical providers to collect any additional information or to record additional information or to take steps to notify anybody. This information is collected in the course of routine health care delivery," he said. "This is important, because we need a system that is sustainable."

This month, United Healthcare will join the project, gathering information from its nurse call-in line, called Optum. Bob Harmon, vice president and national medical director of Optum, said he's sure his system can help. He cited a study of a 1993 outbreak in Wisconsin of cryptosporidium, a waterborne parasite that comes from animal waste. That outbreak sent 4,400 people to the hospital, killed 50, and sickened hundreds of thousands in Milwaukee. At the time, patients began contacting nurse call-in lines several days before the emergency rooms started to report victims. "This was the kind of thing that led to this particular project, realizing that this could be valuable for a bioterrorism event, and also for a public health outbreak," Harmon said.

Optum is the largest company offering nurse telephone triage in the United States; it serves more than 23 million people through six call centers.

About 400 nurses are on hand to talk to health plan members about symptoms and concerns. Of course, not all 23 million members call the nurse line for help. According to Harmon, up to 10 percent place a call in any given year. But that's more than enough calls to detect a problem, said Reed Tuckson, the senior vice president for consumer health and medical care advancement at United Healthcare. "If there were to be an increasing incidence of disease that was occurring, we are in a position ... from people's use of our service, to be able to detect some of that," Tuckson said.

To be sure, this isn't the only surveillance effort under way. The CDC is still encouraging local authorities to monitor emergency room visits and sales of over-the-counter medications, for example. "The theory now at CDC is to let a thousand flowers bloom," Ignagni said.

"Encourage a variety of systems to develop so that they can have the best of those systems, and see what they want to keep over time and what they want to discard over time."

But Ignagni believes that private health plans can provide one of the earliest warning signs in detecting a possible biological attack. Indeed, as the pilot project begins its second year, AAHP is asking for a larger federal grant, and more health plans want to participate. Kaiser Permanente in California is ready to go, and Caldwell is asking CDC for the funding to get Golden State participants in the system. Several other large health insurers, including Aetna, are considering participating in the project.

Caldwell cautions that this is still a localized demonstration project.

But, she said, "I'd like to think that this will grow tremendously. We just have to prove that the system works."

[http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues/newswires/2003\\_4\\_18.html#5](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/newswires/2003_4_18.html#5)

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Washington Times

April 18, 2003

Pg. 12

## Rice Taps Inspector With Iraq Experience

By Stewart Stogel, The Washington Times

NEW YORK — Charles Duelfer, a former State Department official who once led a weapons inspection team in Iraq, is in Baghdad directing the U.S. search for banned weapons, diplomatic sources said.

According to the sources, White House National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, a friend of Mr. Duelfer, tapped him to lead the new inspection effort. Neither the State Department nor the United Nations would confirm his arrival in the Iraqi capital.

The United States has enlisted about 10 former U.N. weapons inspectors to help the search in Iraq, Reuters news agency reported yesterday.

A Pentagon official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told Reuters that "approximately 10 former U.N. inspectors and personnel" have been "applying their experience and expertise to the effort." The official said some are inside Iraq and that others are preparing to go there.

The official did not identify the former inspectors other than to say that they are Americans, with some British possibly involved as well, and did not define their role.

The official said several U.S. government teams have been in the region since the operations in Iraq began, and are "deploying to suspect sites across Iraq to perform analysis of [weapons of mass destruction]-related finds." More than two dozen sites have been visited "and the pace of such visits is expanding," the official said.

From 1988 to 2000, Mr. Duelfer led the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM). Before that, he was the deputy to chief inspectors Rolf Ekeus and later Richard Butler.

During Mr. Duelfer's tenure, the Saddam Hussein government barred U.N. inspectors from Iraq. This also was the period the White House believes the Iraqi regime reactivated most of its prohibited weapons programs.

Mr. Duelfer left the U.N. panel in March 2000 when the Security Council dissolved UNSCOM and replaced it with a new inspection organization, the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission led by Hans Blix.

Until last summer, Mr. Duelfer had been a research fellow at a Washington think tank.

Former inspectors from the United Nations said the U.S. military's efforts to find any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq have gotten off to a slow start, increasing the chances that some could be spirited out of the country and sold to terrorist groups.

Thousands of U.S. soldiers and other experts are working to locate stockpiles of weapons such as VX and sarin nerve agents and mustard gas that American officials believe are stashed somewhere in Iraq.

Before the war President Bush said Iraq posed a threat because Saddam Hussein's government had stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, which Mr. Bush said justified military action.

"There is pressure to find something pretty quickly, of course. I have no doubt something will be found, but it may take a little while," said Terence Taylor, a chief U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq from 1993 to 1997.

Former U.N. inspector David Kay said he has talked to U.S. officials about how to organize the search, recommended that others be recruited in the effort, and volunteered to take part "under the right set of circumstances." But he said the military's effort has had a slow start and some former U.N. inspectors involved were "sitting on the sidelines."

He worried about "some Iraqi colonel who thinks he has no future in Iraq but knows if he takes a chemical or biological weapon or some of the technology to Damascus he can sell it to Hezbollah, or you name the terrorist group, for \$50,000."

A former U.N. inspector in Iraq who has talked to the U.S. military said the Pentagon wants to bring in arms experts who have special knowledge of the country without formally involving the United Nations.

U.N. chief weapons inspector Hans Blix, meanwhile, has again urged U.S.-led forces in Iraq to allow the return of U.N. inspectors, but says he sees little sign of willingness to do so.

"The alliance arrived as a liberator and an occupier and that can have its disadvantages. If their experts actually find weapons of mass destruction, their veracity could be doubted," Mr. Blix said in an interview with German magazine Der Spiegel.

"Therefore I am in favor of having these tasks put back under the responsibility of specialists with international legitimacy," he said.

"We have never claimed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, although we could not rule it out. Now we will see if London and Washington were right. I am very curious and can only wish them luck with their search," he said.

*This article is based in part on wire service reports.*

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030418-30703850.htm>

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New York Times

April 18, 2003

## Rumsfeld Looking For Help In Finding Outlawed Arms

By Eric Schmitt

WASHINGTON, April 17 — Even with coalition forces now controlling most of Iraq, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said today that the United States would still need the help of Iraqis to find banned weapons in their country.

"It's going to take time to find anything," Mr. Rumsfeld said. "They've learned to function in that country in an inspections environment. They buried things, they used underground tunnels."

Mr. Rumsfeld said most of the areas where Iraq is suspected of hiding its unconventional weapons have now been secured by American forces, and military search teams are searching those areas. But he said the teams would still need Iraqis, perhaps scientists or military officers, to guide them to the hiding places.

"It is not like a treasure hunt where you just run around looking everywhere hoping you find something," Mr. Rumsfeld said in remarks to a gathering of Pentagon employees and military personnel.

"The inspectors didn't find anything, and I doubt that we will," he said, referring to inconclusive inspections by the United Nations. "What we will do is find the people who will tell us."

Gen. Tommy R. Franks, the commander of allied forces in Iraq, said on Sunday that 2,000 to 3,000 possible sites had been identified that could have housed chemical, biological or other unconventional weapons, although search teams have narrowed their immediate focus to about three dozen of the highest-priority sites, officials said.

So far no chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons have been found in Iraq.

Asked today what steps were being taken to counter potential accusations that the United States had planted whatever weapons might be found, Mr. Rumsfeld said, "Well, that is something, needless to say, that we're concerned about."

American officials are treating all the sites essentially as crime scenes to reduce the possibility that such accusations would be given credence, he said.

Mr. Rumsfeld said American officials at the sites were taking photographs to ensure that control over any evidence would be as transparent as possible.

"That will not stop certain countries and certain types of people from claiming, inaccurately, that it was planted," Mr. Rumsfeld said. "There are a lot of people who lie and get away with it."

The American teams include experts from the Defense Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In addition, about 10 former United Nations weapons inspectors have been recruited by the United States to help look for the banned weapons, Reuters reported.

Mr. Rumsfeld made his remarks as he and Gen. Richard B. Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed Defense Department workers at one of their periodic meetings in an auditorium at the Pentagon.

The Pentagon has refused to estimate the number of Iraqi civilians killed in the monthlong war. But General Myers said the combat operations had been "the most humane of any war in history," citing the military's care in picking targets to minimize the risk to civilians and to mosques, schools, power plants and other public structures.

General Myers joined Secretary of State Colin L. Powell in warning Syria against harboring any members of Saddam Hussein's former government who may have fled Iraq.

Mr. Powell, who said on Wednesday that he would probably visit Damascus later this spring to talk to President Bashar al-Assad, said there were signs that Syria was responding to the repeated warnings.

"They say they have closed their borders to this kind of movement and we hope that they keep that border sealed,"

Mr. Powell said on the PBS program "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer." "If any of these individuals who are associates, affiliates of the former Hussein regime turn up, the Syrians will do the correct thing, the right thing, in our judgment, and return them back to Iraq so they can stand before justice administered by the Iraqi people."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/18/international/worldspecial/18PENT.html>

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Boston Globe  
April 17, 2003  
Pg. 1

## Pressure To Find Weapons Mounts

By Bryan Bender, Globe Correspondent

WASHINGTON - A month after the outbreak of war, arms control specialists and former United Nations weapons inspectors are increasingly critical of the Bush administration for its failure to substantiate prewar claims of a hidden weapons arsenal, the principal argument for going to war against Saddam Hussein.

President Bush and other top US officials repeatedly asserted that a significant stockpile of Iraqi chemical and biological weapons remained unaccounted for, including hundreds of tons of chemical agent production materials, 15,000 artillery rockets that could deliver nerve agents, and 30,000 liters of the biological agent anthrax.

Several thousand soldiers in Iraq are now dedicated to the US search, being run by the Defense Department. But so far the mission has been plagued by numerous false readings of suspected chemical and biological materials.

Washington's credibility is being eroded further, according to arms specialists, by the continued refusal to include international participation in the search.

Some analysts say the Bush administration could build support for a lengthy, exhaustive search by immediately bringing in either the United Nations weapons inspectors who left Iraq before the war or other international specialists. The UN Security Council next week will discuss the possible resumption of its inspections in Iraq.

"It's important to be as transparent as possible," said Lee Feinstein, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "I believe they will find weapons of mass destruction, and I think it's going to be important to get the international community involved."

Adding international expertise could also address criticism that the US military's weapons hunt has appeared cumbersome.

"They are not demonstrating much capability," said David Albright, a former UN weapons inspector who is now president of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington. "It has been run somewhat incompetently. They have to bring the professionals in. They said the UN inspectors were bumbling idiots and can't find anything. Now these guys are looking like bumbling idiots that can't find anything."

However, the United States has not indicated any willingness to accept UN help in the search. Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Richard B. Myers said Tuesday that "right now our searches are done under military control, and it's not appropriate to add anyone to that equation."

Other analysts say the failure to find weapons so far suggests there may be few to find.

"There will be less than we have been led to believe," predicted Robert Einhorn, who was the assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation in the Clinton administration. "There is a good chance that Iraq disposed of some weapons. There was no real security need to keep some of the junk they had stored up."

If US military forces are unable to locate a "smoking gun," the specialists say, it will raise new questions about whether the UN weapons inspectors could have successfully contained the threat posed by the Hussein regime, without the need for an invasion. The inspectors returned to Iraq in November after a four-year absence, but left again in early March after the United States and Britain said Iraq had failed to meet its obligation to disarm.

"The case was made that there were a lot of weapons," said Albright, the former inspector. "To make its case, the Bush administration has to find a lot - not 20 chemical shells here, or a couple of drums there. If Iraq destroyed any incriminating evidence, people will say that the inspectors could have contained Iraq."

Administration officials maintain that the search is still in its early stages and point out that at least a dozen suspected weapons sites have been identified and that most are still being investigated.

But some analysts say the slow progress of the search suggests that the US intelligence community widely misjudged the Iraqi weapons program.

"The fact that we haven't found any yet seems to indicate that there were fewer weapons than the administration feared," said Joseph Cirincione, a weapons specialist at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "It would be very difficult to hide a large, ongoing biological or chemical weapons production program [making] hundreds of tons of agents. Janitors who worked in these plants should be able to give us information."

Defending its approach, the Pentagon says it remains convinced that it will find outlawed weapons in Iraq, but it has lowered expectations on what might be found and how soon.

US officials hope the recent capture of two top Iraqi scientists - Jaffar Dhia Jaffar, described as the father of Iraq's nuclear weapons program, and Lieutenant General Amer al-Saadi, Hussein's top science adviser - will provide key insights into the Iraqi weapons program. A raid yesterday on the Baghdad home of Rihab Taha, known as "Dr. Germ" for her role in Iraq's biological weapons program, could provide more leads in the search.

"I have every confidence we're going to find them, but I don't think it's unusual that we haven't found them yet," said Myers, the Joint Chiefs chairman. He said Iraq had many years to learn to hide evidence of its weapons of mass destruction program. "It really hasn't been the top priority up until now."

Moving away from previous assertions that a large arsenal exists in the country, senior officials are now emphasizing the need to find a paper trail and testimony that points to the Hussein regime's capability and intent to develop chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons, as opposed to a readily usable stockpile of weapons.

"We have seen chemical protection-related things in a number of areas, chemical defense-related items. We certainly have encountered a number of delivery systems that have been captured or destroyed," said Brigadier General Vincent Brooks, Central Command's deputy operations chief. "The real heavy-duty work of being able to get into sites and getting detailed access to people who have knowledge... that's ongoing. And we're really just in the earliest stages of that."

Pentagon spokeswoman Victoria Clarke has sought repeatedly to "manage expectations," in her words, saying that the search process could take up to a year to complete.

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Posted 4/18/2003 8:44 PM

Updated 4/18/2003 9:41 PM

## **Iraqi nerve agent expert turns himself in**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A top Iraqi scientist called the "father" of one of his country's nerve agent programs has turned himself in to American authorities, a U.S. official said Friday.

U.S. officials have called Emad Husayn Abdullah al-Ani the father of Iraq's program to make the sophisticated nerve agent VX. His capture could be an important advance in the U.S. search for chemical and biological weapons inside Iraq.

U.S. officials also have accused al-Ani of involvement with an alleged chemical weapons plant in Sudan with links to al-Qaeda.

Military officials say U.S. troops have found no confirmed chemical or biological weapons so far in their searches inside Iraq. No evidence of links between Iraq's



government and the al-Qaeda terrorist group has been found, either, military officials say.

If he cooperates with the Americans, al-Ani may be able to provide information on both. He is not one of the "most wanted" Iraqis depicted on the deck of cards distributed by the Pentagon.

Al-Ani was involved in Iraq's development of the nerve agent VX, one of the world's deadliest chemical weapons — and a substance that is difficult to make. He once headed the research and development program at Iraq's Muthanna State Establishment, a key chemical weapons laboratory, and later headed Iraq's Fallujah 2 chemical weapons plant.

In 1998, U.S. officials said al-Ani had links with executives of the Shifa Pharmaceuticals plant in Khartoum, Sudan. Then-President Clinton alleged that the plant was making a key precursor chemical used in manufacturing VX, a claim that was never independently substantiated.

American officials said the Shifa executives who had contact with al-Ani also had ties to al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. But they conceded they did not know if al-Ani or other Iraqis knew of Shifa's links to bin Laden, which the U.S. officials said were "fuzzy."

The United States destroyed the plant with cruise missiles shortly after al-Qaeda bombed U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Officials of the Shifa plant and Sudan's government denied it was involved in chemical weapons work.

At the time, Iraq's government denied al-Ani was working with Sudanese authorities and said he had never visited Sudan. That statement, however, said Iraq never produced stable VX precursors, when United Nations weapons inspectors concluded Iraq had made tons of VX.

U.S. officials said they had electronically intercepted telephone calls between al-Ani and Shifa plant executives.

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2003-04-18-iraq-weapons-expert\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2003-04-18-iraq-weapons-expert_x.htm)

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New York Times

April 21, 2003

Pg. 1

## **Illicit Arms Kept Till Eve Of War, An Iraqi Scientist Is Said To Assert**

By Judith Miller

WITH THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION, south of Baghdad, Iraq, April 20 — A scientist who claims to have worked in Iraq's chemical weapons program for more than a decade has told an American military team that Iraq destroyed chemical weapons and biological warfare equipment only days before the war began, members of the team said.

They said the scientist led Americans to a supply of material that proved to be the building blocks of illegal weapons, which he claimed to have buried as evidence of Iraq's illicit weapons programs.

The scientist also told American weapons experts that Iraq had secretly sent unconventional weapons and technology to Syria, starting in the mid-1990's, and that more recently Iraq was cooperating with Al Qaeda, the military officials said.

The Americans said the scientist told them that President Saddam Hussein's government had destroyed some stockpiles of deadly agents as early as the mid-1990's, transferred others to Syria, and had recently focused its efforts instead on research and development projects that are virtually impervious to detection by international inspectors, and even American forces on the ground combing through Iraq's giant weapons plants.

An American military team hunting for unconventional weapons in Iraq, the Mobile Exploitation Team Alpha, or MET Alpha, which found the scientist, declined to identify him, saying they feared he might be subject to reprisals. But they said that they considered him credible and that the material unearthed over the last three days at sites to which he led them had proved to be precursors for a toxic agent that is banned by chemical weapons treaties.

The officials' account of the scientist's assertions and the discovery of the buried material, which they described as the most important discovery to date in the hunt for illegal weapons, supports the Bush administration's charges that Iraq continued to develop those weapons and lied to the United Nations about it. Finding and destroying illegal weapons was a major justification for the war.

The officials' accounts also provided an explanation for why United States forces had not yet turned up banned weapons in Iraq. The failure to find such weapons has become a political issue in Washington.

Under the terms of her accreditation to report on the activities of MET Alpha, this reporter was not permitted to interview the scientist or visit his home. Nor was she permitted to write about the discovery of the scientist for three days, and the copy was then submitted for a check by military officials.

Those officials asked that details of what chemicals were uncovered be deleted. They said they feared that such information could jeopardize the scientist's safety by identifying the part of the weapons program where he worked. The MET Alpha team said it reported its findings to Washington after testing the buried material and checking the scientist's identity with experts in the United States. A report was sent to the White House on Friday, experts said. Military spokesmen at the Pentagon and at Central Command headquarters in Doha, Qatar, said they could not confirm that an Iraqi chemical weapons scientist was providing American forces with new information.

The scientist was found by a team headed by Chief Warrant Officer Richard L. Gonzales, the leader of MET Alpha, one of several teams charged with hunting for unconventional weapons throughout Iraq. Departing from his team's assigned mission, Mr. Gonzales and his team of specialists from the Defense Intelligence Agency tracked down the scientist on Thursday through a series of interviews and increasingly frantic site visits.

While this reporter could not interview the scientist, she was permitted to see him from a distance at the sites where he said that material from the arms program was buried.

Clad in nondescript clothes and a baseball cap, he pointed to several spots in the sand where he said chemical precursors and other weapons material were buried. This reporter also accompanied MET Alpha on the search for him and was permitted to examine a letter written in Arabic that he slipped to American soldiers offering them information about the program and seeking their protection.

Military officials said the scientist told them that four days before President Bush gave Mr. Hussein 48 hours to leave Iraq or face war, Iraqi officials set fire to a warehouse where biological weapons research and development was conducted.

The officials quoted him as saying he had watched several months before the outbreak of the war as Iraqis buried chemical precursors and other sensitive material to conceal and preserve them for future use. The officials said the scientist showed them documents, samples, and other evidence of the program that he claimed to have stolen to prove that the program existed.

MET Alpha is one of several teams created earlier this year to hunt for unconventional weapons in Iraq. Supported by the 75th Exploitation Task Force, a field artillery brigade based in Fort Sill, Okla., the teams were charged with visiting some 150 top sites that intelligence agencies have identified as suspect.

But the Pentagon-led teams, which include specialists from several Pentagon agencies, have been hampered by a lack of resources and by geography.

Because the task force has two expensive, highly sophisticated, transportable labs in which chemical and germ samples can be analyzed quickly, it was kept at a safe distance from fighting at a desert camp in Kuwait, just across the Iraqi border.

Unable to move their task force closer to Baghdad, where most of the suspect sites and scientists who worked in them are situated, the mobile exploitation teams have had to rely on scarce helicopters to travel to suspect sites in the Baghdad area. Until recently, these were reserved mainly for soldiers going to battle. As a result, most of the teams had done almost no weapons hunting until the fighting had largely concluded.

Two weeks ago, MET Alpha was finally given a mission of inspecting barrels filled with chemicals that were buried on the outskirts of Al Muhawish, a small town south of Baghdad. A small team with little equipment and virtually no supplies traveled to the town for what was supposed to be a half-day survey. The barrels turned out to contain no chemical weapons agents.

But during the survey of that site, Maj. Brian Lynch, the chemical officer of the 101st Airborne Division, told MET Alpha members about a report of suspect containers buried in the area that fit the description of mobile labs.

Other officers mentioned that a man who said he was an Iraqi scientist had given troops a note about Iraq's chemical warfare program. No one had yet followed up the report, they said, because of the fighting and also because similar tips had failed to produce evidence of unconventional weapons.

The team, with vehicles and supplies from the 101st Airborne Division, went out on its own to survey other sites and pursue the tip about the buried containers and the scientist. After completing a lengthy survey of one installation,

Mr. Gonzales and other team members from the Defense Intelligence Agency's Chemical Biological Intelligence Support Team decided to try to find the scientist.

Mr. Gonzales tracked down the scientist's note, which had never been formally analyzed and was still in a brigade headquarters, along with the scientist's address, military officials said.

The next morning, MET Alpha weapons experts found the scientist at home, along with some documents from the program and samples he had buried in his backyard and at other sites.

The scientist has told MET Alpha members that because Iraq's unconventional weapons programs were highly compartmented, he only had firsthand information about the chemical weapons sector in which he worked, team members said.

But he has given the Americans information about other unconventional weapons activities, they said, as well as information about Iraqi weapons cooperation with Syria, and with terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda. It was not clear how the scientist knew of such a connection.

The potential of MET Alpha's work is "enormous," said Maj. Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the 101st Airborne Division.

"What they've discovered," he added, "could prove to be of incalculable value. Though much work must still be done to validate the information MET Alpha has uncovered, if it proves out it will clearly be one of the major discoveries of this operation, and it may be the major discovery."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/21/international/worldspecial/21CHEM.html>

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Los Angeles Times

April 20, 2003

Pg. 1

## **U.S. To Step Up Its Search For Banned Arms**

*More than 1,000 experts will be sent to look for evidence of the still unproven claim that Iraq has hidden weapons of mass destruction.*

By Doyle McManus and Bob Drogin, Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON -- With its claim that Iraq hid chemical, biological and nuclear weapons still unproven, the Bush administration is preparing to dispatch hundreds of additional investigators to step up the search -- and warning that it may take as long as a year to complete.

The Pentagon is assembling a "survey group" with more than 1,000 experts to interrogate Iraqi scientists and sift through recovered documents to broaden the search for weapons of mass destruction, officials said.

U.S. military units in Iraq have found no prohibited weapons since they invaded the country last month, although they have found gas masks, protective gear and antidote kits.

Some experts, both inside and outside the U.S. government, say Iraq's weapons programs may turn out to be significantly smaller than the Bush administration has portrayed them. And some say missteps in military units' initial searches of suspected weapons sites may have unwittingly destroyed useful evidence.

But administration officials say they are still certain that the regime of Saddam Hussein was developing and hiding weapons of mass destruction and that the evidence will eventually turn up. The U.S. contention that Hussein was holding chemical and biological weapons, and that he might give some of them to terrorists, was the administration's principal rationale for going to war.

"We are quite confident of our intelligence," Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said in a television interview last week. "When the searching is all over and the evidence comes forward, this conflict will rest on a solid foundation of fact."

But officials also have begun an effort to lower public expectations, emphasizing how difficult it will be to find the evidence and how long it may take for the weapons to be found.

"It is not like a treasure hunt, where you just run around looking everywhere, hoping you find something," Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said last week. "The [United Nations] inspectors didn't find anything, and I doubt that we will. What we will do is find the people who will tell us.

"It's going to take time to find anything because ... they buried things, they used underground tunnels ... [and] they took the documentation," Rumsfeld said.

Army Gen. Tommy Franks, the head of U.S. Central Command who directed the war in Iraq, said recently that the weapons search could take as long as a year.

Officials maintain that they are not frustrated or disappointed that evidence of their principal charge against Hussein has not yet turned up, but they acknowledge that they will face mounting skepticism from critics of the war the longer the search takes.

The issue will come up this week in the U.N. Security Council, which has summoned chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix to report on the situation. Blix clashed with the Bush administration before the war began when he argued that his inspections should be allowed to continue; since the war, he has noted acerbically that the United States has found no more evidence of Iraqi weapons than he did.

Blix said last week that he was ready to put a team of U.N. inspectors back in Iraq within two weeks.

"I think that the world would like to have a credible report on the absence or eradication of the program of weapons of mass destruction," he told the BBC.

The Bush administration says it is "too early" for U.N. inspectors to return to Iraq and expresses little interest in Blix's services. "This seems to be the week of voluntarism ... on the part of people who say they are willing to help get rid of Iraqi weapons, weapons that they weren't willing to admit were there before," a senior U.S. official said. The administration isn't worried that critics may not find any U.S. discoveries credible without international monitors on the scene, the official said. "There will always be people who believe we never landed on the moon," he said. "Besides, it won't just be Americans. There will be Iraqi scientists talking about what they did too."

Part of the problem, U.S. officials say, is that the effort to find the weapons is only now getting underway in earnest. Until now, the effort has been run through the 75th Exploitation Task Force, a unit of several hundred military and civilian experts that followed the Army and Marines into southern Iraq. But to interrogate scientists and scour documents all over the country, the Pentagon is only now assembling the full-scale Iraq Survey Group, which will include more than 1,000 experts in fields ranging from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons to linguistics and conventional munitions.

Most of the team is still in the United States, waiting until travel in Iraq is safe, officials said.

"The 75th is sort of our advance organization, if you will," a member of the group said. "When the Iraq Survey Group stands up, it's going to be a much more capable organization."

The 75th has already searched more than a dozen suspected weapons sites and started collecting Iraqi military documents. Once collected, the documents are scanned and downloaded into a classified U.S. military intelligence computer network known as Harmony for further analysis. But some experts have said the initial effort already appears to have gone awry.

"I'm not sure we went about this in the most efficient fashion," said William C. Potter, director of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

He said he was shocked to learn that Marines had "bumped into" the Tuwaitha nuclear research center, the focal point of Iraq's civilian and military nuclear activities, without knowing what it was, and that former regime members may have succeeded in destroying evidence of their activities.

"I'm surprised there has not been more unambiguous material and documentation found, particularly in the chemical weapons area," Potter said. "I didn't expect to find anything in the nuclear sector. But I was persuaded they had prohibited activities underway in the biological and chemical area."

A former U.N. inspector who asked not to be identified was sharply critical of the U.S. effort so far.

"Basically, they're making some of the same mistakes we made at the start of the inspections in 1991," he said.

"When the Marines blew up an Al Samoud missile ... outside Al Kut, do you think anyone disassembled it first to see if any foreign components were in it? Or took down the serial numbers to trace parts back to suppliers? Or took precise measurements of the warhead to see what it was designed for?"

"They're destroying things without understanding what it is and how it got there," he said.

Officials said the Iraq Survey Group's effort will rely heavily on Iraqi scientists to lead them to evidence of clandestine weapons programs.

But Ewen Buchanan, spokesman for the U.N. inspection team, said the scientists may not know the answers to the most important questions.

"The scientists may be useful in figuring out what got made," Buchanan said. "But it's not at all clear that they would know where things went or where they are hidden."

But Buchanan acknowledged that the U.S. teams "may get more out of interviews than we did.... If there was something hidden, people under the old environment would not have told us where to look."

Rumsfeld announced last week that the United States would pay rewards to anyone providing information about weapons of mass destruction. Iraqi scientists who don't cooperate may be taken to a detention facility for interrogation and ultimately could be charged with war crimes, U.S. officials said.

The surrenders this month of two top Iraqi scientists, Gen. Amir Saadi, the main liaison to U.N. inspection teams for chemical and biological weapons after 1995, and Jafar Jafar, who founded and led Iraq's clandestine nuclear program, raised hopes that the search would soon bear fruit.

But both scientists continue to assert that "they destroyed everything" in the years after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, according to a U.S. intelligence official familiar with the initial debriefings.

"I will be more surprised if we don't find something than if we do," said Jon Wolfsthal, a nonproliferation expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"I expect Saddam buried them deep and hid them well. But as the population opens up, and as former military and security people try to win favor with the new authorities, they'll be willing to talk."

But he said he's concerned that the administration presented "the worst-case scenario" when discussing Iraq's weapons. "Those worst-case estimates may turn out to be high," he said. "What exists there may turn out to be less than what [the administration] said."

David Albright, a former nuclear weapons inspector in Iraq, said he concluded long ago that the administration was overstating the likelihood that Iraq had rebuilt its nuclear weapons program.

He said he is increasingly skeptical of claims that Iraq had a huge arsenal of chemical and biological weapons.

"If there are no weapons of mass destruction, I'll be mad as hell," Albright said. "I certainly accepted the administration claims on chemical and biological weapons. I figured they were telling the truth. If there is no [weapons of mass destruction program], I will feel taken, because they asserted these things with such assurance."

He said it was possible that Hussein's regime broke down its weapons program and destroyed or hid any evidence in hopes of surviving the crisis.

"They could get rid of stuff but maintain a reconstitution capability," he said. "In 1998, the estimates were they could reconstitute in six months."

*Times staff writer John Hendren contributed to this report.*

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/iraq/homefront/la-war-wmd20apr20,1,2548184.story>

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New York Times

April 21, 2003

## Administration Divided Over North Korea

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, April 20 — Just days before President Bush approved the opening of negotiations with North Korea over its nuclear program, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld circulated to key members of the administration a Pentagon memorandum proposing a radically different approach: the United States, the memo argued, should team up with China to press for the ouster of North Korea's leadership.

Mr. Rumsfeld's team, administration officials said, was urging diplomatic pressure for changing the government, not a military solution. But the classified memo, drafted by officials who are deeply opposed to opening talks that could eventually end up benefiting North Korea economically, shows how the handling of the crisis has become the newest subject of internal struggle over how to pursue Mr. Bush's determination to stop the spread of nuclear arms and other unconventional weapons.

Officials on all sides of the arguments say that, with the fall of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, the internal battles that once surrounded the policy on Iraq are re-emerging over North Korea.

White House officials say a change of government in North Korea is not official administration policy — and some suggest that the secret memorandum was circulated for discussion among high-level officials, including Vice President Dick Cheney, and may not represent Mr. Rumsfeld's view. Mr. Rumsfeld's spokeswoman, Victoria Clarke, said today that the defense secretary completely supported the president's diplomatic strategy for disarming North Korea.

But the memo's main argument, that Washington's goal should be the collapse of Kim Jong Il's government, seems at odds with the State Department approach of convincing Mr. Kim, in the words of one senior administration official, "that we're not trying to take him out."

The memorandum was described by several officials who have seen it, including critics of the Pentagon approach who say it is ludicrous to think that China — which is acting as intermediary between North Korea and the United States — would join in any American-led effort to bring about the fall of the North Korean government.

"The last thing the Chinese want," said a senior administration official dealing with the delicate diplomacy, "is a collapse of North Korea that will create a flood of refugees into China and put Western allies on the Chinese border."

President Bush said today that China's willingness to intervene in the negotiations — along with close coordination with Japan and South Korea about dealing with the North Korean government — meant that there was "a good chance of convincing North Korea to abandon her ambitions to develop nuclear arsenals."

But some in the administration liken the new effort to force North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons to Mr. Bush's attempt last September to force Iraq to open up to full inspections: while the White House believes that it is worth a try, few in the administration believe it will work. Mr. Bush and Mr. Rumsfeld have carefully avoided ruling out a military strike on North Korea, though they have both publicly insisted that this is a moment for diplomacy and that no military action is currently contemplated.

Even those who urged the administration to talk to North Korea, like Senator Richard G. Lugar, Republican of Indiana and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, say the threat of military action, no matter how risky, must underpin any talks. "I think that that always has to be there as a very strong possibility," Mr. Lugar said today on the NBC News program "Meet the Press."

Hard-liners in the Pentagon — and some at the White House — say that the United States should use its speedy victory in Iraq to drive home to North Korea that it could meet the same fate if it ignores Mr. Bush's demand that it dismantle its nuclear weapons program, ship its spent nuclear fuel out of the country and open up to intrusive inspections.

Mr. Powell's approach, officials familiar with his thinking say, is to offer North Korea assurances that the United States is not trying to undermine its government, but to make clear that until the nuclear programs are dismantled, the country will get no aid and investment. Mr. Powell received final approval for his approach in a meeting with President Bush last week, a session Mr. Rumsfeld did not attend.

"There's a sense in the Pentagon that Powell got this arranged while everyone was distracted with Iraq," said one intelligence official. "And now there is a race over who will control the next steps."

North Korea is the next case in Mr. Bush's policy of zero tolerance for "rogue states" with such weapons, because unlike Iraq it has two active nuclear programs. The Central Intelligence Agency believes that the country may have developed two weapons before a 1994 nuclear-freeze agreement. North Korea continues to sell missiles to Iran, Syria, Pakistan and other states around the world, and Mr. Powell's deputy, Richard L. Armitage, told Congress earlier this year that if the country made weapons-grade plutonium, it would probably sell it.

On Friday, in its first explicit comment on the Iraq war, North Korea said it had learned something from the fall of Mr. Hussein. "The Iraqi war teaches a lesson that in order to prevent a war and defend the security of a country and the sovereignty of a nation," North Korea said in a statement, "it is necessary to have a powerful physical deterrent." The talks scheduled for this week were nearly scuttled on Friday when, in that same statement, North Korea appeared to suggest — according to its own English-language translation of a government statement — that it had already begun reprocessing its spent nuclear fuel into bomb-grade plutonium. That would mean that Mr. Bush was entering into talks with the nuclear clock ticking. Unless a quick deal was struck, North Korea would be producing weapons-grade material within weeks.

But by midday Friday, American, Japanese and South Korean officials said that when read in the original Korean, the statement said that North Korea was poised to begin producing plutonium, not that it had done so. Today the White House said it was consulting with its allies about whether to go ahead with the talks, scheduled to begin Wednesday.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/21/international/asia/21KORE.html>

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Washington Post

April 21, 2003

Pg. 18

## **Korean Scientists Defect In China**

*Report Says Top Nuclear Officials From North Helped by U.S., Others*

By Doug Struck, Washington Post Foreign Service

TOKYO, April 20 -- The United States and at least 10 other countries helped arrange the defections of up to 20 top North Korean officials, including key nuclear scientists, in an operation that began in October, according to an Australian newspaper.

The Weekend Australian reported that a man it identified as the "father" of the North Korean nuclear program, Kyong Won Ha, was among the defectors and is providing intelligence information to Western officials. Kyong and the other officials had escaped to China and went on to other countries with the help of consulates and embassies, the newspaper reported. The United States helped set up -- and pay for -- an embassy in Beijing for the tiny Pacific Island of Nauru specifically to help move the defectors, though none went to the embassy, the Australian said.

Nauru, an eight-square-mile island in Melanesia northeast of Australia, was persuaded to cooperate in part because of a promise that the United States would help it avoid financial sanctions being considered for the island nation as a "non-cooperative country." It has been singled out for sanctions by Washington as a "primary money-laundering concern" under the U.S.A. Patriot Act.

The Chinese route for defections from North Korea has become an increasingly sensitive issue. China, an ally of North Korea, does not accept Koreans who cross the shallow river border as refugees, and has forcibly returned many people.

But other Koreans have been helped out of China by church groups, aid organizations and some diplomatic offices in China. According to the newspaper, the diplomatic route was galvanized by the United States under the code name "Operation Weasel" to get the top North Koreans out of the country. The report could not be independently verified by The Washington Post.

According to the Weekend Australian, the plan took the defectors in China through a network of other countries. In the past, China has chosen not to challenge the underground route operated by diplomats, who in return have tried to be discreet about it.

Defectors who ended up in South Korea, for example, were instructed by that government not to disclose that they had gone through China, to avoid embarrassing Beijing.

Some defectors in this latest group, which the newspaper described as members of the "military and scientific elite," have ended up in the United States or other Western countries. Kyong, the nuclear scientist, is "believed to be in a safe house in the West," according to the Weekend Australian. The newspaper said Kyong had provided "unprecedented insight" into North Korea's nuclear program, but no specifics were reported. The United States is scheduled to meet with North Korea and China in Beijing on Wednesday in their first negotiations over North Korea's nuclear weapons programs.

The newspaper said one organizer of the defection network was a Washington lawyer named Philip Gagner. He had contacted the president of Nauru in October and asked the country to agree to open embassies in Washington and Beijing, free of charge.

"Some of the governments involved, including governments in the Pacific and the United States government, would like to have the assistance of the Nauru Government in a diplomatic matter of very great sensitivity," Gagner wrote Nauru's president then, Rene Harris, according to the report.

The matter "involves a country -- not Iraq -- which may have acquired weapons of primary concern to other governments and other countries in the region and the world," said the letter, according to the paper. He added, "This is a matter of sufficient concern that the government of the United States would likely recommend removing Nauru from the list of non-cooperative countries."

"We were going to get a [North Korean] nuclear scientist and his family from a farm in China and then take them in a Nauru consulate car to an embassy," the paper quoted Kinza Clodumar, Nauru's former finance minister, as saying. Among the other countries involved in the operation, according to the paper, are New Zealand, Vanuatu, Thailand, the Philippines and Spain. The newspaper said it had uncovered the network "through confidential documents and interviews with key players in Washington, the Pacific and North Asia." It said Australia was not involved and that the operation "has now been wound up."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64760-2003Apr20.html>

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Philadelphia Inquirer  
April 21, 2003

## **A Month Of War, And Still No Illegal Weapons Found**

By Jessica Guynn, Knight Ridder News Service

WASHINGTON - Where are Iraq's weapons of mass destruction? That's the most pressing question facing the United States one month after the war to disarm Saddam Hussein began.

"If we never find any chemical or biological weapons in Iraq, how do we say 'oops'?" said one senior administration official.

The United States has yet to substantiate repeated claims that Saddam Hussein had massive stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and a program to build a nuclear bomb - claims the Bush administration relied on to justify preemptive military action in Iraq without the United Nations' blessing.

The weapons hunt is critical to improving the United States' already shaky credibility in the Middle East, and rebuilding relations with former allies that opposed the war. So far, the hunt has turned up only false alarms.

A senior Pentagon official said none of the more than two dozen sites searched for banned weapons "have turned up the real goods yet."

Arms-control experts have grown increasingly critical of the slow progress. International critics say the failure to find Hussein's supposed deadly arsenal raises questions about the Bush administration's motives for going to war. Responding to mounting political pressure here and abroad, the United States has intensified efforts to uncover chemical, biological or nuclear weapons programs in Iraq.

The Pentagon has equipped thousands of troops, technicians, intelligence analysts, and military and civilian scientists with mobile laboratories. U.S. forces - including elite Delta and Navy SEAL teams - are scouring palaces, regime headquarters and government officials' residences. The FBI is reviewing regime documents for clues. U.S. officials have offered up to \$200,000 in rewards.

The Pentagon must search at least 1,000 suspected storage and manufacturing sites. Officials caution that ferreting out weapons dispersed and hidden by Hussein's regime in a country the size of California could take as long as a year.

"We're looking for stuff that is clearly hidden quite skillfully," the senior Pentagon official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But [intelligence operatives] seem to think it's just a matter of time."

Arms-control specialists are not convinced the hunt will yield substantial - or any - caches of weapons. Many experts expect that weapons of mass destruction will be found, but perhaps not in the quantities that the Bush administration suggested could be hidden away.

"It's too early to come to any definitive conclusion," said Jonathan Tucker, a former weapons inspector who is a senior fellow at the Washington-based United States Institute of Peace. "Their [the Iraqis'] behavior during the [U.N.] inspections process suggests to me they had something to hide, that they were probably harboring prohibited weapons. But whether they had weapons on the scale the Bush administration alleged remains unclear."

Not finding any illegal weapons or their production facilities would raise serious questions about the reliability of American intelligence and could spur charges of political overreaching.

"We'd pay a price in terms of our political influence," said Robert Galluci, dean of the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. "Over time, credibility accounts for a great deal, and to some degree this would diminish our effectiveness, particularly in the Arab world."

In one intelligence fiasco, the CIA put forward documents it said showed Iraq had attempted to buy uranium oxide, which can be used to make nuclear weapons, from Niger. The documents turned out to be crude forgeries that a diplomat from Niger sold to Italian officials.

Arms-control experts fear weapons materials and scientists may have slipped out of Iraq. They say it is critical that the United States account for all of Iraq's missing weapons - from liters of anthrax to tons of materials that can make chemical agents - to make sure none of it has fallen into the wrong hands.

"We could face a new round of terrorism either against ourselves or against friends and allies as these weapons move through the global terrorist network," said former weapons inspector David Kay.

Such concerns have prompted former inspectors to call for the United States to bring in the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency to help search for Hussein's alleged forbidden weapons. U.N. inspectors were charged with making sure Iraq complied with resolutions that prohibited the possession of chemical, biological and nuclear arms after the 1991 Gulf War.

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## **Lethal Legacy: Bioweapons for Sale**

# **U.S. Declined South African Scientist's Offer on Man-Made Pathogens**



*By Joby Warrick and John Mintz*  
Washington Post Staff Writers  
Sunday, April 20, 2003; Page A01  
*First of two articles*

PRETORIA, South Africa -- Daan Goosen's calling card to the FBI was a vial of bacteria he had freeze-dried and hidden inside a toothpaste tube for secret passage to the United States.

From among hundreds of flasks in his Pretoria lab, the South African scientist picked a man-made strain that was sure to impress: a microbial Frankenstein that fused the genes of a common intestinal bug with DNA from the pathogen that causes the deadly illness gas gangrene.

"This will show the Americans what we are capable of," Goosen said at the time.

On May 6, 2002, Goosen slipped the parcel into the hands of a retired CIA officer who couriered the microbes 8,000 miles for a drop-off with the FBI. If U.S. officials liked what they saw, Goosen said he was prepared to offer much more: an entire collection of pathogens developed by a secret South African bioweapons research program Goosen once headed.

Goosen's extraordinary offer to the FBI, outlined in documents obtained by The Washington Post and interviews with key participants, promised scores of additional vials containing the bacteria that cause anthrax, plague, salmonella and botulism, as well as antidotes for many of the diseases. Several strains, like the bacterial hybrid in the toothpaste tube, had been genetically altered, a technique used by weapons scientists to make diseases harder to detect and defeat. All were to be delivered to the U.S. government for safekeeping and to help strengthen U.S. defenses against future terrorism attacks.

U.S. officials considered the offer but balked at the asking price -- \$5 million and immigration permits for Goosen and up to 19 associates and family members to come to the United States. The deal collapsed in confusion last year after skeptical FBI agents turned the matter over to South African authorities, who twice investigated Goosen but never charged him.

Participants in the failed deal differ on what happened and why. But they agree that the bacterial strains remain in private hands in South Africa, where they have continued to attract attention from individuals interested in acquiring them.

The episode throws new light on the extraordinarily difficult task of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. South Africa, which built nuclear, chemical and biological arsenals under apartheid, renounced its weapons in 1993, and sought to destroy all traces of them, including instruction manuals and bacterial seed stocks. But like other countries that have attempted such a rollback, such as Ukraine and Kazakhstan, South Africa finds itself in a gray zone where weapons of the past pose serious dangers for the present.

"The weapons programs were ostensibly terminated, yet clearly they weren't able to destroy everything," said Jeffrey M. Bale of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, which is carrying out a study of South Africa's weapons programs. "The fact that Goosen and others are providing samples and being approached by foreign parties suggests that these things never really went away."

To disarmament experts, the case is especially troubling because of the kinds of terrorist-ready weapons produced by Project Coast, a top-secret biological and chemical program created by South Africa's white-minority government, which came to light in the late 1990s. Unlike U.S. and Soviet programs that amassed huge stockpiles of bombs and missiles for biological warfare, Project Coast specialized in the tools of terrorism and assassination -- including "stealth" weapons that could kill or incapacitate without leaving a trace. The program's military commanders also researched anti-fertility drugs that could be clandestinely applied in black neighborhoods, and explored -- but never produced -- biological weapons that would selectively target the country's black majority population.

Even if all of Project Coast's bacterial strains are secured, the know-how and skills acquired by dozens of its scientists may be impossible to contain, South African officials acknowledged in interviews. Several key scientists have pursued business interests overseas since the program was disbanded shortly before South Africa's transition to democracy. Others, including Goosen, have acknowledged they were approached by recruiters claiming to represent foreign governments or extremist groups. While the United States has spent tens of millions of dollars to re-train and re-employ weapons scientists in the former Soviet Union, many Project Coast scientists have been shunned by their peers and left to try to support themselves any way they can.

"It would have been galling to most South Africans to see their government take care of these scientists, after all the revelations about them," said Chandre Gould, an investigator for South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the late 1990s and now the co-author of an official United Nations study on Project Coast. "They were part of a program that tried to kill people in this society."

**Novel Weapons**

The failed deal with the South African scientist is documented in hundreds of pages of memos, contracts and reports. Many of the documents were provided by Don Mayes, a former CIA operative who acted as go-between in the deal, and helped arrange for the bacterial sample to be brought to the United States for testing. Mayes, Goosen, and several other South African participants were also interviewed at length for this article.

The FBI and CIA, which were jointly involved in the encounter with Goosen, declined to speak about it on the record. However, U.S. government officials, who asked not to be identified by name, have provided details of the negotiations. They say the agencies were troubled by Goosen's claims but suspected the scientist and his partners were more interested in cashing in than helping out. They viewed Goosen and his partners as naive, at best, for expecting to be rewarded for turning over what they viewed as 1990s-vintage biological material -- products that could be duplicated in any well-equipped, modern microbiology lab.

"If they thought we were going to put out good money for that kind of stuff, they came to the wrong group," said one U.S. law enforcement official who reviewed Goosen's proposal. "Thanks for being good citizens, but no thanks."

Goosen acknowledged that he had hoped to benefit financially, and sought permission to work in the United States, where he wanted to start a new business. But he says the FBI misjudged both his intentions and his ability to help them defend against future bioterrorism.

"At minimum, they should have copies and DNA fingerprints for each of the strains from Project Coast," he said. "If one of the strains were to turn up in Iraq, at least they would know where it came from."

Goosen, an affable 51-year-old who became a veterinarian like his father, was picked in 1981 as the founding director of Roodeplaar Research Laboratories, the bioweapons research arm of Project Coast.

Project Coast's notorious military commander, Wouter Basson, used the lab to create novel weapons for use against anti-apartheid activists and the black communities that supported them, according to documents and testimony in a murder and fraud case that ended last year in Basson's acquittal. One of Goosen's first assignments, he has said, was to harvest highly lethal venom from the black mambo snake for use in secret assassinations. Fangs from a dead snake were used to make impressions in the victim's skin so the death would appear accidental.

A widening rift between Goosen and Basson over the lab's direction ended with Goosen's resignation in 1986. But he continued to work as a consultant for the lab and maintained close ties with its scientists, some of whom would later work for him in his private laboratory. After Project Coast was disbanded, Goosen was among the first scientists to publicly acknowledge and condemn its offensive weapons research.

South African officials claimed to have destroyed all of Project Coast's biological materials in 1993, several months before the outgoing government of Frederik W. de Klerk revealed the secret program to Nelson Mandela, the first president of post-apartheid South Africa. But Goosen says many scientists kept copies of organisms and documents in order to continue work on "dual-use" projects with commercial as well as military applications. Goosen's vaccine production lab ended up with hundreds of strains, at least half of which were from Project Coast. At his home in Pretoria, he showed a visiting reporter two trays of what he described as vaccine strains that he kept in a freezer. "The products should have been destroyed. The products were not destroyed," he said.

After the U.S. anthrax attack in October 2001, at the urging of American friends, Goosen approached the U.S. Department of Defense with an offer of "open cooperation" in sharing Project Coast's extensive research in anthrax vaccines and novel antidotes known as antiserums. The Pentagon was sufficiently interested to arrange a meeting in January 2002 between Goosen and Bioport Corp., the Michigan company that produces anthrax vaccines for the military. But interest from the U.S. side evaporated quickly, to Goosen's amazement.

"At that time there was a massive amount of good will toward the United States, and a feeling that we could contribute," Goosen said. "My thinking was: If George Bush had contracted anthrax, our technology could have cured him."

### **Clandestine Deals**

The two men who finally brought Goosen to the FBI's attention knew little of germ warfare but were old hands in the shadowy world of arms trading and secret deals. Goosen had met neither until May 4, 2002, just two days before the toothpaste tube filled with genetically-altered bacteria began the journey across the Atlantic.

One of the men, retired South African Maj. Gen. Tai Minnaar, was a former military intelligence officer who had worked undercover for the CIA in Cuba in the 1970s, according to his resume. After Goosen's unsuccessful meeting with Bioport, Minnaar phoned Goosen, offering to put him in touch with U.S. officials who would appreciate the value of his work. And, Minnaar said, the Americans might be willing to pay money -- perhaps tens of millions of dollars, Goosen recalled.

Minnaar's first call was to Mayes, the former CIA operative, whom he had met and befriended during Mayes' frequent business trips to South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. On March 4, Minnaar wrote to Mayes warning that dangerous biological material from Project Coast still existed in South Africa and posed unacceptable risks.

"With the current situation here at present, we need to ensure that the technology as well as 'stock in hand' (at present stored safely in a private facility) are safeguarded from finding its way to the people on the wrong side of the fence," Minnaar wrote in an e-mail to Mayes. "This is a very real danger, as some of the other technology we fear has already been sold."

Mayes, 64, a missiles expert who had built a career out of making clandestine deals to acquire foreign-built weapons and air-defense systems for the CIA, said he became quickly convinced that Minnaar was right. Within three weeks, he arranged the first of a series of meetings with FBI and CIA officials to discuss the feasibility of bringing Goosen and his bacterial collection to the United States.

Mayes said that he sought "not a penny" of compensation for himself because "it didn't seem like the patriotic thing to do." Mayes acknowledged he was hoping to shore up his reputation with the U.S. intelligence community following a series of highly publicized legal troubles in the late 1990s. Mayes had been investigated for alleged offenses ranging from the mishandling of classified documents to violating export regulations. Two separate grand juries found no evidence that Mayes had broken the law. His ex-wife made the allegations during a difficult divorce. To remove the bacterial strains from South Africa, Mayes and an associate, Robert Zlockie, a former CIA officer, drew up an extraction plan in the event an agreement was reached to sell the pathogens to the United States. A private aircraft would land at a remote airfield 600 miles from coastal city of Durban. From a waiting camper-trailer on the runway, the bacteria in two cryogenic canisters would be loaded onto the plane along with two of the South African scientists. The canisters were to be labeled "oxygen" to avoid suspicion. One of the canisters was to contain more than 20 liters of antiserum and other antidotes, documents show. The other would contain 200 glass vials of biological material described as "extremely harmful to people and the environment." An inventory later provided to the FBI listed the contents of those vials as more than 150 strains of bacteria, including six that were marked as "genetically modified."

Before the large transfer of pathogens could be made, Goosen first sent a sample to the FBI, which they insistently sought. It was meant to ice the deal and dispel any doubts about Goosen's credentials. Goosen recalled that he thought carefully before selecting a strain and settled on "*Escherichia coli* 078:K80 (+K60 GM)," a common intestinal bacterium that had been spliced with a toxin-producing gene from *Clostridium perfringens*. *C. perfringens* causes several potentially fatal conditions including gas gangrene, a rare and severe form of gangrene in which in bacteria aggressively attack living tissue.

Biodefense experts have long worried about the implications of genetic modification for biological warfare or terrorism. The kind of engineering accomplished by Project Coast could theoretically be used to transfer lethal properties to ordinary bacteria. Or, conversely, it could be used to inoculate people and animals against disease. The problem of how to transport the sample to the United States was quickly solved by Goosen himself. Microbes can easily be transported, he said, in a sealed glass cylinder inserted inside an ordinary toothpaste tube. A few grams of cooling gel squirted into the tube would ensure a stable temperature for a trip of up to several days.

"I can take it all over the world," Mayes quoted the scientist as saying.

#### **Offer Declined**

At 5 p.m. on May 9, 2002, Robert Zlockie, the retired CIA officer who had couriered the toothpaste tube across the Atlantic, delivered the package to an agent at the FBI's office in Key West, Fla. In return, he was given a hand-written receipt on FBI letterhead. "One toothpaste tube containing one ampul of *E. coli* genetically coded with epsilon toxin," it read.

Within days, the bacteria arrived at the Army's top biodefense laboratory at Fort Detrick, Md. for scientific analysis. Government biodefense scientists were consulted about the findings, and helped the FBI in assessing the implications. By May 15, the FBI arrived at several conclusions, according to officials who participated in the discussion.

They decided that Goosen's altered bacteria was precisely as the scientist had described it and that the pathogens listed in his collection were likely "legacy" materials from Project Coast, just as Goosen claimed. They also decided that the FBI would not offer a penny for any of it.

"The material was just as advertised, but the hands-down reaction was, 'So what?' " said one law-enforcement official familiar with the assessment.

U.S. officials involved in the decision say they saw no compelling reasons for paying Goosen or for excluding the government of South Africa, a U.S. ally, from an operation affecting the security of biological material in that country. Mayes, in an urgent note to the FBI, pleaded against alerting South African authorities, saying the scientists "have no faith that the material would ever reach" the United States government. But within days of the note, the FBI reported the matter to South Africa in an official letter relayed through the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria. "From that point on, it became a police matter for South Africa," the law enforcement official said. . . .

(Editor's Note: Please click on hyperlink to view rest of article. There is a "bug" of some sort in the remaining paragraphs that did not allow me to post in this journal.)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A58454-2003Apr19.html>

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## Lethal Legacy

# Biotoxins Fall Into Private Hands

Global Risk Seen In S. African Poisons

By Joby Warrick

Washington Post Staff Writer

Monday, April 21, 2003; Page A01

*Second of two articles*

PRETORIA, South Africa -- In three days of secret meetings last July, the man known throughout South Africa as "Doctor Death" astounded U.S. law enforcement officials with tales of how the former white-minority government carried out unique experiments with chemical and biological weapons.

Wouter Basson, the bearded ex-commander of South Africa's notorious 7th Medical Battalion, spoke candidly of global shopping sprees for pathogens and equipment, of plans for epidemics to be sown in black communities and of cigarettes and letters that were laced with anthrax. He revealed the development of a novel anthrax strain unknown to the U.S. officials, a kind of "stealth" anthrax that Basson claimed could fool tests used to detect the disease.

But most disturbing was the question Basson could not answer: Who controls the microbes now?

Nearly a decade has passed since the last South African president under apartheid, Frederik W. de Klerk, dismantled the top-secret biological and chemical weapons program known as Project Coast, of which Basson was the director.

In 1993, South Africa declared all the weapons, pathogen strains and documents destroyed. Since then, South Africa has been held up as a model -- an example for Iraq and other nations of "what real disarmament looks like," as Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said in a speech in January.

But in reality, Project Coast's legacy continues to haunt South Africa in ways that bode poorly for countries seeking to roll back programs for weapons of mass destruction, according to government officials and weapons experts. South Africa is still struggling to answer basic questions about the kinds of weapons developed in the program, how they were used and what happened to them, the officials said. Bacterial strains that supposedly were destroyed continue to turn up in private hands. Law enforcement officials remain concerned that former weapons scientists may share secrets with extremist groups or foreign governments.

The lingering threats from Project Coast attest to the existence of a gray zone, the combination of weak states, open borders, lack of controls and a ready market of buyers and sellers for weapons of mass destruction.

"So many of the past problems occurred because there weren't enough checks and balances in the system," said Torie Pretorius, one of two lead prosecutors in the state's case against Basson on murder and fraud charges stemming from Project Coast, of which he was acquitted. "Are those checks and balances any better today? I don't think so," he said.

"The rollback in South Africa is incomplete," said Milton Leitenberg, an arms control expert and senior research scholar at the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs. "It's unclear that the government ever wrapped these programs up, and they need to wrap them up. The fact that you've got a guy with a walking collection of bacteria traveling around the world is just more evidence of that."

## Novel Methods

Project Coast was a closely guarded state secret, created as a unit of the South African National Defense Force (SADF) in 1981, at a time when the white-minority government saw itself under siege from all sides -- from communist-led insurgencies in neighboring countries and from an increasingly restive majority black population within its borders.

"The SADF viewed the liberation movements as terrorist organizations, a view that held that every white South African was a potential target," South African researchers Chandre Gould and Peter Folb wrote in a major study on Project Coast released in January for the United Nations.

The first authoritative accounts about Project Coast surfaced only in 1998 when Basson and other top scientists were called to testify before South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings. In 1999, state prosecutors began a 21/2-year trial of Basson on murder and fraud charges, alleging that he had directed the use of weapons in assassinations and misused state money. The trial resulted in the release of thousands of pages of documents, and produced sensational disclosures about South Africa's use of chemicals and pathogens. In a stunning rejection of the

state's case, a South African judge acquitted Basson on all counts last April, finding that Basson did not break any laws. Prosecutors are appealing the case.

Testimony in the trial portrayed Basson as a skillful and wily manager who built a sophisticated weapons program on a modest budget with little oversight from the country's political and military leadership. Unlike the vastly larger Soviet weapons program, Project Coast produced no warheads or missiles and no "weaponized" agents that would be considered militarily significant. Instead, it focused entirely on small-scale, custom-made weapons intended to terrorize, weaken and kill opponents of the apartheid government, testimony and documents showed.

"The most characteristic feature of the South African program was the development, testing and utilization of a wide array of hard-to-trace toxic agents to assassinate 'enemies of the state,'" said Gary Ackerman, a South African weapons expert with the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute for International Studies. Project Coast scientists collected hundreds of strains of deadly pathogens, including 45 types of anthrax and the bacteria that cause cholera, brucellosis and plague, according to documents released by the government. They also developed novel methods for distributing toxins. A 1989 sales list released by the government provided a partial inventory: sugar cubes laced with salmonella, beer bottles and peppermint candies poisoned with pesticide, cigarettes and letter-size envelopes sprinkled with anthrax spores.

More sinister were the attempts -- ordered by Basson -- to use science against the country's black majority population. Daan Goosen, former director of Project Coast's biological research division, said he was ordered by Basson to develop ways to suppress population growth among blacks, perhaps by secretly applying contraceptives to drinking water. Basson also urged scientists to search for a "black bomb," a biological weapon that would select targets based on skin color, he said.

"Basson was very interested. He said, 'If you can do this, it would be very good,'" Goosen recalled. "But nothing came of it."

### **Toxic Trail**

When South Africa announced destruction of its nuclear weapons program in 1993, teams of international observers were flown in for verification that the warheads as well as thousands of pages of blueprints and documents were destroyed. But the process was different for biological and chemical weapons -- the only witnesses to the destruction at Project Coast were the program's top managers. Their claims came into question as early as 1997, when steamer trunks filled with Project Coast documents belonging to Basson turned up in the home of an associate. The trunks contained financial and scientific records as well as a sales list of clandestine weapons.

When questioned by U.S. officials in July, Basson said he could offer no assurances about the possible existence of other documents, or bacterial strains and chemicals that he previously claimed were incinerated or dumped at sea. "His suspicion was that people working in the labs had probably taken things with them," said a knowledgeable U.S. law enforcement source. "As the program ended, an effort was made to destroy or sell off as many assets as possible. That's because the white leadership didn't relish the prospect of this technology ending up in the hands of the new black government."

Goosen acknowledged in an interview that scientists had retained copies of bacterial strains to continue work on vaccines and antidotes with commercial applications. Goosen said he ended up with scores of such strains in his private laboratory, a collection he attempted unsuccessfully to sell to the United States last May. Goosen did not destroy them, he said, because he considered them vital to his continued research and vaccine business.

Documents and e-mails generated as part of that attempted sale to U.S. officials suggested that additional "replica" copies of Project Coast strains existed. Tai Minnaar, a retired South African general who represented Goosen in the attempted sale, wrote to a retired CIA official describing one such replica that "is in fact a copy of the original in every way." Goosen said he had no knowledge of such a replica.

Reconstructing what happened to Project Coast materials is made more difficult because of uncertainties over the identities of outside companies and institutes that may have provided assistance. Most of Project Coast's scientists worked for one of two front companies, Roodeplaat Research Laboratories and Delta G Scientific. But based on interviews with former South African military leaders, some U.S. researchers have concluded that other entities were deeply involved.

"There were a number of different research and testing centers at universities and companies, and scientists in various parts of South Africa assisted," professors Helen E. Purkitt and Stephen F. Burgess wrote in a June 2002 article in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Over time, Basson was able to acquire or develop "pathogens that had never before been seen," they wrote.

### **Global Marketplace**

During his trial, Basson boasted of logging many tens of thousands of miles visiting foreign capitals, from Taipei to Tripoli. According to his own testimony, his trips included a visit to Iran to acquire samples of chemical weapons

used in the Iran-Iraq war, and a trip to Russia to purchase sophisticated equipment used in genetic engineering. Along the way he built a network of foreign contacts who later became business partners. Although weapons experts dismiss many of Basson's claims, travel records confirm that he made at least five trips in the 1990s to Libya -- a country the CIA believes is attempting to establish a biological weapons program. The State Department became so concerned about his visits that a formal complaint was made to the South African government in 1995.

Other former Project Coast officials have made extended visits to Libya as well as China, and still others have received visitors from countries regarded by the United States as proliferation concerns. Gould and Folb, in their U.N.-sponsored study, describe a visit by a group of Syrian businessmen to meet with former Project Coast scientists Andre Immelman and Jan Lourens some time after the program was shut down.

One of the visitors was "quite open in his request for technology in the form of documentation or skills," Lourens was quoted as saying. He said the Syrians returned home empty-handed, and no further contact was made. Deciphering the intent of the foreign contacts was a key objective of U.S. officials who met with Basson during a secret three-day session last summer. Basson, who did not respond to requests for an interview for this story, has kept a relatively low profile while awaiting the outcome of the state's appeal of his acquittal. But in July, he offered himself to U.S. government officials for questioning at the fortress-like U.S. Embassy in Pretoria, the capital. Officials knowledgeable of the meeting agreed to discuss some of the revelations on the condition they not be identified. They recalled Basson had requested the meeting, saying he wanted to clear his record with U.S. law enforcement officials who had tracked his movements in recent years to determine whether he was trying to sell biological agents or secrets to other countries. During three days of questioning, Basson answered questions and told stories with the assurance that none of his statements could be used against him in any criminal or civil court, the officials said.

In past statements, Basson told extraordinary tales that later turned out to be either fabricated or unverifiable. The U.S. visitors were not convinced of his candor on many points, particularly about his foreign travels. Basson acknowledged the trips but offered innocuous explanations. For example, he said that in Libya he consulted with senior government officials about plans to construct a hospital and a railway.

"He was having one hell of a time going all over the world," said a law enforcement official familiar with details of the embassy meetings. "He told us about Libya, Iran, Syria, Egypt and Israel. He mentioned meeting officials from North Korea. And of course, we're convinced he only told about the things he thought we already knew."

The officials did find disturbingly credible Basson's account of an unknown "stealth" anthrax strain. South Africa's most tightly guarded anthrax weapon was a native bacterial strain, known to be lethal to humans and animals -- one of 45 anthrax types in Project Coast's collection. But the strain achieved a whole new significance, he said, when his scientists were able to induce a change that rendered the microbe invisible to standard field tests commonly used in South Africa and neighboring countries.

"They ended up with an organism that would confound conventional detection," said one U.S. law enforcement official who reviewed Basson's claim. "That way, the spread of the disease is not stopped, and more people would become ill." The official said more sophisticated anthrax tests commonly used in the United States would not be fooled by the stealth microbe.

Anthrax experts who learned details of Basson's claim said the reported accomplishment was possible, but likely not very effective as a weapon. The alterations described by Basson would likely have severely reduced the virulence of the strain, said Martin Hugh-Jones, an anthrax specialist at Louisiana State University.

"It might make a few goats sick but it wouldn't do very well at killing people," Hugh-Jones said. "It appears he turned a pathogenic organism into a nonpathogenic one."

Basson acknowledged to U.S. officials that the modifications stripped the microbe of some of its virulence, but said Project Coast scientists remained interested because of the strain's ability to sicken and debilitate targets without leaving a trace.

Basson also told U.S. officials he had learned the technique from Israeli government scientists, a claim that could not be independently verified. Israel has persistently denied having biological or chemical weapons programs, although many U.S. weapons experts believe such programs exist. Israel also is widely believed to have assisted South Africa with the development of its former nuclear weapons program, a claim Israeli officials also deny.

Basson and at least one other member of South Africa's biological and chemical weapons team made extended trips to Israel in the 1980s, according to testimony and documents cited by authors Gould and Folb.

"The two countries at the time shared a similar mind-set: Both saw groups inside their own borders that threatened the country's survival," said a U.S. government weapons analyst with first-hand knowledge of Project Coast and its aftermath, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "The enemy wasn't another nation-state but pockets of individuals within their own population."

Washington Post staff writer Joby Warrick will answer reader questions about this series in a video interview that can be viewed online this afternoon. Submit questions for Warrick at [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64518-2003Apr20.html>

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International Herald Tribune  
April 22, 2003

## North Korea Shifts Tone On Nuclear Plans

By Don Kirk

SEOUL - With a quick shift in a few words, North Korea eased the way Monday for the first talks with U.S. negotiators since the North acknowledged last October that it had a program to build nuclear warheads. Pyongyang's KCNA news agency revised a report last week that the North was "successfully reprocessing" more than 8,000 spent fuel rods into a declaration that it is "successfully going forward to reprocess work" on the rods. That wording was a retreat from the original statement that created a sensation here and in Washington by quoting a Foreign Ministry official. While the new version still carried the threat of North Korea's nuclear potential, the change in wording appeared to be a careful effort to remove the impression that the North had significantly escalated the crisis.

U.S. and Korean officials have repeatedly said that the start of reprocessing the fuel rods at the Yongbyon nuclear complex would mark a critical step toward producing nuclear warheads, possibly within a few months.

Many analysts here believed, however, that the original wording, far from having been an error in translation from the Korean, was a deliberate attempt on the part of North Korea to gauge the response in the run-up to the talks, due to start this week in Beijing.

Or, as Park Jong Chul, senior research fellow at the Korea Institute for National Unification, put it, "We might think North Korea intentionally made a mistake to see how hard-line is the U.S. attitude."

It was only after studying reports of the outcry in Washington over the initial English version, he said, that North Korea ordered the somewhat softer wording than had originally been disseminated.

South Korean officials publicly expressed no doubt that the talks on Wednesday were still on, especially since President George W. Bush expressed confidence Sunday in the ability of negotiators ultimately to resolve the nuclear crisis. Park shared the view of South Korean officials that U.S. negotiators, after reviewing the revision, would head to China for the talks.

Although neither South Korea nor Japan is participating in the first round, Bush, talking to reporters in Fort Hood, Texas, said he believed that the United States, China, Japan and South Korea "working together have a good chance of convincing North Korea to abandon her ambitions to develop nuclear arsenals."

Almost paralleling the talks in Beijing, South and North Korean officials prepared to meet early next week in cabinet-level talks in Pyongyang. The South Korean unification minister, Jeong Se Hyun, telephoned his acceptance of North Korea's invitation for talks that appear timed to follow the first round of dialogue among U.S., North Korean and Chinese negotiators.

Unlike the Beijing talks, however, those between South and North Korean officials were likely to focus on economic matters, notably the North's need for food aid offered by the South. North Korea has said it would discuss the nuclear issue only with the United States.

South Korea planned to send a low-level diplomatic observer to the talks in Beijing, but a Foreign Ministry official said he would make no public comment. North Korea was expected to still exclude South Korea and Japan from the table despite U.S. insistence on a multilateral dialogue.

"For the near future, it might be difficult for South Korea to get involved," Park said at the Korea Institute of National Unification, which is affiliated with the Unification Ministry.

James Kelly, assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific, and Kim Gye Hwan, North Korea's deputy foreign minister will play major roles in the Beijing talks. Park doubted if Kim would have much latitude to negotiate. "It's a preliminary meeting to investigate intentions," he said.

### **Japan seeks to participate**

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan said Monday that talks on North Korea's nuclear plans would not get far without the participation of Japan and South Korea, Reuters reported from Tokyo.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/93977.html>

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## Sniffing New York's Air Ducts For Signs Of Terror

By William K. Rashbaum

Since the war began in Iraq, and even before, the response to the threat of terrorism in New York City has been jarringly visible: heavily armed police officers in the subways, truck checkpoints on bridges, Black Hawk helicopters in the skies.

But there is another layer of protection, on the rooftops and down deep in the basements of some of the city's most notable buildings. Here the threat is nearly invisible, as are the soldiers defending against it, but the danger is still real for those working unawares in their offices.

For a little more than a month, a team of specially trained National Guard soldiers has been testing for biological agents in hotels, tourist sites, government buildings — including City Hall — office buildings like the World Financial Center and other places on a list of possible targets, primarily in Midtown and Lower Manhattan. They have made repeated, almost daily visits to as many as 30 sites.

"Our job is to give the local authorities quick, preliminary information so they can save lives," said Maj. Kaarlo J. Hietala, a soft-spoken career soldier originally from upstate New York who is the National Guard unit's commander. "We help provide the preliminary information they need to make decisions about whether to restrict access or quarantine an area, and how to handle patients."

The 22-member unit is based in Scotia, N.Y., and is one of 32 Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams around the country, although it is the only one now testing for unconventional weapons in urban areas. The Pentagon began forming the teams in 1998 to help assess the scope and severity of a possible terrorist attack by testing for unconventional weapons and then advising civilian agencies on how best to deal with them.

The list of potential targets was compiled by the Police Department, which relied on a combination of intelligence and common sense. On one recent morning, as thousands of people settled into their offices at the World Financial Center, Major Hietala and Master Sgt. Michael Hartzel, both wearing nondescript blue uniforms, were guided through a warren of passageways in the subbasement. There, in a cinder-block fan room painted pale blue, they began their task.

Major Hietala pulled on latex gloves and climbed through a small access panel in the financial center's subbasement. He took a wooden-stemmed cotton swab from a kit in a black knapsack and drew it across a filter that cleans the air pumped into a garage beneath the building.

He handed the swab to Sergeant Hartzel, a chemical and biological weapons specialist, who sealed it inside a pinky-finger-size bottle, which he then put in a larger specimen bottle and then in a heavy zippered plastic bag. The day before, soldiers from the unit checked the ventilation system that filters the air that office workers breathe in the tower above, the major said.

The swabs were tested for a wide range of biological agents, including smallpox and anthrax, he said. As they have each day since the team arrived in New York City on March 19, the results came back negative.

In addition to checking for biological agents, the soldiers, working with the Police Department, have also been monitoring for chemical agents and radiological contamination, supplementing open air testing done in several areas by the City Health Department and, under a new nationwide program, by the federal Homeland Security Department.

The soldiers use sensitive equipment and a mobile laboratory that allows them to do a preliminary analysis, which can be forwarded to more sophisticated city, state or federal labs. They carry small radiation detectors, like those used by some police officers and firefighters, chemical agent detectors and other detection and testing gear.

Their work underscores the growing concerns among local and federal authorities about a terrorist attack using such unconventional weapons, concerns that heightened when United States and British forces invaded Iraq.

Al Qaeda, according to intelligence agencies and testimony in several federal terrorism trials, has long sought chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, including a so-called dirty bomb — a conventional explosive jacketed in radioactive material that would send out a plume over a limited area.

While the \$143 million nationwide civil support team program for biological, chemical and radiation weapons stumbled in its early days, with criticism over a ballooning budget that might have been better spent on training and equipping local agencies, the New York team has earned praise from some local officials. Gov. George E. Pataki ordered the unit to New York City when the war began. It continues to work, even while hostilities appear to be cooling overseas.



The New York team's annual budget is about \$600,000, for personnel, equipment and training, according to officials. Among their tools are a computer modeling program that, using real-time weather information, can roughly predict the course and effects of a release of biological, chemical or radiological agents, Major Hietala said. The program tracks the course of a plume, delineated as a scarlet cloud across an aerial map of the city, roughly defining the affected area and allowing the soldiers to set up what is known as an exclusion zone. Using census data, the program can also make casualty estimates, Major Hietala said, but he noted the figures for some areas can be unreliable because they are based on nighttime population, which could be a fraction of the daytime figures. They have gone about their tasks in recent weeks with little fanfare, in large measure because officials view the testing as a precaution, and because Major Hietala says he views the unit's role as supporting the work done by local authorities.

So the soldiers have abandoned their camouflage battle dress for unremarkable blue uniforms — actually low-level chemical protection suits — and drive mostly in unmarked vehicles, traveling with the New York Police Department officers with whom they work.

Made up of full-time National Guard soldiers who are each trained in a particular specialty, the unit also has a sophisticated communications truck that can send encrypted data to laboratories like the one at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta over a secure satellite link. (After the unit came to New York City the day of the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center, senior F.B.I. officials, who lost the use of their communications center in Lower Manhattan, used the team's secure link to communicate with F.B.I officials in Washington.)

And the support team's assistance, according to Major Hietala and several other officials, has not been limited to the Police Department.

Major Hietala has met with officials from several other city agencies, including the office of the chief medical examiner, which has an unusual problem surrounding the possible use of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. "They have concerns," the major said. "What if something bad did happen and how would that affect remains? They talked to us about what they've been working on, how do they certify people as clean to release them to their families."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/22/nyregion/22WEAP.html>

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## **Warner May Revisit Ban On Military Domestic Police Power**

Senate Armed Services Chairman Warner may hold hearings to determine if the Reconstruction-era Posse Comitatus law should be revised to give the military new domestic policing powers, even though the Bush administration has backed away from its call for a review and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld is opposed to changes. Warner, a former Navy secretary, "remains concerned about making sure Posse Comitatus is not limiting legislation," a spokesman said. "He remains open to re-examining and reviewing it."

The 1878 law, originally designed to bar federal troops from policing polling places in the South after the Civil War, limits the military's role in civilian law enforcement proceedings. Calls for easing the restrictions gained momentum after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The White House entered the debate last summer when the Homeland Security Department was being designed. "The threat of catastrophic terrorism requires a thorough review of the laws permitting the military to act within the United States in order to determine whether domestic preparedness and response efforts would benefit from greater involvement of military personnel and, if so, how," the administration wrote in its legislative proposal.

Warner raised the idea of hearings in 2001 and repeated it late last year, when election results gave Republicans control of the Senate and put him in line to chair the Armed Services panel. He revisited the issue while questioning Paul McHale, assistant Defense secretary for homeland defense, during an April 8 committee hearing. While McHale said protecting the country "requires an unprecedented level of cooperation throughout all levels of government," he said Rumsfeld has decided the law should not be changed. Gen. Ralph Eberhart, commander of the military's Northern Command, took a similar position at a House Armed Services hearing in March. "We believe the act, as amended, provides the authority we need to do our job, and no modification is needed at this time," he said.

Debate about the law has created some unusual coalitions inside and outside of government. Senators interested in considering relaxed restrictions during national emergencies include Sens. Trent Lott, R-Miss., and Joseph Biden, D-Del. Among the Senate opponents is Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Thad Cochran, R-Miss. "I really don't think we ought to change that, frankly," he told *CongressDaily*. "The military's not in the business of arresting people." Cochran said he supported changing the law until a military officer made a chilling comment about the Pentagon's involvement in drug-interdiction flights, "Senator, we're in the business to kill enemy aircraft, not force them to land."

Opponents of easing the restrictions, including the American Civil Liberties Union and scholars from some conservative think tanks, argue that the law has already been weakened by government decisions to allow the military to patrol U.S. borders, search for drug suppliers, and, in one highly publicized case last year, use spy planes to try to track the Washington-area sniper. Even if Rumsfeld convinces Warner to skip hearings, Gene Healy of the Cato Institute said he does not think the issue will go away. "The next time there is a domestic terrorism incident, this will come up again," Healy said. "Because the military does its main mission so well, a lot of politicians are starting to see it as a panacea for solving every problem."

-- by *David Morris*

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