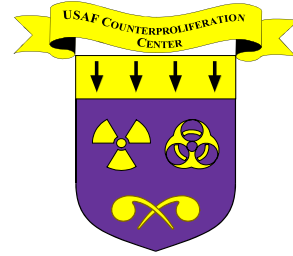


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Washington Times

June 18, 2003

Pg. 1

Lack Of Spies In Baghdad Spurs CIA To Bolster Ranks

Agency to focus on human intelligence

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

The CIA lacked spies on the ground in Iraq who could detail Baghdad's weapons programs and is working to build up its ranks after years of neglect, according to current and former U.S. intelligence officials.

The agency is too dependent on former officials, defectors and foreign intelligence services that lack the kind of detailed knowledge that human intelligence can provide, according to the officials.

CIA sources on Iraq is one of the issues being examined by Congress as part of its probe into whether the CIA provided bad intelligence on Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, or whether policy-makers skewed reports to fit their goals.

Much of the information about Baghdad's weapons came from former Iraqi officials and friendly foreign intelligence services, in addition to intercepted communications and satellite photographs, intelligence officials said. The CIA had few agents with firsthand knowledge of weapons inside Iraq, said officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Former CIA Director R. James Woolsey said having the right agent in the right place at the right time is the best use of human spying. But he also believes the U.S. government did too little to acquire information from Iraqi exiles, many of whom were in touch with people in Iraq.

"You don't have to control an asset for them to be useful," Mr. Woolsey said. "An awful lot of people in the Cold War were volunteers and defectors."

Ahmed Chalabi, the leader of the anti-Saddam Iraqi National Congress, said his group provided three Iraqis with information on Iraq's arms programs. Two were useful to the CIA and one was not, Mr. Chalabi said.

Mr. Chalabi also said in an interview that an Iraqi double agent fooled the U.S. military into bombing two purported Saddam hide-outs during the war. The CIA denies the claim.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell revealed much of what U.S. intelligence agencies knew about Iraq's arms programs in a Feb. 5 briefing before the U.N. Security Council.

Mr. Powell said the data came from electronic intercepts of Iraqi communications and from human sources.

"Every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources. These are not assertions. What we are giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence," Mr. Powell said.

No weapons have been found in the two months since coalition forces took Baghdad. U.S. forces found two mobile biological-weapons production vans, which a CIA report called evidence of Iraq's hidden arms programs.

Democrats on Capitol Hill say that intelligence was politicized by the Bush administration to support its efforts to go to war.

The Powell presentation included references to at least 12 human sources, most of them defectors. These sources provided the CIA with details on biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, as well as missile systems.

The two biological-weapons vans that were discovered in April were disclosed before the war by a chemical engineer and corroborated by three other Iraqis, including two defectors.

The chemical-arms intelligence on Iraq came from defectors, including two human sources that were not further identified.

Two defectors were the source of information on Iraq's nuclear program, and two sources inside Saddam's missile program revealed information about Baghdad's hidden Scud missiles.

The CIA, which is in charge of human spying operations, has tried to rebuild its agent networks around the world and especially in Iraq.

The head of the CIA's espionage branch, James Pavitt, said in a speech in January that in the mid-1990s the recruitment of case officers came to a virtual halt.

"Today, however, we have more reporting on the really hard targets than I can remember at any time in my nearly 30 years of agency service," Mr. Pavitt said.

The clandestine service today includes veteran officers and newer recruits hired in the past five years, Mr. Pavitt said.

U.S. spying capabilities were sharply cut in the 1970s under CIA Director Stansfield Turner, and again in the 1990s under President Clinton.

The Defense Intelligence Agency's Defense HUMINT Service also conducts espionage. Its efforts to build up agent networks have been hampered by the CIA, which in the past has taken the best agent-recruits and contacts away from DIA.

Problems with espionage persist in Iraq. U.S. officials said CIA officers working in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities must travel with armed escorts, who critics say limit their ability to conduct spying.

CIA officers in Baghdad also carry firearms, which has led some critics to call the agency risk averse. One intelligence official, however, rejected the idea.

"Iraq continues to be a dangerous place, and CIA officers take all necessary steps to protect themselves and those they deal with," this official said. "The notion that there is something risk averse about agency officers carrying weapons to protect themselves in a dangerous environment is ridiculous."

The official would not comment on the requirement for armed escorts.

The CIA's cadre of spies is estimated at 8,000 to 10,000 people.

Last week, the agency graduated the largest class of case officers, as its field agents are known, in its history, said a U.S. official who declined to say how large it was. The large class is a sign that CIA efforts to improve spying are progressing and have increased sharply since the September 11 terrorist attacks, the official said.

Other officials said most CIA trainee classes in the past ranged from 50 to 100 people. During Vietnam, the agency's training facility near Williamsburg turned out as many as 600 spies per class.

The CIA also has launched a program to recall some experienced clandestine service veterans. However, officials said some of the best officers were turned down for jobs because they did not fit the political profile of the current agency's case officers.

Robert Baer, a former CIA operations officer who worked in Iraq during the 1990s, said the Clinton administration decided to cut back on spies because of the end of the Cold War.

"They basically closed down [CIA operations] in Africa," Mr. Baer said. "Africa was a place to send officers not for intelligence, but to learn how to do the job."

Mr. Baer said the problem with CIA spying is that the agency is risk averse, hamstrung by too many lawyers and fails to back its people when they make mistakes or get in trouble.

"People are going to make mistakes, and if they do, they need to be protected," Mr. Baer said. "It's the price of doing business."

Mr. Baer has said that during the 1990s, the CIA had no case officers in Iraq and thus no agents on the ground.

That changed after the September 11 attacks, as the CIA attempted to set up networks in Iraq, officials said.

North Korea is another area where the CIA lacks good spies of its own.

The agency is trying to improve its spying in the tightly controlled Stalinist state and also is focusing on spying in China aimed at North Korea.

Officials said the CIA relies heavily on South Korean spies in the North for its intelligence, something the agency is trying to remedy.

CIA estimates of North Korea's nuclear program were exposed as deficient in April by the private comments of Li Gun, a North Korean negotiator, during talks in Beijing. Mr. Li stated that North Korea was nearly finished reprocessing spent fuel rods that the CIA had reported were still in storage under a 1994 U.S.-North Korea agreement. The comment prompted the CIA to reassess its intelligence on the fuel reprocessing.

One U.S. official said either the North Korean official was lying or there was a major intelligence failure on the part of the CIA.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030617-114855-6633r.htm>

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Washington Times

June 18, 2003

Pg. 1

U.S. Seeks Asian Aid For Ship Searches

N. Korean arms the target

By Nicholas Kravlev, The Washington Times

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — Secretary of State Colin L. Powell sought Asian support yesterday for a new U.S. policy of interdicting suspect North Korean ships on the high seas, and North Korea threatened "immediate physical retaliation" if its vessels are stopped.

"As you look at what happens on the high seas with respect to piracy, drug running, shipment of weapons of mass destruction, you can see that there could be a broader agenda for discussing maritime security," Mr. Powell told reporters on his plane during the flight to Phnom Penh, where he is to attend a security meeting sponsored by the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

"Whether these efforts will blend together at some point, it's too early to say," he added, referring to anything ASEAN members might do to help.

The Bush administration reached an agreement last week with 11 allied countries to crack down on illicit North Korean trade.

The communist nation has been caught shipping missiles to the Middle East and illegal drugs to Japan, Australia and other Asian nations.

Mr. Powell said he would discuss the issue, known as the Proliferation Security Initiative with fellow foreign ministers today at the annual security meeting.

"Everybody is saying the same things to the North Koreans with respect to the unacceptability of their actions," Mr. Powell told reporters.

The plan, also known as the Madrid Initiative for the city where last week's meeting took place, was first proposed by President Bush during his European tour earlier this month. It was endorsed by Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Australia.

"Our goal is to work with other concerned states to develop new means to disrupt the proliferation trade at sea, in the air and on land," John Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security who led the U.S. delegation in Madrid, told Congress on June 4.

"Over time, we will extend this partnership as broadly as possible to keep the world's most destructive weapons away from our shores and out of the hands of our enemies," he said.

North Korea's official Rodong Sinmun daily called the measures part of a premeditated war plan yesterday.

The North "will take an immediate physical retaliatory step against the U.S. once it judges that its sovereignty is infringed upon by Washington's blockade operation," the newspaper said in a commentary carried by the state-run KCNA news agency. "Nobody can vouch that this blockade operation will not lead to such a serious development as an all-out war."

The statement contained a warning to Japan, a major market for smuggled North Korean drugs. Tokyo has stepped up inspections of visiting North Korean ships on suspicion they are carrying drugs and intelligence agents.

"In case a war breaks out on the Korean Peninsula, it will immediately spill over into Japan, as the territory of Japan is used as a U.S. base of aggression against [North Korea] and Japan is fully involved in the U.S. policy to isolate and stifle" North Korea, the paper said.

Mr. Powell, who had a 15-minute impromptu meeting with North Korean Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun at last year's ASEAN meeting in Brunei, said yesterday that he is "pleased at the unity we have been able to achieve with the countries in the region" regarding the unacceptability of the North's nuclear weapons program.

It was not clear whether North Korea would attend this year's meeting.

Since their brief exchange nearly a year ago, the United States and North Korea have met twice: in Pyongyang in October, when the North admitted to having developed a secret uranium-enrichment program, and in April in Beijing, where the North Koreans told the U.S. delegation that they had nuclear weapons and intended to provide "proof" soon.

"North Korea must understand that it does have to cease these activities and abandon altogether its nuclear programs," said Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, who is also in Cambodia for the ASEAN meeting, yesterday.

U.S. officials said the initiative is a direct response to a December incident in which the United States and Spain seized a North Korean missile shipment for Yemen but had to let it go because no rules had been broken.

Australia recently seized a North Korean boat loaded with amphetamines.

Mr. Bolton warned that the administration's goal is "not just to prevent the spread" of illicit arms, "but also to eliminate or roll back such weapons from rogue states and terrorist groups that already possess them or are close to doing so," as it did in Iraq.

Under the measure, Washington and its allies would be able to confiscate deliveries, preventing them from reaching their intended recipients.

In the event that shipments are being transported by air, the plane carrying them would be denied overflight rights by countries that are part of the initiative, a State Department official said.

The aircraft could also be grounded when stopping to refuel or even "escorted down" if they refuse to land, the official added.

ASEAN includes Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Each year, it invites other nations such as the United States to join security discussions as part of a group called the ASEAN Regional Forum.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030617-114822-3632r.htm>

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New York Times
June 18, 2003

Word That U.S. Doubted Iraq Would Use Gas

By James Risen

WASHINGTON, June 17 — American intelligence analysts reported to the Bush administration last year that Saddam Hussein's government had begun to deploy chemical weapons but that Baghdad would almost certainly not use them unless the government's survival was at stake, United States officials said today.

In a wide-ranging report in November, the Defense Intelligence Agency said it was unlikely that Iraq would use unconventional weapons as long as there were United Nations sanctions against the country. President Saddam Hussein would turn to the weapons only "in extreme circumstances," the D.I.A. report concluded, "because their use would confirm Iraq's evasion of U.N. restrictions," according to the report, portions of which were read to a reporter by an intelligence official.

The November D.I.A. report, which remains classified, indicates that most analysts believed at the time that Iraq had some illegal weapons, but that Mr. Hussein was not likely to use them or share them with terrorists.

The report also provides fuller context for statements made last fall by George J. Tenet, director of central intelligence, in a letter to Congress in which he said Iraq might use its weapons, but only if attacked.

The D.I.A. report and Mr. Tenet's letter do not dispute that Iraq had chemical and other weapons.

The existence of the November report was first made public in U.S. News & World Report on Friday, prompting American officials to defend pre-war intelligence assessments that indicated Iraq possessed illegal weapons.

In their public comments before the war, senior Bush administration officials portrayed Iraq as possessing illegal weapons that posed a threat to the United States, either directly or because they might be supplied to terrorists.

Some intelligence analysts, government officials and Democratic critics of the Bush administration have alleged that the administration exaggerated the nature of the pre-war intelligence on Iraq's weapons and of suspected ties to Al Qaeda.

President Bush and his advisers have defended their statements on Iraq's weapons. Today, appearing in Virginia, Mr. Bush said: "We made it clear to the dictator of Iraq that he must disarm. And we asked other nations to join us in seeing to it that he would disarm, and he chose not to do so, so we disarmed him."

The D.I.A. report suggests that while, before the war, there was something close to a consensus in intelligence agencies that Iraq still had a program to develop illegal weapons, there was debate about whether Iraq intended to use them against the United States.

The report, titled "Iraq's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and missile programs," also stated that the United States had evidence of "munitions transfer activity in mid-2002," suggesting that "the regime is distributing chemical warfare munitions in preparation for an anticipated U.S. attack."

That tactical intelligence suggested that Mr. Hussein was planning to deploy chemical weapons to his most elite military units in case of an American invasion. As a result, the American military prepared ground forces for chemical attacks, requiring troops to frequently don chemical protective suits. Chemical weapons were never used during the war.

But short of an all-out invasion of Iraq, the D.I.A. analysts did not see many situations in which Mr. Hussein would turn to unconventional weapons, the report shows.

"Iraq's chemical agent use against Iran and the Kurds suggest that Baghdad possesses the political will to use any and all" illegal weapons, the report said, but only if "regime survival was imminently threatened."

The report shows that the D.I.A. was in agreement with the C.I.A.'s assessment, made public last fall by Mr. Tenet in a letter to Senator Bob Graham, the Florida Democrat who was then the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

In that letter, Mr. Tenet stated that "Baghdad for now appears to be drawing a line short of conducting terrorist attacks" with conventional or illegal weapons, but that "he probably would become much less constrained in adopting terrorist actions" if convinced that an American-led attack could not be deterred. Those assessments were also included in an overview on Iraq's weapons programs produced by the entire United States intelligence community in October.

Earlier this month, a portion of a September 2002 D.I.A. report that dealt with Iraq's weapons programs was declassified, largely because D.I.A. officials wanted to dispel the idea that its analysts did not believe that Iraq had a chemical weapons program before the war. In that September report the D.I.A. stated that it did not have "reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons, or where Iraq has or will establish its chemical warfare agent production facilities."

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said some accounts of the September report had been misleading because they stopped there and neglected to cite the part of the report that said Iraqi military units had received chemical weapons. Appearing on Fox News on Sunday, Mr. Powell said, "The very next sentence says that it had information that weapons had been dispersed to units."

D.I.A. officials say that the document was prepared for operational military purposes, and was intended to inform war planners at the United States Central Command, and that it did not have much information that would be useful for targeting weapons facilities in case of war.

The analysts were still convinced that something was there. "A substantial amount of Iraq's chemical warfare agents, precursors, munitions and production equipment were destroyed between 1991 and 1998," the September report stated. "Nevertheless, we believe Iraq retained production equipment, expertise and chemical precursors and can reconstitute a chemical warfare program in the absence of an international inspection regime." Since major combat ended, however, evidence that Iraq was reconstituting its program has eluded the United States.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/18/international/worldspecial/18INTE.html>

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Wall Street Journal
June 18, 2003

Iraq Weapons-Hunt Showdown

New Push for Answers Comes Amid Rising Tension Between Searchers

By David S. Cloud, Staff Reporter Of The Wall Street Journal

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- The search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq is kicking into a higher gear, amid rising tensions between the military officials conducting the search and civilian and intelligence officials increasingly taking control.

A new team of U.S. investigators is setting up operations on the grounds of the bustling airport here to intensify the search for banned weapons. The Iraq Survey Group, a Pentagon office that assumed responsibility for the weapons search this month, is sending in dozens of investigators, Arabic translators and specialists in Iraqi weapons programs from the U.S., Britain and Australia.

The stepped-up activity comes amid mounting political pressure on the Bush administration to explain its prewar declarations that U.S. intelligence proved the Saddam Hussein regime had chemical and biological weapons. The clamor for answers is adding to the internal tensions.

Some civilian officials in the Bush administration are increasingly worried that the military commanders overseeing the search haven't made it a high enough priority, and didn't have the expertise to penetrate layers of Iraqi deception. Relations between the military and Central Intelligence Agency personnel in Baghdad have been strained. Some officials complain privately that military commanders here have given priority to achieving stability and protecting U.S. troops, rather than the weapons search.

Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet is assuming a growing role in resolving the mystery. Increasingly, officials are inclined to think the answers about Iraq's weapons program are more likely to be found in newly discovered Iraqi documents and interrogations of Iraqi scientists and officials, rather than searches of suspected weapon sites.

Intelligence officials complain that so far, military interrogations of former senior regime officials have yielded little, while cooperative Iraqis who came forward claiming to have leads have received comparatively little attention. The military's failure to stop looting at some suspected weapons-program centers, such as the Tuwaitha nuclear facility, has angered some officials in Washington.

For their part, several hundred military-weapons search teams that have been operating there since the end of the war have found nothing at suspected weapons sites -- a failure they blame on poor intelligence. Likewise, officials at the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency were angered last month when the CIA released a report, without notifying them, about two trailers that the U.S. contends were Iraqi mobile biological weapons laboratories.

The task of sorting through the evidence now falls to the Iraq Survey Group, which is being given more support to tackle the job. At a U.S. military base in the Persian Gulf state of Qatar, technicians are attempting to work the kinks out of a computer program that officials say is critical for scanning thousands of captured Iraqi documents for clues. In Washington, a special intelligence unit has been established to analyze discoveries from Iraq and send back directions for searchers.

The arrival of the survey group in Baghdad this month was meant to quell some of the rivalry within the search. Pentagon officials said that the substantial resources devoted to the organization reflected the high priority being given the weapons search.

Its commander, Maj. Gen. Keith Dayton, said more use would be made of intelligence-agency help. His team, which included former U.N. weapons inspectors who had worked in Iraq during the 1990s, will dispense with the strategy of searching sites and be guided more by intelligence derived from interviews with friendly Iraqis and from captured documents.

As the new process unfolds, the CIA is seeking to exert more influence over it. CIA officials, including Mr. Tenet, have grown concerned that the agency was being blamed for exaggerated prewar intelligence on Iraq's weapons programs but was taking a back seat to the military in the conducting the postwar search.

Mr. Tenet last week named former United Nations weapons inspector David Kay as an adviser charged with "refining the overall approach for the search for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction," according to a statement issued by Mr. Tenet. In a sign of the civilian leadership's concern, a senior intelligence official said that Mr. Kay's appointment had been approved by President Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and reflected growing impatience with the military's approach.

Yet Mr. Kay's appointment surprised survey-group officials in Iraq and left some confusion about the chain of command. Mr. Kay, who returned to the U.S. last month from a lengthy visit to Baghdad, will be based in Iraq and report to Mr. Tenet. Gen. Dayton reports to Mr. Rumsfeld and remains in charge of the group, officials said. But intelligence officials said that Mr. Tenet has won assurances that he will be responsible for deciding the survey group's approach, with Mr. Kay as his representative. The CIA director has been able to carve out a larger role because many of the personnel attached to the survey group fall under his control as overall head of the U.S. intelligence community.

Pentagon officials have stressed that it might take months or years to develop an accurate picture of Iraq's covert weapons programs. One official noted that the search is complicated by the fact that, in addition to searching for weapons, the Iraq Survey Group has been given responsibility for investigating war crimes by former Iraqi officials as well as the regime's connections to terrorist groups.

"The process is still oriented toward finding a smoking gun," says David Albright, a former weapon inspector in Iraq. "Giving the CIA and [Mr.] Kay more of a role is a good thing. They essentially want information, not just to look for a smoking gun."

One survey-group official, disputing criticism of current efforts, said military officials have the same goals as their intelligence counterparts: to develop "a broad picture" of how Iraqi weapons programs operated and where and how they obtained their supplies.

In some ways, Mr. Kay seems an unusual choice to be at the center of the effort. His views about Iraq's weapons programs are less alarmist than those of some senior Bush administration officials, who continue to insist that Iraq possessed banned weapons up until the war. In a recent interview before his appointment, Mr. Kay speculated that Saddam Hussein may have ordered the destruction of chemical and biological stockpiles months or even years ago. It's possible, he said, that Iraq's strategy was to preserve its capability to produce these weapons in the future, after international sanctions were lifted. Work on nuclear weapons may have been abandoned altogether.

Finding out for sure will require more effort to locate and interview thousands of Iraqi scientists and bureaucrats who worked within the former regime's vast state-run weapons and scientific research sector. Even that may not provide the hard evidence the Bush administration wants, but it could help resolve whether the White House wildly exaggerated the Iraqi threat.

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Los Angeles Times
June 18, 2003

New Hunt For Iraqi Arms Resembles Old

U.S., British and Australian teams will rely heavily on military intelligence but also use many of the U.N. inspectors' techniques.

By Bob Drogin, Times Staff Writer

BAGHDAD — A sweeping overhaul of the search for Saddam Hussein's suspected weapons of mass destruction is creating an operation with striking similarities to the United Nations inspection system that Bush administration officials openly derided before the war, according to senior military and intelligence officials here.

Unlike the U.N. teams, however, the new weapons hunt will rely chiefly on "secret squirrels," as U.S. commanders call the growing army here of CIA and military intelligence operatives, National Security Agency eavesdroppers, British MI-6 agents and elite Special Operations teams whose very existence is classified.

In addition to the latest spy gizmos and techniques, the American, British and Australian teams will have the advantage in the postwar occupation of what one commander called "unfettered access to Iraqis at all levels," at gunpoint if necessary.

"We have a full deck of cards," added the official, who requested anonymity. "The U.N. had about 35."

But the 1,400 people in the Iraq Survey Group, as the new effort is called, will utilize many of the same highly intrusive investigative and covert intelligence-gathering techniques that U.N. inspectors secretly used between 1991 and 1998 to find and destroy vast quantities of illicit Iraqi weapons and production materials.

The U.N. inspectors collected more than a million pages of architects' blueprints, weapons designs, financial and customs records, as well as microfilm, videos and other media. They interviewed not only senior Iraqi weapons scientists and government officials, but also warehouse workers, factory accountants, lab assistants, office clerks and truck drivers.

U.N. inspections resumed last November, but Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told the Security Council in February that U.S. intelligence showed that the Baghdad regime was deceiving the U.N. teams and was concealing active programs to build chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Powell opposed extending the U.N. inspections, which had found no evidence of new Iraqi weapons programs. The U.N. teams were withdrawn shortly before U.S. troops invaded Iraq on March 20.

Brig. Gen. Steve Meekin, the senior Australian officer in the Iraq Survey Group, said the new effort "absolutely" resembles the former U.N. inspection system here because it will focus on collecting clues and not just searching buildings.

"We're changing our focus that way on almost a daily basis now," said Meekin, who is commander of a center studying captured military equipment, a key part of the new group. As a result, he said, both the number and quality of leads coming in are gradually increasing.

"We haven't had any single dramatic discoveries," Meekin said. "But we're getting closer."

The redesign was ordered after U.S. field commanders acknowledged that the hunt, as organized and implemented so far, probably would not find any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, one of the chief reasons President Bush had cited for taking the nation to war.

"Some people thought we'd just drive in and find fields of WMD, with neon signs saying, 'Look here,' " a senior Defense Department official here said. "We had to get expectations under control."

The shift in effort was symbolized by the quiet departure Monday of Army Col. Richard R. McPhee. He commanded the 75th Exploitation Task Force, a former field artillery brigade from Ft. Sill, Okla., that was reconfigured before the war to serve as the lead unit in the search for unconventional arms.

No announcement was made, but U.S. officials said command has passed to Keith Dayton, a two-star general from the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon's chief spy service. Dayton is considered an expert in collecting intelligence through interrogations or from informants. The nucleus of his staff will be intelligence officers, including several former U.N. inspectors.

Dayton's group won't be functioning fully for several weeks, officials said. Members ultimately will live in mobile trailers and operate from 100 workstations and a secure facility for top-secret communications that will be built in a ballroom at one of Hussein's former palaces that is located near the Baghdad airport. The team will also open two satellite bases in northern and southern Iraq.

Because they were forced to rely on a target list set before the war, the previous weapons-hunting teams spent most of the last two months picking through rubble or empty shells of former Iraqi factories, Baath Party offices, secret police centers, military camps and other sites that had taken the brunt of both U.S. bombing and postwar looting. Most of the early weapons teams lacked translators, interrogators and transportation, as well as investigative expertise. They took hundreds of "wipes and swipes," as one officer here called it, of suspect substances for analysis at U.S. and British military laboratories. No germ agents, poison gases, or undeclared nuclear materials have been found.

The Iraq Survey Group plans to start anew by focusing on collecting and consolidating fresh clues.

The lead teams, working from an interrogation and debriefing center, already have been assigned to find and interview Iraqis. Others have begun translating and analyzing Iraqi documents and computer data. Still others will seek to unravel covert procurement networks outside Iraq.

"This is truly going to be looking for all the clues," said the Defense Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "We haven't done that before."

Officials say any clues or raw intelligence will be instantly fed back to intelligence analysts, weapons specialists and others at the Pentagon's Central Command headquarters in Qatar. Information then will go to a new inter-agency intelligence center in Washington. Suggestions for follow-up will be fed back to officials in the field.

"There are thousands of analysts and others in the intelligence community who are chewing on this," the official said.

Three-member teams will be assigned at each level simply to look at the intelligence "with a different eye," another official explained, in case they see something others may have missed.

News headlines in the 1990s chiefly focused on the U.N. inspection teams' recurring struggles to gain access to suspected weapons sites in Iraq. But the teams steadily eliminated more of Hussein's unconventional weapons than were destroyed by coalition airstrikes during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, according to U.N. records.

Their success — especially at uncovering Hussein's germ warfare and nuclear weapons programs — was largely based on intense investigations of Hussein's clandestine weapons procurement programs, as well as the research, development and production systems, according to former U.N. inspectors.

Meekin said the weapons hunters have mostly revisited sites that U.N. teams already had searched, and have growing respect for the U.N.'s work. "We have not recovered anything that the U.N. had not seen," he said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/iraq/la-fg-iraqweapons18jun18.1.2532103.story?coll=la-home-headlines>

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New York Times

June 18, 2003

U.S. And U.N. Agency Press Iran On Its Nuclear Program

By Mark Landler

VIENNA, June 17 — The debate over Iran's nuclear ambitions intensified today at the United Nations' watchdog agency on atomic weapons, as the United States and other countries tried to rally support for a resolution urging Iran to accept stricter supervision of its nuclear program.

The diplomatic offensive came a day after the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, reported that Iran had not been forthcoming about its activities, which have included the import of uranium and the construction of two large nuclear facilities.

"Iran has failed to meet its obligations," Dr. ElBaradei said in a confidential report delivered to the 35 members of the agency's board. A copy of the report was obtained by The New York Times.

The agency's blunt tone has prompted the United States, Britain and other nations to try to pass a resolution calling on Iran to sign an additional agreement with the agency that would allow it to inspect more of the country's nuclear facilities with less advance warning than currently required.

"There's a major diplomatic push under way," said a Western diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity. "This is not like the U.N., which passes resolutions every day. This is the heavy artillery."

Diplomats said the resolution would probably be dropped if it became clear it would not win a majority vote of the board. Russia, which has agreed to supply fuel to a light-water reactor in Iran, plans to oppose it. "We think this is not the right time to use such an extraordinary step," Grigory V. Berdennikov, the Russian ambassador to the agency, said in an interview. "It is clear there is some cooperation, maybe not 100 percent. We should encourage this cooperation, not turn to confrontation."

Iran, which has a seat on the board, is also seeking support from other countries. A group of nonaligned countries, led by Malaysia, is expected to deliver a joint statement to the board on Wednesday, which is likely to praise Tehran for its cooperation. Diplomats say Iran is not nearly as isolated as Iraq and North Korea were in previous such debates.

Such maneuvering is rare at the agency, which views itself less as a political than a technical body. But the debate over Iran has become politically charged, in part because it is occurring against a backdrop of student protests in Tehran, the arrest of suspected Iranian terrorists in France and the American-led war that deposed Saddam Hussein's government in Iran's neighbor, Iraq.

Iran has accused President Bush of supporting the Iranian student protests in an effort to destabilize the country, a charge Washington denies.

While the agency's report stops short of saying that the Iranian government is trying to develop nuclear weapons, it documents a pattern — dating from 1991 — in which Iran has withheld information about its activities and hindered the agency's efforts to find out the extent of its program. In particular, it cites a fuel-enrichment facility being built at Natanz and a heavy-water production plant at Arak. It also notes that Iran has not allowed the agency to take

environmental samples at the Kalaye Electric Plant, which experts suspect was a cover used to enrich nuclear material.

Western diplomats hope the report will sway countries that express concern about Iran's plans, but hesitate to do more than that. "We're trying to persuade people who are still sitting on the fence that the Iranians have been pursuing a nuclear program under the guise of a power program," said another senior diplomat.

Still, nobody at the agency's headquarters here is yet talking about imposing sanctions on Tehran, or referring the matter to the United Nations Security Council. Iran has not been judged to be "noncompliant" with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, as North Korea was last year. Agency officials also say they are less worried about the prospect of Iran building a bomb. The report notes that the amount of uranium imported by Iran in 1991 was not great — about 1.8 tons — and that it would require further processing before it could be used in an explosive device. But, the report adds, "the number of failures by Iran" to provide information about its activities and facilities is "a matter of concern."

Iran said today that it would consider granting more access to inspectors. "We are studying positively the appeal by the International Atomic Energy Agency to sign an additional protocol," Khalil Mousavi, a spokesman for Iran's atomic energy agency, told The Associated Press.

Diplomats were skeptical that the shift in Iran's position was genuine. Iranian officials have tied greater openness to obtaining access to nuclear technology, an exchange the United States has rejected.

While the diplomatic wrangling goes on, outside groups are seizing the chance to drive home their message. The National Council of Resistance of Iran, an antigovernment group with links to the Iranian suspects arrested in Paris, held a news conference here today to draw attention to what it said was Iran's strategy of masking its nuclear ambitions by dispersing the facilities around the country.

Last August, the group was the first to document the existence of the facilities at Natanz and Arak. That led the agency to press Iran into acknowledging that it had not fully disclosed its activities.

"This is a very sophisticated, advanced, and serious program," said Alireza Jafarzadeh, a spokesman for the National Council. "The international community cannot afford to be negligent."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/18/international/middleeast/18IRAN.html>

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New York Times

June 18, 2003

Plan To Block North Korean Nuclear Shipments Gains Support

By Steven R. Weisman

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, June 17 — Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said today that the United States had lined up broad support to press North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program, but an American initiative to interdict shipments of nuclear materials brought a new threat of retaliation.

Speaking to reporters on his plane before arriving here for a meeting of 20 envoys from Asia and around the world, Mr. Powell said the United States had "aligned the international community in a way that makes it clear to North Korea that they will not have any support or friends helping them."

The drive against North Korea is expected to be discussed by the Association of South East Asian Nations and the Asian Regional Forum.

Mr. Powell said Japan and South Korea had frozen their initiatives to improve economic ties and provide aid to North Korea. The United States, he said, had committed itself to 40,000 tons of food but was waiting to see how it would be distributed before considering more.

The most controversial part of the American campaign emerged from the summit meeting of leading industrial nations in Évian-les-Bains earlier this month. There, a small group of nations agreed to take steps to monitor and perhaps intercept shipments of nuclear materials and rockets to and from certain countries.

Last week the United States led a group of 11 countries meeting in Madrid to begin discussing the interdiction program, which could bring about more incidents like the one in December when a ship carrying North Korean missiles was stopped by the United States on its way to Yemen and was then allowed to proceed. Japan has also tried to block shipments of cash and illegal contraband between North Korea and Japan.

Australian officials identified the 11 nations at the meeting as Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Australia and the United States.

Mr. Powell said the program was aimed at "the problem of interdicting weapons of mass destruction and making it more difficult for them to traverse the airways, seaways and land ways of the world."

Word of the meeting brought a stinging retort from North Korea, which declared today that any blockade would result in limitless retaliation and the spread of war to Japan.

Mr. Powell said the issue of interdicting materials related to weapons of mass destruction was separate from the issue of trying to crack down on piracy, drug trafficking and trafficking in people, which the Association of South East Asian Nations has vowed to discuss in its meeting.

"Whether these efforts will blend together at some point is too early to say," he said.

The secretary said he was "pleased at the unity we have been able to achieve with the countries in the region" on North Korea. After a period of some disunity, he said, "everybody is saying the same thing to the North Koreans with respect to the unacceptability of their actions."

It is not clear how the interdiction program would be carried out or how widespread it could be without the cooperation of other countries that do business with North Korea, including China and Russia.

According to Reuters, North Korea's official daily Rodong Sinmun said the moves were part of a premeditated war plan. The paper said North Korea would take "an immediate physical retaliatory step against the United States once it judges that its sovereignty is infringed upon by Washington's blockade operation."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/18/international/asia/18KORE.html>

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Wall Street Journal

June 18, 2003

U.S.-Thai Seizure Triggers Fears Of 'Dirty Bombs'

By Shawn W. Crispin and Gary Fields, Staff Reporters Of The Wall Street Journal

Radioactive material recently seized by U.S. and Thai security officials in an elaborate sting operation is raising new concerns about weapons proliferation. Just as worrisome: the material that wasn't seized, including two large stashes of cesium-137 that officials believe remain stashed in Laos.

Last week Thai and U.S. agents working together arrested Narong Penanam, 44 years old, after he attempted to sell them a quantity of cesium-137. The radioactive substance usually is used for medical purposes, but it also may be attached to conventional explosives to produce a so-called dirty bomb.

Washington suspects that al Qaeda and other international terror groups are trying to acquire various radioactive materials to make dirty bombs to hit U.S. targets, including embassies and other overseas installations. The large amount of cesium in Mr. Narong's possession highlights how readily available such materials have become even in a country such as Thailand, where traffic in such goods hasn't been recognized as a problem previously.

"Historically the region has been just about completely free of any sort of proliferation threat," said one Bangkok-based Western diplomat. But after the recent arrest, "it appears anything is possible."

The hunt for Mr. Narong dates back to last October, when a U.S. customs official in Bangkok received a tip that people were trying to peddle weapons-grade uranium on the black market, according to an official with the U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. U.S. law-enforcement officials contacted the Royal Thai police, who began an undercover operation and had one of their officers contact the suspect.

The undercover operation continued to June. But despite assurances that Mr. Narong had enriched uranium and bombs, authorities in Thailand, working under the observation of U.S. investigators, couldn't get him to produce the goods.

"We were having all kinds of meetings," the U.S. customs and immigration official said. The breakthrough came about June 6, when Mr. Narong finally provided a sample. "He believed it was enriched uranium," the law-enforcement official said. Investigators took the material to the Thai Atomic Energy Commission, which examined it and determined it was cesium, not enriched uranium. Cesium-137 is widely used in the radiation treatment of cancer.

Another meeting was set up to negotiate for more of the material. When Mr. Narong appeared at a hotel for the meeting, Thai authorities arrested him.

Thai and U.S. officials say there is no evidence Mr. Narong, a school teacher in Thailand's northeastern province of Surin, has any links or made any direct contacts about selling the radioactive material to international terrorist organizations. Instead, it appears his connections were closer to home: inside the Thai military establishment.

Initial interrogations of Mr. Narong disclosed that he obtained the cesium from the aide of a deceased Thai air force marshal, known only by as Mr. Chanard, according to Thai officials. The Thai air force has denied any involvement with the cesium or how it was obtained. Mr. Narong also said under interrogation that the cesium originated in Russia and was later moved through Laos into neighboring Thailand, a Thai government spokesman said.

Ongoing Investigation

Thai officials believe there are two additional large stashes of cesium hidden in Laos, along with one or more of Mr. Narong's accomplices. "It's still an open case. The recent big bust is part of an ongoing investigation into where the material originated, who the potential buyers were, and who else may have been involved," says a U.S. Embassy spokesman in Bangkok. So far Mr. Narong hasn't been charged with any particular crime.

It isn't clear how much cesium was seized in the Thai sting operation, because the material was surrounded by a heavy metal casing. Whatever the amount, the cesium-137 has caused consternation among law-enforcement officials and raised the specter of unsecured radioactive material that could be used in a radiological, or dirty bomb. "He was trying to sell to anybody," the U.S. customs and immigration official said. "This stuff was on the open market and anybody could have approached him. Absolutely this raises concern."

The impact of dirty bombs, which use conventional explosives to spread radioactive materials, is limited. The device itself would cause casualties in the immediate area of the explosion, says a U.S. government official familiar with intelligence on dirty bombs, as well as possibly causing radiation sickness, but "you're not talking mass casualties." The bigger impact, that official said, is "the psychological impact. The psychological impact of its use would be greater than the physical damage. It's a weapon of terror."

A just-released report from the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of the U.S. Congress, raises further concerns about the proliferation of radioactive materials. The report found that there is limited information on stocks of a number of "sealed radioactive sources," including cesium-137, "because many countries do not systematically account for them." The report added that information is limited on how much material is stolen, lost or abandoned world-wide because of the lack of tracking. Losses of the containers could be in the "thousands" and "many of the most vulnerable sealed sources that could pose a security risk are located in the countries of the former Soviet Union," the report said.

Terrorist Crossroads

Cesium-137 and many other radioactive materials aren't controlled substances with extreme security surrounding them, like enriched uranium. "Much of this stuff is out there," says an agent with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. "It's gettable."

The arrest of Mr. Narong, meanwhile, comes as Thai authorities are just beginning to acknowledge the presence of international terrorists on Thai soil. On June 10, Thai police arrested three suspected terrorists accused of plotting to bomb five foreign embassies and various tourist spots in Bangkok during the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in October, which U.S. President George W. Bush is scheduled to attend.

The three suspects are accused of being members of Jemaah Islamiyah, the al Qaeda-linked Islamic group accused of plotting last October's Bali bombing in Indonesia. Thai officials say they are pursuing leads on a number of other Jemaah Islamiyah-linked operatives believed to be hiding in Thailand's predominantly Muslim southern provinces. With its notoriously lax immigration procedures tailored for promoting tourism rather than combating terrorism, Thailand has long served as a crossroads for terrorist groups and organized-crime syndicates, according to Bangkok-based Western diplomats.

But with the recent disclosures about possible proliferation of radioactive materials in the region, the U.S. is looking for even greater intelligence-sharing with its Thai counterparts, say Thai officials. In particular, the U.S. is hoping to work more closely in improving container and shipping security around Thailand's deepwater ports, according to U.S. officials.

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New York Times
June 19, 2003
Pg. 1

Bush Says U.S. Will Not Tolerate Building Of Nuclear Arms By Iran

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, June 18 — President Bush said for the first time today that the United States and its allies "will not tolerate the construction of a nuclear weapon" in Iran, and an American official at a meeting of the world's nuclear watchdog agency accused the country of repeatedly evading inspections and violating its commitments. Mr. Bush's assertion that Iran's program would be stopped came as the White House said it hoped to begin working with allies soon on intercepting ships and aircraft suspected of carrying material that could aid states like Iran and North Korea in their nuclear programs.

For years American officials have been studying programs in Iran and North Korea that are believed to be used to produce weapons-grade plutonium from the spent fuel produced by nuclear reactors. The Central Intelligence Agency believes North Korea already produced, a decade ago, enough plutonium to produce two weapons. Then, in October, the North admitted to a second program to produce highly enriched uranium in a laboratory process, and inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency found a very similar program in Iran, after receiving tips from American and other intelligence agencies.

Programs in both countries appear to have accelerated in recent months, American intelligence officials say. Mr. Bush's statement today came in response to questions from reporters during a meeting with senators about Medicare. Asked how he would stop Iran from acquiring a weapon, he said: "The international community must come together to make it very clear to Iran that we will not tolerate construction of a nuclear weapon. Iran would be dangerous if they have a nuclear weapon."

But Mr. Bush did not describe a strategy to halt the program, and while he is picking up support for gradual isolation of North Korea, many nations in Europe and elsewhere have extensive trade relations with Iran and rely on its oil. Moreover, administration officials believe that Iran is likely to pursue efforts to build nuclear weapons regardless of what government rules the country.

"They now see a nuclear power — the United States — right next door in Iraq," said one American diplomat with long experience with Iran. "That has to be affecting their calculations."

A senior White House official said tonight that Mr. Bush's explicit warning to Iran was a "carefully-worded escalation" that, for the first time, drew a line that the White House said Iran would not be permitted to cross. "It's not like this spilled out," a senior official said, noting that Mr. Bush had met extensively with his aides about the Iranian program in recent weeks.

Yet as recently as two weeks ago, when he was visiting Russia, which is providing crucial technology to Iran for a nuclear reactor, Mr. Bush said only that he was "concerned" about Iran's program and that it was important to keep weapons out of the hands of "radical clerics."

By declaring today that he would "not tolerate" the Iranian program, he echoed exactly the statements he made last month about North Korea. Mr. Bush has said that the United States is seeking a diplomatic solution in North Korea and is leaving its military options open if diplomacy fails; in the case of Iran, he has never mentioned the possibility of military action.

Mr. Bush has made clear in a series of statements that began during the summit meeting of industrialized nations in Évian, France, two weeks ago that finding new ways to counter the Iranian and North Korean programs would be at the top of his agenda in the aftermath of the war in Iraq. The White House said today that it was moving forward with the first phase of its "counterproliferation" effort.

Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman, said a number of major allies had agreed in principle at a meeting in Spain last week to begin intercepting — at sea and in the air — nuclear and missile-related shipments into and out of countries suspected of developing nuclear weapons technology. "The interdiction initiative that the president announced in Krakow has been well received and has now moved forward," he said, referring to the president's visit to Poland last month, although he added that no date had been set to begin intercepting such shipments.

The agreement in Spain calls for the seizure of such shipments when they pass through the waters or air space of countries agreeing to join the American-led effort. But it does not establish any new legal authority to seize such shipments in international waters, a step that would require redrafting international laws.

"We don't want to get bogged down in that," one senior administration official said last week.

In recent weeks, North Korea has boasted of its nuclear program and said it would accelerate it if the United States did not agree to a package of aid, recognition and security guarantees for the country. Iran, in contrast, has insisted that its nuclear program is entirely peaceful, a statement reiterated today by President Mohammad Khatami.

White House officials have clearly decided to increase the diplomatic pressure on both countries.

Today, speaking at a meeting of Asian leaders in Cambodia, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said that "no issue is of greater urgency to the U.S. than North Korea's nuclear weapons programs." He was seeking broader Asian support for a policy of increasing isolation of the North, a strategy that Japan has joined, but that China and South Korea have resisted.

Meanwhile, at a meeting of the I.A.E.A. in Vienna, the United States ambassador, Kenneth Brill, contended that Iran is "aggressively" pursuing a weapons program, and at the White House Mr. Fleischer said it made no sense for an oil-rich nation to spend so much money to produce nuclear power to produce energy.

Mr. Brill also noted that the I.A.E.A. inspectors were only allowed to see parts of the nuclear program after their existence was revealed by outsiders.

"Without the outside revelations, Iran's extensive nuclear program would still be proceeding on a largely clandestine basis," he said. "Can the I.A.E.A. or anyone else be confident under these circumstances that there are no other clandestine facilities that have yet to be revealed?"

Mr. Bush also voiced support for protesters on the streets of Tehran today, even though some of his aides have worried that any vocal American backing would play into the hands of hard-line clerics who say the street protests have been engineered by Washington.

"I appreciate those courageous souls who speak out for freedom in Iran," Mr. Bush said. "They need to know America stands squarely by their side. And I would urge the Iranian administration to treat them with the utmost of respect."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/19/international/middleeast/19PREX.html>

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Wall Street Journal

June 19, 2003

Pg. 1

Iran Poses Nuclear Challenge That Stymies U.S. Crackdown

By Carla Anne Robbins and David Crawford

Iran is posing a new challenge to the U.S. and the international community: how to stop a nuclear-weapons program that's being built not in the shadows but in plain sight, and just inside most of the rules designed to foil nuclear proliferation.

As the International Atomic Energy Agency's board met in Vienna Wednesday to review Iran's growing nuclear program, President Bush warned that the world "must come together to make it very clear to Iran that we will not tolerate the construction of a nuclear weapon." Washington has warned for months that Iran's sprawling nuclear-energy complex, once completed, could be used to produce scores of weapons.

Bolstered by a new IAEA report criticizing Tehran for withholding information about its program, Europe and Russia have begun taking the threat more seriously, urging Iran to accept more-intrusive inspections and hinting at possible costs if it fails to do so. But Wednesday, the U.S. was still having trouble rallying enough support for a resolution condemning Iran's actions. Instead, the U.S. was expected to settle for a weaker statement criticizing Iran's evasions and urging it to agree to more-stringent inspections by the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog.

Iran's representative denied his country was seeking nuclear weapons and accused the board of bowing to pressure from the U.S. The question of whether the board will refer the issue to the United Nations Security Council, which could impose trade sanctions or other punishments, is expected to be deferred at least until the next IAEA meeting in September.

One of the biggest problems facing the U.S. is that most of what Iran is doing doesn't violate the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The 1970 treaty, signed by every country except Pakistan, India and Israel, allows governments to acquire almost any nuclear technology -- as long as they agree to use it for peaceful purposes and to place it under international monitoring.

Even if Iran accepts wider inspections, its nuclear ambitions will only be partly constrained. It would find it harder to hide a clandestine weapons program. But it wouldn't have to stop building a new uranium-enrichment plant or halt its plans for a heavy-water-research reactor. Iran claims those facilities are part of a peaceful energy program. But they also could produce large quantities of weapons-grade uranium and plutonium.

Washington's fear is that Iran, like North Korea, then could pull out of the Nonproliferation Treaty, declare itself a nuclear-armed state and dare the world to react. U.S. officials say privately that the only real way to head that off is to deny Iran the technology and outside support it needs to complete those plants.

Gary Samore, a former aide to President Clinton now at London's International Institute for Strategic Studies, says that Iran's claims that it needs the plants for nuclear energy "don't pass the laugh test There's a growing belief in Europe that what Iran is really seeking is a nuclear weapons capability." At the same time, Mr. Samore says, "there's no political consensus" for forcing Iran to dismantle its program. "There's a fairly low bar and that's Iran signing the additional protocol."

There are a variety of reasons why countries are refusing to push Iran harder. Russia, which already has an \$800 million contract to build a nuclear reactor in the port city of Bushehr, is wary of jeopardizing its lucrative nuclear trade with Tehran. Most European countries believe that engagement rather than isolation is still the best hope of reforming Tehran's government and curbing its nuclear appetite.

Washington's main charges against Iran are circumstantial. Its ambitious nuclear program simply doesn't make sense for a country with huge oil and gas reserves and limited uranium supplies, the U.S. says. And Tehran tried to hide much of what it was building until an opposition group exposed the existence last summer of two new nuclear production sites. "Can the IAEA or anyone else be confident under these circumstances that there are no other clandestine facilities that have yet to be revealed?" Kenneth Brill, the U.S. ambassador to the IAEA, challenged the board Wednesday.

What Washington hasn't been able to develop so far is hard proof that Iran has committed a major violation of United Nations safeguards -- such as diverting enough nuclear material to make a weapon, as North Korea is believed to have done. The Bush administration said Wednesday that it would try again to get the Security Council to issue a statement condemning Pyongyang for pulling out of the treaty, a move China is resisting.

"Iran has been much more clever," says David Albright, a former nuclear inspector in Iraq and head of the Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington-based nonproliferation group. Iran came clean when its facilities were discovered, he noted, and is using the letter of the law of the nonproliferation treaty to press ahead. The breadth of Iran's nuclear ambitions has only become clear over the last year, since the opposition group's disclosure. At the time both the IAEA and the Bush administration were hesitant to push the issue too hard or too publicly.

The agency is notoriously averse to confrontation, preferring to use quiet diplomacy. The Bush administration already had its hands full with a brewing nuclear crisis with North Korea and the coming war with Iraq. But the issue became harder to ignore after Mr. Albright's organization published satellite photos of one site, at Natanz, and identified it as a uranium-enrichment plant that could hold tens of thousands of centrifuges when completed. Since then, Iran has adopted a new tactic: It opened its known facilities to international view, hosting several U.N. inspection teams in recent months and giving them fairly wide access. Tehran hasn't gamed the system perfectly. The new IAEA report cites Iran for "failing to meet its obligations" on a variety of fronts -- including secretly importing 1.8 tons of natural uranium from China more than a decade ago and failing to report on its storage and processing to the IAEA. The report noted that "although the quantities of nuclear material involved have not been large" -- and not enough to make a weapon -- the amount is "not insignificant in terms of a state's ability to conduct nuclear research and development activities."

Iran made another misstep last week, blocking IAEA inspectors from taking samples at a factory in Tehran. The samples might help determine whether Iran had enriched a small amount of uranium as part of its efforts to improve its enrichment technology -- a clear treaty violation.

The question of whether it enriched uranium may pose Iran's biggest problem at the next IAEA board meeting. Tehran has claimed that it has used only computer simulations and inert gasses to calibrate the technology for its new multimillion-dollar centrifuge plant, rather than testing it by enriching uranium. Mr. Albright says it's a difficult claim for nuclear experts to accept. The paradox, he says, is that Iran could have asked the IAEA for permission -- if it had wanted to admit to the plant's existence.

--Robbins is reporting from Washington and Crawford from Berlin.

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USA Today
June 19, 2003
Pg. 4

Iraqis In The Know Could Cut A Deal

By Dave Moniz, USA Today

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Wednesday that the United States is considering a plan to offer plea bargains to captured Iraqi officials who could help locate chemical or biological weapons.

"It's a perfectly reasonable proposal, and lawyers are considering it," Rumsfeld said during a news conference at the Pentagon.

A decision hinges on whether giving Iraqis some form of immunity would be worthwhile. "What do we think we can get by way of information or validation or assistance in exchange for what we'd have to give up? Those are the calculations," Rumsfeld said.

The United States has in its custody a number of key officials from Iraq's former regime. Among them are several of Saddam Hussein's top chemical and biological weapons experts.

The British government has already proposed offering deals to some Iraqi scientists in exchange for information, provided those scientists were not involved in war crimes or atrocities committed by Saddam's regime.

The Bush administration is under mounting pressure to produce evidence to back prewar assertions that Saddam's government had chemical or biological weapons and posed an imminent threat to the United States.

It was widely acknowledged that Iraq had such weapons during the 1990s. The Iraqi government claimed to have destroyed them, but it offered no proof. The inability of U.S. forces to find any such weapons since the war ended has raised questions about the quality of prewar intelligence and the Bush administration's interpretation of it.

Administration officials continue to say it is only a matter of time until searchers find such weapons in Iraq. Some lawmakers, however, have begun to grow impatient.

During a congressional hearing Wednesday, Rep. Gene Taylor, D-Miss., reminded Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz that it was a private conversation between the two of them that persuaded Taylor to vote last year to authorize the use of military force against Iraq.

"The appeal by President Bush at the White House last fall was less than convincing," Taylor told Wolfowitz. "It was our conversation (that convinced me). If you have the information (on Iraqi weapons), you come forth with it." Taylor said that if Wolfowitz was "misled by intelligence people," this was the time to say so. "A person is only as good as his word. A country is only as good as its word."

Wolfowitz said that if there was a problem with the intelligence, it "doesn't mean anyone was misleading anybody. It means intelligence is an art, not a science." The weapons hunt comes down to people with knowledge telling U.S. officials where the weapons are located, he said. "So far, the people with the knowledge are not telling us. We're going have to be patient."

Meanwhile, President Bush defended British Prime Minister Tony Blair against allegations that Blair exaggerated evidence of Iraq's weapons to justify an invasion.

"He operated on very sound intelligence, and those accusations are simply not true," Bush said.

Contributing: Tom Squitieri, Kathy Kiely and wire reports

<http://www.usatoday.com/usatoday/20030619/5256937s.htm>

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New York Times
June 19, 2003

National Programs To Vaccinate For Smallpox Come To A Halt

By Donald G. McNeil Jr.

ATLANTA, June 18 — Government officials said today that both the civilian and military smallpox vaccination programs had virtually come to a halt, the military program because it has vaccinated everyone it can and the civilian program because few people volunteered for it.

Officials also said that of the 493,000 people who had been vaccinated, the rate of dangerous side effects was lower than predicted.

"I take that as proof that our screening succeeded marvelously," said Col. John D. Grabenstein of the United States Army surgeon general's office, who was in charge of the military's inoculation.

Although eight people had heart attacks after immunizations and three died, it is unclear whether the deaths were coincidental, said officials at a conference here today on immunization policy. The conference was convened by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The heart attack victims were middle-aged, and several had clogged arteries, diabetes or other risk factors like smoking. There were no deaths from encephalitis, eczema vaccinatum, progressive vaccinia or the other side effects predicted last year based on studies from smallpox vaccination drives in the 1960's.

The military has inoculated 454,856 personnel, nearly 90 percent of them before the invasion of Iraq and is now vaccinating about 1,000 a week, which Colonel Grabenstein called "maintenance." State health departments have inoculated only 37,608 civilian emergency health workers and are adding about 100 more each week.

President Bush announced last December that the country would vaccinate up to 500,000 civilian health workers as a first line of defense against a terrorist smallpox attack. White House officials said there was evidence that President Saddam Hussein of Iraq either planned to use smallpox as a weapon or could have given it to terrorists.

But the program got off to a slow start and Dr. Raymond A. Strikas, director of smallpox preparedness in the centers' immunization division, said volunteers dropped off sharply after late March.

Dr. Strikas cited several reasons:

*With a quick victory in Iraq, Americans felt the threat had faded.

*The heart attacks and cases of inflamed heart muscle led the centers to ban immunization for anyone with heart disease on March 25.

*Nurses and others resisted immunization until a law to compensate them if they were hurt was passed; it was not signed until April 30.

*SARS and monkeypox competed for state health resources and public attention.

"What we are in now is what we call the natural pause between Stage 1 and Stage 2," Dr. Strikas said, with Stage 2 being the 500,000 goal.

Phase 3 would have extended vaccination to the general public, he said, "but there's been relatively little clamoring for that."

Asked if the centers were disappointed that so few had volunteered, he said: "We accept where we are, given the circumstances. We can make this work."

The smallpox vaccine, Vaccinia, is the most dangerous vaccine, and health experts predicted it would cause serious adverse reactions in one in 19,000 to one in 71,000 people and would kill one or two in a million. But they predicted brain inflammations or the uncontrolled spread of vaccinia pox, not heart attacks.

The government ordered large supplies of vaccinia immune globulin, an antidote for bad reactions. It was needed only three times, instead of the roughly 50 times that the 1960's studies would have predicted.

About 125 women who were pregnant or became pregnant were inadvertently vaccinated, despite screening, Colonel Grabenstein said. Thus far, there has been no vaccinia in fetuses, and miscarriage rates have been normal, though they are still being followed.

In the past, there were reports of myocarditis and pericarditis inflammation of the heart and the sac surrounding it from Australia and Finland, but they used more virulent vaccinia strains, doctors said.

Heart inflammations were not identified in the 1963 and 1968 American studies that experts consulted last year when planning the immunization drive, said Dr. Juliette Morgan of the National Immunization Program at the centers.

Vaccination did seem to increase the risk of myocarditis in the military vaccines, Dr. Morgan and Colonel Grabenstein said. Of the 18 cases that have been most studied among 53 possible ones, all were young healthy men who developed chest pains and abnormal enzyme levels; all seem to have recovered. That was 3.6 times the number that might have been expected to develop myocarditis anyway.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/19/politics/19POX.html>

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Washington Post

June 19, 2003

Pg. 16

Lawmakers Begin Iraq Intelligence Hearings

White House Continues To Defend War Decision

By Walter Pincus and Dana Priest, Washington Post Staff Writers

The House and Senate intelligence committees began closed-door hearings yesterday on the intelligence that provided the basis for the U.S.-led attack on Iraq, as President Bush and his top policymakers continued to defend their decision to go to war despite the continuing failure to find chemical or biological weapons or indications of a reconstituted nuclear arms program in Iraq.

Rep. Jane Harman (Calif.), ranking Democrat on the House panel, said after yesterday's session that "the credibility of the intelligence community is at issue here" because the public has raised questions "about whether the [Bush] administration accurately portrayed the intelligence case regarding Iraq's WMD [weapons of mass destruction] and ties to al Qaeda and other non-indigenous terrorist groups."

The House panel heard several intelligence officers provide background on the October 2002 national intelligence estimate on Iraq's weapons programs and answer questions about how certain conclusions in that estimate were reached, administration and congressional sources said. Today the panel will hear from intelligence operations officers on the search for weapons, the sources said.

The Senate committee spent its session trying to work out details of how it will proceed. Both committees' hearings may continue through the summer.

At the committees' request, one senior U.S. official said, the CIA has sent them more than a dozen five-inch-thick binders containing information dating to 1996 on Iraq's WMD programs and support for al Qaeda and other terrorist groups; documents supporting statements made by CIA, State Department and Pentagon analysts in the October 2002 estimate; and intelligence reports to support Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's speech to the United Nations on Feb. 5.

One binder, the official said, contained a history of the intelligence, later proved false, on Iraq's alleged attempt to buy uranium oxide from Niger in the late 1990s. Bush included a reference to the allegation in his State of the Union address Jan. 28, after the CIA had raised questions about it.

Also yesterday, Bush defended British Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose statements about Iraqi arms are under investigation by a committee of Parliament.

On Tuesday, Blair's former foreign secretary, Robin Cook, told the committee that intelligence had been used to justify going to war rather than to formulate policy. Cook also said the failure so far to find biological weapons meant that Iraq was "even less threatening" than he believed when he resigned before the war started.

Bush said that Blair "operated on very sound intelligence, and those accusations are simply not true."

One measure of how deeply the issue is felt on Capitol Hill came at a House Armed Services Committee hearing, where Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz was appearing on a different matter. Rep. Gene Taylor (D-Miss.) said that he voted to support the war only after speaking to Wolfowitz, but that now he needed to know if the intelligence about the threat from Iraq's weapons was wrong.

"A person is only as good as his word," Taylor said. "This nation is only as good as its word. And if that's the reason why we did it -- and I voted for it -- then we need some clarifications here."

Wolfowitz replied, "If there's a problem with intelligence . . . it doesn't mean that anybody misled anybody. It means that intelligence is an art and not a science." He said the intelligence assessments reflected a broad consensus of the intelligence community and were based on Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's "history of deception, his pattern of defiance, his willingness to incur an enormous price for himself, his regime and his country."

Wolfowitz repeated what he and others often said while U.N. inspectors were searching without success for weapons before the war, that "the burden of proof [was] on him, not on us." With the burden of proof resting on the United States, he told the committee, "it's going to take time, and we're going to have to be patient."

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, pressed by reporters at the Pentagon on what he thought of the prewar intelligence, for the first time delivered his tentative view: "Imperfect, but good." He said that "the intelligence was correct in general, and that you always will find out precisely what it was once you get on the ground and have a chance to talk to people and explore it."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A11002-2003Jun18.html>

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Newhouse.com

June 18, 2003

Government May Expand Count Of Vets Exposed To Nerve Agents In First Gulf War

By Mary Orndorff, Newhouse News Service

WASHINGTON -- Scientific studies of events during the first Gulf War could cause the government to change its policy and presume that everyone who served was exposed to some level of nerve agents, the nation's top veterans official said Tuesday.

"That may be the ultimate outcome," said the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

In an interview, Principi said there is conflicting research on how far contaminated plumes traveled during the postwar clean-up of chemical weapons in Iraq in 1991, and therefore on how many troops were affected. If the differences are not reconciled, he said, the department might have to assume all 700,000 men and women who served were exposed.

That would be a dramatic increase from the most recent Pentagon estimate of about 100,000, and it would remove a significant hurdle for veterans in proving their illnesses are related to military service, a requirement for certain medical benefits.

During a public meeting of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, Principi said he has asked the national Institute of Medicine to further analyze low-level exposure to the nerve agent sarin and its potential for long-term health effects. But studies reviewed Monday by the committee indicate that connection is already established.

"The research suggests that even lower levels can cause harm," said committee Chairman James Binns. "It can even be extremely low."

For example, a study done by Rogene Henderson at Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute in New Mexico showed undetected low-level exposure to sarin can alter the brain and cause memory loss in animals. The finding dramatically challenges the previous belief that if someone did not show symptoms at the time of exposure, there would be no longer-term health problems.

The developments are important to Gulf War veterans, who have been suffering from a variety of mysterious ailments since returning from the Persian Gulf, where allied troops destroyed large amounts of Iraqi ammunition, including sarin-loaded rockets. In particular, the detonations at Khamisayah and elsewhere have come under increased scrutiny because of new findings on where and how far the plumes from those explosions traveled across the region.

A preliminary report from Congress' General Accounting Office says the Pentagon's modeling of the plume is flawed, and that an Energy Department study showed a wider path in different directions. The conflict, which stems from incomplete weather information and multiple variables that can't be determined with certainty, should give the benefit of the doubt to veterans, according to the chief technologist with GAO, Keith Rhodes. Rhodes told Congress earlier this month that it should direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to adjust its policy to presume exposure for all.

Rhodes repeated that recommendation Tuesday, and Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn., is spearheading the effort. Steve Robinson, executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center, said the presumption could mean another 100,000 veterans would file claims, in addition to the more than 300,000 that already have.

"They will no longer be required to fight for treatment," he said.

Dr. Michael Kilpatrick, deputy director of deployment health support with the Department of Defense, said the Pentagon would respond to GAO's report when it is complete.

"Trying to understand Khamisayah is not a simple process," he said. He also told the committee that there was "insufficient data" on whether there are long-term health effects from low-level sarin exposure.

Principi said he has doubled the amount of research funds available for studies of Gulf War illness to \$20 million in 2004, and has begun a public relations campaign to encourage scientists to pursue the work.

"I'm committed to exploring theories ... that might provide some answers," he said.

<http://www.newhouse.com/archive/orndorff061803.html>

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New York Times

June 19, 2003

Iran Rejects U.S. Charge Of Faulty Nuclear Report

By Mark Landler

VIENNA, June 18 — Iran today rejected American accusations that it had been deceitful in not reporting the extent of its nuclear activities to the United Nations' watchdog agency on atomic weapons.

Defending its failure to report the import of a small amount of uranium in 1991, Iran said in effect that everybody does it. Iran also complained that it was being held to a double standard for political reasons.

Speaking to the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Iranian representative, Ali A. Salehi, recited from an agency report that listed failures by many other countries to meet inspection standards.

"Hardly any member state can claim to be impeccable," Ambassador Salehi said, according to a copy of his remarks.

That response did not placate the United States, which expressed "grave concern" about Iran's nuclear ambitions, saying Tehran had only admitted to its plans when forced into it by disclosures in news reports.

"Without the outside revelations, Iran's extensive nuclear program would still be proceeding on a largely clandestine basis," said the American ambassador, Kenneth Brill, in a toughly worded statement.

Noting that Iran had tested its ability to produce uranium — a necessary component for a nuclear bomb — Mr. Brill asked the agency whether it was confident that Iran was not diverting nuclear material from its declared goal of power generation into a weapons program.

"The U.S. expects the agency's accumulation of further information will point to only one conclusion: that Iran is aggressively pursuing a nuclear weapons program," Mr. Brill concluded.

He spoke even as the United States backed away from a campaign for a resolution demanding that Iran accept stricter supervision of its nuclear activities. Such a step would have required a majority vote of the 35-member board, which the United States was unlikely to get.

While Britain and Canada also criticized Iran, a group of nonaligned countries, led by Malaysia, came to its defense, saying that it had been cooperative and transparent in its dealings with the agency.

"There are many countries that have failed to report, not just Iran," the Malaysian ambassador, Hussein Haniff, said in an interview. "They are showing their willingness to cooperate. Let the process go on."

Diplomats said they still expected the board chairman to issue a statement on Thursday that would urge Iran to accept expanded agency supervision — known as an additional protocol — without conditions.

A statement, while short of a resolution, would send a stronger signal than the board's usual custom after a debate, in which the chairman simply summarizes the various positions. The language of the statement was being hashed out by diplomats in telephone calls this evening.

The lively, two-day debate followed a report by the agency's director general, Mohamed ElBaradei, that said Iran had not been forthcoming about its nuclear activities, which have included the import of uranium and construction of two nuclear facilities, at Natanz and Arak.

It also said Iran denied its request to conduct sampling at the Kalaye Electric Company, which produces components for centrifuges. The samples would determine whether Iran used nuclear material to test the centrifuges in what is supposed to be a nonnuclear facility.

Iran faulted the report for reflecting the hard-line views of "certain influential capitals" — a clear reference to Washington. It said outsiders had pressured the agency to come to the most ominous conclusions.

Iran did not even respond to some of the allegations, such as why it did not disclose the existence of the Natanz and Arak facilities. It questioned why it had to justify the construction of facilities that are for peaceful use.

Western diplomats applauded the report for being uncommonly forthright. Now, they said, the agency must keep up the pressure. Dr. ElBaradei is scheduled to present a final report on Iran by September. The United States would like the deadline moved up to midsummer.

Iran said this week that it was open to accepting broader agency supervision. But it has tied the move to gaining access to nuclear technology. The United States and other countries reject that quid pro quo.

"If Iran's nuclear program were limited only to peaceful purposes, Iran would see the additional protocol as a way to show its commitment to the nonproliferation regime and complete transparency," Mr. Brill said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/19/international/middleeast/19IRAN.html>

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Washington Times

June 20, 2003

Pg. 1

U.N. Agency Raps Iran Nuke Program

IAEA urges closer monitoring of facilities

By David R. Sands, The Washington Times

A U.N. watchdog agency yesterday reprimanded Iran for its advanced nuclear program and called for tough new inspections. But it stopped short of U.S. hopes for a full-scale condemnation of what the Bush administration says is a clandestine drive by Tehran to build a nuclear bomb.

After three days of bargaining, the 35-nation board of governors of the Vienna, Austria-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) slammed Iran's failure to come clean on its extensive nuclear program and strongly urged Iran to accept a tough new inspection regime.

Although less than Washington had originally sought, the IAEA statement was met with praise in the White House while a top Iranian official quickly rejected the idea of opening up further to global monitors.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said the IAEA move was an "international reinforcement" of President Bush's call Wednesday for a concerted global effort to prevent the Islamic government in Tehran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

"Iran needs to comply. Otherwise, the world will conclude that Iran may be producing nuclear weapons," Mr. Fleischer said.

Kenneth Brill, U.S. ambassador to the IAEA, told reporters in Vienna that the Bush administration was "very satisfied" with yesterday's action.

Iran, which says its nuclear activities are intended for civilian power needs, said yesterday's vote represented a "failure" for the United States, according to Gholamreza Aghazadeh, head of the country's Atomic Energy Agency. The U.S.-backed resolution would have immediately referred the issue to the U.N. Security Council for action, a course many nonaligned countries represented at the IAEA were reluctant to take.

Mr. Aghazadeh said Iran would continue to block surprise inspections of its nuclear facilities unless the international community met its demands for aid and technology in developing civilian nuclear plants. Diplomats said there is little chance of such a deal being struck.

The standoff comes as the Islamic government in Iran finds itself facing continued domestic political dissent, including nightly clashes in many cities, between pro-democracy activists and hard-line elements loyal to the cleric-led regime.

Mr. Bush has expressed sympathy and support for the protesters, but U.S. officials deny Iranian charges that they have helped organize the demonstrations. Tensions between Tehran and Washington have sharpened in the aftermath of the Iraq war.

In Paris, an Iranian exile opposition group staged new protests after a crackdown by French officials this week.

A woman from the Mujahideen Khalq, or People's Mujahideen, died yesterday after setting herself on fire in protest after mass arrests of the group's leaders in Paris earlier this week. Similar self-immolations took place in Italy and Switzerland.

French police, who said the group was planning terrorist strikes against Iranian embassies in Europe, rounded up another 100 members of the exile group yesterday.

Miriam Rajkumar, a researcher with the Non-Proliferation Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, called the IAEA statement a "balancing act" but said the Bush administration had made progress in focusing international pressure on Tehran.

"I don't think the administration wanted to go into this fight alone, and it does seem there is a diplomatic consensus developing that Iran is a problem and that some questions need to be answered," she said.

IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei "is a diplomat, and it would be very unusual for the agency to send this immediately to the Security Council for action. But you are hearing ... strong statements from the European Union and the Russians that Iran has to respond to."

British Foreign Minister Jack Straw said this week that a proposed EU-Iran trade deal could be put on ice if Tehran is not more forthcoming about its nuclear program.

Russia, whose support of a major Iranian nuclear-power plant being built in Bushehr has been a bone of contention with the Bush administration, called the IAEA statement a "balanced declaration" that notes Tehran's promises to try to improve cooperation with the U.N. inspection agency.

But Moscow also has urged Iran in recent days to agree to an additional protocol under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to allow IAEA inspectors into sites currently declared off-limits.

Miss Rajkumar said the United States was laboring under a "credibility gap" in Vienna, facing widespread international skepticism after the failure to date to find extensive evidence backing U.S. and British claims about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

A series of revelations in recent months has heightened fears about Iran's nuclear program. Iran admitted in May that it was building a heavy-water research reactor in Arak that could produce weapons-grade plutonium, and it also conducted a secret uranium-enrichment pilot program at a previously undisclosed facility in Natanz.

The Bush administration says Iran's nuclear program is not needed in a country with huge oil deposits.

"If Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons, why wouldn't they cooperate fully and completely with the IAEA?" Mr. Fleischer asked yesterday.

The IAEA is set to issue a follow-up report based on its inspections in September, but diplomats said yesterday that the United States and its allies may try to speed the administrative process to keep pressure on Tehran.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030620-120926-1368r.htm>

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New York Times

June 20, 2003

U.N Atom Agency Seeks Wider Scrutiny On Iran, But Is Rebuffed

By Richard Bernstein

VIENNA, June 19 — The International Atomic Energy Agency called on Iran today to allow stricter inspections of the nuclear reactor sites that the United States has said are being used to develop atomic weapons. Iran rejected the request.

In a statement concluding three days of debate, the 35-member governing board of the agency said Iran should "promptly and unconditionally conclude and implement an additional protocol to its Safeguards Agreement, in order to enhance the agency's ability to provide credible assurances regarding the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities."

The statement was in effect a call on Iran, which denies that it is building nuclear weapons, to allow further inspections of its reactor sites, including chemical samplings of the areas that have been identified as places where enriched uranium suitable for weapons is being produced.

"I'm very satisfied with the outcome today," the American ambassador to the agency, Kenneth Brill, said. "We have an important message from the board that supports the U.S. position and concern about the Iranian program."

Mr. Brill said he welcomed the board's call for "unqualified cooperation by Iran to help the I.A.E.A. get to the bottom of this."

"And we expect to hear back soon from the I.A.E.A. in that regard," he said. The agency is scheduled to hear a report in September based on further inspections of the Iranian nuclear program.

The Iranian representative, Ali A. Salehi, rejected the call for wider inspections, saying, "We have dissociated ourselves from this part of the statement."

Today's action by the agency, an arm of the United Nations that monitors nuclear practices around the world, came after three days of debate during which the United States backed away from its initial demand that the agency issue a strong condemnation of Iran for its nuclear activities.

That step had been opposed by 15 countries represented on the board whose position was that Iran had shown cooperation with the agency and should be given a further chance to show that its nuclear programs are only for peaceful purposes.

Still, for the agency's board to issue a statement at all is an unusual step, one that was seen by Western diplomats here as a move toward increasing the pressure on Iran to cease what the United States has called a clandestine nuclear weapons program.

"The international community has a whole different look today than it did a year ago," a senior Western diplomat said. "It's really at the center of attention," he continued, referring to nuclear activities in both Iran and North Korea.

The agency's director general, Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, said after today's meeting that the board of governors had a "broad sense" that Iran should accept a new inspections protocol "without conditions."

"Safeguards have to be implemented in a very comprehensive, very conspicuous, very rigid manner to build confidence," Dr. ElBaradei said. "They need to be completely transparent and the issues before us should be resolved as soon as possible."

The agency's statement came a day after President Bush said the United States would "not tolerate" an Iranian nuclear weapons program. Mr. Salehi, the Iranian representative, said in a speech before the agency's board on Wednesday that Iran had no intention or desire to create nuclear weapons and that the attention being paid to it was "politically motivated."

"The language of force and threat will be futile and not conducive to the final achievement of our common goal," Mr. Salehi said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/20/international/europe/20VIEN.html>

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Washington Post

June 20, 2003

Pg. 9

Panel Urges Caution On Smallpox Inoculation

By Ceci Connolly, Washington Post Staff Writer

A panel of medical experts overseeing the Bush administration's smallpox immunization campaign advised yesterday against expanding the effort to millions of emergency response workers, saying a series of unexpected heart complications raises concerns about the safety of the vaccine.

The recommendation by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices comes as many state and federal health officials say privately that the program is at a standstill, falling far short of President Bush's desire to vaccinate millions. At its meeting in Atlanta yesterday, the advisory panel approved a one-page resolution saying it would be "unwise to expand beyond its current, pre-event smallpox vaccination recommendations" and begin inoculating first responders "because of the new and unanticipated safety concerns."

Joseph Henderson, the chief bioterrorism official at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the agency is conducting a six-month assessment of its smallpox preparedness efforts and expects to suggest adjustments to the White House with more focus on education and training, emergency response drills and faster reporting of suspicious outbreaks.

Investing almost solely in vaccinations "is not a practical approach right now," Henderson said in an interview. Nevertheless, he said, CDC is "committed to the president's decision" and intends to press for more volunteers to be immunized.

In a news briefing, CDC Director Julie L. Gerberding said the administration will review the panel's recommendation but is likely to encourage more people to be immunized.

"The more people we have vaccinated, the better off we'll be, and the fact that we have almost 40,000 people vaccinated is I think a tremendous step forward compared to where we were just six months ago," she said. "So we've made enormous progress, but we have more to do."

When Bush announced in December his plan to resume smallpox vaccinations, his health advisers outlined an ambitious timetable for inoculating nearly 500,000 health care workers in early 2003 and as many as 10 million medical and emergency response personnel by summer. So far, fewer than 40,000 people have been immunized. Skepticism about the true threat of a biological attack, partisan wrangling over a compensation package for people harmed by the vaccine and public health crises such as the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome dampened participation in the program, Henderson said.

States' participation has varied -- 34 people in Rhode Island have been immunized, compared with more than 3,700 in Florida, according to the June 13 CDC report. The District has immunized about 105, Virginia 867 and Maryland 735, according to the CDC.

From the outset, health experts knew -- and worried -- about complications from the smallpox vaccine, made from a live virus called vaccinia. But what startled the medical community were the few dozen cardiac cases, in particular some heart attacks and several cases of swelling in or around the heart.

The first hints of heart complications came in the military, which immunized more than 450,000 personnel before the war in Iraq. At least 27 military employees and 21 civilian workers suffered heart inflammation after being vaccinated, prompting the administration to tighten its screening procedures.

The panel and other medical experts have urged more extensive studies on the possible link between the vaccine and heart trouble before continuing the program.

Although smallpox was believed to be eradicated in the late 1970s, many experts fear terrorist groups or hostile nations such as Iraq may have acquired the germ and could use it as a weapon. There is no treatment for the highly contagious illness, but vaccination given within several days of exposure often protects people from the virus.

Last year, the advisory committee urged a small-scale, cautious approach to resuming smallpox vaccinations after 30 years. But for the first time in history, the administration overrode those recommendations and unveiled its plan for inoculating millions.

Several groups that have voiced skepticism about the original policy yesterday applauded the panel's cautionary note.

"The lesson for the future is that public officials can't ignore the voice of health care workers on the front lines when they make decisions that affect them and their patients," said Andrew L. Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union. As the nation's largest health care union, SEIU led the fight for compensation of injured workers.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A14763-2003Jun19.html>

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