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Washington Times
August 5, 2003
Pg. 1

Bush Backs Bolton's Tough Talk

Rejects North Korea's demand to bar arms official from meetings

By Nicholas Kralev, The Washington Times

The White House yesterday stood behind a top arms-control official's description of life in North Korea as a "hellish nightmare" and rejected Pyongyang's demand that he be banned from upcoming talks on the North's nuclear weapons program.

President Bush will decide who represents the United States, White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan told reporters in Crawford, Texas, where Mr. Bush is spending a monthlong working vacation.

John Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, "was speaking for the administration," Mr. McClellan said. "His remarks last week reiterated things that we have said in the past."

In the administration's latest verbal spat with North Korea, Mr. Bolton lashed out in a speech in Seoul in which he called that country's leader, Kim Jong-il, a "tyrannical dictator."

Mr. Bolton said: "Hundreds of thousands of [Mr. Kim's] people [are] locked in prison camps, with millions more mired in abject poverty, scrounging the ground for food. For many in North Korea, life is a hellish nightmare."

The North Korean Foreign Ministry issued a response through the official Korean Central News Agency, saying of Mr. Bolton that "such human scum and bloodsucker is not entitled to take part in the talks."

On North Korea's demand that Mr. Bolton be excluded from negotiations, Mr. McClellan said yesterday: "The president of the United States makes the decisions about who participates in the delegations for the United States of America."

Besides the United States and North Korea, the talks are to include China, Japan, South Korea and Russia.

At the State Department in Washington, spokesman Philip Reeker declined to comment on North Korea's response. "We are not going to dignify North Korean comments about our undersecretary of state," Mr. Reeker said. "I think the undersecretary's speech speaks for itself.... It was a speech that reflected some obvious truths, and let's just leave it at that."

The United States and North Korea said last week that they would hold six-party talks, but the date and location have not been announced.

In another development, former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright writes in a memoir to be published next month that President Clinton invited Mr. Kim to visit Washington in late 2000.

Mrs. Albright also chides the Bush administration for not having continued Mr. Clinton's policy of engagement with North Korea.

She writes that Mr. Clinton, being forced by the eruption of violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians in fall 2000 to dedicate most of his remaining time in office to the Middle East, decided not to take a trip to Pyongyang.

"In a final effort to sidestep this choice, we invited Chairman Kim to come to Washington. The North Koreans replied that they could not accept the invitation," Mrs. Albright says in an excerpt from her book, "Madame Secretary," published by Vanity Fair magazine in its September issue.

"Given the public character of Kim's invitation to us, the lateness of our invitation to him and the importance of 'face' in East Asian diplomacy, this response was unsurprising but also unfortunate," she writes.

Mrs. Albright is the highest U.S. official to have visited North Korea since the communist state was created more than five decades ago. She met with Mr. Kim in Pyongyang in October 2000, but the two sides failed to reach an agreement on the North's missiles.

"We wanted [North Korea] to refrain from the production, testing, deployment and export of whole classes of missiles (including those threatening Japan) in return for our agreement to arrange for civilian North Korean satellite launches under safeguards outside the country," she writes.

In exchange for these and other concessions, the Clinton administration was ready to offer "full normalization of relations" between Washington and Pyongyang, which never have had formal diplomatic ties.

After assuming office in 2001, Mr. Bush said he did not trust Mr. Kim and refused to deal with his regime.

In October 2002, the North admitted to having developed a secret uranium-enrichment program in violation of a 1994 nuclear deal with the Clinton administration.

Early this year, it reopened its plutonium plant in Yongbyon and says it has reprocessed 8,000 spent fuel rods to extract plutonium.

Uranium and plutonium can be used to make atom bombs. Neither assertion has been independently confirmed, in part because of the absence of international monitors in the reclusive country.

The Bush administration began an effort in late winter to convene a multilateral forum to resolve the nuclear standoff, but the North insisted on direct dialogue with the United States.

Last month, after the administration agreed to invite Russia to a meeting that was to include only China, Japan and South Korea, Pyongyang accepted Washington's offer.

Talks are expected in a matter of weeks, possibly in early September, if not before that. Pyongyang said yesterday that the talks will be held in Beijing, which hosted a U.S.-China-North Korea meeting in April, but no venue has been officially announced.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030804-111212-6491r.htm>

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New York Times
August 5, 2003

North Korea Moves To Win Some Friends Before Nuclear Talks

By James Brooke

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug. 4 — The tinny loudspeakers fell silent along the 148-mile demilitarized zone this past weekend as North Korea shut down a cross-border propaganda barrage by radio and megaphone that it started in 1970.

Seeking to make friends and influence countries before six-party talks over its nuclear bomb program, North Korea is easing tensions with the South, making clumsy overtures to Japan and even trying to temper its trademark anti-American vitriol.

"Ultimately the North Korean game is to split South Korea and other countries away from the United States," Marcus Noland, a Korea expert at the Institute for International Economics, said from Washington. "Ultimately the North Koreans want their charm campaign to soften up South Korea and other countries and make them less likely to back the United States in any kind of coercive diplomacy."

North Korea still engages in a nasty tit-for-tat with the United States but even so tries to limit the damage.

On Sunday, a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman called a top Bush administration official a "scum and human bloodsucker." But in the next breath, the diplomat emphasized in an interview with North Korea's news agency that there was "no change" in North Korea's intent to join the nuclear talks with the United States, which are expected to be held in Beijing early next month.

North Korea was responding to a speech delivered here on Thursday by John R. Bolton, an under secretary of state, in which he lambasted the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, by name 41 times.

"While he lives like royalty in Pyongyang, he keeps hundreds of thousands of his people locked in prison camps with millions more mired in abject poverty, scrounging the ground for food," Mr. Bolton said.

In response, the North Korean spokesman said, "On the basis of a serious analysis of Bolton's outcries, in the light of his political vulgarity and psychopathological condition, as they are quite different from the recent remarks of the U.S. president, we have decided not to consider him as an official of the U.S. administration any longer nor to deal with him."

Today in Texas, the White House spokesman, Scott McClellan, said Mr. Bolton was "speaking for the administration," and added, "His remarks last week reiterated things that we have said in the past."

The North Koreans plan a kind of Ping-Pong diplomacy for the American public later this month when North Korea's top gymnasts fly to Anaheim, Calif., to compete in a qualifying championship for the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens.

Turning to Japanese public opinion, North Korea is focusing on the 10-month drama of seven children who have been unable to follow their parents to Japan. The parents are Japanese who were kidnapped by North Korea many years ago and then finally allowed to return to Japan. On Sunday, the parents received the first letters and photos from their children in North Korea.

While the parents were happy to see photographs of the children, they said they doubted the spontaneity of the letters, which contained appeals to return to live in North Korea.

"I got the impression she was told by the North Koreans to write this way," Kaoru Hasuike said Sunday of the letter from his 21-year-old daughter. Hitomi Soga told reporters that the smile on the face of her 20-year-old daughter looked forced.

Yomiuri Shimbun, a conservative Japanese newspaper, said today, "North Korea is trying to break the nation's will by taking advantage of the returned abductees' natural affection for their children."

The North Koreans may have better success easing tensions with South Korea.

In the last six weeks, North and South Korea formally relinked their cross-border railroads, and a South Korean company inaugurated what could be a \$5 billion industrial park in an area of North Korea about 40 miles north of here. The two countries closed the ceremonies to foreign reporters, fearing that publicity over those steps toward inter-Korean integration would irritate the United States in a time of nuclear tension.

"Ultimately this comes down to a fight for the hearts and minds of Seoul," Mr. Noland said of the charm offensive before the six-party talks. "If the U.S. is not firmly, actively and enthusiastically supported by South Korea, it cannot do any coercive diplomacy toward the North, economically, militarily or whatever."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/05/international/asia/05KORE.html>

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Philadelphia Inquirer
August 5, 2003

N. Korea Reaffirms 6-Nation Talks Still On

That followed a contentious weekend. Still, Pyongyang did not sound optimistic on results.

By Michael Dorgan, Knight Ridder News Service

BEIJING - Long-awaited talks on North Korea's nuclear-weapons program seemed on track yesterday, despite hitting a bumpy patch during the weekend with a sharp exchange of insults between U.S. and North Korean officials.

A spokesman for North Korea's Foreign Ministry said the six-nation negotiations agreed to last week would open soon in Beijing, according to a Korean-language statement translated by South Korea's Yonhap news agency. It did not identify the spokesman or say when the talks would begin. Officials in South Korea and elsewhere have said the date could be as early as the first week in September.

Although he confirmed the talks, the spokesman did not seem optimistic on the outcome.

"Inasmuch as the multiparty talks that the U.S. side has long advocated will be held, whether the United States has made a change in its policy toward our country will be clearly revealed to the international community at the talks," the statement said.

Ever since President Bush early last year labeled North Korea as part of an "axis of evil" with Iraq and Iran, the North has accused the United States of plotting an attack. It has demanded a nonaggression treaty from Washington as a condition for negotiations on ending its nuclear programs. The United States insists North Korea must first shut down its weapons program.

North Korea originally demanded talks with only the United States. U.S. officials demanded that other nations also participate because North Korea's nuclear-weapons program threatens the whole region. South Korea, Japan, China and Russia will also take part in the talks.

On Sunday, a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman described John Bolton, the top U.S. arms-control official, as "human scum" and a "bloodsucker." The official, whose name was not given, said Bolton was unfit to participate in the negotiations.

Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, gave a speech Friday in which he described North Korean leader Kim Jong Il as a tyrannical dictator and said life in North Korea was a "hellish nightmare" for most people.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan said yesterday that Bolton was speaking for the administration when he made the remarks.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/6458666.htm>

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San Francisco Chronicle

August 3, 2003

Beyond North Korea: A New Nuclear Threat

By James Sterngold

There was a slender ray of light last week in the conflict with North Korea as Pyongyang agreed to multilateral negotiations over its nuclear weapons program.

And for the first time, Iran has said it will consider allowing inspections of previously secret uranium enrichment facilities, providing modest hope in the battle to prevent the seemingly inexorable spread of nuclear arms.

But a number of arms control experts say that the positive signs may be masking an ominous new shadow in today's dark proliferation picture, creating enormous challenges for the United States.

What experts have found troubling is not just that North Korea and Iran appear to have succeeded in mounting clandestine programs for enriching uranium for weapons, but that they broke through a number of legal and technological safeguards with the help a shadowy new "proliferation ring," or distribution network, involving a number of less developed countries.

"This has blown a big hole in the protective barriers we've set up," said Jon Wolfsthal, deputy director of the Nonproliferation Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He is a former Department of Energy nuclear weapons inspector.

The fact that two isolated, economically backward nations could secretly acquire so many obscure materials and components, and construct the specialized centrifuges for enriching uranium, suggests that other countries -- or terrorist groups with substantial technological assistance -- could, too.

During the second half of the 20th century, spying and theft were the focus of concern among the established nuclear powers. But now, with a number of less developed countries supplying some of the know-how as well as

materials, this new secondary proliferation ring is causing experts and policy makers to reconsider the old methods of control.

A SCARY FACT

The concerns have been made scarier by the fact that North Korea itself may be not just a bombmaker, but also a technology supplier. So may be Pakistan and Iran, both believed to have traded various weapons technologies to North Korea.

"There's been increased concern about those new suppliers," Wolfsthal said. "The last year has really brought it home in spades, in large part because of Pakistan and their reported role in spreading the centrifuge technology. If they haven't been the primary suppliers, they have been the professors." The kind of weapons these countries appear to be building is also causing concerns. North Korea initially chose to use a small reactor to produce radioactive materials from which it could extract plutonium. Relatively little plutonium is needed to build a bomb -- perhaps 10 pounds or so -- but actually creating a workable weapon is considered enormously complex.

North Korea has now acknowledged building a clandestine facility for creating weapons-grade uranium, U-235, using hundreds of centrifuges. More uranium than plutonium is needed for a bomb, perhaps 40 pounds or more, but experts say it is far easier to transform uranium into a reliable, and devastating, weapon.

Iran said a few months ago that it has constructed a similar home-grown uranium enrichment program using hundreds of centrifuges. It has also admitted secretly importing uranium ore and building a plant for producing heavy water, a critical substance for certain bomb-making reactors.

Pakistan, which stole the centrifuge technology from Europe years ago, is suspected of having traded it to several other countries, including Syria and Libya, in addition to North Korea and Iran. All are believed to have bought and sold ballistic missile technology among each other.

BELIEVERS RECONSIDERING

The flowering of this secondary proliferation network has made even many strong believers in the old nonproliferation machinery -- a series of treaties and export controls restricting the flow of sensitive materials and technologies -- reconsider their opposition to harsher strategies.

"Even guys like me, who support the treaties and want to see them flourish, understand that realistically they are not enough anymore," said Leonard Spector, a nonproliferation expert at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. "You have to say that there's more going on than we can manage with the traditional tools. What has changed is that by the end of the Cold War, the countries working on getting the bomb were threatening to us, in this country. That was a major, major change."

Fred C. Ikle, a senior government arms control adviser for decades and a hawk on the proliferation problem, echoed that thought: "For a long time there was a view that we weren't worried about a few bombs, that that was not a military threat to us and so it wasn't a great worry. Now we see it in the light of 9/11, and a few bombs are disastrous."

Equally important, many experts say, the secondary proliferators have been swapping information on essential tricks, such as how to create front companies for making clandestine purchases, lists of companies that can be persuaded to make sales, and which commercial goods can be converted to weapons use.

"The face of proliferation has changed a lot in recent years," said Robert Einhorn, a nonproliferation official in the Clinton administration and now a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington policy research organization. "It isn't terribly new; we saw this in the '90s. But what we're seeing more of is, these countries are turning to each other for components and sub-components and technology that they didn't have before."

He added, "One of the worst parts is what we don't know about these secondary rings. I think the intelligence community has an exaggerated sense of what it knows. I think there's a lot going on that they don't know about. We keep getting surprised, and that's a real problem."

The policy of the United States and the other declared nuclear states has long rested on a sort of devil's bargain. Under this approach, international pacts including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and other accords tightly restricted trade in nuclear technologies and required states that did acquire controlled materials to undergo rigorous inspections. The countries that agreed not to develop weapons programs were given access to peaceful reactors, as long as they played by the rules.

The philosophy behind this bargain was trumpeted to the world 50 years ago in a now-famous speech that President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered at the United Nations, called "Atoms for Peace."

Eisenhower warned that the "the dread secret and the fearful engines of atomic might" presented a unique threat to global security. The only way to overcome the standoff with the Soviet Union, he said, was to encourage the spread of peaceful nuclear energy so that "this greatest of destructive forces can be developed into a great boon, for the benefit of all mankind."

A REACTOR FOR A FRIEND

But the spread of reactors around the world by the United States and the Soviet Union turned into a new realm of Cold War competition. Each side rewarded its friends with research reactors -- often easily adapted to bomb-making purposes -- or commercial power reactors. In hindsight, states determined to develop weapons programs secretly transformed the reactors into bomb factories or training grounds.

Countries as disparate as the Congo, Ghana, Jamaica, Peru, Syria, Turkey, Bangladesh, Algeria and Colombia all got reactors. A university in Tehran received a research reactor from the United States. South Vietnam got an American reactor during the Vietnam War. A special military team was sent at the end of the war to spirit out the highly enriched uranium fuel, but the team grabbed the wrong containers.

"We weren't tough enough," said Ikle, who recently delivered a stern attack on the Atoms for Peace concept at a congressional hearing. "We sprinkled reactors all over the world. It was insane."

He added, "We wanted to do good. We wanted to stop proliferation. But as an unintended consequence, we created massive proliferation."

Nor did the United States envision the possibility of terrorists obtaining a nuclear weapon. Instead, weapons planners contended that one or two crude weapons had little, if any, military value.

"We had assumed before that if a country wanted nuclear weapons, they would do things more or less the way we did, with the effort to create a big arsenal," said Corey Hinderstein, a senior analyst at the Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington think tank. "We didn't worry about someone having just a few bombs. Now we do."

Those changes make preventing proliferation far harder, experts agree, and they lie behind the slowly changing calculus of the U.S. response to nuclear threats. Experts applaud the prospect of negotiations with North Korea, but many are suggesting that countries suspected of spreading even components, such as ring magnets or high-purity aluminum tubes, must be threatened with dire consequences.

Ikle said he believes North Korea should be warned that if it exports any nuclear materials or technologies "it will be finished" -- meaning subject to devastating military attack.

Even those who still support the existing nonproliferation treaties and agreements say those accords may not be up to the new challenges.

"It's turned into a kind of race now between the proliferators and the people trying to stop them," said Einhorn.

"Both sides are getting better, but the proliferators are probably ahead."

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/08/03/MN293524.DTL>

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U.S. parents say son in Iraq was casualty of chemical weapons

By Charles Laurence

LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

August 04, 2003

The parents of an American soldier who died in Iraq after contracting a mysterious pneumonialike illness that ravaged his major organs are convinced that their son stumbled across deadly chemical weapons while clearing rubble from one of Saddam Hussein's palaces.

Spc. Josh Neusche, 20, who had been conducting cleanup operations in Baghdad, died July 12 after being transferred from his base at the airport to a U.S. military hospital in Germany.

Army specialists are analyzing tissue samples from his liver, kidneys and lungs to determine the cause of death. Two U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq have died after their major organs failed. Seven others have reported similarly serious symptoms, although overall about 100 cases have been diagnosed since March 1.

Lt. Gen. James Peake, the Army surgeon general, has sent two doctors and four other disease specialists to Iraq and two more doctors to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, where some of the troops were treated after being flown from Iraq. The teams are retracing the soldiers' steps in hopes of pinpointing the source of infection.

Mark and Cindi Neusche of Montreal, Mo., told the Sunday Telegraph that their son had lapsed into unconsciousness less than an hour after writing a letter to them in his tent.

He had begun to complain of a sore throat and difficulty in breathing, and had been making his way to the field dressing station at the camp when he came across a medic, muttered a few words and collapsed at his feet.

The Army believes Spc. Neusche had been suffering from pneumonia.

Mr. Neusche, 40, an electrician, said: "I honestly feel that he must have got into some sort of chemical weapon or something. For Josh to fall into a coma in just a few hours, it has to be something like that. He was a strong boy and he knew how to look after himself. This could not have been a natural thing. We have been told that his lungs and

kidneys collapsed, and he had toxins eating at his muscle structure."

Mrs. Neusche, 43, added: "I still want to know what my son died of. But we know that he had been on a hauling mission for 20 hours, and he told us in a letter that he had been clearing rubble from one of Saddam Hussein's palaces. I am convinced that he stumbled across something deadly from a chemical weapon that had been buried in that palace."

Spc. Neusche, who was serving with the 203rd Engineer Battalion in Baghdad, was buried with full military honors in Montreal on July 22 after his body was returned from Germany.

After the funeral, Rep. Ike Skelton, Missouri Democrat, said: "The Army has confirmed that three or four of the soldiers in Josh's unit are among those who got sick. They are investigating everything it could possibly be. I'm confident that we will get some answers."

Military officials said there was no evidence that the cases, which are spread among troops deployed across Iraq, were caused by exposure to chemical or biological weapons, or environmental toxins.

"It is pneumonia. The question is what is the cause," said Lyn Kukral, spokesman for Gen. Peake and the Army Medical Command.

"The epidemiological teams will look and follow the facts wherever they lead," she said. "You've got a healthy population and a young population, and you have two soldiers who have died. And that's a concern."

Fifteen of the 100 soldiers were ill enough to require ventilator support. According to the Army, these severe cases have been spaced out fairly evenly, which doesn't suggest a single-source epidemic. Three occurred in March, three in April, two in May, three in June and four in July.

Mrs. Neusche said receiving the flag at her son's funeral was an honor.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030804-121410-8530r.htm>

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THE TROOPS

Army to probe a rash of sickness

By Associated Press, 8/2/2003

WASHINGTON -- The Army is trying to figure out what is causing a rash of serious pneumonia cases, two of which were fatal, among troops serving in the Iraq war.

A six-person team of specialists was en route to Iraq yesterday to investigate 15 cases of pneumonia so serious that patients had to be put on ventilators to breathe and were evacuated from the region, the Army Surgeon General's office said yesterday.

Two soldiers died, 10 recovered, and three remained hospitalized as of yesterday, spokeswoman Lyn Kukral said. Most were in the Army, but at least one was a Marine.

The team on its way to Iraq includes infectious disease specialists, laboratory officers, and people who will take samples of soil, water, and air.

So far, officials have identified no infectious agent common to all the cases. Officials said there was no evidence that any of the cases were caused by exposure to chemical or biological weapons, environmental toxins, or SARS -- severe acute respiratory syndrome -- the disease first noted in China this year.

A two-person team already has gone to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, where most of the cases were treated after evacuation. The two teams also will review patient records and laboratory results and interview health care workers and patients, if possible, said the Army surgeon general and Army Medical Command in a statement.

The teams will be looking for similarities among the cases, which so far have hit troops in geographically dispersed areas and from different units, said the Thursday statement. They also were spread over time, with three in March, three in April, two in May, three in June, and four in July.

Most of the cases were in Iraq and occurred after the US-led invasion began March 20, although some were among other troops deployed to the region in support of the campaign. Troops also were sent to Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and other countries, but no breakdown was available on the number of cases outside Iraq, Kukral said.

This story ran on page A12 of the Boston Globe on 8/2/2003.

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/214/nation/Army_to_probe_a_rash_of_sickness+.shtml

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GMU launching biodefense graduate program

By Jason Jacks

08/01/2003

The Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks spurred the creation of the federal Department of Homeland Security, and starting this fall, a new program at George Mason University will supply that department with trained biodefense professionals.

Next month, officials from the GMU Center for Biodefense on the Prince William Campus will launch the country's first biodefense graduate program. The program is intended to provide personnel for the Department of Homeland Security and other government and private organizations.

Kenneth Alibek, former deputy chief of the civilian branch of the Soviet Union's Offensive Biological Weapons program, and Charles Bailey, former deputy commander for research at the U. S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, will lead the program.

"Our goal is to create a new generation of biodefense professionals," Alibek, the center's executive director for education, said. "Currently, biodefense training for most working in the field is fragmented."

According to the center's Web site, the program will offer master's and doctoral degrees as well as certificates for people with biodefense experience. Students can concentrate in threat analysis of biological weapons, medical defense or counterterrorism and law enforcement.

Alibek expects that about 50 students will enroll this fall. Many of those interested in the program have been current biodefense professionals and undergraduate science students.

"We probably receive 15 to 20 phone calls a day from people interested," Alibek said.

Alibek and Bailey are also pleased by the response they are receiving from federal and local agencies as well as private companies.

"We have many government agencies and companies who are very encouraged by this program. Some have even offered to supply us with adjunct professors," Bailey said.

"Most of our guys were trained by baptism of fire during the anthrax attacks," said John Medici, hazardous materials officer for Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue. "The program will be a phenomenal opportunity and incredible resource for us."

With the fall semester fast approaching, the center's staff is preparing for the first batch of students.

"We are working seven days a week, 14-hour days to develop this program," Alibek said.

Washington, D.C.'s pool of bioterrorism and defense experts, plus GMU's already-strong biological sciences department, made this an ideal location for the program, Alibek said.

Bioterrorism has received a great deal of attention since Sept. 11, 2001, and the subsequent anthrax scares.

However, as Bailey pointed out, the program was not created as a response, but as a need.

"We saw a need on the research and education fronts for biodefense training and wanted to get heavily involved.

Also, this type of work has been my life," Bailey, the center's executive director for science, said.

With the continuing threat of terrorism, Bailey sees a long and successful future for the GMU program.

"As long as the bad guys are still trying to get us, there will be a need for trained biodefense professionals," he said.

http://www.zwire.com/site/tab6.cfm?newsid=9932662&BRD=2553&PAG=461&dept_id=506105&rfti=6

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New York Times

August 6, 2003

Two Army Teams Investigating Puzzling Outbreak Of Pneumonia

By Lawrence K. Altman

The Army has assigned two teams of medical investigators to determine the cause of a puzzling spate of pneumonia cases among American troops in Iraq and other countries in the war region, Pentagon officials said yesterday.

From March 1 through July 30, about 100 pneumonia cases have been reported among all troops deployed in Southwest Asia, the officials said, and doctors have not been able to determine the cause of the disease in most of them.

In 15 cases, the pneumonia was severe enough to require attaching the sick troops to mechanical respirators. Ten of the 15 cases occurred in Iraq, where most of the troops are deployed; the others occurred in Kuwait, Qatar and Uzbekistan.

Two have died. Both served in Iraq, and one died there. The other died after being taken to Germany.

Epidemiologists are focusing on environmental factors like dust and dehydration because they have ruled out SARS, Legionnaires' disease, anthrax, smallpox and other infectious agents as a cause of the pneumonias.

Col. Bob DeFraités, the Army's chief of preventive medicine, said at a news conference yesterday that he was "pretty close to ruling out" biological or chemical weapons as a source of the pneumonias.

At the news conference, military officials said the number of cases and deaths was about usual for the size of the population involved. They said they were concerned about the serious cases and deaths despite the small numbers.

About three deaths from pneumonia usually occur among all Army troops each year, said Dr. DeFraités, "so two occurring in one area of the world in about a month was enough to cause us concern" and to lead to an epidemiologic investigation.

Dr. DeFraités said he was constrained from disclosing the total number of troops deployed in the region by military security.

One of the most puzzling aspects of the pneumonia is the sporadic nature of the cases and the lack of a discernable pattern of transmission. "No two of the cases share any common unit or exact day or time," and there is no evidence that it was spread person to person, Dr. DeFraités said.

Fourteen were soldiers, and one was a marine. Two cases occurred in March, two in April, one in May, six in June and four in July, Dr. DeFraités said.

The patients' ages ranged from 19 to 40, with a median of 24, Dr. DeFraités said in an interview. All but one were men, he said. One of the two deaths occurred in June, the other in July. Full autopsy reports are expected in about 10 days.

Dr. DeFraités said his team is trying to obtain data to compare the incidence of pneumonia in the Iraq war to that among troops during the Persian Gulf war in 1991. He said he was also trying to determine if any pneumonia cases have occurred among British troops in Iraq.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/06/international/worldspecial/06PNEU.html>

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U.S. Army Delays Burning Chemical Weapons

By REUTERS

Filed at 8:56 p.m. ET

ANNISTON, Ala. (Reuters) - Facing protests from environmentalists and fearful residents, the U.S. Army agreed on Tuesday to delay for two days the burning of hundreds of Cold War-era chemical weapons at a facility in Alabama. The Army, complying with an international treaty, had been expected to begin burning the first of its M-55 rockets containing the deadly nerve agent sarin on Wednesday at its \$1-billion chemical weapons disposal facility in Anniston.

The effort, which comes as the United States is searching Iraq for evidence of weapons of mass destruction, triggered widespread protest in the area and prompted environmentalists to ask a federal judge for an injunction barring the incineration.

In a hearing in Washington on Tuesday, an attorney representing the U.S. military told U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson the Army would wait until Friday to give the court enough time to consider the issue. Jackson promptly set a hearing for Friday.

"We are waiting to see what happens in Friday's scheduled hearing," said Mike Abrams, the Army's public affairs officer for the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility.

Opponents of the weapons disposal plan have argued that large amounts of dangerous chemicals would be released into the environment if the Army and Department of Defense were allowed to burn the weapons stockpiled in Anniston.

The Army's weapons disposal facility is in the middle of this northeastern Alabama town and less than 100 miles from the heavily populated cities of Atlanta and Birmingham. About 110,000 people live within 30 miles.

"We feel that we have a strong case," said Craig Williams, director of the Chemical Weapons Working Group, one of the environmental groups that asked for an injunction to stop the Army's incineration plan.

Military officials have said the project does not pose an undue danger to local residents.

Thousands of residents most at risk in the event of a chemical release, have been offered protective hoods, air filters and shelter kits in preparation for the event.

The Army's weapons depot in Anniston contains more than 2,000 tons of rockets, artillery shells and land mines, which contain sarin, VX and other nerve agents. The stockpile accounts for about 6 percent of the U.S. chemical weapons that must be destroyed by 2007 under an international treaty.

<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/news/news-arms-alabama.html>

Arms Control Today
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An Interview with Hans Blix

Hans Blix, outgoing Executive Chairman of the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), shared his perspective on a number of Iraq disarmament issues during a June 16 interview with *Arms Control Today* editor, Miles Pomper, and ACA research analyst, Paul Kerr.

What follows is a transcript of the interview.

ACT: *So let me just start with maybe the most general question, I'm sure one that you've heard before: Are you surprised that U.S. forces haven't found any weapons of mass destruction [WMD] yet?*

Blix: No, I would not say I am surprised, but nor would I have been surprised if they had found something. Our position was always that there was a great deal that was unaccounted for, which means that it could have been there and the Iraqis had not explained what had happened to it, except to say in a general way that it was all destroyed in the summer of 1991.

We warned, and I warned specifically and explicitly, against equating "not accounted for" with "existing." And you'll find that we consistently said that Iraq must present any proscribed items or provide evidence of what has happened to them. And if they do not succeed in providing evidence, then the conclusion for us is that one cannot have confidence that these are gone and that therefore, at least in the past, in terms of the past resolutions, there was not a ground for lifting sanctions.

I am surprised, on the other hand, that it seems that so many of the U.S. military seemed to have been convinced that there would be lots of weapons of mass destruction, particularly chemical weapons, for them to take care of as soon as they went in and that they would practically stumble on these things. If anyone had cared, in the military circles, to study what UNSCOM [United Nations Special Commission] was saying for quite a number of years, and what we were saying, they should not have assumed that they would stumble on weapons.

ACT: *What do you think accounts for the discrepancy between this assumption on the U.S. military side and what was in the UNSCOM reports and what you found in your investigations?*

Blix: I think primarily little attention to the United Nations and what it does up in New York and more attention to the huge organization that is the U.S. military force.

ACT: *It's not a question of different intelligence methods of gathering things or political pressures or other factors?*

Blix: No--well, of course there was a lot of political feeling that Saddam was bad, which was true, and which I shared (*laughter*). But going from there to saying that "well it was a foregone conclusion that there was a lot" [of WMD] was not really tenable logic. It is true that he had the intention and he had these programs; we all know that. And, in popular thinking, maybe, if you have someone committing a crime once you are inclined to think there will be a second time. But if you are a lawyer, if you are in a court, you are not supposed to say that it is automatic that someone who is accused a second time is guilty because he was guilty the first time. I think the matters have to be looked at on the merits, and this is what we tried to do here and that we were being cautious.

ACT: *What do you think the lack of prohibited weapons finds says about the effectiveness of the investigations that you carried out and that the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] carried out? You got a lot of criticism at the time from the administration and other people about how effective they were and do you think that this shows you were more effective than they claim?*

Blix: Let's distinguish between what is said at the official level with what is said at other levels. I mean, my relations with the U.S. mission here, with their representatives to the Security Council, with their representatives in the State Department, and Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Adviser, were--there was no criticism of what we were doing. On the contrary, there was support for it. And even at the time when the media were suggesting that we were withholding some evidence, there was no such suggestion made on the Security Council. These were spins that came at a lower level.

ACT: *On the substance of the question, do you think that your investigations were more effective than perceived at the time, whatever the origin of the criticism?*

Blix: I think our investigations were quite effective, but we never claimed that we could get into the last cave or corner in Iraq, and, when I was at the IAEA, [current IAEA Director-General Mohamed] ElBaradei and I both said that there will always be a residue of uncertainty, however far you can get. Now I think that given the many things unaccounted for we were relatively far from hitting that residue, so we were never conclusive about it. There is only one case when we really got very close to asserting that there was something left, and that was with the anthrax, where I think we certainly had strong indications that everything hadn't been destroyed in 1991. But having gone

through the evidence of that case with the particular scientists here, I came to the conclusion that the evidence was not compelling, so we stopped short of saying that it does exist.

Now, we too, of course, were aware that the Iraqis must have learned a lot about concealment in the years and knew a lot about the techniques of the inspectors. So, we could not be sure that there were not underground stores that exist. We in fact were looking for ways in which one could explore that particular area, but you can't look into every cave in a big country. We were also looking into the question of mobile transport of WMD, because it was alleged that they moved things around all the time. Which is hardly plausible for a whole stock of chemical weapons for a country, but there could have been some. And this was an area in which we were really looking at for things. So we didn't exclude that we could stumble upon something. And the question came then when, you remember, we found the chemical weapons warheads which were empty of any chemicals but we found 12 of them and then another four I think, and we asked ourselves, and I said to the Security Council: "Is this the tip of the iceberg? Or is it simply broken up pieces of an ice that has broken in the past?" And I wouldn't answer it at the time, kept both possibilities open. As I look at it today, perhaps I'm a little more inclined to think that it was debris from the past.

We looked at the stash of documents which we found on the basis of a tip from an intelligence agency. And again this had been said from intelligence in the past that the Iraqis were farming out documents to farmhouses and individuals and did not have them in archives. So the find was fitted into that picture. Could it have been part of a more general behavior? We still don't know. But it could also have been an individual scientist who brought documents home, even though some were confidential. Both possibilities are open and we never found another one, but I don't exclude that it could have happened.

ACT: Can you speculate on why--

Blix: Ah, one point more. That is that, if you study our latest report, in the appendix we have information about when did UNSCOM, in particular, find things and when did they destroy things. And you'll find that, in the first place, UNSCOM hardly ever stumbled upon something or found something that really was concealed. It was declared--either the sites were declared or the weapons were declared. And they destroyed practically all--the vast majority was destroyed before the end of 1994. After 1994, through their investigations and through the Kamel papers, 1 they managed to identify that a number of things had been tainted, had been used, in installations, equipment had been used for the production of weapons--then they decided, this must be destroyed. So the little things were destroyed of that, but not weapons. And, I think that it is a detail now that the U.S. hasn't found anything and we didn't find anything. I think it's interesting to go back and see that, in fact, after 1994, not much was found and destroyed. That has escaped attention. I don't think we have called much attention to it either but it struck me, and so we brought that forward.

ACT: Let's talk a little about the Kamel papers. One of the criticisms that was made before was that the investigators didn't find things on their own, that they were basically relying on defector testimony. How would you rate [defector testimony] versus on-the-spot investigations in terms of their effectiveness of getting at weapons programs and what is there?

Blix: Well, of course, if you count Kamel as a defector, which he was, this was a very valuable source of documents. But, it did not lead anybody to a new weapon that was hidden. It demonstrated that they had weaponized biological weapons and, according to what the Iraqis said, then destroyed them. So, it was a very interesting piece of history. It showed that they'd been lying, but [defectors] didn't lead directly to any weapons. In the nuclear field, it revealed that the Iraqis had a crash program under Kamel from the end of 1990 and to some part of 1991, in order to make a nuclear weapon out of fissionable material, which were under safeguards, and that they just didn't have time to do it. However, it did not lead the IAEA to any more fissionable material. It had already been taken out of Iraq by the time they found the Kamel papers. So, it was very interesting historically, revealed something that the Iraqis had kept quiet about, but it did not lead the IAEA to any weapons.

And when it comes to comparison between the value of defectors and the value of other intelligence or what the inspectors found, I would say that the IAEA, for which I was responsible at the time, did a pretty good job, with the exception of these crash programs about which we knew nothing. However, it was in discussions with Professor Jaffar [Jaffar Dhair Jaffar, Deputy Chairman of the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission] that the big revelations came about the program. And through very painstaking research by our team, led by Prof Zifferero [Maurizio Zifferero, former Deputy Director of the IAEA and head of the IAEA's Iraq Action Team] not by David Kay [chief inspector of a nuclear weapons inspection team in Iraq and now Special Advisor for Strategy in the WMD search in Iraq]--he had no notion of their nuclear program. He was not a nuclear physicist. But Professor Zifferero, vilified by Mr. Milhollin [Gary Milhollin, director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control], he was the one who really traced the program and understood it.

ACT: You mentioned the mobile laboratories when we were talking a little bit earlier. If they were, as the Iraqis claim, not used for biological weapons but were actually producing hydrogen [for civilian purposes], why didn't they declare them? Doesn't it strike you as strange?

Blix: Yes, a little. I mean, we were the ones who said to the Security Council that we asked the Iraqis for the images or declarations of whatever could have been seen as mobile and they gave us a number of photographs and none of these really fit with the ones that have now been discovered. Maybe there is some explanation for it but we are not aware of it. And I agree, it is puzzling and not the only puzzling detail.

ACT: *More broadly, let's say that the Iraqis have been telling the truth all along and that they don't have these weapons, why would they not show the evidence of that and avoid a war?*

Blix: I agree with you, I think it is a little bizarre. Maybe they considered them to be not a dual-use item. If they were to produce hydrogen, as they say, for weather balloons, was that a dual-use item at all? Maybe it had not drifted up to Amin and to al Saadi [Hussam Mohammed Amin, head of the Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate and Amir Al Saadi, a senior adviser to then Iraqi President Saddam Hussein].

Ewen Buchanan (UNMOVIC Public Information Officer): Maybe they didn't bother to tell the others.

Blix: I do not immediately jump to the conclusion that it was a lie. It could be.

ACT: *Not just on that particular program but in the general sense of all their--of all the things you were missing.*

Blix: Why didn't they declare everything?

ACT: *Yeah, why not come clean?*

Blix: When it came to biological, clearly they were lying and they knew that. Now, why did they do that if they had no weapons left? I'm not sure that the logic and the emotions and psychology works exactly the same way as they might do here. Maybe they felt ashamed to admit weaponization? I mean one theory why they - if they had no weapons after '91, then of course there's a much bigger enigma than that, and that is why did they behave all along as they did during the whole 1990s? Because they suffered through sanctions all the way through. And I've been speculating about it and I think more people than I will speculate about it.

One speculation that's been made in the Washington Post, which may have been plausible is that, while on the one hand they would say to the Security Council, "We've done everything, now you lift sanctions." On the other hand, maybe they did not mind that people say, "Well maybe they have something"-a deliberate ambiguity. It's possible-the mystique of maybe having some biological weapons, maybe they're playing around. That is one possibility. Now, why should such a mystique - why should they pursue that until they are occupied? That seems a little peculiar. Maybe by the force of its own logic or by miscalculation, brinkmanship.

And I have one other speculation and that's regarding pride. I saw that the chief minder of the chemical sector -- when he was asked this question-he talked about pride. And I think that goes fairly deeply into my view of how inspections should operate here, that the Iraqis are very proud, as are the Pashtuns in Pakistan, the Afghans are extremely proud people. And that [the Iraqis] felt that, okay, these resolutions are accepted by us. We will live by them, but not one inch longer, not more intrusion than is absolutely [necessary], and they were legalistic about this. I find it very hard to understand some of their denials of access that they had otherwise, where they were quibbling about five inspectors or ten inspectors going in, and eventually going into a house that was totally empty. There must have been a strong element of pride, and that was why when I came here from the very outset, I said we are in Iraq for effective and correct inspections. We are not there for the purpose of humiliating them, harassing them, or provoking them. There were many other elements too that we differed from UNSCOM, but this was one and I still think that pride might have been an element and, while we had lots of frictions and difficulties with them, in any case, we had I think a less difficult relation than UNSCOM had. We had, in particular, never any denial of access, and we had a good deal of cooperation when it came to setting up the infrastructure. So did UNSCOM have cooperation, but they of course had many denials of access.

ACT: *In your recent report, you said that Iraq was cooperative in terms of process but not equally cooperative in terms of substance, and that the long list of unresolved disarmament issues had not shortened. On the other hand, you also said that inspections contributed to a better understanding of previous weapons programs. Could you elaborate a little bit? How does the inspection produce a better understanding if no outstanding disarmament issues were resolved?*

Blix: Well, I think that there are biologists that learned more about [the Iraqi] biological program. We were given access, for instance, to some binder of documents-a fairly extensive thing-which did give them a better understanding. But it did not explain or give evidence that 8,500 liters were all they had [the total anthrax production that the Iraqis had acknowledged to UNMOVIC] or that they'd all been destroyed.

In the chemical field, we were interested in explanations about VX and whether it was stabilized or not stabilized. I'm told, by the experts that they understood some things better, obviously.

Buchanan: If I could chime in. From the UNSCOM days, it is true, the better understanding often led to more questions rather than anything else.

Blix: That's true. Take the Air Force documents.² I mean, they did give us the Air Force documents. The famous Air Force document was given to us and we examined it and everybody agreed it was authentic. And it raised new questions. There was one enigma gone and another one coming up.

But as to the first part of your question about the difference between cooperation on process and on substance: Yes, of course, from the outset they were cooperative on process, and this was a marked difference from the past. And we were also trying to be as professionally correct as we could, although they accused us of being spies from time to time and asked "why could you ask such questions, these are not legitimate questions." But at the same time we felt that on the substance, they were to be active-as the council resolution required-and the 12,000 pages that we received as the declaration we thought were not really containing much new, mostly repetition of old finally complete declarations from the past. This was almost arrogant--that was our view, maybe we were mistaken in this judgment, but that was how we saw it, and similarly when they gave us 400 names, we had more names ourselves. And, combined with their assertion that these are "so-called disarmament issues," it was a somewhat arrogant attitude - we perceived it as such.

And that was the background for my statement in January, that they were not of substance, and that statement shook them. When I came back the next time, they were--[Iraqi Vice President Taha] Ramadan was indignant about it. It shook them clearly. And then it seemed to me that they changed very much, and they suggested all kinds of methods. They also zeroed in on the points which they knew that we were particularly interested in: on the VX, and on the anthrax, and on the SCUD missiles. So from that time, they became proactive, not just active but proactive. And we welcomed that.

However, we had to look at everything with cold eyes and examine [these efforts, which] didn't really solve anything. And in that respect, I warned the council that it may not, and eventually as we analyzed and submitted our thirteenth report, no we don't think that it really solved any of the issues of the past. As an example, we talked about the idea they had that we should take soil in places where they had poured anthrax into the ground, examine the soil, and look at the products that were there and see whether we could draw some conclusions about the quantities of anthrax that had been poured into there. Well our scientists were skeptical about it, but we were willing to go along and try the experiment. And so there was an effort, but whether this was an attempt to throw more dust in our eyes, or whether it was a genuine desperation on their part, that they had no other evidence, we don't know. We simply had to conclude that we did not have more evidence.

We also said in the discussion of interviews that, if you don't have any documents, then clearly interviews become even more important. They gave us lots of names of people who had taken part in the transport of missiles and the destruction of anthrax and the destruction of VX, and this was the most interesting avenue we would have pursued if we had remained, with all the handicaps that you have, in pursuing interviews in a totalitarian country. And I still feel a little puzzled that they could have detailed lists about even who transported what in 1991 without keeping any records of how much they transported. That's mystifying to me, though I do not exclude that there could be some natural explanation that they could destroy all the stuff, they could destroy all of the documents, but they couldn't destroy all the people, even in a country like Iraq.

ACT: As you said, they seemed to be getting a little more cooperative, at least giving you the semblance of cooperation, toward the end, if the inspections had continued, do you think you would have been able to get more substantive cooperation out of them or was it bogged down in this difficult process?

Blix: Well, it seems to me that the interview process would have been the most promising of them. Maybe they would have found some further documents, occasionally found some, but not very many. We thought that after we had found this stash of documents, that when they appointed [former Minister of Oil, General Amer] Rashid, and it was the [Rashid] Commission that could get the documents all over the country. I thought that if they had them-now this is a moment for them to do it [turn over the documents] without loss of face-they would find themselves in the right. I applauded their department officials. The same way with the commission they appointed after we had found the 12 warheads. It is far better-this now could be done without loss of face. But nothing came of it.

Now what would have happened then, if we had not been able to clear up and give really solid evidence, was that there would have been more indications of cooperation in substance yes, but still a lot of things would have - might have - remained unaccounted for, which wouldn't have been very satisfactory. And we don't know where we would have gone, maybe the U.S. would have said, "Well we are waiting for two months, this is it, that's the end of it." And others would have said, "They are really cooperating now, there are no problems." What we really are in now is continued containment. Now that was not a welcomed word in Washington, they didn't like the idea of containment, they wanted something decisive. And, well, their patience was not even enough for us going until March, so at what time point would they have lost patience? I don't know.

I'm not opposed to containment, and I said so at the time. I agree that containment has its drawbacks. In particular, and I think I mentioned it publicly that, there could be a fatigue in the Security Council, that the guard will be let down. I understand that also. So, it has some shortcomings. At the same time, I think one must be-then see what shortcomings has the other solution. All of the lives lost, all of the destruction, and we haven't seen all the other drawbacks that may come from it, nor have we seen all the benefits that could have come from it. They'll be on there

- the balance of that particular account is not finished. But I was not personally against aerial containment actually that we had for a long time.

And in particular when you look at the most important-I mean, we-you and me talk about WMD as if it were one homogenous area, which of course it is not. I mean, the nuclear is vastly more important and there's a question of whether we really want to call chemical weapons "weapons of mass destruction." Biological [weapons are] more like terror weapons than weapons of mass destruction. However, in the nuclear field, I think that it was clear that it would have taken quite some time before they were up and running again because the whole infrastructure was destroyed. They could have, I agree they could have, succeeded in importing 18 kilograms of plutonium. They might have had the expertise to make a bomb, yes, but even that would have required some infrastructure, so the matter of intervention to prevent further development in the nuclear field was probably the weakest; it was the most important area, I agree, but it was the weakest.

ACT: When you had to leave Iraq, what were the disarmament tasks that were the most pressing, the issues you really wanted to get resolved?

Blix: I think that mobile business was. That and the underground [facilities for concealing prohibited weapons and related equipment]. And we had taken it up with the Iraqis, both of these items, and we were discussing concepts for how to approach the mobile business with the Iraqis and with others. We talked about having checks at the roads with Iraqi staff and us having helicopters, dashing in here and there, taking samples of these random checks and so forth. We never got to that, it wouldn't have been easy. None of the police forces we talked with gave us a really good model for it, but we were working on that.

And this goes back-the mobile thing went back to my experience in the IAEA in 1991. After all, the calutrons were on trucks, and they were, it was an IAEA team headed by Mr. Kay, who helped to take pictures of it. So we had experience that the Iraqis did move things around on trucks, but whether they were live things or debris, that was another matter. In any case, they had the habit of moving things by trucks in the big country, so that was not implausible. This was one experience from the past. But as Al-Saadi said to me when we talked about moving biological stuff around, he shook his and said merely the collision risk of all this stuff on the highways would have deterred him. I didn't write it off because of his remark, but I understood him.

ACT: I just have a couple of questions about the inspections, the process, getting into the weeds a little more. I have heard some say that there is no such thing as no-notice inspections, and he asserted that even during UNMOVIC's time in Iraq that the Iraqis had advance notice, that it was routine practice to give the Iraqis advance notice of inspections. Is that accurate? If it's not, was there any evidence that you noticed that the Iraqis knew you were coming?

Blix: No, we have heard people say that UNSCOM was penetrated and for that reason, the Iraqis would have known and, in some cases at any rate, that we were coming. We know that when our inspectors set out from the Canal hotel, Iraq would watch in what direction they were going and I know there were some cases our people sort of went around Baghdad so they alerted them all around the country. But once, of course, you are on the road, well then, they will observe that and the minders will inform those who maybe are in the direction they are coming and could prepare. However, we do not believe we were penetrated by the Iraqis here or in the Canal hotel. We do not think that any of these [Iraqis] actually knew where we were coming, until we were setting out on the road and they could start guessing it.

Now, added to that, I think is that, if they have a few hours notice, there is no way you can dismantle a missile program or move out a hell of a lot of chemical weapons. But you can of course squirrel away documents, vials-yes, that can be done. And UNSCOM had seen in the past how they were taking away some documents. But as for hardware, I think that's much harder unless it's small pieces of various kinds.

Buchanan: I think there was a common misunderstanding. Just because the Iraqis went out with us didn't mean to say they knew where we were going. People say, "why do you take them along with you?" They just followed, quite literally. And, yes, it's true, we would say to the chemical minder, "We want to meet you tomorrow in the morning at 8 o'clock because we're going out again." We just say the chemical team is going out at 8 in the morning but not where. There were some of these commentators that we talk of, yes and tomorrow we want you to take us to al-Qa'qa.

Blix: The only cases where we or the IAEA actually told them were in cases where we needed equipment to do something in particular, but they were very few cases. So I don't think this is really tenable.

ACT: I was going to ask you about a comment that [President Bush's national security adviser] Condoleezza Rice made during a March 9 interview³ when she said that "the IAEA missed--"

Blix: Yeah, thank you, wonderful. I've been looking for that. What date was it?

ACT: March 9th.

Blix: Nine. Nine of March. Good. *(laughter)* I'd like to see the evidence for that. *(laughter)* I'm sure she didn't find that evidence herself.

ACT: But my question was--

Blix: She refers to 1991, '95, and '98.

ACT: Right, and I was asking if you could comment on the accuracy of that statement.

Blix: Well, I've been intrigued by this statement, and [Secretary of State] Colin Powell also referred to, I think 1991, and I've seen [Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul] Wolfowitz says that we were ready to close the nuclear weapons chapter before--when?

ACT: Three months after the end of the Gulf War.

Blix: I don't frankly understand. I'd love to see what evidence they have, in fact I love evidence in general (*laughter*). But I'd love in particular to see this since I was responsible for the IAEA at the time. Now, what we can say and I have said to [all this] is that, before the Gulf War, the IAEA had a safeguard system that was constructed by august member states, and which we operated to the full satisfaction of the said august member states. (*laughter*) And that this system was inadequate to discover undeclared installations and it was even asked to go to strategic points, to stretch its limitations to see what it could do within it. And the said august states woke up to the necessity of beefing up the system when it was discovered that Iraq had a great deal that was not declared. It would not have been politically possible to move in that direction before this disaster. And I am part of the disaster, yes. But neither did the CIA nor even Mossad to my knowledge know that the Iraqis had undeclared installations. Well we were in good company and I do not see why the IAEA alone should bear the burden for that.

We did take steps to beef it up when they came to fruition in 1997, the additional protocols which have not yet been ratified by--there are lots of people, states that have not done it. But nevertheless they are on the way and this is an interesting and promising development.

Now so much for '91. We did not see evidence of a nuclear weapon at the first inspection, but I think almost very shortly after the first inspection. We were there before UNSCOM-- we could see that they had a program of enrichment, the calutrons were discovered there relatively early and identified. We did not jump from that conclusion that they have the bomb, nor would it have been permissible to do so. However, we asked -- we certainly did not say or conclude that they have it. And it was relatively soon -- or soon enough that they came with a drawing of the weapon. And so, I don't understand what the critics have mention in 1991. (It's true that in the safeguards report, that came in early 1991, the safeguards department probably reported that it had not seen any diversion of any fissionable material under safeguards but it didn't pronounce itself about anything that was not placed under safeguards.

So, that's 1991. For 1995, the critics have in mind the Kamel papers that revealed the crash program that Iraq had in 1990 and 1991. We didn't know about that. Well, the program failed, but we couldn't fail. This was nothing that went on in 1995; it was going on in 1990. And for 1998, I had no idea what the critics referred to.

So I think it would be very interesting if these criticisms that were never made at the time, by the United States or anybody else, at the IAEA--that this be substantiated. I've seen Mr. Milhollin and others say this -- that doesn't surprise me the slightest -- but I was taken aback when it came from Condoleezza Rice. I know she didn't do the research herself; I'm sure it would have been more solid then. But I would be very interested to know what was that basis of it.

ACT: How would you describe--since you're talking about Dr. Rice--how would you describe the U.S. participation and commitment to the inspection process before the war? Was the United States doing all it could do to enable your inspections to succeed? Were other countries, such as France and Russia, doing all they could do to support the inspections?

Blix: Well, in the early stages, there was not so much intelligence, and we asked for it from Colin Powell and others--Condoleezza Rice--and we were sure that we would get it. I would say that after 1441, the resolution, was adopted, and after the president had met Mr. ElBaradei and myself, there was more intelligence given, and at no time did we really complain about lack of support--lack of intelligence yes, but lack of support no. No, they helped us to run courses here, offered us equipment, etc. We were not complaining about that.

And, as of January--some time around January, I guess--I did not also complain about the number of sites intelligence that we were getting. The problem was rather that the U.S. or elsewhere--I don't want to distinguish between the various intelligence agencies--that they did not lead us to interesting sites. As I have said publicly several times, we went to a lot of sites given to us by intelligence from around the world and in only three cases did we find anything and in none of these cases did it relate to weapons of mass destruction. Now, at this stage, in the middle of June, when the U.S. inspectors have been there for quite some time and I think have probably gone to all of the rest of the sites and they haven't found them very helpful either. So should anyone be surprised then, in retrospect, that we did not?

Now where did [the information about] these sites come from? Some came from satellites, and it's not so easy to see everything and conclude the right things from satellites, and many came from defectors. So, while I by no means want to belittle the value of defectors' information, I think I like the more experienced -- the professionals in the

intelligence [community] - are very cautious about the information they get from defectors, and I think the whole case of the Iraqi affair bears out that you have to treat such affairs with prudence.

ACT: U.S. officials were reportedly frustrated with some of your reports to the Security Council. Is that accurate, and how would you respond to that?

Blix: If they are, I think they ought to be more articulate. My boss was the Security Council. I take my instructions from them, I read every ounce of criticism that came from the council. I do not see any criticism there.

ACT: So these were, as you said, certain lower level people?

Blix: Well, maybe that's a technique that you give spins on something at a lower level and you read in the newspapers what some people feel there at the official level. This might be suppressed, I don't know, but in any case at no time did I feel any criticism from the Security Council. On the contrary, I think I felt support and appreciation. I read about, of course, the most flagrant cases, where allegations to the newspapers that we had suppressed information about the drones and about the cluster bombs probably. But we felt both cases were areas where we were exploring, where we were not ready to say that these are violations. And I have not seen that the U.S. has come out to say that these were violations, that these were smoking guns. So, I don't think that we were so wrong. If they had still felt that way, I assume they would not have been all that tight-lipped about it.

ACT: If you had to assess your own tenure there, how successful were you? How would you sum it up?

Blix: I would say that we have - we showed something that was not a foregone conclusion. Namely, that it was possible to create an international inspection mechanism that was effective, that worked under the Security Council, and that was independent of intelligence agencies but cooperated with them and had assistance from them. And I think that this is a valuable experience for the future because I think that there may yet be a need for international inspections.

Inspections under international organizations have greater acceptability in the world and I think they have also greater credibility than national inspections. Thereby, I don't say that national inspections have no credibility. If the inspectors who are in Iraq now come up with 100 tons of chemical weapons, well that's it. But we have seen how they have been jumping somewhat to conclusions on the mobiles. And I can see the pressure they're under but nevertheless one has to be cautious about that. So, I think there may be use in the future for this and that the experience is valuable and it's my reading of the Security Council that this is also the view of the council. I have not heard the U.S. dissent from it. Sure, the U.S. is a big country and there are many people in Washington, and I understand-as well as you-I understand there are some people there who are deeply skeptical about it and also people who would like to see it under their own control, rather than under of some more-or-less anonymous, international civil servants. This I understand, but there are arguments against this and that is both the credibility and the acceptability of it.

Now this is intriguing because we have different kinds of inspections in the world, and I remember saying at the State Department when we discussed Resolution 1441 that you could have had another one - that the Security Council could have asked the United States to set up the inspections from the beginning, just as it asked the U.S. to lead them in the Korean War. But that was not what they did. In resolution 1284, they said we should set up an inspection that was independent and where the inspectors were international civil servants, as contrasted to the inspectors under UNSCOM who remained civil servants and had per diems and travel expenses from the United Nations. Now there was a signal in this that we were to have a geographical distribution as in the United Nations system, that it was to be an international inspectorate and not any kind of adjunct to western intelligence.

ACT: You were saying something about this permanent body and lessons for the future. You wrote a piece in the Wall Street Journal a few months ago about inspections everywhere.

Blix: Well, the headline was theirs, don't you know. The headlines are always yours, I take no responsibilities for headlines. *(laugh)*

ACT: Yes, but could you elaborate more on what your notion of this organization and how this would function?

Blix: Well, we read now about the North Korean situation that the U.S. and others say that it must be irreversible and it must be verifiable, so I ask myself now what kind of verification are they planning for North Korea? Are they planning bilateral American inspections? Or are they still looking at the IAEA, or do they want to have inspection system under NATO, or what? I don't know. But the IAEA has the safeguards agreement with the operator, and to my knowledge the U.S. is supporting the safeguards system, even to the extent of asking for more funds for it. Although I haven't seen that they do the same thing for the OPCW [Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-the international organization that carries out inspections under the Chemical Weapons Convention]. Maybe they did, I haven't seen it.

So I think the U.S. is also not throwing out inspections but it's natural for some people who have command of an area that they would like to have it all under their control. Well, I understand these guys, but there are some things you can gain by being together with others. You may have to give something, but you also gain something. Therefore, I think there may yet be opportunities for it.

I can go back to the early days of the nuclear sphere, when the U.S. sold technology and hardware to other countries, and they had bilateral American inspections. There were American inspectors going to the countries to check that what they had sold was used only for peaceful purposes. Now that was transferred to the IAEA, through explicit agreements, transferred to be multilateralized and institutionalized. And there were several reasons behind that. I think that's what both UNSCOM and UNMOVIC have shown is that we can have very effective inspections under an international system. In Iraq, maybe with the exception of something that will come up, we have not been accused of not having been effective. They were both correct and effective.

Now things might have been different if the Iraqis had stonewalled, but then you report [that]. I mean, the chances that inspectors will catch anybody red-handed are not very great. A country that is about to act in such a way would rather deny access, but then you would have smoke. Rather than a smoking gun, you have smoke. And that is interesting enough because that sets in motion the alarm bells and sets in motion the diplomatic, economic, and other measures that the government can take.

This is what happened in the case of North Korea. We didn't find a smoking gun—in fact, we don't know how much more plutonium they had than they declared. But they were not — it was not an honest report that they had. They had reprocessed more than once, [although North Korea declared that they had only reprocessed once] so they must have had more plutonium now. This was smoke. The Pentagon and the CIA came to the conclusion later that they had one or two bombs. Well, the IAEA has never said that. It's possible, because they might have reprocessed the whole batch. It's conceivable, but it's the worst case scenario, as it were. It's legitimate for them to play with that. But what the IAEA achieved then was getting the smoke coming up, setting in motion the whole procedure with the Security Council and the formidable [Robert Gallucci, lead U.S. negotiator on the 1994 Agreed Framework that attempted to freeze North Korea's nuclear weapons program] who came to an Agreed Framework, which I think probably was the best-or least bad—we could do at the time. I've never felt any criticism here.

ACT: There is speculation that Iraq destroyed prohibited weapons pretty recently before the U.S. invasion. Do you think this is possible, given UNMOVIC and IAEA's presence, that they could have destroyed the weapons without your knowledge?

Blix: This is not the only explanation we heard. One explanation is that they took things to Syria. Another one was that they dug it down so deep that they didn't have time to dig it up. The third one would be that they have already given it to terrorists. And the fourth one is they destroyed it just before the U.S. came or just before the inspectors came. Well, I see these explanations with increasing, accelerating interest and curiosity, but I'd like to see evidence of any one of them.

But to your precise question, I think it would have been difficult for them to hide the destruction of rather large stashes of chemical weapons under the noses of the inspectors. I don't exclude anything in this world.

ACT: Do you think any chemical or biological weapons that are still there would still be viable?

Blix: It varies. Any biological weapons that were dried, like dried anthrax, that would be viable. Even slurry might—might not be. A lot of the chemicals would not be viable.

Buchanan: A lot depends on the agent. Botulinum toxin has a very short life.

Blix: And the precursors might be there.

ACT: Now that you're moving on, in terms of UNMOVIC, at this point, what role can and should UNMOVIC play?

Blix: Well, it's entirely up to the Security Council. We are its humble servants.

ACT: Presumably, they might take your advice.

Blix: I'm not so sure. Well, maybe some of them (*laughter*). No I think there are two things that could be in the future. One is the verification of disarmament. A report by the inspectors who are there now would have greater international credibility if they were examined and if the reality were examined by international inspectors. Whether they are interested in that, I don't know.

The second is long-term monitoring. Will they want to have long-term monitoring in Iraq? That's still not rescinded from the resolutions. It was in all the resolutions and the resolutions also talk about this future zone free of weapons of mass destruction. I think there's something a little paradoxical about reducing the institutionalized transparency by doing away with something that was there, especially if we are looking for an enhanced verification for the region at some stage, including the Additional Protocol [an agreement designed to provide for more rigorous IAEA inspections]. And you would do away then with any verification [that Iraq does not possess biological weapons]. So you would have inspectors presumably on safeguards and the NPT [nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] and chemicals maybe. But they would be a step backwards on inspections. So for the long-term it's a possibility, and I think that would be better in the hands of international inspectors than national ones.

But for the rest, the UN Security Council had in UNSCOM's and UNMOVIC's archives and personnel a unique, elite trained force. Especially the roster of inspectors is a practical and inexpensive way of holding an inspectorate ready. Valuable particularly regarding missiles, a priority for which you have no international organization. I do not think that the council wants to send ad hoc inspections every week, but it could be from time-to-time, and it would

not need to have a very big stable force here. We would organize the training forces and organize the roster and the readiness.

For the rest, I think that they should write up the experiences here in some sort of digest because if they do not retain UNMOVIC then maybe they will set up something in the future and the document has experiences from both [UNSCOM and UNMOVIC] which are valuable.

ACT: For some sort of institutional memory ?

Blix: We have ourselves some of that already. We have the handbook that we worked out and which was not made public but which was used and made available to our College of Commissioners that might not be applicable in the same way to another situation because it was somewhat tailored to the resolutions, of course. Nevertheless, there is a lot to be learned, I think we can learn for the future. We have tried to commit to paper some of these experiences.

NOTES

1. Hussein Kamel, Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, who directed Iraq's illicit weapons programs, defected in 1995. Shortly after, Iraq provided inspectors with papers from Kamel's farm detailing their offensive biological weapons program

2. A document indicating that Iraq had used fewer chemical munitions during the Iran-Iraq war than it had previously stated.

3. Excerpt from "This Week with George Stephanopoulos," ABC TV, March 9, 2003:

Condoleezza Rice: It's extremely important not to draw conclusions too early about who is making progress on a nuclear program. I was a little concerned that IAEA remarks about the Iraqi nuclear program the other day seemed to draw certain conclusions.

George Stephanopoulos (*Off Camera*): It said they hadn't revived the nuclear program.

Condoleezza Rice: Right, and the IAEA of course missed the program in '91, missed the program in '95, missed it in '98. We need to be careful about drawing those conclusions particularly in a totalitarian state like Iraq.

http://www.armscontrol.org/events/blixinterview_june03.asp

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Washington Times

August 7, 2003

Pg. 3

Army To Consider Anthrax As Cause In Pneumonia Cases

By Mark Benjamin, United Press International

The Army will consider whether the anthrax or other vaccines could be causing a cluster of pneumonia cases among soldiers in Iraq and southwestern Asia, an official said yesterday.

Col. Robert DeFraités of the Army Surgeon General's Office told United Press International that the Pentagon would look into whether vaccines, among other factors, might have triggered the pneumonia that has killed two soldiers and sickened 100.

"Among all of the possible causes or contributing factors, we are looking at the immunizations that the soldiers received as well," Col. DeFraités said. "It is premature to say that there is any relationship at all."

The Pentagon announced Tuesday it is investigating the cases in search of a common factor, but did not mention vaccines as a possibility.

A co-author of a government-sponsored study of possible side effects from the anthrax vaccine told UPI Tuesday that the Army should look at whether that vaccine is behind the cluster of pneumonia cases. That study last year found the vaccine was the "possible or probable" cause of pneumonia in two soldiers.

"As physicians, I would think they would be looking at all possible causes. I would think vaccines would be part of that," said Dr. John L. Sever of George Washington University's medical school, who was one of six authors of the study.

Under a 1998 law, the military is supposed to take samples of soldiers' blood before and after deploying. One Gulf war illness expert said yesterday that the Pentagon should use the samples to see if the anthrax vaccine is to blame.

"We need them to investigate the role of vaccines as aggressively as everything else in order to rule it in or out," said Steve Robinson, executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center.

"The question is, did these soldiers get their blood screened?" Mr. Robinson said. "It is my opinion that they missed a large portion of the soldiers who deployed for this war."

Last year's anthrax vaccine study, printed in the May 2002 issue of *Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety*, found that the vaccine was the "possible or probable" cause of pneumonia among two soldiers, according to Dr. Sever. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services convened the group, called the Anthrax Vaccine Expert Committee,

which studied 602 reports of possible reactions to the vaccine among nearly 400,000 troops who received it, Dr. Sever said.

In addition to identifying pneumonia and flulike symptoms among troops who received the vaccine, the group also looked at four other cases of potentially serious reactions, including severe back pain and two soldiers who had sudden difficulty breathing in a possible allergic reaction to the vaccine.

Dr. Sever described the two cases of pneumonia as "wheezing and difficulty breathing going into a pneumonialike picture."

To conduct the study, the Anthrax Vaccine Expert Committee examined reports from the U.S. military to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; they are anecdotal reports and do not necessarily show a cause-and-effect relationship.

Col. DeFraitres said that the two deaths under investigation by the Army surgeon general occurred in June and July, and that both soldiers had been in Iraq. He said the investigation began as soon as the first death occurred.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030806-104019-1693r.htm>

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(Editor's Note: Referenced article in Outreach Journal #279)

Chicago Tribune

August 6, 2003

Officials Deny Helping Iran With Nuclear Program

By Tribune news services

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN -- Pakistan on Tuesday denied a U.S. newspaper report saying Pakistan shared expertise with Iran that could help Tehran develop nuclear weapons.

A statement from the Foreign Ministry did not name the report, but the Los Angeles Times said Monday that Iran appeared to be in the late stages of building a nuclear bomb and had sought help from scientists from countries including Pakistan.

The story cited a confidential report by the French government in May that it said concluded Iran was "surprisingly close" to having enriched uranium or plutonium for a bomb.

Iran has consistently denied it has plans to build nuclear weapons and has said its program is for civilian use.

The story also quoted a Middle Eastern intelligence official as saying Pakistan's role in helping Iran develop a nuclear program was "bigger from the beginning than we thought."

"The spokesman termed it [the report] as completely false, irresponsible and obviously motivated," the ministry statement said. "Pakistan's commitments, affirmed at the highest level, that it would not export any sensitive technologies to third countries remains unquestionable.

"Pakistan's record in this regard is impeccable," it added.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf is a key ally in the U.S.-led war on terrorism, but the country is under pressure from Washington amid allegations it helped North Korea make materials needed for nuclear arms in return for missile parts.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0308060286aug06.1.3285899.story>

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Korea Times

August 7, 2003

NK-Iran In Arms Deal

TOKYO (Yonhap) -- North Korea and Iran have been in talks to discuss the joint development of nuclear warheads, the Sankei Shimbun reported yesterday.

Quoting military sources, the Japanese daily also said the North is pushing ahead with a plan to export its Taepodong 2 long-range ballistic missiles to Iran.

The two countries have been discussing the plans for about one year and are expected to reach an agreement in mid-October, according to the paper.

Under the plan, North Korea would export knockdown missile components for assembly in Iran.

Pyongyang will also dispatch experts to give technological aid and promote joint development of nuclear warheads, the report said.

<http://times.hankooki.com/lpage/nation/200308/kt2003080615060211990.htm>

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Washington Times

August 7, 2003

Pg. 13

Iraq's Weapons Bothered Scientist

By Paul Martin, The Washington Times

LONDON — The British weapons inspector who committed suicide last month over an intelligence flap remained convinced that Iraq had continued developing a biological-weapons program until the regime was toppled by U.S.-led coalition forces, according to a close colleague.

The weapons expert, who was buried yesterday afternoon in an English country churchyard, also believed that Iraqi scientists possessed the know-how and materials to construct a radiological weapon known as a "dirty bomb."

The death of David Kelly, who slit his wrist last month after he was exposed as the source for a British Broadcasting Corp. report on British intelligence on Iraq, has been used by critics of Prime Minister Tony Blair to support their claim that he misled the British public.

Meanwhile, a top aide to Mr. Blair apologized Tuesday for comparing the dead Iraq weapons inspector to Walter Mitty, a fictional fantasizer.

The suicide of the scientist days after he appeared in front of a parliamentary panel investigating whether the case for war in Iraq was exaggerated has turned into a test of the Blair government's credibility.

Mr. Blair's official spokesman, Tom Kelly, apologized for linking the scientist, a respected government weapons inspector who made dozens of trips to Iraq, to the fictional daydreamer, the creation of American author James Thurber.

In two interviews with BBC reporters, the scientist was reported to have expressed doubt on Mr. Blair's claim that Iraq could have launched nonconventional warheads within 45 minutes of any order to do so.

It is now emerging that Mr. Kelly was firmly convinced that Saddam Hussein's regime did present a serious threat.

The scientist died only two days before he was due to fly to Iraq to join the secretive Iraqi Survey Group, which is seeking to amass evidence for the coalition leaders' assertion that Iraq had biological-, chemical- or nuclear-weapons programs.

"I spoke to him by phone on his return from Iraq and four days before his death," said Terry Taylor, a former British colonel who was a chief nuclear inspector in Iraq and worked closely for years with Mr. Kelly, who led the biological team.

"I didn't detect any change in his view on the Iraqi biological program," Mr. Taylor said in an interview. "He and I both believed they had a hidden program, and I detected no change in his fundamental view."

Mr. Taylor, who now heads the Washington office of the prestigious International Institute for Strategic Studies, was speaking after attending a high-powered conference of international warfare specialists at Saclay, near Paris.

Mr. Kelly was laid to rest in southern England's midsummer heat after a moving ceremony yesterday, attended by British Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott and the judge who will hear evidence on the circumstances of his death. Mr. Kelly had played key roles in getting first the Soviets and, years later, the Iraqis, to reveal key elements in their biological-weapons programs, Mr. Taylor said.

"We managed to break the Iraqis over their secret and illegal biological program in March 1995 — and David must take a lot of credit for that," he said.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030806-092217-6064r.htm>

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