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New York Times  
September 11, 2003

## **Alabama: Army Linked To Environmental Violations**

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management has cited the Army for violations of its permit to burn chemical weapons at the Anniston Army Depot. The department said the violations were not serious. It said they included improperly marked pipe flanges and high liquid levels in a drainage pump. Michael B. Abrams, a spokesman for the depot, said the problems were being addressed.

--Ariel Hart (NYT)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/11/national/11BRFS4.html>

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Los Angeles Times  
September 11, 2003

## Halt In Work Seen At N. Korea Nuclear Site

*The apparent cessation of activity is not being viewed as an indication of any shift in the regime's intentions, a U.S. official says.*

By Paul Richter and Greg Miller, Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON — North Korea has apparently halted activity at its Yongbyon nuclear complex, where it has been holding thousands of nuclear fuel rods that can be reprocessed to make bombs, a U.S. official said Wednesday. The official stressed that work at the site could be quickly restarted. The stoppage could signal a pause in the regime's efforts to build a nuclear arsenal, analysts said.

U.S. and South Korean officials have reported activity at the complex several times this year. North Korean officials have claimed that they have reprocessed enough material to make six bombs, although U.S. officials have said they had no proof.

The disclosure comes two weeks after diplomats from China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Russia and the United States met in Beijing to discuss the crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear program.

The diplomats are expected to meet again in the fall to discuss a deal in which North Korea would give up its nuclear programs in return for aid and other benefits.

"Various sensors and imagery and other things we have don't show activity," the U.S. official said. "There's not much indication that anything is going on there at the moment."

Previously, U.S. intelligence had detected limited activity at the site, though the CIA had never concluded that the facility had been reactivated. "We never said it was operating," the official noted.

The official stressed that the apparent decline in activity was not being interpreted by the U.S. government as an indication of any shift in North Korean intentions.

"I wouldn't read too much into it," he said.

"They can start and stop fairly easily," he added, noting that the facility could be restarted on short notice.

"If there's any significant activity going on, it would be very hard to conceal," the official said. Asked whether the North Koreans could be operating the facility without detection, he said, "No."

Jon B. Wolfsthal, a proliferation expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said the government's disclosure was consistent with some other signs that activity at Yongbyon was halted.

He said satellite photographs circulating on the Internet showed that the cooling tower at the facility was no longer giving off steam and thus might not be running. He said some media reports have suggested that the North Koreans had been having trouble running the nuclear reactor and fuel-reprocessing plant.

A halt could mean that the North Koreans have reprocessed some rods but, because of technical problems, have had to restrict their amount of bomb-making material, he said. Or, he said, it could mean that "of their own volition, or through Chinese pressure, they're signaling that they're not pursuing the program as fast as they could to reassure the United States that they want to deal."

A congressional source said information on North Korea provided by the Bush administration was viewed with suspicion among many on Capitol Hill.

"If the administration came up and told me now that Yongbyon is shut down, I wouldn't necessarily believe it," the source said, speaking on the condition of anonymity. "The administration has a huge ulterior motive to try to say they're making progress in North Korea."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-norkor11sep11.1.239486.story>

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(Editor's Note: See ABC News story following this article.)

Washington Post  
September 11, 2003  
Pg. 21

## ABC Ships Uranium Overseas For Story

*Federal Officials Call Test a Crime*

By Howard Kurtz, Washington Post Staff Writer

ABC News says it has exposed a crucial weakness in the nation's port security system by shipping depleted uranium from Jakarta, Indonesia, to Los Angeles. Federal officials say the network seems to have committed a crime.

"We feel this is a very valid and important test," ABC News spokesman Jeffrey Schneider said yesterday. "This is what journalists do. . . . It was not our intent to defraud the U.S."

But Homeland Security Department spokesman Dennis Murphy said that "it appears they violated the law, and the Justice Department is taking a look at that. Does a news organization have a right to break the law? Can a reporter rob a bank to prove that bank security is weak? My understanding of journalistic ethics is you don't break the law in pursuit of news."

The government's response to the undercover operation by ABC prompted a strong letter from Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) to Attorney General John D. Ashcroft and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge.

"I would urge that significant caution must be used by the federal government to ensure that legitimate reporting is not chilled," Grassley wrote, adding: "If my neighbor told me my barn was on fire, my first instinct would be to thank my neighbor and get some water for the fire. . . . Time and again, I find federal agencies devoting enormous time and energy to attacking whoever put the spotlight on a government mistake."

The report by ABC's Brian Ross, scheduled to air tonight on "Primetime Thursday," involves 15 pounds of lead-encased uranium put in a teak trunk along with other furniture in Jakarta, a terrorist hot spot.

Shipping depleted uranium, which cannot be converted to weapons use, is legal. But Murphy said the network "failed to disclose the contents accurately, which is a false declaration."

Schneider countered: "Do you think terrorists are going to fill out a form saying they're shipping uranium? That's the point of the test."

The two sides differed sharply on the importance of the test. Murphy said depleted uranium does not give off the same radioactive signals as the active kind, and that federal devices "are geared up for the real thing."

But ABC quoted a nuclear physicist with the Natural Resources Defense Council, which provided the uranium, as saying that if federal inspectors "can't detect that, then they can't detect the real thing."

Murphy also contended that his department used its contacts to crack the case. But Schneider said the government was notified only after an ABC camera crew identified itself to a truck driver hired by the network, who had become suspicious that U.S. Customs agents had missed something at the Los Angeles port.

ABC questioned why federal investigators interviewed some of the network's staffers, demanded their videotapes and showed up unannounced at the Washington home of the NRDC physicist working with the network.

Murphy said the agents did not know that reporters were involved when they began their investigation. He noted that terrorists, such as members of al Qaeda, have posed as journalists in the past.

ABC also breached port security last year when it shipped the same batch of uranium to the Staten Island, N.Y., port.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A57230-2003Sep10.html>

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## Border Breach?

### Customs Fails to Detect Depleted Uranium — Again

**Sept. 10**— For a second year, U.S. government screeners have failed to detect a shipment of depleted uranium in a container sent by ABCNEWS from overseas as part of a test of security at American ports.

"I think this is a case in point which established the soft underbelly of national security and homeland defense in the United States," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., who has been urging the Bush administration to do more to enhance port security.

The ABCNEWS test was criticized by officials at the Department of Homeland Security, who assigned agents in at least four cities to investigate ABC personnel and news sources involved.

"I think you're a news reporter that is trying to carry out a hoax on our inspectors," Homeland Security Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson told Brian Ross, ABCNEWS' chief investigative correspondent, for a report to be broadcast Thursday on *World News Tonight* and *PrimeTime Thursday*.

The ABCNEWS project involved a shipment to Los Angeles of just under 15 pounds of depleted uranium, a harmless substance that is legal to import into the United States. The uranium, in a steel pipe with a lead lining, was placed in a suitcase for the shipment.

"If they can't detect that, then they can't detect the real thing," explained Tom Cochran, a nuclear physicist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, which lent the material to ABCNEWS for the project.

Cochran said the highly enriched uranium used for nuclear weapons would, with slightly thicker shielding, give off a signature similar to depleted uranium in the screening devices currently being used by homeland security officials at American ports.

### Chest Never Opened in Jakarta

The ABCNEWS suitcase containing the uranium was placed in a teak trunk along with other furniture put in a container in Jakarta, Indonesia, a city considered by U.S. authorities to be one of the most active al Qaeda hot spots

in the world. The container was shipped to Los Angeles in late July, just one week before the bombing of the Jakarta Marriott Hotel that killed 12 people.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge has claimed major improvements in port security, in part because of enhanced vigilance overseas. "So that our borders become the last line of defense, not our first line of defense," Ridge said in a speech last week. He said the United States was increasing security "thousands of miles away, long before a container is first loaded on a ship."

But in Jakarta, ABCNEWS producers David Scott and Rhonda Schwartz found that the chest in which they had placed the depleted uranium was never opened or inspected before being sent on to Los Angeles.

"It took us only a few days to find a shipper willing to send a container to America with almost no questions asked," said Scott.

"We did not tell the company about the depleted uranium," said Schwartz, "and they never asked."

The shipment was handled by Maersk Logistics, part of the giant Maersk shipping company based in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Maersk company officials say their procedures do not require their agents to inspect containers loaded outside of the pier area. Maersk provided what it calls "door-to-door service," which allowed the container to be loaded at a furniture store.

"We rely on screening of government authorities to validate shipping contents," said Maersk security official John Hyde.

In a statement, Maersk said the ABCNEWS findings had caused it to investigate and review its procedures overseas.

"Any important deviations from normal procedure will be rectified immediately," the statement said. Furthermore, "Security procedures will be reviewed again in order to evaluate whether any adjustments should be made."

#### **Targeted for Screening, But Chest Wasn't Opened**

The container arrived at the Port of Los Angeles on Aug. 23 and, given its origination in Jakarta, was targeted for screening by homeland security agents.

"The system first passed the test because we did target this shipment," said Hutchinson.

But homeland security officials say the radiation pagers and X-ray scanners used by inspectors did not detect anything suspicious or harmful.

Scientific experts say the only way they could know that was to open the container. "The only way to know whether this is the real thing or depleted uranium is to actually open the container and take a look," said Cochran.

When the ABCNEWS container was released from the port, it still had the same metal seal that had been put on in Jakarta, meaning it had not been opened.

"The test that you put to them, which looks to me to be a fair test, they fail," said Graham Allison, a former assistant secretary of defense and now director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

"What indeed is the most likely way that a nuclear weapon would be delivered by a terrorist to the U.S.?" asked Allison. "The most likely way is in a cargo container ship."

#### **Homeland Security: Not a Danger**

Homeland security officials scoffed at the ABCNEWS test, saying its screeners had passed the test because the harmless depleted uranium did not represent a valid replica of weapons-grade uranium.

"We targeted it, we inspected it, we confirmed that it was not a danger to America," said Hutchinson.

Homeland security officials did not realize the depleted uranium had successfully gone through its screening devices until the truck driver hired by ABCNEWS became concerned that customs officials had missed something important.

ABCNEWS personnel had identified themselves to the driver and told him the nature of the shipment.

"This container went through an exam and so we were wondering about that, how come customs didn't get this," said Cesar Melgar, the president of the trucking company used by ABCNEWS.

Maersk called the FBI in response to concerns raised by the trucking company.

#### **Security Test Prompts Federal Inquiry**

On the night the shipment left the Los Angeles port, on Sept. 2, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security began a weeklong investigation of ABCNEWS personnel and others involved in the project, suggesting possible violations of felony smuggling laws.

A Homeland Security official said any decision on whether to prosecute would be made by the U.S. attorney in Los Angeles.

Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., a critic of the Bush administration's port security plans, says the behavior of the federal agents "is not only against the American ethos, but will hurt our safety."

Federal agents showed up outside the gates of the ABCNEWS bureau in Los Angeles at midnight on Sept. 2 demanding access to ABCNEWS personnel and the depleted uranium, which had already been shipped back to New York at the time.

"Agent Susan Lane of U.S. Customs said she was there on the authority of the U.S. Department of Justice," said ABCNEWS editor Ursula Fahy. "They wanted our people and they wanted the package."

ABCNEWS later voluntarily turned over the depleted uranium for inspection by homeland security lab technicians, who confirmed the material was harmless depleted uranium.

U.S. agents also sought, without warrant or subpoena, to obtain ABCNEWS field tapes. Two agents showed up at night at the San Diego home of a freelance cameraman, Jeff Freeman, who worked on the project.

"They first identified themselves as FBI agents, which it turns out they weren't," said Freeman. "They wanted to know if I still had the tapes I had shot for ABC and if I could turn them over."

The tapes had already been shipped to ABCNEWS in New York and were not turned over to the government.

On Saturday morning, two U.S. Customs agents showed up unannounced at the Washington, D.C., home of nuclear physicist Cochran, blocking his driveway as he and his wife were about to go shopping, Cochran told ABCNEWS.

"They pulled up and blocked my driveway so that I couldn't pull the car out," said an angered Cochran. "They didn't call me up, they didn't knock on my door, they just swooped in and stopped my exit from the driveway."

Cochran says he told the agents to come to his office during business hours when his attorney would be present.

In a letter to Attorney General John Ashcroft and Ridge, Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, said he was concerned about "a chilling effect on legitimate investigative reporting" in the ABCNEWS case.

"If my neighbor told me my barn was on fire, my first instinct would be to thank my neighbor and get some water for the fire. I worry that the government's first instinct is to pour cold water on the neighbor," Grassley wrote.

Today, a top official at the Department of Homeland Security told ABCNEWS that truck-sized radiation detectors will soon be up and running, able to detect even small amounts of shielded depleted uranium.

[http://abcnews.go.com/sections/wnt/Primetime/sept11\\_uranium030910.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/wnt/Primetime/sept11_uranium030910.html)

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Los Angeles Times

September 12, 2003

## **N. Korea Working On Missile Accuracy**

*If developed, the new nuclear weapon could increase the communist regime's chances of striking the continental U.S., an analyst says.*

By Sonni Efron, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — North Korea is developing a long-range missile that could hit U.S. targets with greater accuracy than its old missiles, a U.S. official confirmed Thursday.

The missile is based on the old Soviet navy's SS-N-6, a submarine-launched missile, the official said. North Korea is believed to have acquired it between 1992 and 1998, then added technology to improve the missile. It can now be launched from the ground, the official said.

North Korea is already believed to have long-range missiles, but "what it increases for them dramatically is the accuracy," the official said.

There is no indication that the Russian government sanctioned the missile technology transfer or has had any involvement in North Korea's missile program "in at least the last five years," the official said.

"We've had hints of this for several years, but it's only within the last year that we've been able to confirm that this did exist and it's derived from Russian technology," the official said, adding that the development "makes you wonder what else they might have been able to access" during that period.

As described, the missile "increases the probability that North Korea could achieve the capability of launching nuclear weapons against the continental U.S.," said John Pike, an intelligence expert who runs GlobalSecurity.org, a Web site focusing on national security issues.

If true, "it significantly changes our security situation, because for the first time they would have a missile with a proven capacity to deliver a warhead to U.S. soil," said a Capitol Hill source. "They don't have that capability absent such a missile."

Because the SS-N-6 is based on 40-year-old Soviet technology, the North Koreans could more likely deploy it "without having to farm out the testing to their buddies in Pakistan and Iran" or "blow up a lot of hardware," Pike said.

"They're going with something tried and true rather than trying to invent it themselves. They basically let [former Soviet leader Nikita] Khrushchev pay for all the exploding rockets 40 years ago."

Pike said he could not comment on the U.S. assertion that the SS-N-6 would be more accurate than North Korea's Taepodong 1 or Taepodong 2 missiles.

"I don't know who told them [U.S. intelligence] how accurate the old one was," Pike said.

There were conflicting news reports Thursday about the range of the new missile.

North Koreans fired a Taepodong 1 missile over Japan in 1998. But the Taepodong 2, which is a Taepodong 1 on top of a larger rocket, has never been field-tested.

In 1999, U.S. intelligence estimated its range at 4,000 miles, far enough to hit Alaska or Hawaii.

The SS-N-6 is estimated to have a range of 1,497 to 1,920 miles. If that is true, the missile alone would not be powerful enough to hit Los Angeles, which is about 5,900 miles from Pyongyang. The question is whether the new North Korean missile is a three-stage missile — an SS-N-6 with the two-stage Taepodong 2 on top of it, Pike said. If so, it might be able to deliver a nuclear warhead to Los Angeles or other U.S. cities. North Korea is believed to be attempting to miniaturize its nuclear warheads, based on relatively sophisticated, smaller designs tested by Pakistan in 1998, Pike said.

"Anybody who thinks North Korea's nuclear weapons weigh thousands of pounds rather than hundreds of pounds might be surprised," he said.

A CIA spokesman Thursday declined to comment on the existence of the missile. No other officials contacted would describe the nature of it or discuss whether it was sold to North Korea by a Russian rogue enterprise or stolen by Pyongyang.

However, the congressional source, who asked not to be named, noted that 1992-98 was a period when the Russian Pacific Fleet, which used the submarine-launched missiles, was desperately underfunded and disorganized.

"Everything was on the chopping block or the auction block," the source said.

Pike said the SS-N-6 could have been sold to North Korea in 1992 by the Makeyev design bureau of the old Soviet Ministry of General Machine Building, which had previously supplied missile technology to its communist client state. That year, Russian officials stopped a group of Makeyev scientists at the airport as they were headed to Pyongyang, he said.

News of the missile first appeared in the South Korean press and began circulating in Washington on Wednesday. It was the latest in a series of leaks from Washington over the past year that have raised alarms about North Korea's progress toward a nuclear arsenal. The political motivation behind the leaks remains unclear.

"All of [the reports] have a 'hawk' reading, that the North Koreans are going to get us and we should get them first and a 'dove' reading, that war with North Korea is not an option because North Korea has effectively deterred us," Pike said.

Administration officials say they expect that the U.S., North Korea, South Korea, China, Russia and Japan will meet for a second round of talks on North Korea's nuclear program, probably this fall.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-norkor12sep12.1.829312.story>

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New York Times  
September 12, 2003

## **Iranian Envoy Blames U.S. For Nation's Reticence On Nuclear Plans**

By Felicity Barringer

UNITED NATIONS, Sept. 11 — Iran's ranking diplomat in the United States, in an interview today, blamed the Americans for his country's reluctance to reveal details of its nuclear program.

Iran has denied accusations that it is producing nuclear materials for a clandestine weapons program.

In an interview today, Javad Zarif, Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, said that Washington's apparent "intention to deprive Iran" of legitimate power plants was the reason for Iran's current problems with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"The political issue has led to the technical difficulties," Mr. Zarif said. On Friday, the 35-member nuclear watchdog agency is expected to vote in Vienna to approve a resolution that would give Iran until Oct. 31 to answer the agency's questions about its nuclear program.

A crucial question is whether Iran is enriching uranium at its power plant in Natanz. Inspectors said they had found evidence, in the form of isotopes of weapons-grade uranium, at the plant.

In the interview, Mr. Zarif was by turns conciliatory and accusatory.

At one point, he suggested that Iranian cooperation with the nuclear agency was simply a matter of carrying out the investigation "in the right political atmosphere," and "in a serious technical atmosphere."

At another, he said that Washington "has used the existing international mechanisms in order to take a step-by-step approach towards depriving Iran of its nuclear capability, even power generation."

He added: "There are people in Washington who do not want to clarify matters — who, in fact, would encourage, invite and welcome negative news from Iran. And if that is the intention, if that is the desire, then they may in fact get what they want." He gave no specifics.

The United States has supported the resolution but was not a sponsor.

In Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, today, Iran's foreign minister, Kamal Kharrazi, told the Associated Press that any resolution coming down hard on Iran "could make the situation more complicated."

One issue Mr. Zarif mentioned in the wide-ranging interview was Al Qaeda. He said that Iran probably "arrested and extradited more Al Qaeda people than anyone else" in 2002 and early 2003. While he said Iran continued to detain a number of Al Qaeda members, he would not identify them in any way, nor confirm United States reports that Saad bin Laden, the oldest son of Osama bin Laden, is in Iran.

On the subject of United States policy in the Middle East, Mr. Zarif said, "I believe the entire international community considers the behavior of the United States disrespectful, particularly of this administration."

He said that the American invasion of Iraq had "led to further extremism in the region, exacerbation of the terrorist threat both inside Iraq and outside" and discouraged cooperation and confidence-building in the region.

Mr. Zarif said, however, that "it is not a situation that cannot be reversed."

Mr. Zarif said that he believed that Iran and the region required change, but he said imposing it was the wrong way to bring it about and would only alienate the people and encourage forces fighting change.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/12/international/middleeast/12IRAN.html>

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Chicago Tribune  
September 11, 2003

## **The Terrorist Threat That Gets Shortchanged**

By Steve Chapman

In Iraq, the United States has a problem with weapons of mass destruction: It wants to eliminate them, but first it has to find them. In the former Soviet Union, it has the opposite problem: It's knee-deep in these weapons, but it's not quite up to the task of eliminating them.

Two years after the worst terrorist attack in history, an even bigger danger still looms: Violent anti-American groups getting their hands on weapons more lethal than box cutters and commercial aircraft. Eight months before the destruction of the World Trade Center, a bipartisan task force warned that "the most urgent unmet national security threat to the United States today is the danger that weapons of mass destruction could be stolen and sold to terrorists or hostile nation states and used against American troops abroad or citizens at home."

No one paid much attention to such fears at the time, but Sept. 11 should have put an end to cheerful complacency. Those atrocities were nothing compared to what terrorists could do with an atomic bomb. The chance that Al Qaeda might get one from Saddam Hussein was one of the chief justifications for invading Iraq. Yet elsewhere, the U.S. government is doing far less than it should to avert the unthinkable.

Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, recently returned from Russia and reports that there is still a huge amount to be done. In 1997, the Russians ratified the international treaty banning chemical weapons. At the time, they had 40,000 metric tons of nerve gas, and today, they still do. In the past six years, they have destroyed a grand total of 100 pounds--pounds, not tons--of that stockpile.

Lugar and former Democratic Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia visited a site that houses some 2 million shells and warheads containing chemical agents. "The smallest of these," notes Lugar, "can easily fit into a suitcase and be carried out of the facility. Just one briefcase could carry enough agents to kill thousands of people."

There have been hundreds of documented attempts at smuggling nuclear or radioactive material. Osama bin Laden himself has declared a fervent desire to acquire the bomb. But many weapons sites in Russia and its former sister states have less security than the average American high school. At others, accounting is so lax that if a weapon were stolen, it might never be missed. At least not until it went off in an American city.

The chief American effort to defuse the danger, known as the Nunn-Lugar program, provides funds to help the Russian government secure weapons sites and destroy munitions. But it has rarely gotten the urgent priority it deserves. The Bush administration wanted to cut the program when it took office. Congressional Republicans have often balked at giving money to the Russians.

After a budget increase last year, the administration proposes to reduce funding for this effort by \$35 million in 2004. Even last year's outlays look skimpy next to, say, the cost of the war in Iraq, not to mention the cost of failure. The federal task force recommended \$30 billion in funds over 10 years just to safeguard and destroy nuclear

materials in the former Soviet republics. We're nowhere near that goal, and our leaders apparently aren't interested in meeting it.

Why not? Part of the resistance comes from the less-than-perfect reliability of Russia, where corruption often diverts money from its intended uses. Another complaint is that while we're paying Moscow to destroy weapons of mass destruction in Russia, the Tehran government is paying it to build a nuclear reactor that could spawn weapons of mass destruction in Iran.

But even if not all the money we're spending is being spent appropriately, reducing the flow of dollars wouldn't help. We don't cut spending on defense just because programs suffer cost overruns. President Putin has shown some flexibility on the Iranian project, and the danger it presents is less immediate than that of Russia's own loose nukes. Nunn-Lugar has been undeniably effective in its overall purpose. It has paid for the deactivation of some 6,000 nuclear warheads, employed 22,000 weapons scientists who could be working for Al Qaeda instead, and upgraded security for hundreds of tons of nuclear material. Which one of those achievements do the critics think was unnecessary?

Nearly three years ago, the task force said, in words that remain true today, "The existing scope and management of the U.S. program addressing this threat leave an unacceptable risk of failure and the potential for catastrophic consequences." There's a word to summarize what we face if Nunn-Lugar fails: doom.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/chi-0309110257sep11.1.2075185.column>

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Birmingham (AL) News

September 11, 2003

## Shelby Seeks Anniston Monitors

*New perimeter, incinerator alarms sought*

By Katherine Bouma, News staff writer

A month after the Army began burning chemical weapons in an incinerator in Anniston, leaders from Sen. Richard Shelby to anti-burn activists are calling for better monitoring at the site.

The Army currently has no alarms around the perimeter of the site, and the monitors inside the incinerator complex are subject to false alarms and long delays for verification.

A newer "real-time" monitoring system has been the buzz of state leaders since Shelby, a Republican representing Alabama in the U.S. Senate, co-sponsored a resolution asking the Secretary of the Army to "develop and deploy a program to upgrade the airborne chemical agent monitoring systems at all chemical stockpile disposal sites across the United States."

"Given recent events at (the incinerator), I believe the Army should establish a new standard for agent monitoring by looking at more modern real-time systems for use in the chemical demilitarization program," Shelby said in a printed statement. "I believe the safety benefits that would accrue to the workforce and the surrounding communities are well worth the time and effort required to identify and implement this new technology."

Already, Congress has required "maximum protection" for the people and environment surrounding the depots where the Army is destroying chemical weapons that have been stockpiled since the beginning of the Cold War.

Now there's a growing question of whether the monitors in Anniston do provide maximum protection.

In addition to Shelby's call for a look at the new technology, members of the state Environmental Management Commission say they plan to ask for a demonstration of the new technology.

"This community deserves the best technology, and with the best technology, whatever that is, comes a higher level of trust and comfort," said Pete Conroy, director of Jacksonville State University's Environment Policy and Information Center.

### **Shakedown testing:**

The Army has one monitor in its incinerator stack that draws in air and tests it continuously for sarin, the lethal gas being destroyed in the incinerator. It also has stack monitors for the basic air pollutants as required under the U.S. Clean Air Act, such as nitrogen oxide. But it does not monitor for dangerous pollutants that are hazards of chemical weapons incineration, such as PCBs, dioxins and heavy metals.

The incinerator was tested for hazardous pollution during a test burn, using a chemical other than sarin. But it will be tested for hazardous air only once during operations - after it finishes its "shakedown" period of slowly ramping up to a full burn. Then, the equipment will be disconnected.

The state will assume, based on models and a successful test, that the incinerator is destroying the dangerous chemicals in the burner, said Stephen Cobb, who oversees the program for the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.



That's because there are no known, reliable methods to continuously monitor air to be certain it has been cleansed of 99.9999 percent of the toxins, Cobb said.

"That is a very small amount of material that you're looking for," he said. "In some cases you're almost looking at the molecular level."

**Better or worse?:**

With the equipment proposed by Shelby and others, the incinerator operator Westinghouse Anniston could continuously monitor for such chemicals and PCBs and dioxins, although not at such low levels.

"That's one reason Westinghouse Anniston is fighting this so hard," said Craig Williams, executive director of the anti-burn group Chemical Weapons Working Group. "They don't want a multi-spectrum, real-time monitoring capability that can give you a reliable and consistent emissions reading capacity over the life of the plant."

The proposed equipment, which measures minute amounts of chemicals using a beam of infrared light, is not as sensitive as the elaborate one-time tests required by federal law. But advocates say it may be more reliable.

Williams shows volumes of Army records that state the current monitoring systems can become clogged and sometimes are not working upon their 90-day service checks.

But the proposed monitors would be worse, said James Dillon, an Army chemist who said he tested a similar system in the mid-1990s.

They weren't as sensitive as the current equipment and they were prone to false alarms "all the time," Dillon said.

With the current stack monitor, if nerve gas enters the monitor, an alarm sounds within eight to 15 seconds, Army officials say.

The community should be alerted while information is carried to a laboratory to determine whether sarin was actually captured. An answer should be returned in an hour to 90 minutes.

With the proposed system, Dillon said, false alarms could disrupt operations around the clock while providing the community with no quicker notification.

**Perimeter reports:**

Proponents of the new technology say they are not asking to replace the existing monitors, but to add an extra layer of protection to them.

Unlike the stack monitors, the monitors at the perimeter of the incinerator site would not be attached to alarms. Instead, information from them would be retrieved twice a day.

And unlike the infrared beam technology, they cannot span the entire fence-line, only draw in air in their immediate vicinity.

Members of Congress from all states involved in the chemical weapons destruction program signed on to the resolution calling for monitoring upgrades, with the exception of Utah, where an incinerator has been operating since 1996. The proposal, which was attached to a defense bill in Congress, would not bind the Army to act on the recommendation.

<http://www.al.com/search/index.ssf?/base/news/106327176975490.xml?birminghamnews?nstate>

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Insight Magazine

September 30, 2003

## Mystery Deaths Fuel Vaccine Anxieties

By Timothy W. Maier

Since Persian Gulf War II began about 6,000 soldiers have been shipped home for recovery. Of these, 1,200 were wounded in combat. Many of the others consider themselves part of an army of "walking dead" - troops who appear to be so physically and mentally exhausted that the military has no recourse but to discharge them. Why they are ill has become a matter of intense debate inside the Pentagon. Some claim a series of anthrax and smallpox vaccinations made them so gravely ill that they have trouble breathing or sleeping and have experienced a loss of memory. Others have been diagnosed with lupus and heart problems. At least six died shortly after rolling up their sleeves to receive the anthrax and smallpox shots. But the Pentagon dismissed related claims with such regularity and intimidation that many GIs tell Insight they no longer report the illness. They are told to "suck it up" and move on.

"Don't blame the vaccinations" has been a Pentagon mantra since it began inoculating nearly half a million troops almost two years ago and pumping millions of dollars into BioPort Corp., the Lansing, Mich.-based sole supplier of the anthrax vaccine [see "A Dose of Reality" and "Why BioPort Got a Shot in the Arm," Sept. 20, 1999]. But an alarming outbreak of more than 100 suspected pneumonia cases among Gulf War II veterans serving in Iraq and southwestern Asia has drawn the ire of Congress.

Rep. Chris Shays (R-Conn.) held eight congressional hearings on the safety of the vaccination while chairman of the House Government Reform subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations, and issued a seething report that found serious safety and regulatory problems with the vaccine. Now Shays is asking again, "Could these vaccinations be hurting our troops?" The Pentagon reluctantly admitted that two Army soldiers - Spc. Joshua M. Neusche, 20, of Montreal, Mo., and Sgt. Michael L. Tosto, 24, of Apex, N.C. - died from complications arising from pneumonia on July 12 and June 17, respectively. The Army is investigating their deaths. Between 1998 and 2001, the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine reported 17 soldiers died from complications of pneumonia. The Pentagon has confirmed that this year at least 17 others have been placed on respirators but insists the vaccinations have nothing to do with the deaths or illness.

The two pneumonia-related deaths reported recently apparently are an understatement. Family members of Army Spc. Zeferino E. Culunga, 20, of Bellville, Texas, and Staff Sgt. Richard S. Eaton, 37, of Guilford, Conn., claim their sons died in August after being diagnosed with pneumonia. A third death involved Spc. Rachael Lacy of Lynwood, Ill. According to her autopsy, "smallpox and anthrax vaccinations" contributed to her death on April 4 after she first had been diagnosed with pneumonia.

When the victims' families reached out to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, he ordered a team of military investigators to Germany and Iraq to review the recent pneumonia cases. "We as a family are concerned that we are not being told the truth," wrote the family of Spc. Neusche in an Aug. 12 letter to Rumsfeld. Like the other families, they asked to see medical records in an effort to get a second opinion on the cause of death. Culunga died of acute leukemia. Lang was never deployed, so she is not considered part of the cluster of pneumonia cases. "It is our right to receive truthful, honest and unfiltered answers just as the military required truth, honesty and commitment from our son," says the Neusche-family letter to Rumsfeld.

But the Army is not investigating the deaths of Culunga or Lacy, and is awaiting autopsy results for Eaton. Besides those who died from pneumonia-like complications, families of six others claim the vaccinations contributed to their sons' deaths - including two who committed suicide because, say the complaints, the vaccinations made them so seriously ill that it destroyed their will to live. While the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has acknowledged the nature of these deaths, the Pentagon has not because military doctors have refused to confirm that the vaccines contributed to the deaths of any of these victims.

Despite mounting criticism, the Pentagon repeatedly claimed the pneumonia cases had nothing to do with the anthrax or smallpox vaccinations. "In 200 years of vaccination, no vaccine has ever been shown to cause pneumonia, and there are multiple reasons to believe that the vaccines have no role," Col. John D. Grabenstein, deputy director for clinical operations at the Military Vaccine Agency, told United Press International.

Could Grabenstein be wrong? During congressional hearings on the vaccination program in 1999, Pentagon officials acknowledged there had been three reports of serious illness coincidentally associated with the vaccination involving hypersensitivity pneumonia. A study last year in *Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety* said the vaccine was the cause of pneumonia in two soldiers. But Grabenstein dismisses such evidence. In fact, in his recent study of vaccination patients published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, he insists there have been no deaths related to the smallpox shot. He ignores the Lacy case because she was never deployed overseas. "Totally bogus," says Meryl Nass, a civilian doctor who has treated soldiers who became ill after receiving the vaccinations. "I e-mailed JAMA a copy of the death certificate for Lacy. I asked him why he didn't report it. He said, 'We don't accept diagnoses from outside the military.' The Mayo Clinic [in Rochester, Minn.] did the autopsy. They don't believe the Mayo Clinic!"

In fact, Lacy's death is not even listed in the military's Noteworthy Adverse Events report - an omission that critics suggest smells of cover-up. "My concern regarding the Lacy case is that it was parsed to death in an effort to keep it out of the official reports," says Jeffrey Sartin, a former U.S. Air Force doctor who now works in the Infectious Disease Department at the Gunderson Clinic in La Crosse, Wis. "If it could not be proven with 100 percent certainty that vaccines caused her illness, it was not going to be reported as such."

While Sartin says it should have been reported, Nass wonders if Grabenstein may have a serious conflict of interest that has prevented him from reporting such incidents. She notes Grabenstein sits on a number of pharmaceutical boards and is well known for advocating legislation that would allow pharmacists to administer vaccinations. Some civilian doctors charge that the Pentagon mislabeled these cases in an effort to avoid making adverse-reaction reports that the military keeps to monitor vaccination programs. Indeed, Lacy may not be the only death overlooked. The death of NBC correspondent David Bloom, who died of a blood clot after receiving vaccination shots, as well as the death of a 55-year-old Missouri National Guardsman who had a heart attack under similar circumstances, also were disregarded. "I am not sure they had pneumonia," Nass says. "They are trying to obscure it. They have something else in the lungs and they're not telling us what it is. The Pentagon knows something, but they are not sharing it. And if it isn't pneumonia, what is it?"

What is known is that about one-half of these military patients with pneumonia also had elevated eosinophils in their blood. Eosinophils are responsible for allergic reactions and also help defend against parasites, says Sartin, who worked with a team of doctors that treated Lacy. "Elevated eosinophils were seen in the blood count of Rachael Lacy before she died, and both her autopsy and the heart biopsy of a servicemember who had myopericarditis showed eosinophilic infiltration of heart tissue," reports Sartin. "This suggests to me the possibility of an immune-mediated reaction to something such as a vaccine."

Another possibility, he says, could be Churg-Strauss syndrome, an autoimmune disease in which "you get asthma, pulmonary infiltrates [in other words, the chest X-ray can look like pneumonia] and eosinophilia." Sartin reports this can lead to vasculitis, which is what killed Bioport employee Richard Dunn. A coroner claimed the anthrax vaccine contributed to Dunn's death. "If we could get the test results on these patients, and in particular the autopsy results on Neusche and Tosto, we might be able to draw some conclusions about what caused their illnesses and whether it was vaccine-related," he believes.

Pointing to the sharing of information on the SARS outbreak and how that helped civilian doctors diagnose and treat the disease, Sartin argues that the same could be done with data about the sick soldiers. However, for now, the military would rather keep those records under wraps, which puzzles Sartin. "All of us close to the [Lacy] case, including her family members, wonder why a perfectly healthy young woman, in the top 10 percent of her PT [physical-training] testing, would get sick right after her vaccinations without any other explanation and the authorities would not consider that the vaccine probably, or at least possibly, caused her illness and death."

*Timothy W. Maier is a writer for Insight.*

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Pg. 6

## **The Pursuit Of Steven Hatfill**

*He says he's a patriot, and some on the front lines of the war against terror sing his praises. But his provocative life and career have kept him at the center of the FBI's frustrating hunt for the anthrax killer.*

By Marilyn W. Thompson

It couldn't be Steve Hatfill. No way.

Stan Bedlington had known the guy for several years. They were drinking buddies who'd both been involved in anti-terrorism efforts long before the World Trade Center crumbled. Now, suddenly, people were saying that Hatfill could be responsible for the country's first case of domestic bioterrorism, a release of lethal anthrax through the mail that had left five people dead and 17 others infected in the fall of 2001. The FBI had just searched Hatfill's apartment in Frederick, looking for traces of anthrax spores or anything else that might tie the scientist to the attack. Bedlington hadn't seen Hatfill for a while, but he still had vivid memories of him. They'd first met at a Baltimore bioterrorism conference. Bedlington, a retired CIA agent, had spent six years as a senior analyst with the CIA Counter-terrorism Center. Hatfill was working as a virology researcher at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick, where he'd begun making a name for himself preaching the dangers of a bioterror attack.

Soon they ran into each other again at Charley's Place in McLean, then a favorite hangout for the U.S. intelligence community. Agents and officials from the CIA and Pentagon mingled with private consultants and law enforcement agents. Most were cleared to handle classified information, but after long workdays and a few drinks, the conversation often veered to tales of dark intrigue and, occasionally, into drunken bluster.

Hatfill, who first showed up there with men whom Bedlington recognized as bodyguards for Saudi Arabian Prince Bandar bin Sultan, had plenty of stories to tell.

He bragged about being an ex-Green Beret. He walked with a slight limp and told people it was the result of being shot during combat. In a convincing British accent that he could turn on at will, he described parachute jumps and commando training he did under the direction of the British Special Air Service. He detailed his exploits as a member of the Selous Scouts, an elite counterinsurgency unit of Rhodesia's white supremacist army that became notorious for brutality during that country's civil war. He even recounted a devastating outbreak of anthrax poisoning in the Rhodesian bush in the late 1970s, an event later suspected to be part of an effort by the Selous Scouts to control guerrilla uprisings.

Hatfill was always a little over the top. He once brandished a photo Bedlington considered "a little bit weird" -- an image of Hatfill in a biohazard suit pretending to cook up germs in a saucepan. Hatfill also described how easy it would be for a terrorist to enter the Pentagon in a wheelchair and spray a biological agent. Even so, Bedlington was

impressed by Hatfill. He considered him a "superpatriot" committed to improving U.S. preparedness for a biological attack. He mentioned Hatfill to a CIA recruiter as an ideal candidate for a clandestine operations job.

After Hatfill's name surfaced in the anthrax case in the summer of 2002, Bedlington kept wondering: Did he really know this man as well as he thought? Curious, Bedlington finally sat down in the den of his Arlington condominium, typed Hatfill's name into a computer search engine and found a copy of his résumé.

Hatfill, it said, had graduated in 1984 from a medical school in Harare, Zimbabwe, the former Rhodesia. Which had no particular significance to Bedlington, until he did a bit more research and learned the campus bordered a suburb called Greendale. A fairly ordinary name, except for one jaw-dropping coincidence: The fictional return address on two of the anthrax letters read "Greendale School."

From the air, the pond was little more than a splotch on a canvas of verdant green, a fishing hole tucked among thick woods on the edge of the Catoctin Mountains. Situated along a remote country road, it could easily escape notice on a drizzly morning as a helicopter chugged through the hazy clouds blanketing the Frederick horizon. Yet for days this past June, the prospect of what this pond might contain had captivated much of America. At the tiny Frederick municipal airport, news photographers waited their turns to climb to 400 feet and capture images of the secretive law enforcement operation transpiring below.

The pond sat almost completely empty, sucked dry by pumps. Colors flashed from its banks -- yellow police tape, the fiery glow of a welder soldering a black box, and a dozen sour-faced men in orange reflective vests, surveying the pond like disgruntled husbands dispatched to bail out a flooded basement.

"That's it!" the helicopter pilot barked into his mouthpiece, dipping low. A small yellow earthmover sat stuck in the mud, going nowhere. A few trailers dotted a road, including one bearing the initials "FBI."

In a panoramic sweep, the scene below showed the extent to which the agency had gone in search of evidence tying Steven Hatfill to the anonymous anthrax mailings. Such moments of grand theater had punctuated the anthrax investigation -- dramatic raids with agents in hazmat suits carting away sealed plastic bags, reports of bloodhounds sniffing out a likely suspect, images of brave divers plunging into icy ponds to pursue a promising lead.

In a chase that had taken agents to the far corners of the world, more than 5,000 people had been interviewed and 20 laboratories used as consultants, according to U.S. Attorney Roscoe C. Howard Jr., who is overseeing the grand jury investigation of the case. The costs for scientific analysis alone had reached \$13 million.

Still, after nearly two years, the criminal investigation seemed more stalled than the yellow earthmover. And as the months had dragged on, critics of the FBI's performance had begun to fear that the anthrax attacks might represent a "perfect crime," unsolvable not so much because of the killer's cunning but because of the FBI's inadequacies.

Although Attorney General John Ashcroft vowed just last month that the case would be solved, and FBI officials say they are still pursuing a short list of suspects, only one man has been subjected to intense public suspicion: Steven Jay Hatfill.

Before he was dubbed "a person of interest" in the case, Hatfill had been part of a tight circle of U.S. government officials and consultants working to counter the global bioterror threat.

He'd trained defense intelligence agents and soldiers in the elite Special Forces. He'd served as an adviser to the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service. He'd worked with the Pentagon, the CIA, even, ironically, with FBI agents, one of whom Hatfill recognized as a former student when his home was being searched.

For more than a year now, the FBI has monitored Hatfill's every move, following him so relentlessly that an agent drove over his right foot in a May incident on Wisconsin Avenue. Holed up in his girlfriend's luxury condominium near the Washington National Cathedral, Hatfill surfs the Internet and watches TV to stave off boredom. He's been unemployed for more than a year. A job interview he had fell apart when the FBI followed him to the restaurant where it was taking place and began videotaping.

His supporters compare him to Richard Jewell, the man falsely accused in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics bombing case, one of the greatest embarrassments in the FBI's modern history.

Hatfill insists he is innocent and, in a lawsuit filed last month, accused Ashcroft and the FBI of engaging in a "patently illegal campaign of harassment" to cover up their own failure to solve the case. The violations of his civil rights and privacy, Hatfill contends in his 40-page lawsuit, "are not honest mistakes. They are the acts of government agents who long ago chose expedience over principle and abandoned any pretense of concern for the constitutional rights of an American citizen."

The FBI, the lawsuit charges, has wiretapped Hatfill's phones, made it impossible for him to work and leaked information about him to the news media "in a highly public campaign to accuse Dr. Hatfill without formally naming him a suspect or charging him with any wrongdoing."

Hatfill's wish is simple, his attorney Thomas G. Connolly said in a press conference announcing the suit. "He wants his life back."

Whether that's possible depends on how the FBI resolves a single question: Who is the real Steven Jay Hatfill? Is he the zealous patriot so expert at preparing U.S. troops and agents for biowarfare that agencies risked security

breaches to use his services? Or is he a contemptuous "catch-me-if-you-can" criminal, whose offhand comments to an associate had sent agents in hard hats and knee boots scouring a Frederick mud pit, desperately searching for clues?

The first to die was Robert Stevens, a South Florida photo editor whose blood was swimming with a bacteria that most doctors had seen only in medical textbooks. Cause of death: inhalation anthrax, the most fatal and rare form of the diseases caused by *B. anthracis*, the anthrax bacteria.

Within two days of Stevens's death on October 5, 2001, doctors discovered a second inhalation anthrax case at a Miami hospital. The victim, Ernesto Blanco, turned out to be a mailroom worker and friend of Bob Stevens at the Boca Raton headquarters of American Media Inc., publisher of the *National Enquirer*.

Although the letter that sickened them both was never found, Stevens's mail slot tested positive for anthrax contamination.

Soon letters laced with anthrax began turning up in other places, first at the offices of the *New York Post* and NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw, then, on October 15, at the Capitol Hill office of Sen. Tom Daschle. The letter to Daschle ended with the message: "Death to America. Death to Israel. Allah is Great." At the time, the nation was still reeling from the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington. Many terrorism experts feared another attack, perhaps the release of a biological agent.

Now the country held its breath as others who had come into contact with the letters began to fall ill. The scope of the contamination was astonishing. The letter to Daschle and another to Vermont Sen. Patrick Leahy had rolled through high-speed sorting machines at huge East Coast postal centers, including the Brentwood distribution center in Northeast D.C., where two workers, Joseph P. Curseen and Thomas L. Morris Jr., died of inhalation anthrax. (Brentwood was shut down on October 21, 2001, and has yet to reopen.) Fine anthrax powder -- weaponized and lethal -- had rained over millions of pieces of mail. Spores surfaced at the U.S. Supreme Court, at Howard University, at the Stamp Fulfillment Services building in Kansas City, Mo., at the U.S. Embassy in Vilnius, Lithuania, at an accounting firm in Mercerville, N.J., at the main post office in West Palm Beach, Fla.

No one felt entirely safe from one of the most deadly germs known to man.

The FBI first began to pursue the obvious, whether al Qaeda operatives were behind the anthrax release. Then investigators received the first DNA analysis of the anthrax spores found inside American Media's offices. The results were startling. The material bore the genetic mark of the Ames strain of anthrax, one of 89 known varieties, and one commonly used in U.S. military research. The evidence, as compelling as a human fingerprint, shifted suspicion away from al Qaeda and suggested another disturbing possibility: that the anthrax attacks were the work of an American bioweapons insider.

By now the case had spiraled beyond South Florida, to New York, New Jersey and Washington. A flurry of hoax letters and packages further complicated the trail. The FBI's field offices struggled to keep up.

With resources already stretched thin by the investigation into September 11, the FBI was slow in contacting scientists who might shed light on the anthrax attacks. Some old-timers in the disbanded U.S. offensive bioweapons program contacted the bureau on their own, only to wait weeks for a return phone call.

James R.E. Smith, an octogenarian who had once worked with weaponized anthrax at Fort Detrick, says he became so upset that the FBI had not contacted him that he wrote to Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge. He offered a description of a potential prime suspect in the case -- his education, background and address. "This individual is me," Smith teased. The letter finally prompted an FBI visit.

The bureau knew it needed a more coordinated strategy. Director Robert Mueller decided that the Washington field office would head the probe, though it was also investigating the September 11 attack on the Pentagon. Thirty-five FBI agents and 15 inspectors from the U.S. Postal Service were assigned to the team. Eight agents boasted PhDs in the sciences, a virtual roundup of anyone in federal law enforcement with expertise advanced enough to match the presumed killer's. The others faced a "steep learning curve," Howard says, with many discussions revolving around obscure terms usually heard only at microbiology symposiums.

The man leading the investigation was Assistant FBI Director Van Harp, who had made his name busting the Mafia in Cleveland. He was decidedly "old school" FBI, a hard-nosed, "take-no-prisoners" interrogator used to squeezing information out of reluctant witnesses and holding clandestine meetings with nervous informers. Even in casual conversation, Harp's easy smile could evaporate and his eyes narrow into a piercing slit if he sensed duplicity. Harp gave the anthrax investigation the code name "Amerithrax," coordinated the initial sweep of interviews and posted copies of the anthrax letters and envelopes on the Internet. The hope was that someone would recognize the creepy block lettering or offer insight into the letters' ominous texts or the phony return address on two of them: 4th grade, Greendale School, Franklin Park, N.J.

To run the anthrax case day to day, Harp turned to veteran agent Bob Roth, whose straightforward, meticulous style mirrored his own. Roth sometimes referred to himself as a cops-and-robbers kind of guy, best suited to pursuing the mobsters, embezzlers and kidnapers who had always been the FBI's bread and butter.

But this case posed an entirely new set of challenges, and Roth was willing to try almost anything to solve it. At one point, he held a meeting with Mark Smith, a veteran Maryland handwriting analyst, and two associates, who proposed setting up a computer sting operation in an effort to identify the killer. Smith would try to lure the perpetrator to two Web sites, handtomind.com and anthraxhunt.com, by making provocative comments about the killer's handwriting and publicizing the sites in interviews and on TV's "America's Most Wanted."

Roth encouraged the men to try the plan. If it worked, they might be eligible for the FBI reward for information leading to a conviction -- a sum that began at \$1 million and eventually ballooned to the current \$2.5 million. The sting operation lasted a few months and attracted at least two people on the bureau's watch list, but it apparently produced no breakthroughs.

Smith says the FBI's frustrations with the case were palpable. At one meeting at the Washington field office, agents talked candidly about the toll the long hours were exacting on their families. Roth vented, too, groaning to no one in particular, "Get me out of this!"

From the start, the anthrax case offered two concrete forms of evidence. The first was the anthrax itself, material that through genetic fingerprinting and other analysis might be pinned to a specific laboratory.

The Ames strain identification had focused intense attention on two labs in particular: Fort Detrick and the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah. But much of the scientific analysis was beyond the capabilities of the FBI's own laboratory. Investigators had to rely heavily on 20 outside laboratories, including some in the United States that employed potential suspects and some abroad whose cutting-edge analytical techniques stretched the limits of what might be admissible in U.S. courts. Yet even after studying every conceivable trait of the spores with the help of eight different scientific panels, Howard says, prosecutors still cannot say with absolute certainty where the anthrax used in the letters originated.

The letters and envelopes, which were decontaminated so they could be safely handled, offered other clues. With distinctive printing in all capital letters, designed to mimic that of a schoolchild, they seemed the best hope of tying the case to a specific person.

FBI psychologists, handwriting analysts and forensic experts used the letters to produce an early behavioral profile of the perpetrator. The analysis took into account the words and phrases chosen by the writer, the style of punctuation and the selection of intended targets. The conclusion: The killer was most likely a middle-aged white male with scientific expertise who had some recent beef with the government and chose media and political targets for maximum visibility. It was likely, FBI analyst James Fitzgerald said, that the criminal had timed the letters to take advantage of the 9/11 panic and hoped to use them to draw attention to his special, as yet unknown cause. Privately, agents shared other theories. The perpetrator might have an interest in an enterprise that could benefit from the hysteria surrounding a bioterror event. And almost certainly, agents hypothesized, the perpetrator had no idea what postal machines would do to a finely ground anthrax powder.

Within weeks of the attacks, Howard says, the team began drawing up a list of "literally thousands of potential suspects, [who] had to be eliminated one by one." At the core was a group of about 50 to 100 people, believed to have either access to anthrax or the scientific expertise to produce the refined material found in the Daschle and Leahy letters.

Agents interviewed dozens of current and former infectious disease researchers at Fort Detrick, some of whom had left on bad terms. The FBI had received an anonymous letter not long before the attacks suggesting that one disgruntled former employee, who'd joined others in filing a discrimination lawsuit against Fort Detrick, might be planning a biological attack. That charge turned out to be bogus.

In Utah, an FBI agent who also was a microbiologist spent weeks questioning more than 100 employees at Dugway Proving Ground. For some time, the Army disclosed, Dugway researchers had been producing small quantities of anthrax powder, similar to the type found in the letters, for use in testing military equipment. This revelation raised the prospect that the powder used in the letters had simply been stolen from Dugway's supply.

As they conducted interviews, sifted through tips and searched homes and laboratories, agents asked one question over and over: Who could have done this? Several people offered up the same name: Steven Jay Hatfill.

As the FBI would learn, Hatfill was not some mild-mannered, white-coated researcher who'd spent his career quietly immersed in scientific minutiae. With his thick black mustache, intense eyes and muscular, stocky build, he looked - and behaved -- more like a character in a Hollywood action flick. Trained as a medical doctor in Africa, he'd spent two years at Fort Detrick as a virology researcher. After he left in 1999, he kept a modest apartment in Frederick just outside the laboratory's guarded gates.

He took a consulting job with the behemoth government contractor Science Applications International Corp., better known as SAIC. With a sprawling campus in McLean, it did work for a multitude of federal agencies. Many projects were classified, and SAIC's tight relationship with the CIA had led to a standing one-liner: "What is SAIC spelled backwards?"

At SAIC, Hatfill designed and taught bioterror preparedness courses, but his responsibilities also included "black," or classified, biowarfare projects. One of Hatfill's major roles was working with the Joint Special Operations Command, which handled U.S. military counterterrorism operations. At Fort Bragg, N.C., Hatfill led grueling training for Army commandos preparing for covert missions to find and destroy weapons of mass destruction, according to friends and former colleagues. He conducted counter-terrorism training for Defense Intelligence agents and did a "super job," says DIA spokesman Don Black.

Hatfill designed programs and training equipment for Navy SEALs, and SAIC colleagues say he often sat at his desk designing mock bioterror training devices, including a backpack that could be used by enemies to spray germs on the battlefield. He trained CIA agents in counter-proliferation, and shuttled to U.S. embassies abroad to teach bioterrorism preparedness.

In Hatfill, FBI agents found themselves pursuing a man who had government pull and connections. Smith, the handwriting analyst, remembers sharing his theories about the perpetrator with Roth and other agents. Based on his study of the anthrax letters, he speculated that the likely suspect probably had worked for or had close ties to U.S. military intelligence or the CIA.

From around the table, the dark-suited agents stared at him. Finally, one offered, "We believe he still does." The call of God brought Lena Eschtruth and her husband, Glenn, to a remote medical clinic in the Belgian Congo in 1960. Methodist missionaries from Michigan, they devoted their lives to ministering to patients who would "die in your arms for lack of medicine," she says.

They'd been living there for 13 years when an "idealistic kid" named Steve Hatfill showed up unannounced on the clinic's doorstep, wanting to help.

Hatfill had grown up in Mattoon, Ill., where his father was the president of an electrical supply company. The family also owned a thoroughbred horse farm in Ocala, Fla., and several Florida waterfront condominiums. At Mattoon High School, Hatfill wrestled, played tennis and belonged to the Latin club. After graduating in 1971, he enrolled at Southwestern College, a small Methodist-affiliated school in Winfield, Kan., and majored in biology, with plans to study medicine.

Lena Eschtruth has no idea what prompted Hatfill, at 19, to leave college for eight months to work as a hospital assistant in a country beset by civil strife. She doesn't remember him being particularly religious. "Nobody sent him," she says. "I don't even know how he knew about us. But you don't kick a kid out. You know how it is: When you're young, you can set the world on fire."

While he worked at the clinic, Hatfill fell in love with the Eschtruths' teenage daughter, Caroline, who was preparing to return to the United States to attend college. She and Hatfill were married in 1976. Six months later, in April 1977, the young couple received devastating news. Caroline's father had been seized by Soviet- and Cuban-backed mercenaries invading what was then called Zaire from Angola. For several tense weeks, no one knew Glenn Eschtruth's fate. Then his body was found in a shallow ditch.

Hatfill's marriage soured quickly after his father-in-law's death. He accompanied Caroline to a funeral service in Michigan, and that was the last time Lena Eschtruth saw him. He and Caroline divorced in 1978. He had no contact with his only child -- a daughter named Kamin, who was born shortly before the divorce -- until several years ago, Caroline Eschtruth says. Through most of Kamin's childhood, Hatfill was living in Africa, where he'd returned after his divorce to become a physician.

After receiving his medical degree, he continued his studies in South Africa, where he earned dual master's degrees in microbial genetics and radiobiology, completed his medical residency in hematology and pursued a PhD in molecular cell biology.

It was serious science, though Hatfill didn't exactly fit the mold of a scholar. He was too flamboyant, too raunchy and too abrasive, according to former classmates, professors and friends, who decline to be quoted by name because they've been threatened with lawsuits by Hatfill or his attorneys. (Others have received the same threats. "By the time my attorneys are through with you, you will not have your position," Hatfill warned a few months ago in a voice-mail message left for a Washington Post reporter.) Many people who'd gone to school or worked with Hatfill in Africa were interviewed by reporters long before they were questioned by the FBI. A Johannesburg newspaper reported that Hatfill had carried a gun into South African medical laboratories and boasted to colleagues that he had trained bodyguards for white separatist Eugene Terre'Blanche. A British newspaper described a hallway tantrum when medical school grades were posted and Hatfill learned he would have to repeat a year.

In a recent interview with The Post, one former classmate recounted how Hatfill punched out a fellow student. "He is not someone I would ever want to cross," another classmate wrote in an e-mail.

Hatfill declined to be interviewed for this article. His friend Pat Clawson, a former CNN investigative reporter who served until last month as his spokesman, acknowledges that he is a larger-than-life character who has a temper, enjoys practical jokes and sometimes rubs people the wrong way. But, Clawson points out, that doesn't make him a bioterrorist. "He had nothing to do with the anthrax crimes," Clawson says. "Period."

An attack was coming. Again and again, Hatfill sounded the alarm about the looming danger of bioterrorism. In 1997, after a stint at the National Institutes of Health, Hatfill had won a government grant to work with Fort Detrick scientists, who studied Ebola, smallpox and other deadly viruses. He had access to the most restricted Biosafety Level 4 laboratories, where scientists handle viruses in biohazard suits tethered to air supplies, and to the less dangerous Level 3 labs, where experiments with anthrax and other bacteria are conducted inside the protection of safety cabinets.

Hatfill used his time at Fort Detrick to develop a new specialty -- biological warfare. Bioterrorism was becoming an increasingly hot topic. Hoax letters purporting to contain anthrax had begun to show up around the country, and each episode set off a new round of panic.

With public interest on the rise, Hatfill began giving bioterror lectures at think tanks and offering up sound bites to reporters. A photograph published in *Insight* magazine in 1998 showed Hatfill dressed in mock biohazard regalia, purportedly cooking germs in a kitchen. It may have been the same photo he'd shown to Stan Bedlington. In an accompanying article, Hatfill warned that the hoaxes "could be a form of testing for a future terrorist attack, perhaps next time using anthrax."

Hatfill knew how to get people's attention. At a seminar in New York, he demonstrated one of his favorite bioterrorism scenarios: a terrorist using a wheelchair to sneak past White House security with a biological agent, says Jerome Hauer, then New York City's emergency preparedness director. Hauer was appalled. After the presentation, he says, he called Hatfill aside and told him he "had gone too far. It was too detailed, too specific to go into in a public forum." Hatfill listened, Hauer says, but shrugged it off.

Hatfill's sudden emergence amazed some scientists who had devoted lifetimes to the field of biowarfare and had never heard of him. But he was much in demand, as his lawyer made clear to a Fairfax County district court in 1999 after Hatfill had been arrested for public drunkenness at 4 a.m. in McLean.

Hatfill's attorney, Thomas Carter, wrote the court that Hatfill was a "medical doctor holding an extremely important position in government. He is on a government assignment in Cairo and Bangkok until 12/2/99." After several delays, prosecutors finally dropped the charges.

Hatfill entered the bioterror world's inner circle largely through a single connection: Bill Patrick, one of America's leading bioweaponers and the holder of five classified patents for the weaponization of anthrax.

Patrick had come to Fort Detrick in 1951 to help create a biological weapons arsenal. The program, authorized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942, flourished until President Richard Nixon disbanded it in 1969 in response to humanitarian pressures. As a result, Patrick and a legion of other specialists were sidelined after devoting their lives to a program that they considered vital to national security.

Patrick, who retired in 1986 and became a biowarfare consultant, lives a few miles from Fort Detrick in a sprawling rancher. He ushers a visitor down to his tidy basement office, where he pulls out a notebook labeled "Weaponization" in Magic Marker. Then he tucks it away on a shelf. The information inside is still classified and cannot be shared, he says.

A consultant whose business card bears an ominous illustration of a skull and bones, Patrick landed all sorts of government assignments, teaching jobs and private contracts. He became the man to call on any project requiring historical or technical knowledge of the U.S. bioweapons program or the challenges posed by specific biological agents.

As he entered his seventies, Patrick told associates he wanted a protege to carry on his work. When he met Hatfill, he found an enthusiastic learner. "He was so gung-ho," Patrick, now 76, recalls fondly.

The two struck up a friendship, "like father and son," says one bioterror expert who watched the ties develop. When Patrick's schedule was too full to attend a program or contribute to a study, he recommended Hatfill, who often did the work for free. Hatfill drove Patrick to consulting jobs at SAIC and traveled with him to professional conferences and classified briefings on the weaponization process. Hatfill was often a dinner guest at Patrick's home, where, Patrick says, he keeps the basic lab equipment needed to make bacteria into a finely ground powder. The legendary scientist's support helped Hatfill land his job at SAIC.

Not long after he got there in 1999, Hatfill and SAIC Vice President Joseph Soukup hired Patrick to study the potential dangers of anthrax sent through the mail.

Patrick calculated what would happen if anthrax were to be stuffed into a standard-size envelope. He based his findings on filling an envelope with 2.5 grams of *Bacillus globigii*, an anthrax simulant.

Patrick, who was polygraphed by the FBI for three hours last year, says he was under the impression the research would be used in preparedness training. But the study received no attention until 2002, when the FBI unearthed it and tried to determine whether it had served as a template for the anthrax mailings.

Among the many intriguing statements on Steven Hatfill's résumé was a striking claim that he had extensive knowledge of U.S. bioweapons production and working knowledge of both "wet and dry" biological agents. This placed him in exclusive company.



Experts have estimated that no more than 50 to 100 Americans could claim such knowledge.

Hatfill's claim was not questioned as he moved into increasingly sensitive roles, but it was generally assumed by his colleagues that he could have gotten such knowledge only through his relationship with Patrick.

In the summer of 2001, Hatfill applied for a heightened "top secret" security clearance to work with the CIA, which required that he pass a polygraph. But his polygraph apparently raised concerns at the CIA. In August 2001, Hatfill received a terse letter from the CIA denying upgraded clearance. The letter, which Hatfill angrily showed a few colleagues, put his sensitive job in jeopardy. Hatfill appealed the ruling, but the CIA held firm. Soon, the Department of Defense suspended his regular security clearance, making it difficult for SAIC to keep him on the job.

Nevertheless, sometime before 9/11, Hatfill began a classified SAIC project to design a mock mobile biological production laboratory. The idea was to train Special Forces troops before deployment to the Middle East, familiarizing them with what a lab might look like and how to safely destroy it. Hatfill hired a Frederick welding firm to construct the lab on an 18-wheel trailer and outfitted it with discarded laboratory equipment. Clawson calls the lab an elaborate and harmless "stage prop." Eventually, agents examined it to see if it could have somehow been geared up to use for anthrax production. They found no evidence of anthrax spores.

In early November 2001, with his job in trouble and the anthrax attacks still dominating the news, Hatfill led two weeks of counterterrorism training for the Defense Intelligence Agency. Its agents were about to head to Afghanistan to look for weapons of mass destruction. Dressed in camouflage, Hatfill used role-playing exercises to teach agents how to negotiate with tribal leaders. At the DIA, Hatfill was regarded as indispensable, a trainer whose war games came as close to the reality of a hostile situation as anyone could fashion. Esteban Rodriguez, a division chief in the DIA's Office of Human Intelligence Management, called him the "ultimate biological weapons expert." DIA officials thought so highly of Hatfill that they appealed to SAIC in March 2002 to let him train another group of intelligence agents bound for Afghanistan. SAIC had just fired Hatfill, who was coming under increasing scrutiny from the FBI. But the company agreed to let him stay on as a volunteer to run the course, which included a mock bioterror attack staged in an old West Virginia highway tunnel. At night, he camped under the stars.

Investigators were chasing someone who had been careful to leave no tracks. The envelopes used in the mailings were pre-stamped; thus there was no saliva to test for DNA. The letters bore no fingerprints.

Some of the letters, however, were creased in a special manner used by pharmacists to ship medications, with the corners folded inward. All had been photocopied by the sender, obscuring some details and sending agents on a mad scramble to identify and locate the signature patterns of specific copiers. Agents, sometimes disguised as Xerox repairmen, looked at thousands of copiers and finally isolated one that could produce the unique smears seen on the letters, but haven't disclosed its location. They microscopically examined the paper, even the strips of Scotch tape used to reinforce the seal on the backs of all the letters. All of the tape appeared to come from a single roll, according to a source familiar with the study.

On Capitol Hill, weeks after the scare over the initial Daschle letter had abated, a second letter appeared in Daschle's office. This one had passed through irradiation equipment to kill anthrax spores, and the powdery material packed in the envelope tested benign.

The most curious thing was the letter's postmark. It had been mailed in mid-November from London. The FBI knew that Hatfill had been in Swindon, England -- about 70 miles from London -- at that time for specialized training to become a United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq. Agents determined through rental car receipts that he was the only trainee to hire a car, telling others that he planned to visit old friends. The FBI asked British police to help retrace his every move.

It also sought help from police in Kuala Lumpur after a hoax package arrived at a Nevada Microsoft office bearing a Malaysian postmark. For several years, Hatfill had been involved with a Malaysian-born woman who had come to the United States from Kuala Lumpur and worked at a financial consulting firm. Now the FBI began to ponder whether this widowed mother of two had had a role, witting or not, in the anthrax mailings.

Last summer, according to a complaint filed by a Hatfill lawyer, agents showed up at the woman's Northwest condominium with a search warrant and tore the place apart. They told her that Hatfill had "killed five people," the complaint alleges. By the time they were finished, her home "looked like a war zone."

Barbara Hatch Rosenberg was getting impatient.

From her office at the State University of New York at Purchase, where she teaches environmental science, she'd been keeping close tabs on the anthrax investigation. Since 1989, she'd led a volunteer effort within the Federation of American Scientists to strengthen enforcement of an international biological weapons ban.

Rosenberg knew a lot of biological weapons experts, including some at SAIC. Many of them had offered the FBI names of individuals whose work or comments seemed suspicious -- information they shared with her as well. But as months passed with no apparent FBI follow-up, frustration mounted.

At the beginning of 2002, Rosenberg began writing long, detailed analyses of the existing anthrax evidence -- some of it based on her own confidential sources and reporting -- and posting them on the Internet. Her comments infuriated Van Harp, who warned her that she risked compromising the investigation. She ignored him.

The perpetrator, she wrote in February, "must be angry at some biodefense agency . . . and he is driven to demonstrate, in a spectacular way, his capabilities and the government's inability to respond." She had never met Steven Hatfill and insists that she never divulged his name to anyone. But by the spring of 2002, she issued another broadside that did everything but name him.

"Early in the investigation," she wrote, "a number of inside experts (at least five that I know about) gave the FBI the name of one specific person as the most likely suspect. That person fits the FBI profile in most respects." She went on to describe the suspect's background, insider status in the bioweapons community, anger at the government and connection to the United Nations.

Rosenberg's specificity caused a stir at the Senate Judiciary Committee, then chaired by Patrick Leahy, the target of an anthrax letter. Committee staffers invited Rosenberg to a closed meeting to discuss her theories. Harp, Roth and several other FBI officials were invited, too.

The agents glared at Rosenberg as she talked, again declining to name her sources or offer anything more than what the bureau considered circumstantial clues. At one point in the Senate conference room, Harp leaned across the table and demanded of Rosenberg: "Do you know who did this? Do you know?" Rosenberg said she did not.

Afterward, a staffer suggested to Harp that his tough-guy tactics might not be the best way to elicit information from a well-connected scientist. Harp had another, more private conversation with Rosenberg.

Hatfill contends in his lawsuit that until then, the FBI did not consider him a suspect. The next day, June 25, everything changed. Agents went to Hatfill's Frederick apartment, and, with his permission, searched the premises. Steven Hatfill's life was imploding.

He'd lost his job at SAIC. A \$150,000-a-year training post at Louisiana State University was yanked away by the Justice Department, which was funding the bioterrorism position. Hatfill had even gotten pulled over by D.C. police while driving along Wisconsin Avenue on May 9, 2002. Hatfill, who smelled of alcohol and didn't have a driver's license, refused to take a sobriety test, according to the police report, and "responded to all further questioning with 'F- - - you.'" He eventually pleaded guilty to driving while impaired and was sentenced to 11 months of supervised probation.

By then, the FBI was tracking his every move, and his credentials were falling apart under the merciless scrutiny of the press.

Hatfill had frequently described himself as an ex-Green Beret. Military records show he did enlist in the Army in 1975 and entered the rigorous Special Forces Qualification Course at Fort Bragg in 1976. But he didn't last long there. After a few weeks, he was discharged from active duty and wound up in the Army National Guard.

Hatfill's résumé also claimed that he'd served as a Selous Scout, though his time in the Rhodesian military overlapped with his time in the U.S. Army. Rhodesian military records have been hard to find, but Selous Scouts veterans told reporters they'd never heard of Hatfill. The true circumstances of his connection with the unit, if any, remain unclear.

Then there was the question of Hatfill's PhD from Rhodes University. Hatfill had presented a doctoral certificate from the South African school to win federal research grants. But he didn't actually have a PhD. His dissertation on new ways to treat leukemia had run into problems with a Rhodes review committee. After the committee raised questions about his methodology, it declined to award him a doctorate in 1995.

New revelations about Hatfill seemed to trickle out almost every day. Stan Bedlington wasn't the only person to make the Greendale connection. There was growing buzz about it by the time the former CIA agent mentioned it during a CNN interview.

Hatfill, investigators learned, had obtained a prescription for the antibiotic Cipro, which could be used to fight anthrax infection, not long before the attacks. Agents also had gotten a positive identification from bloodhounds sniffing through Hatfill's apartment after smelling the decontaminated anthrax letters, law enforcement sources told reporters.

Finally, a second search of Hatfill's apartment -- this one conducted with a warrant -- turned up a bioterror novel he had written. Titled "Emergence," the unpublished story revolves around a terrorist using a wheelchair to sneak into the White House and release a germ that causes bubonic plague, which later spreads to the U.S. Capitol. In the story, a clueless government manned by incompetent bureaucrats has to rely on a brilliant scientist, Steve Roberts, to solve the case and save the day.

On August 25, 2002, Steven Hatfill stepped out of an attorney's office in Alexandria to plead his innocence in the anthrax case. Dressed in a conservative business suit, his mustache newly shaved, Hatfill squinted into the bright sun and described the life of a man declared a "person of interest."

"A person of interest," he said, "is someone who comes into being when the government is under intense political pressure to solve a crime but can't do so, either because the crime is too difficult to solve or because the authorities are proceeding in what can mildly be called a wrongheaded manner . . . Every misstatement, every minuscule wrong step, every wrinkle I've ever made in my life has become public, and I'm pilloried for it."

It was Hatfill's second press conference in less than a month, part of an aggressive campaign to dispel the growing perception that the FBI had found its man.

The Greendale connection was a myth, Hatfill and one of his attorneys, Victor Glasberg, said. Sure, Hatfill had lived in Harare, but he had never resided in Greendale, and there was, in fact, no Greendale School located there.

The Cipro prescription was for a lingering sinus infection, Hatfill explained. He insisted that he had never worked with anthrax, and that his research at Fort Detrick had focused solely on viruses. The positive identification by the bloodhounds amounted to one dog's friendly reaction when Hatfill reached down to pet him.

The claim of a PhD was due to a simple misunderstanding, Hatfill said. He left Rhodes University thinking his dissertation was about to be approved, put it on his résumé and only learned later that the approval had not come through.

He produced SAIC timecards that, he said, would show he was putting in long hours in McLean on the day the two most lethal letters were mailed from New Jersey. Throughout the FBI's investigation, he noted, he had been completely cooperative. He took a polygraph in early 2002 and said the examiner assured him he had passed it -- a contention that FBI sources later challenged. He let the FBI search his home and was stunned when agents returned weeks later with a search warrant to examine it again. He gave a blood sample to prove he had had no exposure to anthrax, and offered to give the FBI fresh samples of his handwriting, which investigators said they didn't need.

During the press conference, Hatfill spoke for about 20 minutes, surrounded by dozens of microphones and television cameras. When he was finished, he took no questions. Fighting tears, he turned to embrace his friend Pat Clawson.

The FBI investigation was in overdrive. After hundreds of tests of New Jersey postal boxes, agents had determined that the Daschle and Leahy letters had been mailed around October 8 from a street box in Princeton that still showed anthrax contamination. A team fanned out along quaint Nassau Street, showing Princeton shopkeepers Hatfill's photo and asking if they remembered seeing him. (In his lawsuit, Hatfill charges that the agents violated proper investigative procedures by showing only his photograph rather than an array of pictures -- evidence that they were unfairly targeting him. Hatfill claims that, despite the way the search was conducted, no one in Princeton provided the FBI with a credible identification of him.)

Bloodhounds sniffed through Bill Patrick's home; the scientist says he doesn't know what, if anything, they found. Investigators tracked Hatfill's Cipro prescription back to John Urbanetti, Richard Nixon's former personal physician. (Urbanetti, who knew Hatfill through bioterror courses, declined to be interviewed for this article.) They talked to Stan Bedlington and everyone else they could find who had known Hatfill over the years.

Then, as 2002 came to a close, the FBI learned from a Hatfill business associate that he'd once talked hypothetically about how a smart person might dispose of materials contaminated with anthrax by throwing them in a body of water. The tip was specific enough to lead a team to the Frederick Municipal Forest and a network of ponds, then solidly frozen. Agents sealed off bucolic country roads with crime scene tape. Then, expert divers plunged in.

Over the course of several frigid weeks, divers pulled up a collection of intriguing items. The most promising was a plastic or Plexiglas box that appeared to be fashioned into a crude scientific glove box, with holes cut in the sides to allow for gloved hands to work within it.

Hatfill's defenders said the box could have been thrown into the pond by a fisherman or a drug trafficker, but investigators were left wondering: Could this pond in the middle of nowhere have served as a staging ground for the anthrax attacks, where the criminal might have worked with powdered anthrax without leaving a trail of evidence or risking personal contamination? Could more tools of the crime -- perhaps even a container of anthrax spores -- be buried in the depths of the muck?

A rusted bike. A discarded gun. A street sign.

The \$250,000 pond expedition hadn't produced a breakthrough. Soil samples scraped from the bottom of the pond showed no sign of anthrax, though investigators hadn't really expected them to because the pond is part of a spring-fed system with constantly moving water.

Hatfill's attorney questioned how the government could justify such an expense and called on Ashcroft to clear his client. The lawsuit went further, demanding unspecified damages and back pay as well as an end to the FBI's relentless pursuit of Hatfill.

Meanwhile, the FBI continues to slog through one of the most complicated, high-profile cases it has ever faced. Members of the anthrax team recently reinterviewed Ernesto Blanco, who almost died from breathing in anthrax nearly two years ago. With no arrest imminent, they decided it might be wise to go back to the beginning.

Marilyn W. Thompson, a Post investigative reporter, is the author of *The Killer Strain: Anthrax and a Government Exposed*. Staff writers Allan Lengel and Tom Jackman and researchers Alice Crites, Margot Williams and Bobby Pratt contributed to this article.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A49717-2003Sep9.html>

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New York Times  
September 13, 2003

## Shutdown Of Nuclear Complex Deepens North Korean Mystery

By Douglas Jehl

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12 — American intelligence agencies are puzzling over evidence that North Korea has halted operations at its nuclear complex in Yongbyon, according to senior United States officials. The Yongbyon site is the only one in North Korea known to produce plutonium that can be used in nuclear weapons. The American officials said there was a debate among intelligence officials about whether the shutdown, which some described as fairly recent, reflects a technical problem, a goodwill gesture by the North, or a shift to another site.

The uncertainty underscores the lack of information about North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Much of the intelligence is based on monitoring krypton gas emissions, a byproduct of nuclear reprocessing.

North Korea restarted the reactor at Yongbyon in February. The reprocessing work, to turn spent nuclear fuel rods into plutonium, is believed to have begun in the late spring or summer, United States officials said. The apparent shutdown at Yongbyon was first reported on Thursday in *The Los Angeles Times*.

American spy satellites and their sensors can detect in general whether activity is under way at a plant like the one in Yongbyon, and the indications that work has halted at the site were apparently based on satellite intelligence. But judgments about the pace and extent of nuclear reprocessing require additional information. Without access to North Korean airspace or to the facilities, the United States is believed to rely primarily on the krypton gas sensors, which are placed on aircraft.

It is not clear whether North Korea could have reprocessed enough spent fuel this year to make a nuclear weapon. The United States government has estimated that North Korea already has one or two weapons, and has said that reprocessing efforts at Yongbyon could produce enough plutonium to make one nuclear weapon a month. But American officials have described the effort at Yongbyon as small in scale.

Officials from North Korea and the United States, along with representatives from China, South Korea, Japan and Russia, met in Beijing last month to discuss North Korea's weapons program. They are to meet again this fall. One theory about the halt in activity is that North Korea wanted to signal its willingness to stop work on its weapons program in return for sufficient inducements.

But the other main theories are seen as having less hopeful implications. The idea that the North Koreans might have run into technical difficulties was described by one American official as the most likely explanation, in part because the plant had been shut down between 1994 and the beginning of this year, adding to the likelihood that sensitive equipment would malfunction.

And the idea that North Korea might have moved its efforts to a plant that has not been detected by the United States has been given recent credence. American officials said this summer that krypton gas emissions had been detected at levels higher than could be easily explained by work at Yongbyon alone.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/13/international/asia/13KORE.html>

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Washington Post  
September 16, 2003  
Pg. 14

## Powell Says Gas Attack On Kurds Justified War

*Secretary Visits Town Where Thousands Died*

By Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Washington Post Foreign Service

HALABJA, Iraq, Sept. 15 -- Secretary of State Colin L. Powell asserted today that a 1988 poison-gas attack that killed an estimated 5,000 Kurds in this farming town nestled in Iraq's barren northern mountains was ample

evidence that former president Saddam Hussein's government possessed weapons of mass destruction and justified the U.S. decision to go to war.

In an emotional defense of the invasion of Iraq, Powell visited a mass grave site, toured a new museum commemorating the attacks and listened as Kurdish political leaders proclaimed that the Halabja massacre provided sufficient legitimacy to go to war.

"If you want evidence of the existence and the use of weapons of mass destruction, come here now to Halabja today and see it," Powell said after walking through the museum. "What happened over the intervening 15 years? Did [Hussein] suddenly lose the motivation? Did he suddenly decide that such weapons would not be useful? The international community did not believe so."

Powell's three-hour visit to this town near the Iranian border, which required him to fly in an airborne convoy of Black Hawk UH-60 and AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters, brought him face to face with scores of Iraqi Kurds who praised the U.S. invasion and held aloft signs lauding President Bush. The sentiments on display here were far more ebullient than those generally expressed by Iraqis in parts of the country Powell did not visit.

"Today it is perplexing and rather painful indeed for the people of Halabja to hear voices in the international community that continue to insist on proof for Saddam's weapons of mass destruction," said Barham Salih, the prime minister for the western part of Iraq's Kurdish region. "Here is the proof. Halabja is the proof. . . . This mass grave in Halabja and the other 170 so far discovered mass graves in Iraq should dispel any doubts about the legitimacy of the American and British liberation of Iraq. These mass graves vindicate the moral imperative of your intervention to protect the people of Iraq."

Powell was joined by Iraq's top Kurdish leaders, Massoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, who preside over a swath of northern Iraq that had been autonomous since it split from Iraq after the 1991 Persian Gulf War. The two leaders, who sit on the country's interim Governing Council, expressed opinions similar to those of Salih. "The tragedy of Halabja gives them the legitimacy for going to war," Barzani said.

The attack on Halabja occurred in the waning days of Iraq's eight-year war with Iran. Furious that Kurdish militiamen in the area had allied themselves with advancing Iranians, Hussein ordered his cousin, Ali Hassan Majeed, to carry out a retribution campaign against the Kurds starting in 1987 that included forced relocations, the destruction of villages and the killing of an estimated 182,000 people.

At about noon on March 16, 1988, after two days of conventional bombing, the Iraqi air force dropped sarin, tabun, VX and mustard gasses on Halabja. The toxic cloud drifted over the town, killing an estimated 5,000 people and harming 10,000. Those who survived did so by running into the hills or by hiding in their basements.

"It was such a great tragedy," said Esmail Abdulrahim Saleh, an English teacher, who said nine of his relatives died in the attack. "It is impossible to describe."

Although the United States condemned the Iraqi government's use of chemical weapons as a "grave violation" of international law, the Reagan administration did not sanction Hussein, who was regarded as a U.S. ally because of his war against Iran's Islamic revolutionary government. At the time, the State Department said there were "indications" that Iran had used chemical artillery shells against Iraqi positions in the area.

Asked today about the U.S. response, Powell, who was Reagan's national security adviser, told reporters that "there was no effort on the part of the Reagan administration to either ignore it or not take note of it." But when speaking to about 250 relatives of victims, Powell said there should have been a more aggressive response.

"I cannot tell you the world should have acted sooner," he told the relatives. "You know that."

Standing at the mass grave site in front of rows of gravestones aligned in perfect diagonals with the precision of a military cemetery, Powell said the toppling of Hussein would prevent such atrocities in the future.

"What I can tell you is that what happened here in 1988 is never going to happen again," he said, noting that Majeed, the alleged architect of the Halabja attack and better known by his nickname, "Chemical Ali," had been detained by U.S. forces.

"Chemical Ali is in jail," he told the relatives, many of whom were clutching brightly colored bouquets of silk flowers and holding framed photos of dead family members. "He will stay in jail until an Iraqi court decides his fate. Saddam is running and hiding. . . . Beyond that, the system that spawned them, a system of coups and plots and assassins is smashed and will never return."

Powell did not meet with any of the 1,200 American specialists who are scouring Iraq for evidence that Hussein had an active banned-arms program in recent years. At a news conference Sunday, Powell said there "was no particular need" to meet with them because the director of the search effort, former U.N. weapons inspector David Kay, will soon issue a report.

After touring the museum, which contains a life-size diorama of a dozen dead villagers complete with fake gas produced with liquid nitrogen, Powell had private talks with Barzani, Talabani and other Kurdish leaders before he

flew to Kuwait. The leaders pressed Powell for assurances that Kurdish areas would be given continued autonomy under a new government.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A11974-2003Sep15.html>

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New York Times  
September 16, 2003

## **Powell Visit Honors Victims Of Hussein Attack On Kurds**

By Steven R. Weisman

HALABJA, Iraq, Sept. 15 — Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, winding up a two-day visit to Iraq, came here today to the site of a memorial museum dedicated to the 5,000 people who lost their lives in a 1988 chemical attack, a reminder, he said, of why the United States went to war to oust Saddam Hussein.

In an emotional visit to the Kurdish region of northeastern Iraq, which has been self-governing and allied with the United States since 1991, Mr. Powell acknowledged that the world was indifferent to the atrocity of Halabja and to other chemical attacks, mainly in the 1980's, that killed tens of thousands.

"What can I say to you?" he told a crowd at a cemetery with a thousand headstones, many of them marking the graves of entire families. "I cannot tell you that choking mothers died holding their choking babies to their chests. You know that.

"I cannot tell you that the world should have acted sooner. You know that. What I can tell you is that what happened here in 1988 is never going to happen again." The attacks occurred during the Iran-Iraq war when Iraq considered Kurdish territory hostile.

Mr. Powell made his remarks on a day that another American soldier, from the First Armored Division, was reported killed in a rocket-propelled grenade attack in Baghdad. It was the sixth fatality for American forces in seven days. An Iraqi police chief in Khaldiya, a strongly pro-Hussein city in the so-called Sunni triangle, was also reported killed.

But Mr. Powell's visit underscored another unwelcome fact on the ground here. The evidence of Iraq's stockpile of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons — the main rationale cited for war earlier this year — has yet to be found. In the months leading up to the war, many neutral experts at the United Nations did not so much dispute Mr. Hussein's history of using unconventional weapons as suggest that many or most of the weapons were destroyed in the 1990's, leaving it unclear in their eyes whether any stockpiles still existed.

Asked today about the failure to find the weapons, Mr. Powell answered, as Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld had in Baghdad earlier this month, that it was beyond dispute that Mr. Hussein possessed the ability and will to make and use them.

To Kurdish leaders who welcomed Mr. Powell here today, the logic connecting an event in 1988 to the war in 2003 was obvious, and the nitpicking over evidence of chemical weapons was supremely beside the point.

Halabja, said Barham Saleh, prime minister of the Kurdish regional government, was proof that those who doubted Mr. Hussein had chemical weapons were wrong. "These doubters live or choose to live in a state of denial," he said, suggesting that they should "come to Halabja and witness the proof first hand."

The welcome for Mr. Powell had all the trappings of a visit to a separate country, even though the United States is trying hard to ensure that the Kurdish sector and other parts of Iraq remain in a federated whole in a new self-governing country that the Americans are hoping to create.

In private talks, Kurdish leaders pressed the secretary to make sure that neighboring Turkey did not interfere in local affairs and that the Kurdish region retained a measure of autonomy in a new Iraq.

Many experts and leaders in the Arab world say one of the toughest challenges will be to keep Iraq from splitting into three pieces — Kurdish in the north, Sunni in the center and Shiite in the south. Indeed, many experts say one reason for the fierce attacks in central Iraq is simply that Sunni Muslims, who predominate there, are resentful of the dominant role being assumed by Shiites.

The American-led occupation has an office of 26 people devoted to unearthing old human rights claims from Shiites and Kurds killed under Mr. Hussein's government.

Asked whether emphasizing those claims might aggravate the grievances of Iraq's splintered groups, Sandy Hodgkinson, the occupation's director of human rights, said that on the contrary, such emphasis would only bring Iraqis together in a new democratically ruled nation.

"The truth has to come out," she said. "The fact is, everybody was persecuted, tortured and executed in this country. It wasn't just one group."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/16/international/middleeast/16DIPL.html>

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New York Times  
September 16, 2003

## Senior U.S. Official To Level Weapons Charges Against Syria

By Judith Miller

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15 — The Bush administration says that despite pledges, Syria has not stopped militants from crossing into Iraq to kill American soldiers.

In testimony prepared for a House hearing on Tuesday, John R. Bolton, under secretary of state for arms control, says the administration is also concerned about what it sees as Syria's continuing support for terrorist groups like Hamas, and he reiterated accusations that Syria has an ambitious program to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

But Mr. Bolton's testimony says there is "no information" that Syria has transferred any unconventional weapons it may have to the terrorist groups it is said to support. He also says the administration "has been unable to confirm" reports that Iraq covertly transferred unconventional weapons it may have had to Syria "in an attempt to hide them from United Nations inspectors and coalition forces."

Syria has denied that it has unconventional weapons.

Mr. Bolton's assertion about the transfer of weapons, along with other parts of his testimony, renewed a prolonged debate within the administration, according to officials. The testimony — some will be given in public, the rest in a closed briefing — pitted officials who wanted a much tougher critique of Syria against those who wished to encourage Syria to honor its pledges.

Late last week, the testimony was cleared by the intelligence community and the White House. A copy of the public testimony, to the International Relations Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, was provided to The New York Times by individuals who feel that the accusations against Syria have received insufficient attention.

Mr. Bolton's suggestion that Syria is partly responsible for the attacks on American troops and his allegations of unconventional-weapons programs and support for terrorists reflect the administration's growing frustration that Damascus has not responded to demands that it curb such activities.

His testimony says Syria has taken "a series of hostile actions." Just before and during the war this spring, Syria "allowed military equipment to flow into Iraq," it says. "Syria permitted volunteers to pass into Iraq to attack and kill our service members during the war, and is still doing so," the prepared testimony says.

The administration has previously accused Syria of permitting foreign fighters to pass into Iraq. But Mr. Bolton's sharp criticism reflects what other officials have said is a particular concern about the impact of the reported Syrian action.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told reporters who traveled with him to Iraq last week that of more than 200 foreign fighters captured in Iraq, the largest groups were those from Syria and Lebanon. One intelligence official said 60 to 70 percent of those detained were believed to be Syrian, based on identity cards or interrogations. Many were carrying large sums of money, a Defense Department official said.

A Pentagon official said that while Syria had done some things to limit militant cross-border traffic, "they have not done nearly enough."

The administration, under political pressure as American soldiers continue to die in Iraq, is trying to do whatever possible to stop foreign militants from entering Iraq.

But the cross-border traffic is only one irritant. "Although Damascus has increased its cooperation regarding Iraq since the fall of the Iraqi regime," Mr. Bolton's testimony says, "its behavior during Operation Iraqi Freedom underscores the importance of taking seriously reports and information on Syria's W.M.D. capabilities."

A former intelligence officer said, "We have to find some way of getting their attention," and referred specifically to a trip in May by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and a subsequent visit by an assistant secretary of state in which President Bashar al-Assad promised to curb activities of concern to Washington, but then apparently did not do so.

Mr. Bolton declined to comment or elaborate on his planned testimony.

The testimony does not endorse a Congressional proposal that would require President Bush to impose economic sanctions on Syria. But senior officials said the administration would consider imposing such sanctions if Syria did not stop allowing "jihadis" to enter Iraq and trying to develop unconventional weapons.

In an interview, Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida, the chairwoman of the subcommittee, said Syria's "porous borders and the hatred for Americans are very disturbing."

"Syria can play an important role for regional stability, but it's doing just the opposite," she said.

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen is a co-sponsor of a bill that would require that sanctions be imposed against Syria unless it ended its reported weapons activities, its support for terrorism and its presence in Lebanon, where it has a substantial military role. She said the bill "gives the administration great leverage" against President Assad.

Mr. Bolton's description of Syria's weapons programs is consistent with earlier Central Intelligence Agency descriptions of Syria's efforts to acquire nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. But State Department officials said this is the first time the administration is presenting a somewhat detailed, public assessment of such activities. Tensions between Washington and Damascus have flared in recent months. As major combat operations in Iraq wound down, administration officials, including President Bush, suggested Syria was harboring Iraqi officials who had fled (an accusation Syria denied) and was allowing remnants of Saddam Hussein's government to hide major weapons in Syria. The United States Army wounded and took into custody five Syrian border guards in June when it attacked what American officials said was an Iraqi convoy near the border.

The testimony also alleges that Syria has "a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin that can be delivered by aircraft or ballistic missiles, and has engaged in the research and development of more toxic and persistent nerve agents such as VX." Syria is not a party to the international treaty banning chemical weapons.

Syria, the statement asserts, "is continuing to develop an offensive biological weapons capability" and has not signed the treaty banning those weapons. The testimony also expresses concern about Syria's nuclear activities, noting that Russia and Syria "have approved a draft program on cooperation on civil nuclear power," expertise that could be applied to a weapons program.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/16/international/middleeast/16SYRI.html>

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Los Angeles Times  
September 16, 2003

## Unease In Congress Over Nuclear Shift

*The House voted to deny funding for research on advanced atomic weapons. The Senate is expected to tackle a similar bill today.*

By Nick Anderson, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — A quiet Bush administration effort to begin planning for a new generation of nuclear weapons, including some bombs dubbed "bunker-busters," is meeting loud resistance in Congress.

Earlier this year, the Republican-led House unexpectedly voted to deny the administration millions of dollars it had sought to research an earth-penetrating nuclear weapon and other "advanced concepts," including the possible tactical use of atomic bombs on the battlefield.

The Senate is expected to vote today on a similar measure, proposed by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), which would amend a bill that funds the Department of Energy's nuclear weapons programs. Both sides predict that, this time, the administration will prevail.

But the debate underlines congressional unease about one of the most significant shifts in nuclear policy since the Cold War's end, including preparations to accelerate the timetable for possible resumption — for the first time in more than a decade — of nuclear weapons tests.

Administration allies said the nation should take a fresh look at how nuclear weapons could maintain deterrence against an array of 21st-century threats, including terrorists, that have emerged since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Critics say that the U.S., by ramping up its weapons research at a time when it is warning such states as North Korea and Iran to halt development of an atomic bomb, risks encouraging the spread of nuclear weapons around the globe. While the U.S. and Russia have cut their atomic arsenals in the last few years, administration statements have heightened the profile of U.S. nuclear arms policy.

In a controversial "Nuclear Posture Review" disclosed in 2002, the Pentagon directed war planners to prepare options for the possible use of nuclear weapons against seven potential enemy nations — including Iran and North Korea, both of which harbor nuclear ambitions. The administration has also suggested that nuclear weapons might be used against foes that hit U.S. troops with chemical or biological weapons, a position that echoes threats from previous administrations.

Since the Sept. 11 attacks, officials also have spoken openly of the need to rethink deterrence in an era when nuclear weapons targeting the U.S. are not necessarily located in missile silos watched by spy satellites.

Now comes an administration request for \$15 million in the 2004 fiscal year, which begins next month, to research a weapon called a "robust nuclear earth penetrator." Such a bomb, sometimes called a bunker-buster, would be either a new or refitted weapon able to reach a buried target before exploding.



The administration is also seeking \$6 million for other advanced concepts, including plans for weapons identified as having five kilotons or less of explosive force. That would be less powerful than the estimated 12.5-kiloton bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945, but would still be able to wreak large-scale devastation.

In July, the House approved a bill that would slash to \$5 million the funding for the earth-penetrating bomb and omit the \$6 million sought for other advanced concepts. In a report accompanying the bill, Republicans on the House Appropriations panel wrote: "It appears to the committee the Department [of Energy] is proposing to rebuild, restart and redo and otherwise exercise every capability that was used over the past 40 years of the Cold War and at the same time prepare for a future with an expanded mission for nuclear weapons." These lawmakers called the funding requests "premature."

Feinstein echoed that criticism. Her measure would strike from a Senate spending bill all \$21 million that the administration requested for advanced weapons research. It would also block administration efforts to cut the amount of time needed to prepare for nuclear testing at an underground facility in Nevada.

Currently, it would take up to three years to resume testing; the administration wants to be able to do so in as few as 18 months, if needed. The United States halted nuclear weapons testing in 1992.

Feinstein accused the administration of risking further global nuclear proliferation. "If we appropriate these dollars," she said, "we can expect that other nations will follow and a new nuclear race will begin, and the chance that one day — somehow, some way — they will be used against us will increase."

But the Republican Senate majority seems firmly with the administration. Sen. Pete V. Domenici (R-N.M.), whose state is home to key nuclear weapons research installations, including Los Alamos National Laboratory, said nothing in the bill would authorize the building of a single new weapon.

Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), another opponent of Feinstein's amendment, said scientists should be allowed to pursue further research: "We are well aware that there are countries in the world that have developed extraordinarily robust underground facilities that we're going to have to take out if we're going to have the ability to win a military conflict with them. Conventional weaponry won't do it, as precise as it is."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-bunker16sep16,1,1764072.story>

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