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Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with nuclear, biological and chemical threats and attacks. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

Established here at the Air War College in 1998, the USAF/CPC provides education and research to present and future leaders of the Air Force, as well as to members of other branches of the armed services and Department of Defense. Our purpose is to help those agencies better prepare to counter the threat from weapons of mass destruction. Please feel free to visit our web site at www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc-cps.htm for in-depth information and specific points of contact. Please direct any questions or comments on CPC Outreach Journal to Jo Ann Eddy, CPC Outreach Editor, at (334) 953-7538 or DSN 493-7538. To subscribe, change e-mail address, or unsubscribe to this journal or to request inclusion on the mailing list for CPC publications, please contact Mrs. Eddy. The following articles, papers or documents do not necessarily reflect official endorsement of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or other US government agencies. Reproduction for private use or commercial gain is subject to original copyright restrictions. All rights are reserved

Bioterrorism: A Threat to Agriculture and the Food Supply,

statement for the record by Lawrence J. Dyckman, director, natural resources and environment, before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

GAO-04-259T, November 19.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-259T>

Highlights - <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d04259thigh.pdf>

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More “Cooperation” Needed for Cooperative Threat Reduction, Official Says

By David Ruppe

Global Security Newswire

WASHINGTON — Senior Bush administration officials must work harder to encourage U.S.-Russian cooperation on securing and disposing of Russia’s massive unconventional weapons capabilities, a former Bush administration official said yesterday.

Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Thomas Kuenning, who until October served as director of Cooperative Threat Reduction program at the U.S. Defense Department’s Defense Threat Reduction Agency, made his remarks at a DTRA-cosponsored conference in Alexandria.

The program has accomplished much since its creation more than 10 years ago, he said, listing numerous destruction activities posted on the agency’s [Web site](#).

Most recently, this week, work will be completed on a new facility for securely storing up to 100 tons of fissile material, he said. In addition, massive work has been completed to upgrade security at two key chemical weapons storage sites and operations there will begin this week, Kuenning said.

Kuenning added, though, that the program needs greater support from senior Bush administration officials, comparable to what was received in the nascent days of the program in the early 1990s.

A level of “political support and political participation” is needed, he said, akin to “the early years of this program, [where] political appointees were involved in fostering the program and pushing this program forward.”

Becoming Coercive, Rather than Cooperative

Kuenning said the U.S. approach toward the program following a reported Russian breach of one agreement has been slowing cooperation.

He cited an incident reported last year in which the United States contributed \$106 million to help Russia build a plant to destroy liquid missile fuel, but later discovered the fuel instead had been used in Russia’s civilian space program (see [GSN](#), March 4).

U.S. officials have sought to ensure that such an incident does not happen again, Kuenning said.

He said, though, “The reaction to that has been that now we’re trying to get in place for everything a written precise agreement and it is clogging up, constipating cooperation.”

“It is becoming a coercive program, rather than a cooperative program. So we need to get cooperation back into the program,” he said.

Biological Destruction

Greater political involvement is needed in particular on biological weapons destruction activities, Kuenning said.

“On the bio side, we need to have quite frankly more political involvement to develop a relationship of cooperation with Russia. ... The degree of Russian cooperation is very limited,” he said.

The Soviet Union at one point had between 40 and 70 institutes dedicated to biological weapons research and 20,000 people working for the biological weapons industry, he said.

“We need to have a diplomatic agreement that allows us to work with these various agencies to accomplish security improvement at these biological sites,” he said.

“Plus, we need to have the full gamut of those sites opened up for our cooperation,” he said.

Progress has been “relatively modest” on biological activities, he said, with more than \$50 million contributed annually by the United States, up from a few million dollars prior to the U.S. mail anthrax attacks in October 2001.

Current activities center on supporting projects aimed at fostering peaceful collaboration between U.S. scientists and former Soviet biological weapons laboratories.

“The bottom line is there is a lot that has to be done,” he said.

http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2003/12/10/632012E3-BC57-48C0-8AFC-6033CC944CB2.html

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After 10-Year Effort, U.S. Has Much to Do to Improve WMD Defense, Conferees Say

By David Ruppe

Global Security Newswire

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military still has a great deal to do to prevent and defend against WMD attacks from terrorists or foreign governments, according to a gathering of officials and experts marking the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Defense Department's Defense Counterproliferation Initiative.

The initiative, an effort to better organize and increase military capabilities to deal with weapons of mass destruction, was created in December 1993 by then-Defense Secretary Les Aspin following the discovery of large Iraqi WMD programs after the 1991 Gulf War.

Today, the military still faces numerous technological challenges, such as rapid detection of a biological attack, vaccine development for preventing a variety of possible biological attacks, and a capability for detecting shielded nuclear materials.

"There's a question about whether we've made enough progress to keep pace with the adversary threat," said Stephen Younger, who heads the Pentagon's Defense Threat Reduction Agency, which oversees numerous counterproliferation activities.

"We've had a lot of success, but we've got a long way to go," said Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs Dale Klein.

"I think our glass is half full, not empty," he added, "because if we read the news every morning and only look at the bad side that does cause us to be depressed and demoralized."

Relative Budgets

Shortcomings have resulted from insufficient congressional funding and executive attention, in addition to the many technical and technological difficulties and numerous potential adversaries, according to various experts.

"We don't have enough money, so we need to use our money more wisely," Klein said.

Ashton Carter, who was assistant secretary of defense for international security policy during the Clinton administration, critiqued the Bush administration's efforts.

"President [George W.] Bush has said that the worst weapons in the hands of the worst people is the security threat of the 21st Century, [and that it is] his most solemn duty to confront that threat," he said.

"We've done a lot since 9/11 about the worst people, but I also want to suggest that we haven't done nearly enough about the worst weapons," said Carter, the keynote speaker yesterday.

The administration has done "one thing, pre-emption, in one place, Iraq," he said.

"As we sit here today, North Korea and Iran are way out of the box, and essentially unimpeded effectively so far by our policies," he said.

The administration should have overhauled U.S. counterproliferation activities, including creating an international campaign to combat unconventional weapons proliferation, Carter said.

He called the creation of DTRA in the late 1990s a success for bringing better managerial focus, but added, the "counterproliferation [effort] is still scattered and managerially inchoate" in the Pentagon.

Klein said Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had listed counterproliferation as one of the administration's top 10 defense priorities.

Technological Challenges

"We've got to bring better science and technology to the warfighter," Younger said.

"Success in this difficult endeavor is going to require a national effort, we're going to have to bring the smartest people in the country to bring bear on a really challenging program," he said.

Counterproliferation is distinguished from nonproliferation in that it emphasizes military rather than diplomatic approaches to addressing WMD threats. It includes pure military deterrence, efforts to discourage foreign governments from acquiring unconventional weapons, and using pre-emptive military force to strike weapons, but also includes cooperative threat reduction, troop defense and incident management.

Technology is not the only answer for countering weapons of mass destruction, Younger said, nor necessarily the best, stressing also the importance of troop operations and tactics and intelligence.

"Perhaps maybe the single most important thing for winning the battle against weapons of mass destruction is intelligence. If you know where a target is, if you know where a weapon of mass destruction is, we can develop a weapon to go and take that facility and weapon out. I have no doubt about that," he said.

"The problem is, we don't know where they are. ... We may think they're some places where they're not. DTRA spent a lot of time in Iraq going to school yards, building sites, a lot of places where not only were there not weapons of mass destruction, but we don't think there ever were," he said.

"We got a lot of stuff wrong. We can't afford to do that in the future," he said.

Concerns

Younger said his greatest concern from a military perspective is nuclear weapons.

"Our forces are trained to fight and win in a chemical and biological environment. ... There's not a lot you can do to protect yourself against a nuclear explosion except move away from it or move underground to some sort of hardened configuration," he said.

Chemical and biological terrorism pose more of a concern for domestic security, he said.

"It's hard to make a nuclear weapon," he said.

The technology to make and deliver chemical and biological weapons, however, is "widespread and relatively simple," he said.

"It may not be possible to keep the tools of weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of potential adversaries or irresponsible groups," he said.

http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2003/12/9/CC211B28-E129-454F-87EA-C80D03A85AE1.html

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New York Times

December 8, 2003

Pg. 1

U.S. And 2 Allies Agree On A Plan For North Korea

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7 — The Bush administration has agreed with South Korea and Japan to a broadly worded set of principles to end North Korea's nuclear program, calling for a "coordinated" set of steps in which five nations would offer the North a security guarantee as it begins a verifiable disassembly of its nuclear facilities, according to administration and Asian officials.

The statement is being sent to China's leaders on Monday, the officials said, in hopes that Beijing will pass it on this week to Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader. But officials said North Korea might judge the offer far too vague, in part because it sets no timetable for energy or economic aid to the country, and because it would require inspections of suspect facilities that have never before been opened.

The officials said they doubted that a second round of talks with North Korea would take place this month, though a senior administration official said Sunday that it was "still possible."

Notably missing from the joint position, which the three governments are not formally releasing, is any demand that North Korea return to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, as called for in the past. North Korea pulled out of the accord early this year, after ejecting international inspectors from Yongbyon, the country's largest known nuclear site. In talks with the United States, Chinese and South Korean officials said they doubted that Mr. Kim would agree to re-enter the treaty.

The omission of that demand may fit well with the plans of the administration's hawks, who say the movements of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency were so restricted when they were in North Korea that their presence was nearly useless. They say the administration will insist that any North Korean disarmament be verified by teams of American and Asian inspectors, backed by intelligence gathered by satellites and interviews with North Korean defectors. That demand, they said, would include full inspection of a second nuclear project — detected by American and South Korean intelligence officials last year — where North Korea is suspected of enriching uranium.

"I suspect that's a deal breaker for the North Koreans," one of the administration's more hawkish senior officials said last week. "But we'll see."

Another administration official cautioned Sunday that ultimately the United States might seek North Korea's return to the treaty and "a role for the I.A.E.A.," but said that such demands now "may be too much" for North Korea. South Korean and Japanese officials conceded that there had been disagreements with Washington over what kind of statement to issue and how specific to be about incentives for North Korea to give up its nuclear program.

"For the parts on which the countries have some disagreements, we used indirect and implicative words," South Korea's deputy foreign minister, Lee Soo Hyuck, said Sunday, according to Reuters.

Speaking at the United Nations on Sunday, China's prime minister, Wen Jiabao, said, "at present" North Korea did not have an "objective to possess nuclear weapons," a statement that seemed to contradict intelligence reports and North Korea's own claims that it has a small nuclear arsenal. "Their ultimate objective is to have a nuclear-weapons-free Korean Peninsula," Mr. Wen said. He added that North Korea had "expressed the hope that their security concerns should be met."

Asian diplomats involved in the talks said the wording of the joint proposal did not include the kind of assurance that Chinese officials said North Korea would insist upon: a unilateral, explicit renunciation by the Bush administration of any intent to confront North Korea economically or militarily.

American officials feared that such wording would open the way for North Korea to demand an end to the Proliferation Security Initiative, in which the United States is organizing countries to identify and seize materials related to unconventional weapons. Shipments into and out of North Korea are the primary target for that initiative. While officials say any final agreement would hinge on how each country sequences its concessions, the United States did not agree to any specific timing in the proposal.

Asian officials also said the proposal did not include President Bush's specific language that any disarmament must be "complete, verifiable and irreversible," but American officials said similar language was in the document.

Mr. Bush and the South Korean president, Roh Moo Hyun, have disagreed on the question of whether to offer North Korea specific benefits for disarming. Mr. Roh, who is in a precarious political position at home, has said such incentives would offer Mr. Kim a face-saving way to back down from his rush toward nuclear weapons, and could defuse the situation. Asia experts in the State Department have agreed, saying the administration should be specific and present its best offer now.

But Mr. Bush has repeatedly said he would not give in to what he has called "blackmail" by North Korea, and many in the Pentagon "still don't want any talks at all," one senior White House official said.

China insisted that the United States, Japan and South Korea agree on a statement before a second round of talks with North Korea.

Mr. Bush appeared to pave the way for that statement in October, when he met with President Hu Jintao of China and President Roh. At the time he said the United States would take part in a five-nation security guarantee to North Korea — but not a formal nonaggression treaty — if the North dismantled all of its nuclear weapons programs.

Mr. Bush has said many times that the United States has "no intention" of invading North Korea, but, when pressed, he has said "all options are on the table" if diplomacy failed to result in disarmament. He has rejected North Korea's demand for a country-to-country agreement, insisting that any accord must be reached with the United States and all of North Korea's immediate neighbors: China, Russia, South Korea and Japan. Russia did not play a role in developing this proposal.

"We will not have a treaty, if that's what you're asking," Mr. Bush said at the time. "That's off the table."

Inside the administration, there is active debate over how much time is available to Mr. Bush for negotiations. Many American officials suspect that North Korea is dragging out the talks, perhaps hoping Mr. Bush will not be re-elected. But more likely, they say, North Korea wants to build as many nuclear weapons as possible now, perhaps betting that at least some can be hidden from inspectors.

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London Daily Telegraph

December 8, 2003

Iraqi Troops Given Chemical Arms, Claims Ex-Colonel

By Benedict Brogan and Jack Fairweather

Saddam Hussein's front-line units were provided with rocket-propelled grenades armed with chemical or biological weapons for use against allied troops, a former Iraqi colonel claims.

Lt-Col al-Dabbagh's description of the "secret weapon" issued on the Iraqi dictator's orders appeared to back Tony Blair's claim that weapons of mass destruction (WMD) posed an imminent threat to British interests.

He told The Sunday Telegraph he commanded an air-defence unit in the western desert and claimed to be the source of the intelligence used by MI6 and the Prime Minister to bolster the case for war.

He insisted that the weapons of mass destruction could have been deployed in half an hour, faster than the 45 minutes made famous by the Government's controversial dossier on Iraq's WMD.

He claimed they were not used because the bulk of the Iraqi army chose not to resist the allied advance. "If the army had fought for Saddam Hussein and used these weapons there would have been terrible consequences," he said.

However, in Baghdad last night there were doubts expressed about his version of events. His commanding officer said that he had no knowledge of his men being supplied with WMD warheads.

A senior Iraqi general in charge of air defences during the war, who was part of a committee that reported directly to Saddam on the supply and training of air defence units, said: "This lieutenant colonel wanted to scare the Western world."

The general, who would not give his name, conceded that authority may have been bypassed but said the frontline troops he visited were in a shambolic state and were unlikely to have received any additional weapons.

"We were very low on equipment," he said. "There certainly wasn't any talk of chemical warheads."

Michael Howard, the Conservative leader, told Sky News: "The claim is that battlefield weapons of mass destruction were available.

"That's not what the Government told us at the time. The Government told us that WMD could be deployed in 45 minutes and that was a misleading claim."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2003%2F12%2F08%2Fwirq08.xml>

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London Sunday Telegraph
December 7, 2003

Revealed: The Iraqi Colonel Who Told MI6 That Saddam Could Launch WMD Within 45 Minutes

By Con Coughlin

An Iraqi colonel who commanded a front-line unit during the build-up to the war in Iraq has revealed how he passed top secret information to British intelligence warning that Saddam Hussein had deployed weapons of mass destruction that could be used on the battlefield against coalition troops in less than 45 minutes.

Lt-Col al-Dabbagh, 40, who was the head of an Iraqi air defence unit in the western desert, said that cases containing WMD warheads were delivered to front-line units, including his own, towards the end of last year.

He said they were to be used by Saddam's Fedayeen paramilitaries and units of the Special Republican Guard when the war with coalition troops reached "a critical stage".

The containers, which came from a number of factories on the outskirts of Baghdad, were delivered to the army by the Fedayeen and were distributed to the front-line units under cover of darkness.

In an exclusive interview with the Telegraph, Col al-Dabbagh said that he believed he was the source of the British Government's controversial claim, published in September last year in the intelligence dossier on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, that Saddam could launch WMD within 45 minutes.

"I am the one responsible for providing this information," said the colonel, who is now working as an adviser to Iraq's Governing Council.

He also insisted that the information contained in the dossier relating to Saddam's battlefield WMD capability was correct. "It is 100 per cent accurate," he said after reading the relevant passage.

The devices, which were known by Iraqi officers as "the secret weapon", were made in Iraq and designed to be launched by hand-held rocket-propelled grenades. They could also have been launched sooner than the 45-minutes claimed in the dossier.

"Forget 45 minutes," said Col al-Dabbagh "we could have fired these within half-an-hour."

Local commanders were told that they could use the weapons only on the personal orders of Saddam. "We were told that when the war came we would only have a short time to use everything we had to defend ourselves, including the secret weapon," he said.

The only reason that these weapons were not used, said Col al-Dabbagh, was because the bulk of the Iraqi army did not want to fight for Saddam. "The West should thank God that the Iraqi army decided not to fight," he said.

"If the army had fought for Saddam Hussein and used these weapons there would have been terrible consequences."

Col al-Dabbagh, who was recalled to Baghdad to work at Iraq's air defence headquarters during the war itself, believes that the WMD have been hidden at secret locations by the Fedayeen and are still in Iraq. "Only when Saddam is caught will people talk about these weapons," he said.

During the Hutton inquiry into the death of Dr David Kelly, Sir Richard Dearlove, the head of MI6, said that the information contained in the intelligence dossier relating to the 45-minute claim had come from a single "established and reliable" source serving in the Iraqi armed forces. Privately British intelligence officers have claimed that they believe the original source was killed during the war.

Dr Kelly killed himself last July after it was revealed that he was the source of a BBC radio report claiming that the Labour Government had included the 45-minute claim against the wishes of MI6 to "sex up" the intelligence dossier.

Col al-Dabbagh, who spied for the Iraqi National Accord (INA), a London-based exile group, for several years before the war, said, however, that he provided several reports to British intelligence on Saddam's plans to deploy WMD from early 2002 onwards.

The INA, which was made up of retired and serving Iraqi officers and Ba'ath party officials, is known to have enjoyed a close relationship with MI6 and America's Central Intelligence Agency.

Dr Ayad Allawi, the head of the INA who is now a prominent member of the Governing Council in Baghdad, confirmed that he had passed Col al-Dabbagh's reports on Saddam's WMD to both British and American intelligence officers "sometime in the spring and summer of 2002".

Apart from providing intelligence on Saddam's WMD programme, Col al-Dabbagh also provided details of Iraq's troop and air defence deployments before the war.

Although he gave details of Iraq's battlefield WMD capability, he said that he had no knowledge of any plans by Saddam to use missiles to attack British bases in Cyprus and other Nato targets.

In the build-up to the conflict, Tony Blair was criticised by intelligence officials for giving the impression that Saddam had developed ballistic missiles that could carry WMD warheads and hit targets such as Israel and Britain's military bases in Cyprus.

But Col al-Dabbagh said that he doubted that Iraq under Saddam had this capability. "I know nothing about this. My information was only about what we could do on the battlefield."

Col al-Dabbagh, who received two death threats from Saddam loyalists days after his interview with the Telegraph, said that he was willing to travel to London to give evidence to the Hutton inquiry. "I was there and I knew what Saddam was doing before the war," he said.

An official close to the Hutton inquiry said: "What Mr Dabbagh has to say sounds very interesting and it is certainly new evidence that we will want to look at."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2003%2F12%2F07%2Fwirq07.xml>

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London Sunday Telegraph

December 7, 2003

How The 45-Minute Claim Got From Baghdad To No 10

It was the claim Tony Blair used to justify war, but who was the source? Con Coughlin, in Baghdad, tracked him down

Lieutenant-Colonel al-Dabbagh is not a man who is easily frightened. Having spied on Saddam's regime for British and American intelligence for more than seven years, the 40-year-old former Iraqi air defence commander lived with the constant fear that he might be caught, tortured and executed.

So when last week, shortly after I had interviewed him in Baghdad about his involvement in the infamous 45-minute claim, he received two death threats from Saddam's loyalists, his determination to describe his involvement in revealing details of the former Iraqi dictator's deployment of weapons of mass destruction remained undiminished. The threats - one verbal and one written - warned him not to divulge any secrets about Saddam's regime, on pain of death. The week before our meeting, members of Saddam's Fedayeen had sprayed his house with machinegun fire. "Saddam's people are doing this all the time," he said. "That is why it is so difficult to find the weapons of mass destruction. I am sure the weapons are hidden in Iraq just like I see you now. I am concerned that the chemical and biological weapons are there."

So why was he prepared to risk his life by disclosing to The Telegraph his involvement in smuggling top secret information about Saddam's WMD capability out of the country?

"I admire Mr Blair because he made Iraq secure from Saddam. If Saddam's people kill me for saying this, I do not mind. I have done my duty to my country and we have got rid of Saddam.

"And if the British Government wants me to come to London to tell the truth about Saddam's secret weapons programme, I am ready to help in any way I can."

Although Lt Col al-Dabbagh agreed to talk freely about his spying activities, he asked that we only publish his family name and that we did not photograph his face. In Arab culture, men are better known by their first name and patronym. "I have to protect my family somehow," said Lt Col al-Dabbagh, who is married and has several children. In common with the rest of the Iraqi armed forces under Saddam, Lt Col al-Dabbagh was dismissed after the war as part of the de-Ba'athification programme introduced by Donald Rumsfeld, the US Defence Secretary.

"I don't know why they did this to me. My name was passed to the US six months before the war as someone who was helping them." He now works as an adviser to Iraq's Governing Council.

Despite the threats, Lt Col al-Dabbagh reacted without hesitation when I showed him the controversial section of the British Government's intelligence document that claimed that Saddam's WMD could "be ready within 45 minutes of an order to use them".

When I asked him whether the information in the document relating to the 45-minute issue was 100 per cent accurate, he responded with characteristic Iraqi enthusiasm: "It is 200 per cent accurate!" he exclaimed. "And forget 45 minutes. We could have fired them within half an hour."

When I asked him whether he was the original source of the intelligence, he replied simply: "I am the one responsible for providing this information."

British intelligence has admitted that it relied on a single source for the 45-minute claim, prompting several intelligence experts at the Ministry of Defence, including Dr David Kelly, to question its veracity.

Lt Col al-Dabbagh's claim to be the source of the 45-minute claim, however, is backed up by General A.J.M. Muhie, his brother-in-law, who helped to smuggle the intelligence out of Iraq to the Wimbledon headquarters of the Iraqi National Accord (INA), which was then one of the leading Iraqi exile groups and is now a key member of Iraq's Governing Council. "We only had one source for this information and that was Dabbagh," said Gen Muhie.

Dr Ayad Allawi, the head of the INA who is now a leading figure in Iraq's Governing Council in Baghdad, also confirmed that he personally made sure al-Dabbagh's reports were received by British and American intelligence.

"Yes, we passed this information on to the British and Americans," he said. "It was part of a constant stream of intelligence we passed on to both intelligence agencies. And I still believe it is true. You must remember the dedicated efforts that were undertaken by Saddam and his institutions to hide and conceal [WMD] was gigantic."

It was during the second phase of the Hutton inquiry in September that I realised it might be possible to track down the original source of the 45-minute claim.

In particular it was in the cross-examination of Sir Richard Dearlove, the head of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) - more commonly known as MI6 - that the likely origin of the controversial intelligence report - the one whose veracity a number of experts, including Dr Kelly, had questioned - started to emerge.

During cross-examination by James Dingemans, QC, counsel to the inquiry, Sir Richard confirmed that the intelligence had "come from an established and reliable source . . . a senior Iraqi military officer who was certainly in a position to know this information".

Like most people who have been closely involved with Iraq for many years, I was aware that both SIS and America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had relied heavily on Iraqi exile groups for intelligence on what was going on inside Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Of those the most reliable were generally held to be the Kurds and the INA. Information provided by the Kurds was limited because, as their region was under the protection of the international no-fly zone, they had little if any direct contact with Saddam's regime.

The INA, on the other hand, was highly regarded at both the SIS's London headquarters in Vauxhall and the CIA in Langley, Virginia, and in the 1990s had been involved in a failed CIA attempt to overthrow Saddam. The INA's intelligence depended on a number of serving and retired Iraqi military officers and Ba'athists prepared to risk their lives to rid the country of Saddam. As Lt Col al-Dabbagh told me last week: "At any moment I could have been caught and hanged."

Of all the groups known to have provided intelligence on Iraq pre-war, the INA was the one that best suited Sir Richard Dearlove's description.

I also recalled an intriguing encounter that I had had with a retired Iraqi general in Baghdad in late May when I was reporting on the post-war situation in Iraq. The officer was introduced to me by Dr Allawi as "our great war hero".

Dr Allawi was referring to recent remarks that had been made by President George W. Bush in which he had paid tribute to "the brave soul" who had risked his life to help the coalition forces overthrow Saddam.

Dr Allawi told me that the general had provided a great deal of "priceless information" that had greatly assisted Western intelligence agencies, including the location of Saddam's main bunker during the conflict, which was bombed during the opening hours of the campaign.

Because of the uncertain security situation in Baghdad last spring, the general declined my request to be interviewed about his role in the war effort, and so I made a mental note to look him up next time I was in Baghdad.

As Sir Richard Dearlove gave his evidence to the Hutton inquiry, my thoughts went immediately back to the general and whether he was responsible for providing the information that lay at the heart of the increasingly bitter dispute over whether the British and American governments, during their respective attempts to justify the war with Iraq, had been misinformed in claiming that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction at his disposal, and that they could be "ready within 45 minutes of an order to use them".

The claim formed the cornerstone of the intelligence document issued by the British Government on September 24, 2002, called Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. The intelligence dossier, and in particular the 45-minute claim, was also taken up by President Bush and Ari Fleischer, his then press aide, to justify the war on Iraq.

It was this claim that Dr Kelly questioned during his now infamous interview with the BBC journalist Andrew Gilligan, in which he is alleged to have said that the 45-minute claim was deliberately inserted by the British government to "sex up" the intelligence dossier.

To get to see the general, however, was no easy task. With communications in post-war Iraq notoriously difficult, it took several weeks to establish that he was involved in providing pre-war intelligence on Iraq to London and Washington; and that he was prepared to talk to me.

Nor were my efforts to establish the general's bona fides in any way assisted by the British intelligence community. When I asked one senior official why, in view of the torrid political debate that had erupted over the validity of the British government's intelligence dossier on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, more was not being done to trace the original source, I was informed: "I don't think that's feasible. In all probability he was killed during the war." Even after I had established that it would be possible to meet the general in Iraq, the journey to Baghdad was not without incident. Shortly before the 10-seat, twin-propelled plane in which I was travelling prepared to land at Baghdad airport, the two South African pilots were informed that the aircraft flying immediately in front of us, a DHL cargo plane, had been hit by a Strella surface-to-air missile fired by Saddam's Fedayeen, and had managed to make an emergency landing.

Without bothering to consult the decidedly nervy passengers, the pilots - veterans of similar missions to Angola, it later transpired - unilaterally opted to take us into Baghdad in a manoeuvre known as a "drop spiral descent", where the plane descends in a controlled, circular dive immediately over the air strip to avoid enemy fire.

Thankfully, the tactic worked, and as we taxied towards the terminal building we could see the still smoking remnants of the DHL cargo plane's fuselage.

My hunch about the general proved to be only half right. When I finally got to see him at the INA's new headquarters in Baghdad - a former Ba'ath party training college - it transpired that Gen Muhie had in fact been the middle man in the affair, and not the primary source.

Born in 1941 in Najaf, Gen Muhie enrolled at the prestigious Baghdad Military Academy aged 19 and spent the rest of his career in the Iraqi army, including a year seconded to Camberley Staff College in Surrey (in 1979 - when relations between London and Baghdad were more cordial).

He served in various positions during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, frequently falling foul of Saddam for criticising his leadership of the military campaign. After the 1991 Gulf war he was summarily discharged from the army by Saddam.

From 1995 onwards Gen Muhie worked secretly for the INA in Baghdad, smuggling hand-written information to the INA's office in Jordan on handwritten pieces of paper, which were then transmitted to the INA's London headquarters.

From there it was passed by Dr Allawi to intelligence officers at the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) in Vauxhall and the CIA station chief at the US embassy in Grosvenor Square, from where it went to the CIA's headquarters in Langley.

Gen Muhie says he joined the INA because he believed Saddam was ruining the country. "We never knew the reason why we went to war with Iran, which was a military disaster for Iraq. We had dreadful relations with every other country in the region, countries that should have been our friends. And then Saddam invaded Kuwait."

There was also a personal reason for the general's involvement with the INA. In 1995 his nephew Ahmed, a 23-year-old computer science undergraduate at al-Mansour University in Baghdad, was shot dead by Iraqi security agents four hours after he had voted "no" in a plebiscite on Saddam Hussein's continued presidency - which in Saddam's Iraq almost amounted to writing a suicide note.

Gen Muhie, like many other disillusioned Iraqis who worked for the INA under Saddam, was prepared to risk his life to smuggle material out of Iraq. "One of my relatives would travel to Amman with small pieces of paper hidden in his luggage. In seven years they never got caught," he said.

Although he was retired from the army, as a former staff commandant in Baghdad, Gen Muhie had many contacts in senior positions in the Iraqi military. "I could get a lot of information about what was going on within the Iraqi military. All this information was passed to Dr Allawi's office in London."

During our first meeting Gen Muhie revealed that he had one particular officer who had been a valuable source of information, especially on the issue of Saddam's WMD capability. At first he seemed reluctant to let me meet him, claiming the security situation in Baghdad made such a meeting too dangerous. But after a few days he relented and set up a meeting with Lt Col al-Dabbagh.

Apart from confirming that he passed information about Iraq's ability to launch WMD within 45 minutes to Gen Muhie, Lt Col al-Dabbagh was able to provide a fascinating insight into the war preparations undertaken by Saddam in the months leading up to the war.

According to one document that Lt Col al-Dabbagh sent to London - the minutes of a meeting Saddam held in Baghdad in December 2001 after the Afghan conflict - Saddam called a meeting of his top commanders to discuss how Iraq could defend itself against an attack that Saddam believed was "inevitable".

Saddam was well aware that Iraq could not possibly win a conventional military conflict against a US-led coalition, and in early 2002 he gave orders for large quantities of weapons to be hidden at strategic locations throughout the country. "The battle with America is inevitable," the document states. "What is of paramount importance is how to sustain the continuation of war after occupation."

To that end Saddam ordered that 30 per cent of the country's weaponry be hidden at secret locations which were to be marked by Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) co-ordinates. These were to include guns, rocket-propelled grenades, anti-tank weapons and Strella surface-to-air missiles (such as the one fired at the DHL cargo plane last month).

The only people who knew the precise location of all the arms caches were Saddam, his son Qusay and Abid Hamid Mahmud, his private secretary, since captured by coalition forces. "Saddam Hussein said that if any of these weapons were found by ordinary Iraqi people then the head of the military unit would be hanged immediately," said Lt Col al-Dabbagh.

According to Lt Col al-Dabbagh, it was at about this time that he and other senior commanders were informed that Saddam intended to deploy his WMD arsenal to defend the country against an American-led attack. At a meeting that took place six months before the war, one of Saddam's senior officials told a group of Iraqi air defence commanders that they had many weapons that could be used to attack the US and UK.

"They told us that they [coalition troops] cannot pass across Iraq because we will use everything, from the knife to nuclear weapons, to defend ourselves," said Lt Col al-Dabbagh.

At this juncture Lt Col al-Dabbagh was commanding one of four air-defence units based in the western desert, and managed to smuggle a detailed map of Saddam's troop deployments along Iraq's border with Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia back to the INA's south London headquarters.

"It was very difficult to get this information out," he told me. "The Ba'athists never trusted the military, and as a senior officer I had two Ba'athist officials watching me 24 hours a day."

Lt Col al-Dabbagh cannot remember precisely when he sent information about Saddam's decision to deploy WMD, but thinks it was probably sometime in the spring. As a frontline officer, he had no way of knowing how long it would take information that he passed to Gen Muhie to reach London.

The weapons themselves were finally deployed at his own unit towards the end of last year. "They arrived in boxes marked 'Made in Iraq' and looked like something you fired with a rocket-propelled grenade," Lt Col al-Dabbagh explained.

"They were either chemical or biological weapons; I don't know which, because only the Fedayeen and the Special Republican Guard were allowed to use them. All I know is that we were told that when we used these weapons we had to wear gas masks."

According to information he learnt subsequently from his military colleagues, the weapons were made at factories at Habbaniyah, al-Nahrawan, Nabbai and al-Latifia.

Saddam's officials also gave elaborate instructions on how to use the weapons. Because of their limited range, those responsible for firing them were to dress in civilian clothes and drive in civilian vehicles with yellow number plates.

"Each military unit was given two four-wheel drive Isuzu cars," said Lt Col al-Dabbagh. "We were not allowed to use them and they had to be kept in good condition." If the war reached a critical stage and Iraq's forces were in danger of being overrun, then designated officers would be given the task of driving the vehicles towards coalition positions and firing the weapons.

"We were instructed that when we got the order we must use these cars and use the secret weapon. We were also told that if any of us discussed this weapon with any of our colleagues we would be hanged immediately."

He believes that the only reason these weapons were not used during Operation Iraqi Freedom last spring is that the bulk of the Iraqi army refused to fight for Saddam.

"The West should thank God that the Iraqi army decided not to fight," he said. "If the army had fought for Saddam, and used these weapons, there would have been terrible consequences."

Lt Col al-Dabbagh has no idea what became of the weapons because shortly before hostilities commenced he was recalled to Iraq's air defence headquarters in Baghdad, although he believes that most of them were taken away by Saddam's Fedayeen and hidden away.

He did, however, see a group of Fedayeen attempt to use one of the warheads against an American position on the outskirts of Baghdad on April 6. "They were going to use this weapon, but then they realised that they would kill lots of Iraqis who did not have masks, so they put them in their cars and drove off."

Convinced that the weapons are still hidden in Iraq, Lt Col al-Dabbagh doesn't believe any of them will be found until Saddam is caught or killed. "All the people who worked on these weapons have either escaped or disappeared. Only when Saddam is captured will these people talk openly about these weapons. Then they will reveal where they are."

Con Coughlin is the author of 'Saddam: The Secret Life', published by Macmillan.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2003%2F12%2F07%2Fwirq107.xml>

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San Francisco Chronicle

December 7, 2003

Pg. 1

A New Era Of Nuclear Weapons

Bush's buildup begins with little debate in Congress

By James Sterngold, Chronicle Staff Writer

Congress, with only a limited debate, has given the Bush administration a green light for the biggest revitalization of the country's nuclear weapons program since the end of the Cold War, leaving many Democrats and even some hawkish Republicans seething.

"This has been a good year," said Linton Brooks, the administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, which develops and manages the country's nuclear weapons arsenal. "I'm pretty happy we essentially got what we wanted."

Reversing a decade of restraint in nuclear weapons policy, Congress agreed to provide more than \$6 billion for research, expansion and upgrades in the country's nuclear capabilities. While Congress approved large sums to maintain the existing nuclear arsenal even during the Clinton years, this year's increases will finance multiyear programs to design a new generation of warheads as well as more sophisticated missiles, bombers and re-entry vehicles to deliver them.

"This is a fairly radical new way of thinking about things," Brooks said, adding that it amounted to "a more fundamental shift in the way we look at this than many people realize."

That the change is indeed both "radical" and "fundamental" is about the only thing critics of the administration agree with.

"It hasn't been perceived as such, but this is a nuclear revival," said Stephen Schwartz, publisher of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

Deeply disturbing to critics on both sides of the political spectrum is how little public or congressional discussion has taken place, and how little detailed information the Bush administration has provided on its strategies and plans.

"I'm totally offended by this administration," said Rep. Curt Weldon, R-Pa., a onetime White House ally on nuclear issues, and vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. "I happen to think they're out of bounds on this. There's an important sea change in the world, and we have no idea what our policy is.

"It's a major national scandal in the making," Weldon said in an interview with The Chronicle last week. "I'm totally frustrated."

Yet for all their misgivings, influential Republicans like Weldon managed to impose only minuscule cuts of less than \$20 million on the programs for new warhead development, leaving plans for jump-starting the U.S. nuclear arsenal and warhead production capabilities largely intact.

"We know we're getting rolled," said Rep. Ellen Tauscher, D-Walnut Creek, a vocal opponent of the new nuclear push. "All we did was give the president a sizable victory instead of a complete victory. They got everything they wanted as far as the significant issues. It is a huge ideological victory."

"Nothing that happened in Congress stops (the Bush administration) from doing what they want to do at this point," said Robert Civiak, a nuclear physicist and former weapons analyst at the Office of Management of Budget. "The message that got across is that the country is ready for new kinds of nuclear weapons."

Nuclear-weapons opponents argue that the country has little idea about the direction it is taking with such weapons of mass destruction.

"There's no debate on this at all," said Andrew Lichterman, program director of the Oakland-based Western States Legal Foundation, a nonprofit group that favors arms reductions. "These programs are not being questioned in the political mainstream at all."

The Bush administration has argued that the new doctrine and new weapons are needed because the world has changed since the Cold War, when the United States deterred the Soviet Union from striking by developing a massive arsenal that promised complete annihilation. Now, the administration argues, there are new, regional menaces from such countries as North Korea and Iran.

To deter those threats, the administration is seeking a new stockpile of both some Cold War-era warheads and new, smaller weapons that can be used for limited attacks and for destroying caches of weapons of mass destruction, especially in buried bunkers, without causing indiscriminate destruction and loss of life. It has also proposed a policy of possible pre-emptive first use of nuclear weapons in emergencies, even against non-nuclear states.

A recent study entitled "Missiles of Empire: America's 21st Century Global Legions," by Lichterman of the Western States Legal Foundation highlights not only the administration's push for new kinds of warheads, but also the billions it is planning to spend on reducing the time it would take to launch a nuclear strike and on a new generation of missile re-entry vehicles, among other things. The re-entry vehicles would allow the military to steer warheads toward targets, even moving targets, entering the atmosphere from space.

Even GOP hawks upset

It is precisely those kinds of provocative new weapons capabilities -- at a time when the administration seeks to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction elsewhere -- that worries even hawkish Republicans.

"We have more nuclear weapons now than we know what to do with," said Rep. David Hobson, R-Ohio, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee's energy and water subcommittee, which controls the nuclear weapons budget. "I'm concerned about our image in the world when we're telling others not to build these things, and then we push these new programs."

Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colo., a senior member of the Armed Services Committee who voted against funding some programs, argued in an interview, "We don't need new weapons, and in fact we cause more harm than good in our relations with other countries and in our moral position on nuclear proliferation. I think that they're almost obsolete. I'm not convinced that we have to have that capability."

The Republican lawmakers conceded that their defiance had been more symbolic than substantive. Among other things, the administration succeeded in pushing through the repeal of the law banning the development of smaller, more usable low-yield warheads, and it got approval to begin research into advanced weapons concepts for the future. Congress also provided funding for study of a new "bunker-buster" warhead.

A number of the new initiatives also bring the promise of increased spending in the future. For instance, Congress approved increasing the readiness of the Nevada Test Site, where weapons were tested underground until a ban was put in place in 1992. The NNSA has estimated it would cost as much as \$83 million over three years to increase the level of readiness, and an additional \$25 million to \$30 million a year to sustain that level.

Congress also approved with virtually no debate \$320 million for manufacturing new "pits," the plutonium cores of warheads, almost \$90 million more than last year. More than \$135 million was appropriated for a program to keep tritium, a radioactive gas used to boost the power of warheads, ready for weapons use and another \$265 million for a broad campaign to refurbish the facilities used to produce and maintain the nuclear arsenal.

Republicans acknowledged that the few cuts they did make were achieved in the face of intense White House pressure -- and, as Brooks acknowledged, amounted to only "one-tenth of a percent of my budget." "I'm trying to send messages about priorities and what is important to the long-term future of this country," said Hobson. "We sent some messages, and the question will be whether they get them or not."

The GOP critics, all advocates of a strong defense, also admitted that they did not attack the broader array of programs on the congressional floor.

"I guess my feeling is that I would not want us to unilaterally disarm and get rid of our nuclear potential," said Hefley. "But at the same time I'm not comfortable with seeing us maintain all of the nuclear weapons arsenal. How can we in good conscience upgrade and develop new nuclear weapons?"

'An insurance policy'

Even Democrats who have been passionate in their criticisms of Bush's policies admitted that they felt they had to vote for the bulk of the programs.

Tauscher, when asked why she did not fight the billions of dollars in other budget items, such as rehabilitation of the warhead manufacturing capability and the development of the next generation of missiles and bombers, said some nuclear weaponry had to remain in the nation's defensive arsenal.

"As far as I'm concerned, it's an insurance policy," she said.

But even inside the administration, questions have been raised about the rationale for the new nuclear posture. The Pentagon, notably, is not pushing for the new warheads. A classified study conducted this summer by the Defense Science Board, which was leaked last month, stated, "Current (Department of Defense) structure provides neither clear requirements nor persuasive rationale for changing the nuclear stockpile."

John Harvey, director of the policy planning staff at the National Nuclear Security Administration, a division of the Energy Department, remarked in an interview earlier this year, "We need to tell the military what's possible, even if they haven't asked the question yet. Sometimes the services don't know the right questions to ask."

Weldon said that the best he could do was wait and wage a bigger battle next year. He said he was trying to put together a group to study the entire arsenal and examine how it might be transformed to deal with the new threats. "The debate was on the smaller things this year," he said. "I think next year you'll see that debate widen. Next year will be different, I assure you."

The administration does not seem concerned. Asked if the lawmakers' small budget cuts or expressions of concern altered the administration's direction, Brooks of the NNSA replied, "No, it doesn't."

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/12/07/MNG5Q3GH941.DTL>

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Dirty Bomb Warheads Disappear

Stocks of Soviet-Era Arms For Sale on Black Market

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

TIRASPOL, Moldova -- In the ethnic conflicts that surrounded the collapse of the Soviet Union, fighters in several countries seized upon an unlikely new weapon: a small, thin rocket known as the Alazan. Originally built for weather experiments, the Alazan rockets were packed with explosives and lobbed into cities. Military records show that at least 38 Alazan warheads were modified to carry radioactive material, effectively creating the world's first surface-to-surface dirty bomb.

The radioactive warheads are not known to have been used. But now, according to experts and officials, they have disappeared.

The last known repository was here, in a tiny separatist enclave known as Transdniester, which broke away from Moldova 12 years ago. The Transdniester Moldovan Republic is a sliver of land no bigger than Rhode Island located along Moldova's eastern border with Ukraine. Its government is recognized by no other nation. But its weapons stocks -- new, used and modified -- have attracted the attention of black-market arms dealers worldwide. And they're for sale, according to U.S. and Moldovan officials and weapons experts.

When the Soviet army withdrew from this corner of Eastern Europe, the weapons were deposited into an arsenal of stupefying proportions. In fortified bunkers are stored 50,000 tons of aging artillery shells, mines and rockets, enough to fill 2,500 boxcars.

Conventional arms originating in Transdniester have been turning up for years in conflict zones from the Caucasus to Central Africa, evidence of what U.S. officials describe as an invisible pipeline for smuggled goods that runs through Tiraspol to the Black Sea and beyond. Now, governments and terrorism experts fear the same pipeline is carrying nonconventional weapons such as the radioactive Alazan, and that terrorists are starting to tap in.

"For terrorists, this is the best market you could imagine: cheap, efficient and forgotten by the whole world," said Vladimir Orlov, founding director of the Center for Policy Studies in Moscow, a group that studies proliferation issues.

Why the Alazan warheads were made is unknown. The urgent question -- where are they now? -- is a matter of grave concern to terrorism and nonproliferation experts who know the damage such devices could do. A dirty bomb is not a nuclear device but a weapon that uses conventional explosives to disperse radioactive materials, which could cause widespread disruption and expose people to dangerous radiation. Unlike other kinds of dirty bombs, this one would come with its own delivery system, and an 8-mile range. A number of terrorist groups, including al Qaeda, have sought to build or buy one.

While it has no nuclear bombs of its own, Transdniester is regarded by experts as a prime shopping ground for outlaw groups looking for weapons of every type. It is the embodiment of the gray zone, where failed states, porous borders and weak law enforcement allow the buying and selling of instruments of terror.

Transdniester possesses many of the trappings of statehood, including an army and border guards who demand visas and special entrance fees from visitors. But according to Western diplomats based in the region, these procedures are window dressing used to mask the activities of a small clique that runs the country by its own rules.

Much of the enclave's trade is controlled by a consortium, Sheriff, controlled by the son of the Transdniester's president, Igor Smirnov. Vladimir Smirnov also heads the Transdniester Customs Service, which oversees a river of goods flowing in and out of the country. The cargoes move through the Tiraspol airport; by truck overland to Ukraine or Moldova; and on a rail-to-ship line that connects the capital to the Black Sea port of Odessa. The Transdniester interior minister, Maj. Gen. Vadim Shevtsov, is a former Soviet KGB agent wanted in connection with a murderous attack on pro-independence Latvians in 1991.

Organized crime figures and reputed terrorists flit in and out of the region, according to law enforcement and government officials in Moldova and U.S. officials. Their cargoes are often disguised. "This is one of the places where the buyers connect with the sellers," said William C. Potter, director of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute for International Studies. "It's one-stop shopping for weapons and all kinds of other illicit goods. Very possibly, that includes the materials for weapons of mass destruction."

The enormous Soviet-style banners stretched across intersections in downtown Tiraspol bid visitors welcome to "The People's Pride: The Transdniester Moldovan Republic." The city is locked in a Brezhnev-era time warp. Nearly every corner bears a reminder of the regime's stubborn embrace of old-school Soviet communism: a statue of Lenin, a hammer-and-sickle banner, a street named for Karl Marx.

Father, Son and Sheriff

A large portion of the population is made up Russian-speaking pensioners, many of them Soviet military retirees who served in the area and chose to stay because of the relatively mild climate. Like the elderly elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, the retirees are nostalgic for a simpler, more predictable time when the socialist state took care of all their needs.

North of Tiraspol, an industrial center straddles the main rail line into town. Steam blasts from a complex of gray buildings housing the city's Elektromash works, a leading factory that describes itself officially as a producer of electrical engines. According to Moldovan and Western intelligence officials, the factory's product line includes assault rifles and machine pistols, a centerpiece of Transdnester's most profitable industry: weapons.

Once the industrial heartland of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, Transdnester has a long history as a production center for arms and weapons, including machine guns and rockets. Today, the tradition continues in at least six sprawling factories in the capital and the cities of Tighina and Rybnitsa, according to Ceslav Ciobanu, a former Moldovan ambassador to the United States and now a senior research scholar for James Madison University's William R. Nelson Institute.

Among the weapons in production are Grad and Duga multiple-rocket launchers, antitank mines, rocket-propelled grenades and multiple lines of small arms, Ciobanu said.

It's an impressive output for a country whose army, the Dniester Republican Guard, numbers only 5,000. But hardly any of the weapons are manufactured for local use, according to Ciobanu, who described the arms trade in a Nelson Institute paper released in June. "Production of armaments and illegal weapons traffic constitutes the most important factor of the economic and military policy of the Tiraspol administration, and the biggest source of revenues for its corrupt elites," Ciobanu said.

The same powerful troika that dominates Transdnester's political and economic life controls the production of weapons as well as exports abroad, Ciobanu said: "Father, Son and Sheriff."

It's a view shared by Western officials based in the region, as well as law-enforcement and weapons experts abroad. Several Moldova-based diplomats, speaking on the condition of anonymity, confirmed there is an eastern flow of arms from Tiraspol to Odessa, the Ukrainian port on the Black Sea. They also described seizures of Transdnester-made weapons in conflicts zones outside the enclave.

Last year, one such cache of pistols and other small arms was seized in the basement of the home of one of the leaders of the separatist Gagauz movement. The Gagauz are a tiny Turkic-speaking minority in southern Moldova. The weapons turned out to be poorly made counterfeits of American weapons. "The guns were stamped 'U.S. Army,' but the brand names were misspelled," said one diplomatic source familiar with the incident. Transdnester weapons exports also have been traced to the breakaway Abkhazia region, in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, and to war zones in the Congo and Ivory Coast, according to Moldovan officials and independent weapons experts.

But the largest weapons stockpile in Transdnester is located at a massive arsenal near the northern town of Kolbasna. Originally a supply depot for Red Army forces in the Black Sea region, the Kolbasna arsenal swelled in the early 1990s as troops departing newly independent Eastern European states deposited weapons and ammunition there. The arsenal currently holds an estimated 50,000 tons of munitions of all kinds, including large numbers of shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles.

Moldova has pressed Russia to remove the munitions and the 2,800 Russian troops who guard them. But over the years, both Russia and Transdnester have used a variety of excuses to block or delay their departure. The arsenal, which is 600 miles from the Russian border, is one of the main sticking points in ongoing negotiations aimed at reconciling Moldova and its former province, which fought a short, bloody civil war that ended in 1992.

Transdnester has opposed removing the stockpile, partly because it hopes to receive payment for the weapons, and also because the Russian presence has helped guarantee Transdnester's survival as an autonomous region.

Moldova does not formally recognize that an independent Transdnester exists. Thus, the largest border between them -- and the one most likely to be used for weapons-trafficking -- is unprotected. On the Moldovan side, it has no checkpoints, no detectors and no guards.

Hundreds of westbound trucks and cars cross into Moldova each day along the main Tiraspol-Chisinau highway, just as freely as the trains heading east along the rails to Odessa. Moldovan officials fret privately about the smuggled goods they don't catch. "Transdnester is like a cancer, and there's nothing we can do about it," said one senior Moldovan official who declined to be identified for fear he would lose his job. "We're battling our own corruption, and out there is a 400-kilometer border over which we have no control.

"Trucks cross the border every day, slip into one of the smaller roads and disappear," the official continued. "And I'm 100 percent sure of this: Some of those trucks are carrying weapons."

Western and Moldovan officials point to numerous incidents in which seized Russian weapons were traced back to Transdnester. In one well-documented case in 1999, a truck halted by Moldovan police on the Transdnester border was discovered to contain Russian-made shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles, along with plastic explosives and

detonators. Driving the truck were several members of Transdnier's army, along with Lt. Col. Vladimir Nemkoff, a deputy commander of Russian peacekeeping troops in the enclave.

On the same day, Nemkoff's son, an officer in Transdnier's Ministry of Security, was arrested while driving a vehicle that contained three Soviet-made Igla surface-to-air rockets, similar to the U.S.-made Stinger missile. Nemkoff was convicted of weapons-trafficking in a trial in Moldova, but was later pardoned and allowed to return to Transdnier. Within days, he regained his old job as a Russian peacekeeper.

Such incidents suggest the Kolbasna arsenal is a "black hole" where dangerous weapons can be obtained, if the price is right, said Iurie Rosca, leader of the Christian Democratic People's Party, a leading pro-Western opposition faction in Moldova.

"It's well known to us: If you need a Stinger and you have the money, you can get one," Rosca said. "If it's a Kalashnikov you want, you can get one of those, too."

Radioactive Warheads

The most unusual weapon in Transdnier's arsenal was never meant to be a weapon at all. The Alazan, a slender, three-foot-long rocket, was part of a broader, rather extravagant Soviet experiment in weather control. Soviet scientists believed that hail could be suppressed by firing rockets into approaching storm clouds. The idea is vaguely similar to cloud-seeding as practiced in the United States. American scientists familiar with the anti-hail program say the results are highly dubious, at best.

When the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991, scores of batteries of tube-fired Alazans were left throughout the Soviet bloc, including Eastern Europe. As ethnic clashes erupted in the newly independent former Soviet republics, the Alazan and a slightly larger rocket called the Alan were reactivated for war.

Potter documented 50 cases in which the rockets were used in clashes, by both guerrilla fighters and government forces. In most incidents, Alazans were fired indiscriminately at civilian targets, often crowded urban centers. They were used by Azeri forces in the war with Armenia over the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, and used by separatists in South Ossetia in clashes with Georgian troops.

"Some of the reports indicated that the Alazan, which is notoriously inaccurate as a surface-to-surface missile, was used as a psychological or terror weapon," Potter said.

Since Soviet times, at least three Alazan batteries were known to exist in the Transdnier region, as documented by military inventories of the time. In 1992, there was a confirmed case of attempted smuggling of Alazans for use as weapons. On May 24 of that year, two Moldovan police were killed when they tried to stop delivery of Alazan rockets to ethnic Gagauz militants, according to local press accounts of the incident. Moldovan officials believe the source of the rockets was Transdnier.

But the existence of "radiological warheads" for the Alazan was unknown until two years ago, when military documents describing them were obtained by the Institute for Policy Studies, a research group in Chisinau, the Moldovan capital.

The documents, which were provided to The Washington Post, are a series of official letters written in 1994 by a Transdnier civil defense commander, Col. V. Kireev, who apparently became concerned about radiation given off by the rockets.

One document described an inventory of 38 "isotopic radioactive warheads of missiles of the Alazan type," including 24 that were attached to rocket. In the two other documents, the commander requested technical help in dealing with radiation exposure related to storage of the warheads. He complained that uniforms of soldiers working with the warheads were so contaminated that they had to be "destroyed by burning and burying."

"I propose to categorically ban all work with the missile . . . and to label it as a radioactive danger," Kireev wrote on Oct. 24, 1994.

Several U.S. and Moldovan government officials knowledgeable about Transdnier's weapons said in interviews that they were familiar with the reports of radioactive Alazans, but could neither verify or dispute the existence of such devices.

Oazu Nantoi, a former Moldovan government official and political analyst, sought in 2001 to trace the Alazans with radiological warheads, using contacts in Moldova and Transdnier. He said that the last known location of the weapons was a military airfield north of Tiraspol, but what happened to them after the 1990s remains a mystery. "They are not Scuds, but clearly, the only application for these rockets is a military one," said Nantoi. "Our fear is someone, somewhere, will turn these rockets into dirty bombs."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A41921-2003Dec6¬Found=true>

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London Times
December 8, 2003

How A Secret Bio-Terror Test Run Was Translated Into Failure

By Oliver Wright, Health Correspondent, in Ottawa

BRITAIN and other developed countries are unprepared to deal with a biological terrorist attack crossing international boundaries, a governmental report has found.

The document, produced after a secret multinational three-day exercise simulating a global smallpox outbreak, highlighted failings which allowed the virus to spread.

As a result of the exercise, the existence of which was disclosed by *The Times* in October, big changes in how governments communicate with each other have been proposed.

These include giving the World Health Organisation the responsibility to collect, disseminate and co-ordinate vital information in any public health emergency. Each country has also been told to review urgently its own national plans to take into account the failings uncovered.

The operation, codenamed Global Mercury, took place in September in eight countries including Britain, the United States, France and Canada. It imagined that terrorists from Asia infected themselves with smallpox before boarding an aircraft for Vancouver and on to Europe. Each country had to co-ordinate its own response as further information was disclosed while communicating with fellow participants.

Among the shortcomings highlighted in the report were a failure by the French to provide enough English-speakers to communicate with the other countries; an inability to establish a single conference call during the exercise; and different interpretations of "possible", "suspect" and "confirmed" when dealing with new cases. One of the biggest problems was language. Mexico and France had difficulty getting enough English-speakers to man communications 24 hours a day.

"Direct one-to-one telephone calls were on the most part successful," the report said. "But all party conference calls were never successfully established to the point where all players were able to communicate successfully with one another."

In addition the European Union representative was informed of the first case only three days, in exercise time, after it was first spotted in Canada. One country's e-mail server crashed.

The report said that much remained to be done if international responses to such an event were to be adequate.

"More robust communications infrastructure and better information management processes are required to deal with the exchange of large volumes of information," it said.

"While all the participants have developed national smallpox plans, many of these could be strengthened. Greater attention needs to be paid to organisational structures and training."

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Philadelphia Inquirer
December 9, 2003

U.S. Has Freed Most Iraq Arms Scientists

Only eight remain in custody. Several others have been rehired, including a top nerve-agent expert.

By Dafna Linzer, Associated Press

BAGHDAD - All but eight of the dozens of Iraqi scientists who have been questioned or detained as part of the hunt for weapons of mass destruction have been released by U.S. intelligence, according to officials at the American-run Science Ministry in Baghdad.

Those who remain in custody were involved years ago with former biological programs such as anthrax, suggesting the U.S.-led weapons hunt is holding out hope for success in that area after apparently finding no evidence there were chemical- or nuclear-weapons programs in the period just before the war.

Many Iraqi scientists in those fields - who said for years that Iraq no longer had weapons of mass destruction - have been rehired by the Science Ministry eight months after the United States went to war to disarm Iraq.

In one case, Alaa al-Saeed, the scientist who oversaw stockpiles of the deadly nerve agent VX, was promoted and is in charge of overseeing other weapons scientists.

Senior U.S. officials, including Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, had promised to find hidden Iraqi weapons and said some Iraqis could be punished. But with so few people in custody and no uncovered weapons, the possibility of prosecutions is waning.

"We had meetings with British intelligence and American intelligence and we told them the truth," said Saeed, whose VX program was mentioned by President Bush in his State of the Union address in January. "To the best of

my knowledge, there are no weapons of mass destruction. They were either destroyed by U.N. inspectors or unilaterally by Iraq years ago, and I still insist on that," he said in an interview at the Science Ministry. U.S. officials were convinced Saeed was telling the truth, said Khidhir Hamza, the U.S.-appointed adviser to the ministry.

"The Americans thought he was good enough to keep... and that he's all right. He's very cooperative," said Hamza, who in September gave Saeed the run of the National Monitoring Directorate, a government agency that employed most of Iraq's top weapons scientists. "You want an insider."

Former U.N. weapons inspectors were astonished by the appointment.

"This is absurd," said Jonathan Tucker, a former U.N. inspector now with the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute in California. "The function of that organization was to manage the U.N. inspections process through minders and other means, with the aim of limiting its effectiveness."

Several members of the directorate are among the eight Iraqi scientists held, according to Saeed.

Half of the detained group were on the U.S. "most wanted" list. Six were heavily involved with former biological-weapons programs and two were expert on delivery systems. All continue to say there are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, according to U.S. officers involved in the hunt.

The CIA would not comment on individuals, and David Kay, who leads the weapons hunt on behalf of the CIA, turned down a request for an interview. The names of those held were provided by Saeed and his staff.

Former U.N. inspectors said that at the very least those in custody should be able to clear up whether the biological program was more extensive than previously believed, what biological agents were really produced, in what quantities, and when and how they were destroyed or retained.

The rest of the directorate's senior staff have been rehired, in part to keep them from leaving the country. Some Iraqi scientists have gone to Iran, Syria and Sudan, according to U.S. and Iraqi officials.

About 9,000 scientists, engineers and technicians who worked for Iraq's military industries or in weapons research have been hired back by the new ministry. Hundreds more have found jobs at the Industry or Defense Ministries. An additional 25,000 are unemployed but getting checks of about \$100 a month until the Science Ministry determines which sectors need to be privatized and which will be incorporated into the new government.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/nation/7446491.htm>

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Los Angeles Times

December 9, 2003

Rockets Said To Be Missing In Moldova

The arms are outfitted with dirty bombs, which officials worry could get into terrorists' hands.

By Associated Press

CHISINAU, Moldova — Dozens of rockets outfitted with so-called dirty bombs — warheads designed to scatter deadly radioactive material — appear to be missing in a breakaway region of Moldova, an expert said Monday.

Oazu Nantoi, a political analyst who works at the nongovernmental Institute for Policy Studies here in the capital, said he had seen photocopies of Russian military documents showing that the dirty bomb warheads — 24 ready to use, 14 dismantled — were missing from a depot near Trans-Dniester Tiraspol military airport.

Nantoi is an expert on Trans-Dniester, which has been policed by thousands of Russian troops since its fight for independence from Moldova in the early 1990s. The possibility the warheads were missing was first published Sunday in the Washington Post.

Nantoi said the documents came from a disgruntled Russian military official who said he had not received compensation for being exposed to radioactive material.

Moldova is a former Soviet republic, and thousands of tons of weapons remained stored in Trans-Dniester after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Nantoi said reports first reached him in 1998 that Alazan rockets had been fitted with warheads modified to carry radioactive material.

Since then, the rockets and warheads appeared to have disappeared from storage, he said.

The possibility of terrorists acquiring dirty bombs is a main concern of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-dirty9dec09,1,1798588.story>

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N. Korea's Nuclear Success Is Doubted

Experts question U.S. claims about the North's atomic abilities, warning a showdown based on dubious evidence could further damage trust.

By Douglas Frantz, Times Staff Writer

SEOUL — The Bush administration has asserted in recent months that North Korea possesses one or two nuclear bombs and is rapidly developing the means to make more. The statements have raised anxiety about a nuclear arms race in Asia and the possibility that terrorists could obtain atomic weapons from the North Korean regime. But the administration's assessment rests on meager fresh evidence and limited, sometimes dated, intelligence, according to current and former U.S. and foreign officials.

Outside the administration, and in some quiet corners within it, there is nothing close to a consensus that North Korean scientists have succeeded in fabricating atomic bombs from plutonium, as the CIA concluded in a document made public last month.

Independent experts and some U.S. officials also are skeptical of administration claims that North Korea is within months of manufacturing material for more weapons at a secret uranium-enrichment plant.

Interviews with more than 30 current and former intelligence officials and diplomats in Asia, Europe and the United States provide an in-depth look at the development of North Korea's nuclear program, the regime's elaborate efforts to conceal it and the behind-the-scenes debate over how much danger it poses.

According to these officials:

- The U.S. has failed to find the North Korean plant that the Bush administration says will soon start producing highly enriched uranium.
- North Korea's attempts to reprocess plutonium recently hit a roadblock, raising new questions about its technical capabilities.
- China rushed 40,000 troops to its border with North Korea last summer after the U.S. warned that the regime of Kim Jong Il might try to smuggle "a grapefruit-size" quantity of plutonium out of the country. No signs of smuggling have been discovered.

The doubts about U.S. intelligence come as the administration engages in a high-wire diplomatic battle over its demand that North Korea dismantle its nuclear program and open the country to inspectors.

Six-country negotiations aimed at resolving the nuclear crisis could resume later this month or early next year. In what some see as a bid for backing from the other parties — China, Japan, Russia and South Korea — the U.S. has portrayed North Korea as a global threat.

Its language is reminiscent of administration rhetoric before the Iraq war, as is the worry in some quarters that the U.S. is exaggerating the danger to galvanize world opinion against another regime in what President Bush termed an "axis of evil."

Even officials and experts who question the administration's latest conclusions acknowledge that there is ample evidence that North Korea is trying to develop atomic weapons.

But they say that walking into another confrontation based on dubious evidence could make the danger seem more rhetorical than real and could further damage trust in U.S. intelligence.

The administration's claims about Iraqi unconventional weapons, which have yet to be verified by evidence on the ground, were based on intelligence that seems robust compared to what is available about North Korea.

Recruiting spies there is almost impossible. Military installations are hidden in thousands of tunnels. Few significant defectors have emerged from a country where disloyalty is punishable by death and families left behind face labor camps or worse.

So the U.S. depends heavily on intercepted conversations, satellite images and intelligence from foreign governments — sources that many current and former officials say do not bridge the gap between suspicion and proof.

North Korea's own statements have been contradictory. The regime has said it possesses a "nuclear deterrent," but has also rejected U.S. assertions about its capabilities.

Charles Pritchard, who resigned last summer as a State Department special envoy on North Korean nuclear matters, said the U.S. is in the dark on essential aspects of the North's nuclear effort.

"We don't know what they're doing," he said.

Doubts about the credibility of U.S. intelligence are focused on two frightening allegations. In written answers to questions from a Senate committee, the CIA said recently — and for the first time — that North Korea had produced nuclear bombs from plutonium and had mastered the technology for making more.

The agency provided the answers in August. They became public last month when the Federation of American Scientists, a private arms-control organization, posted them on its Web site (www.fas.org).

"We assess that North Korea has produced one or two simple fission-type nuclear weapons and has validated the designs without conducting yield-producing nuclear tests," the CIA said.

Months earlier, a top administration official said North Korea was close to producing bomb material through a separate process of enriching uranium.

The official, Assistant Secretary of State James A. Kelly, told a Senate committee in March that North Korea was within months of being able to manufacture weapons-grade uranium.

Kelly's statement assumed more rapid technical progress by North Korea than had previous assessments. An unclassified CIA report from November 2002 said that the North was working on an enrichment plant capable of starting production "as soon as 2005."

Kelly's remark raised concern because enriching uranium would give the North a second avenue for weapons production and one easier to conceal than plutonium reprocessing.

Analysts said other reports within the U.S. intelligence community have been contradictory and inconclusive about North Korea's advances in both plutonium bomb-making and uranium enrichment.

To some, the wording of the CIA report shouted political considerations, not proof.

" 'We assess' means they concluded based upon a judgment of North Korean intent and capabilities," said Robert Gallucci, the Clinton administration's top negotiator with the North. "Those are political judgments."

A former Bush administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said he suspected the recent statements were driven by politics. He described it as "a case of pleasing the bosses by telling them what they want to hear or analysts covering their backsides."

Still, some experts believe the U.S. has enough information to support its conclusion about North Korean nuclear capabilities.

"Through our close discussions with the United States, we are positive that nuclear weapons have been reached," said Kim Tae Hyo, a nonproliferation expert at a Seoul think tank.

Bill Harlow, the chief CIA spokesman, declined to discuss the information underlying the agency's recent conclusions. Nor would he respond to written questions.

Despite the doubts about U.S. intelligence, many experts advocate adopting the worst-case scenario because of the danger of underestimating North Korea.

"If we mean anything we say about weapons of mass destruction being the paramount security danger to our way of life, this is it," said Ashton B. Carter, an assistant secretary of Defense in the Clinton administration. "It doesn't get any bigger than this."

The weakness of U.S. intelligence on North Korea has been evident for years.

"The many unanswered questions regarding North Korea, including its nuclear program, all reflect an inadequate commitment to intelligence gathering for decades on the part of the U.S. government," said Keith Luse, a staff member for Sen. Richard G. Lugar (R.-Ind.), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

In early 1995, Thomas Hubbard, a career U.S. diplomat, stood before a room filled with agents and analysts at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va.

Fresh from Pyongyang, the North's capital, where he had negotiated the release of a U.S. Army helicopter pilot shot down over North Korea, Hubbard had been invited to share his insights.

"There were about 200 people in the room, many of whom had spent their entire adult lives studying North Korea, and I realized none of them had ever been there," Hubbard, now U.S. ambassador to South Korea, said in a recent interview.

Donald P. Gregg, who was CIA station chief in South Korea and later U.S. ambassador to that country, calls North Korea "the longest-running intelligence failure in U.S. history." He recalled an encounter last year with a North Korean official.

"I told him that we'd recruited people in Russia, Iraq and other countries, but we never turned a North Korean," said Gregg, chairman of the Korea Society, a foundation in New York that promotes U.S.-Korean ties. "He puffed out his chest and smiled."

The limits of U.S. intelligence were driven home in May 1999.

Satellites had picked up extensive tunneling at Mt. Kumchangri near Yongbyon, the center of the North's nuclear facilities.

Before allowing U.S. officials and technicians inside the mountain, the North insisted on a donation of 500,000 metric tons of food. Once the demand was met, the team spent several days exploring the site before determining it was on a wild goose chase.

Other countries with a stake in the crisis have done little better.

China built a potent espionage network inside North Korea when it was the North's chief benefactor during the Cold War. But as the North grew wary of its neighbor's aims, Chinese agents were systematically imprisoned or executed over the last decade, according to intelligence officials in the region.

A senior foreign intelligence official said of the Chinese: "They are now blind."

The origins of North Korea's nuclear program and its ultra-secrecy lie in the Korean War. The U.S. bombed the country relentlessly, and historical archives show that Gen. Douglas MacArthur sought 26 atomic bombs to use against North Korean and possibly Chinese targets.

"The leaders were awed by U.S. aerial technology," said Lim Young Sun, a North Korean army officer who defected to South Korea several years ago. "Since then, they have been digging all the time."

Lim said he spent 13 years overseeing the boring of tunnels into mountains to conceal everything from aircraft hangars to uniform factories. "If war broke out today and the U.S. bombed all the facilities that they think produce military goods, production will continue," he said.

The fear bordering on paranoia that created a nation of moles did not end with the war in 1953. U.S. threats of nuclear attacks resurfaced periodically in the years that followed. Just five years ago, U.S. fighter-bombers simulated a long-range nuclear strike on North Korea.

The Soviet Union got North Korea started in the nuclear business in the 1950s by helping to build an experimental nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, about 60 miles north of Pyongyang. About 200 North Korean scientists were trained at Soviet nuclear institutes.

U.S. spy satellites detected work on a larger reactor at Yongbyon in the 1980s. The discovery created enough international pressure to persuade North Korea to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1985.

In a pattern that would be repeated, the North stalled for seven years before inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency were allowed to examine its nuclear facilities.

The first inspection team arrived in May 1992. Providing new details of the mission, diplomats said that team members quickly suspected the Koreans were lying about how much plutonium had been extracted from fuel rods at Yongbyon.

Plutonium is a man-made element that must be extracted from irradiated reactor fuel for use in weapons. Records provided by the North Koreans said they had reprocessed 30 fuel rods and produced 90 grams of plutonium — a fraction of the amount needed for a single bomb — after the plant was shut down for three months in 1989.

The IAEA analysis of laboratory data indicated the reactor had been stopped four times and that the North Koreans had extracted enough plutonium for one or two bombs. Depending on technical capability and desired yield, a bomb requires 4 to 8 kilograms of plutonium.

Inspectors suspected the plutonium was buried in a waste dump camouflaged by new soil and freshly planted trees outside the complex. Suspicions also focused on a nearby building believed to be a reprocessing plant.

The inspectors demanded access to both sites. The North Koreans refused.

The IAEA, stung by its failure to discover Iraq's secret nuclear program before the 1991 Persian Gulf War, asked the U.N. Security Council for permission to carry out a special inspection of the North's suspicious facilities. The permission was granted, but the North still refused and in April 1994 threatened to expel the inspectors and withdraw from the nonproliferation treaty.

The U.S. circulated petitions seeking U.N. sanctions and developed contingency plans for military strikes on Yongbyon.

Then former President Jimmy Carter went to Pyongyang at the invitation of the North Koreans and with President Clinton's approval. He persuaded the North Koreans to freeze nuclear activities and open talks with Washington. This led to a deal known as the Agreed Framework later in 1994. North Korea promised to shut down Yongbyon and stop construction on two larger plutonium-producing reactors. It also agreed not to reprocess the 8,000 irradiated rods it had withdrawn from the fuel core at Yongbyon.

In return, Washington pledged to provide two light- water reactors to replace the mothballed plutonium reactors and to donate 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil annually until the new reactors started producing electricity.

Without the freeze, U.S. officials estimated that North Korea could have produced enough plutonium for 60 to 100 bombs within a few years. But the deal did not answer the question of how much plutonium North Korea had already reprocessed.

The IAEA inspectors remained to monitor the freeze at known nuclear sites, but were forbidden to visit the dump or other suspicious locations.

As a result, the estimate by IAEA scientists that the North had enough plutonium for one or two bombs in 1992 remains the best information. It is the foundation of the recent CIA assessment that North Korea possesses nuclear weapons, according to several former officials.

IAEA officials, however, won't hazard a guess as to whether the North has actually made bombs.

"It would be irresponsible on our part to make any judgment," said Mohamed ElBaradei, director-general of the IAEA. "We know they have enough spent fuel for at least a couple of weapons. If they have reprocessed, then obviously they have enough plutonium for a number of weapons, but we do not know."

Almost immediately after the Agreed Framework was negotiated, there were signs that North Korea was violating the pact. Suspicions focused on craters from 100 nonnuclear explosive tests identified by satellite.

A plutonium bomb requires an implosion of a fissionable shell into a critical mass. The U.S. suspected the tests were to define implosion characteristics and perfect a detonator, according to experts who viewed the intelligence reports. There also were hints that North Korea was trying to develop uranium-enrichment facilities. In early 2001, South Korean intelligence told the CIA that defectors and an agent in the North claimed such a program had started a few years before, according to a senior foreign intelligence officer and a U.S. official.

The preferred method of enriching uranium involves spinning uranium hexafluoride gas at high speeds in specially designed centrifuges, slim cylinders about 5 feet high. The result is enriched uranium that can fuel a reactor or, if processed into highly enriched uranium, or HEU, can make a bomb.

The process requires years of development, but enriched uranium offers certain advantages. For instance, reprocessing plutonium requires large facilities easily spotted by satellite.

Uranium enrichment, on the other hand, can be conducted in smaller facilities easily concealed in tunnels or nondescript buildings. HEU is easier to smuggle than plutonium because it's less radioactive and therefore less likely to be detected.

In June 2002, the CIA distributed a report to President Bush that stirred further concern. It said Pakistan, in return for ballistic missiles, had given North Korea centrifuge technology and data on how to build and test nuclear weapons based on enriched uranium.

Pakistan has denied providing the technology. The Bush administration has said any such assistance has stopped.

In July 2002, the administration has said, it received intelligence that North Korea's enrichment program was much larger than was earlier suspected.

The information indicated that North Korea was obtaining "many, many more" centrifuges than previously thought, according to Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage's testimony before a Senate committee last February. By September 2002, North Korea had "embarked on a production program" for HEU, Armitage quoted an intelligence memo as stating.

Kelly, the assistant secretary of State, went to Pyongyang in early October 2002. He confronted the North Koreans with the suspicions on the first day of talks. First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok Ju acknowledged that the government was working on enriching uranium, according to U.S. officials.

The North Korean government denied that Kang made such an admission.

The Bush administration declared the Agreed Framework dead. North Korea retaliated by kicking out the IAEA inspectors on New Year's Eve, disabling monitoring equipment at its nuclear sites and announcing its withdrawal from the nonproliferation treaty.

The second North Korea nuclear crisis had started, but this time the international community was without a window on the country.

The chief reason that many doubt the administration's conclusion that the North may soon produce highly enriched uranium is that the enrichment plant has not been found.

"That plant could be anywhere or nowhere," said a senior foreign diplomat familiar with the latest intelligence.

Gallucci, the Clinton administration negotiator, said North Korea is probably years, not months, away from producing enough HEU for a weapon.

"If we are insisting on the North Koreans taking certain steps to give up this program, we ought to know what we are asking them to do," said Gallucci, co-author of an upcoming book on North Korea, "Going Critical."

Robert S. Norris, a nuclear expert at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington, said it was unlikely that North Korea was close to producing more than a speck of highly enriched uranium. He said similar mistakes had been made in overestimating Soviet military power. "In the vacuum of ignorance, fear fills it up pretty fast," he said.

There is also skepticism about the plutonium reprocessing and North Korean technical competence in general.

The U.S. said in March that the regime could produce "significant plutonium" within six months. But a senior foreign intelligence official told The Times that technical difficulties had recently stopped the reprocessing.

Some experts argue that despite doubts about the CIA's assessments, the mere prospect of nuclear arms in the hands of an unpredictable, militarized regime requires a tough response.

North Korea is desperate for cash to feed its population of 22 million and maintain its million-man army. Its chief source of hard currency is selling missiles and related technology to such countries as Iran and Libya. U.S.

intelligence officials said North Korea also earns tens of millions of dollars a year selling heroin and other drugs on the international market.

Some suggest that trafficking in atomic weapons is a logical next step.

"North Korea is completely amoral, internationally adrift and desperate for dollars," said Joseph Cirincione, director of the nonproliferation project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. "For the United States, the No. 1 concern is not that North Korea would attack the U.S. with a nuclear weapon, but that it would sell a nuclear weapon to someone who would."

Others said there is no evidence of contacts between North Korea and terrorists and that Pyongyang recognizes selling nuclear material or weapons could provoke U.S. retaliation on a scale its people have feared for 50 years.

"Nobody can cross the red line," said the senior foreign intelligence official. "That would mean annihilation."

Times staff writer Barbara Demick in Seoul contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/la-fg-norkor9dec09,1,904491.story>

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Los Angeles Times

December 10, 2003

N. Korea Says It Will Be A No-Show At Six-Party Talks

The Communist regime lists demands the U.S. first must meet. Bush seems to reject the move.

By Barbara Demick, Times Staff Writer

SEOUL — Dashing hopes for an early negotiated settlement, North Korea said Tuesday that it would not show up for the next round of talks on its nuclear weapons unless the United States first agreed to remove the Communist regime from the list of terror-sponsoring nations, lift economic sanctions and provide energy assistance.

The new conditions were rebuffed by the United States, which along with South Korea and Japan last week had offered a joint statement of principles aimed at getting the North to renounce its nuclear program.

By hiking up the bar for negotiations, North Korea practically eliminated any chance for holding the next round of the six-party talks before month's end, as the Bush administration had hoped, and cast doubt on the future of the negotiating process.

The North Koreans did say, however, that they would consider suspending all projects to build nuclear weapons if the regime's demands were met.

"In return for the freezing of our nuclear activities, the United States must remove our country's name from the list of terrorism-sponsoring countries; lift its political, economic, military sanctions and blockade; and give heavy oil, electricity and other energy assistance," said an unnamed spokesman for the Foreign Ministry in a statement distributed by the country's official news service.

"If this takes place, a foundation to continue six-nation talks will be created," the statement added.

The wording of the statement was sufficiently vague to make it unclear if all the conditions needed to be met before the North Koreans would resume negotiations. According to sources, the regime would like to see shipments of heavy fuel, which were suspended last year, resume before it returns to talks.

In Washington, President Bush appeared to reject the North Korean proposal, saying "the goal of the United States is not for a freeze of the nuclear program — the goal is to dismantle a nuclear weapons program in a verifiable and irreversible way."

In an appearance with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao at the White House, Bush said U.S. officials would continue to work with China "and the other countries to resolve this issue peacefully."

Richard Boucher, the chief State Department spokesman, later said the U.S. has "repeatedly stated that we're not going to reward North Korea for its violations of its international commitments. Nor are we going to provide rewards to achieve their compliance with obligations they've already taken on and subsequently violated."

He said the U.S. was ready for another round of six-party talks. "We call on North Korea to drop its preconditions to the talks and to join the other parties as soon as possible."

Tuesday's statement by the North seems certain to tie up the already-cumbersome process with more haggling about what it will take to get Pyongyang back to the bargaining table.

The North Koreans have demanded repeatedly that they talk bilaterally with the U.S. and have complained bitterly about the six-party negotiating process, which also includes China, Japan, Russia and South Korea. The first round of the six-way talks took place in August in Beijing and ended inconclusively.

Bush announced in October that the U.S. would offer guarantees it would not attack the North in return for the dismantling of the nuclear weapons program. But on Tuesday, the North Koreans scoffed at the offer.

"It is unthinkable that we would agree to disarm ourselves only in exchange for the lukewarm pledge," the Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

Times staff writer Paul Richter in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-nkorea10dec10,1,760234.story>

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El Paso Times
December 11, 2003

Rumsfeld: Cruise Missiles Pose Growing Threat To U.S.

By Laura Cruz, El Paso Times

Cruise missiles in the hands of rogue nations are a growing danger to the United States and world, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Wednesday as he challenged several hundred high-ranking military leaders, elected officials and defense contractors to continue creating missile defense systems that will protect against current and future threats.

"This is arguably the most dangerous (time) the nation has known," Rumsfeld said by satellite from Washington, D.C., to people attending the ninth annual Space and Missile Defense Symposium in El Paso. "The danger grows. We need to continue to defend the American people against the threats. You are the ones who are going to continue that work."

Cruise missiles are low-flying, fairly inexpensive (\$500,000 to \$1 million) missiles that carry payloads of about 1,000 pounds at speeds ranging from 500 mph to about 1,000 mph.

The symposium, sponsored by the Association of the U.S. Army, in cooperation with the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, ends today at the Judson F. Williams Convention Center in Downtown.

Rumsfeld responded to questions from conference participants about the future of air defense and the privatization of the military, and from Lt. Col. Joseph DeAntona, of Fort Bliss' Office of the Chief of Air Defense Artillery, about the repositioning of troops in Korea.

"First of all, we have not made any formal announcement about the repositioning," Rumsfeld said. "It's true, we have spent the last year and a half talking about force posture for the entire country."

Rumsfeld's 30 minutes of comments and discussion set the stage for the symposium's panels, which tackled topics such as lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom, joint service developments and integrated air and missile defense.

"We've got a number of things we hope to get out of this," said Maj. Gen. Michael Vane, Fort Bliss commander, who led a panel discussion about the current capabilities of integrated air and missile defense. "First is a vetting of ideas and letting the industry know where we see all of this going."

Lt. Gen. Joseph Cosumano, commanding general of the U.S. Space and Missile Defense Command and former Fort Bliss deputy commander during 1994-95, said he wants to see industry and military leaders work together as a team.

"There is no question that the 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command's Patriot brigades have been successful, but we need to look at how do we improve it," said Cosumano, who will retire Tuesday.

Lockheed Martin officials said they are already taking small steps to improve the capabilities of missile defense by improving the existing Patriot Advanced Capability 3 missile (PAC-3 missile), said Steve Graham, vice president of Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control's PAC-3 Missile Program.

"What we are looking at is improving what we have today," Graham said. "Just as the secretary of defense said, the threats are continually changing, and we must continue to do the same."

Graham said Lockheed's Missile Segment Enhancement of the PAC-3 adds a larger rocket motor and larger fins for greater range and maneuverability. The enhanced missile is expected to be tested in 2006 and 2007 at White Sands Missile Range.

Chapin High School senior Lon McBride, 18, said that although he wasn't able to listen in on what Rumsfeld, industry and military leaders discussed, he hopes one day to be one of the leaders and developers of space and missile defense.

"It would be interesting to see what is going on" in the panels, said McBride, who was on a field trip with his engineer, design and development class.

"It's nice to know that they are always thinking and discussing new ideas," added 17-year-old Elizabeth Aguilar, who stood before Lockheed Martin's exhibits of Patriot missiles.

"Every time we go on field trips like this one, you widen your horizon," Aguilar said. "This one is the best yet, because you don't see stuff like this," she said as she looked around at the variety of military weapons and technology.

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New York Times
December 12, 2003

Scientists Report Progress In Ebola Treatment

By Lawrence K. Altman and Judith Miller

Army scientists said yesterday that they had taken an important step toward a possible treatment for the deadly Ebola virus in humans by successfully treating monkeys with the disease for the first time.

In tests of an experimental drug among a few monkeys deliberately infected with Ebola, one-third survived, the scientists reported in *The Lancet* medical journal.

Ebola infection, which causes severe internal bleeding, is usually 100 percent fatal in monkeys and 80 percent in humans. So a 33 percent survival rate for one of the most virulent diseases known is significant, said the authors, from the Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick, Md.

The drug, derived from hookworms, is being tested in other studies in humans for heart conditions and appears to be safe, the authors said. But they said more research was needed before the drug, known as rNAPC2 for recombinant nematode anticoagulant protein c2, could become an accepted treatment for Ebola.

Experts not connected with the Army research expressed cautious optimism, given the paucity of treatments for Ebola and other hemorrhagic fevers.

"Obviously, this work that got a highly significant decrease in death rates needs to be pursued," said Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

No treatment exists for Ebola, and tests of a vaccine have just begun in humans. Though scientists have had earlier successes in treating the disease in mice and guinea pigs with antivirals, these drugs did not work in nonhuman primates.

In the new study, the scientists injected 12 rhesus macaque monkeys with Ebola virus. Beginning either immediately or 24 hours later, nine received rNAPC2 for 14 days. Three of the nine survived; death was slowed by several days in the other six. All three untreated animals died.

"Our results have great clinical implications, since our treatment approach of Ebola hemorrhagic fever targets the disease process rather than the replication of the infectious agent," the team headed by Dr. Thomas W. Geisbert reported.

Ebola usually starts with a fever and flulike symptoms of malaise, muscle aches, headache, followed by vomiting, diarrhea and a rash. The virus disrupts the blood clotting system in monkeys and humans, leading to abnormal blood clotting and then to severe bleeding and death.

White blood cells known as macrophages seem central to the process by releasing a protein called tissue factor on the surface of the cells. As blood flows, tissue factor forms clots that pave the way for the severe bleeding. Dr. Geisbert, Dr. Peter Jahrling and other team members chose the anticoagulant rNAPC2 because they theorized it would block the harmful effects of tissue factor.

In an interview this week in Dallas, Terry M. Fredeking, a co-author and an expeditionary biologist, said he supplied the raw material used to recreate a protein for the new drug.

"I won't say how long it took me to persuade Peter Jahrling that spit from hookworms might be able to treat monkeys with Ebola," said Mr. Fredeking, founder and president of Antibody Systems Inc., a research company in Hurst, Tex.

Mr. Fredeking said the World Health Organization in Geneva had asked team members whether rNAPC2 might be used on an experimental basis to treat people in a current outbreak of Ebola in Congo. That outbreak, which is thought to be waning, has caused 28 deaths as of Dec. 2, according to the W.H.O.

The patent on the drug is held by Dendreon, a small Seattle biotechnology company. Stephen Keane, director of business development, said Dendreon was willing to consider letting the drug be tested in Congo but had not been contacted by health officials. W.H.O. experts on Ebola could not be reached for comment.

Ebola was discovered in 1976 in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. The source of the virus in nature is not known. It has spread quickly in hospitals where the staff lacks the masks, gowns and other standard protective clothing needed for isolating an infected patient.

Dr. C. J. Peters, an infectious-disease expert at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston who has worked on Ebola, called the new results "very impressive." Dr. Peters said a treatment for the Ebola virus would be even more important than a vaccine.

"Our experience to date shows us that people will resist taking a series of vaccine to protect against anthrax, Marburg, Ebola or other diseases, even if they were readily available," he said. "So successful postexposure treatments are critical."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/12/science/12EBOL.html>

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Seoul Suspects Nuke Activity

Spy satellite detects fumes at North Korean plant

By Combined Dispatches

SEOUL — South Korea is investigating but has yet to confirm reports of fresh activity this month at North Korea's main nuclear center at Yongbyon, Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun told reporters yesterday.

South Korea's JoongAng Ilbo newspaper quoted U.S. and South Korean officials as saying an American intelligence satellite detected fumes rising from a coal-fired boiler at the nuclear lab at Yongbyon. The fumes were observed on four days this month.

Yongbyon, about 60 miles north of the capital, Pyongyang, has a nuclear reactor and a plutonium reprocessing plant that are at the center of the year-long crisis over the secretive communist state's attempts to build nuclear weapons. "We are trying to confirm the activities, but at this stage I have no definitive information to disclose," Mr. Jeong told reporters at his weekly news conference in Seoul.

State Department spokesman Steve Pike said he had not heard of new activity at the Yongbyon facility. "It's the first I've heard," Mr. Pike said.

The latest report comes as the United States, South Korea, Japan, China and Russia are trying to convene a second round of six-way talks on the nuclear dispute with North Korea to follow an inconclusive first round held in Beijing in August.

Mr. Jeong said that a nuclear crisis resolution proposal worked out last week by South Korea, the United States and Japan had been conveyed to North Korea by China.

But he said North Korea had not given a reply.

In a separate development, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) warned yesterday that up to 3.8 million North Koreans — 17 percent of the country's population — could be deprived of critical international food aid by the end of winter.

As the first snows fall, 2.2 million are already missing WFP deliveries because of global cutbacks in donations, the agency said in a statement. The group expects to have delivered 300,000 tons of food aid, only 62 percent of what it originally requested, in 2003.

The WFP also criticized North Korea for banning the group's activities in 43 out of the country's 206 counties. The WFP has a policy of not sending aid to areas its staff can't enter.

"The restrictions imposed by the government continued to seriously impact operations and made some donors reluctant to provide food aid," the WFP said.

Access is a key issue for the United States, which in February said it would give North Korea 40,000 tons in food aid and could offer 60,000 more depending in part on whether Pyongyang let donors track its distribution and provided access to all vulnerable groups in the country.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20031211-094858-1110r.htm>

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Inside The Ring

By Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough

New nuke

Pentagon officials were quietly overjoyed last week when President Bush signed into law the 2004 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act. Tucked away in the spending law is \$7.5 million for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator. It was half the \$15 million request.

The money will be spent studying the ultimate precision guided weapon: a high-yield nuclear bomb designed to drill through rock and destroy deep underground bunkers and facilities. If the weapon is built, rogue states like North Korea and Iran can forget about hiding weapons of mass destruction in rock-hardened, blast-proof shelters.

And the penetrating nuke also would put Russia, China and other nuclear states on notice that they will be unable to protect hardened silos or cave missile complexes. Russian underwater submarine caves also could be taken out with the bomb. Pentagon officials would love to chalk a note on the penetrator before firing one into the cave used by Osama bin Laden and company in Afghanistan, when he is eventually located.

Little has been said in public about the new weapon. Linton Brooks, director of the National Nuclear Security Administration, told a Senate hearing earlier this year one idea is to use a B-61 or B-83 nuclear warhead on a new guided aerial bomb with a special nose cone that can burrow through solid rock. "It's not just that you have to be able to penetrate," he said. "We know how to make things that will penetrate. You have to be able to penetrate and still have nuclear weapons, which are actually quite intricate machines, to work right." Both warheads have 350 kilotons or more of explosive power — the equivalent of 350,000 tons of TNT. The Pentagon wants a bomb that can go through 30 feet to 60 feet of solid rock before detonating. The bomb could also be used for what the Pentagon calls "agent defeat" — frying deadly biological or germ weapons.

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Washington Post
December 12, 2003
Pg. 2

Bioterror Preparedness Still Lacking, Health Group Concludes

By Ceci Connolly, Washington Post Staff Writer

One year after President Bush sought to energize the nation's bioterrorism preparations with an unprecedented smallpox vaccination campaign, the program has all but ground to a halt. A report released yesterday, meanwhile, finds that only two states -- Florida and Illinois -- are prepared to distribute and administer vaccines or medicines that would be needed in the event of a major outbreak or attack.

Fewer than a dozen states have written plans for dealing with other public health threats such as pandemic flu, the report added, and most remain ill-prepared for any large-scale emergency.

After two years of work and \$2 billion in federal aid, "states are only modestly better prepared to respond to public health emergencies than they were prior to Sept. 11, 2001," the Trust for America's Health, a nonpartisan, nonprofit health advocacy group, concluded.

Despite Bush's high-profile call on Dec. 13, 2002, for the immunization of millions of health care workers and emergency responders, the number vaccinated has been stuck at 38,700 for months.

"We are still underprepared to respond to even two cases of smallpox anywhere in the world," Michael T. Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, said in a telephone interview. Just as health care workers and the public "panicked" in the spring over a few cases of monkeypox, Osterholm predicted that a report of smallpox would send thousands rushing to hospitals in search of vaccine and find few people there ready to deliver it.

"You need a core group of vaccinated workers able to go out to the front lines, and we don't have that," he said. Other experts voiced fears that not enough attention has been given to lethal chemical agents, hospital surge capacity and sophisticated staff training.

"Are we ready or not? The answer is not," said Trust executive director Shelley A. Hearne. "Now is the time to get serious about developing an all-hazards approach to public health to ensure we are ready for the range of possible threats we face."

White House spokesman Trent Duffy said Bush is pleased with the progress made on smallpox defenses but "would like more front-line workers to be vaccinated."

Joseph Henderson, associate director for terrorism preparedness and emergency response at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the report "tells us things we've already known. We know we have a lot of work to do." But, he added, the swift response to naturally occurring outbreaks such as severe acute respiratory syndrome last year and influenza now "demonstrate we are definitely more prepared." CDC expects to have more precise measures for evaluating the nation's preparedness next fall, but there will always be a reluctance to publicize that information, he said.

If, for instance, the president asked for a state-by-state assessment, Henderson said he is prepared to give it. "We don't tell the public because we're afraid it might reveal too many vulnerabilities."

State budget cuts, personnel shortages and red tape were the chief reasons identified by the Trust for the spotty progress. Although the report found significant improvement in communications capability and general terrorism response planning, researchers at the Trust and other experts identified several areas that are lagging.

Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, said public health departments are able to respond more quickly, are better trained and are better equipped. He remains concerned, however, about staffing shortages, labs that are unable to identify chemical agents and the shortage of state influenza plans.

"I'm not sure this flu will be a pandemic flu, but we're going through a widespread flu epidemic now, and it worries me that states were not up to speed with those plans," he said.

In addition to tracking flu plans, the report scored states in nine other areas, such as lab capacity, availability of information on the SARS virus and appropriate distribution of federal dollars. States received one point for each category in which they met basic thresholds, with a 10 the highest possible score. More than 70 percent of the states received scores of 5 or lower.

Locally, the picture is mixed. Maryland was one of four states to receive a 7, the highest score given. Virginia received a 5, and the District, a 3.

"While states have achieved piecemeal progress, the full-scale effort to comprehensively fix the nation's public health system is falling short," the report noted.

Randall Larsen, a retired military officer and chief executive of the consulting firm Homeland Security Associates, endorsed the overall conclusions but counseled patience. "People need to understand that although this is frustrating, we're not much better prepared. An enormous change is required to prepare us for homeland security in the 21st century," he said.

Jerome M. Hauer, the former Bush administration bioterrorism preparedness chief who now runs a terrorism response center at George Washington University, said he is concerned that hospitals have not done enough to prepare to handle mass casualties and that states are having trouble hiring specialists such as epidemiologists and laboratory technicians.

He and Larsen criticized CDC Director Julie L. Gerberding for recently denying that the administration had pursued a nationwide smallpox immunization program, calling her comments "a very clever political move to distance herself from a failing program."

When Bush announced the program -- he was among the first people to be inoculated -- the administration said it intended to immunize nearly 500,000 public health and hospital workers by the end of February this year. The plan called for vaccinating millions of police officers and firefighters by spring, and by summer, Bush promised, any American who insisted would be able to receive the vaccine. That has not happened.

Gerberding's spokesman, Tom Skinner, said, "She fully supports the plan the president outlined last December. We're much better prepared even with only 40,000 vaccinated, but obviously we still have more work to do."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A57767-2003Dec11.html>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

December 15, 2003

North Korea Rejects U.S. Nuclear Proposal

By Sang-hun Choe, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea - North Korea today rejected a U.S.-backed proposal on ending a crisis over its nuclear-weapons program, and warned that Washington's "strategy of delaying talks" would only prompt the communist government to step up its nuclear activities.

The North's main state-run newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, said it was rejecting the U.S. offer because it required North Korea to abandon its nuclear program and did not promise "simultaneous" security assurances from the United States.

"If the United States insists on us acting first, the six-nation talks would be nothing but an arena for empty talks," Rodong said, referring to proposed discussions among North Korea, South Korea, the United States, Russia, Japan and China.

"If the United States wants a 'complete, verifiable and irrevocable' dismantling of our nuclear program, we also have the right to demand a 'complete, verifiable and irrevocable' security assurance from the United States," Rodong said. The United States and its allies sent a blueprint for resolving the nuclear dispute to Pyongyang last week. Officials did not divulge details of the plan, but news reports said it broadly seeks the complete, verifiable and irrevocable dismantling of the North's atomic weapons program, along with security assurances for Pyongyang.

"The United States' strategy of delaying talks will only lead us to continue to strengthen our nuclear deterrent force," Rodong's commentary, carried by Pyongyang's official KCNA news agency, said.

Expectations that the talks on the nuclear crisis would be held this month have given way to plans to convene the meeting in January.

The United States and its allies in the region want to persuade North Korea to end its nuclear programs through the six-nation talks. The first round, held in Beijing in August, ended without much progress.

Meanwhile, China's Xinhua news agency reported today that Beijing had urged the United States to be more flexible in the next round of talks.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing called Secretary of State Colin L. Powell from Ethiopia, where he is traveling with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, Xinhua said.

"Li briefed Powell on China's stand... and expressed hope for the U.S. side to take a more flexible and practical attitude," Xinhua said.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/nation/7494336.htm>

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THE ADVISORY PANEL TO ASSESS DOMESTIC RESPONSE CAPABILITIES FOR TERRORISM INVOLVING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

December 15, 2003

To Our Readers:

We deliver this *Annual Report*, our fifth and final, impelled by the urgency that America succeed in its efforts to secure the homeland and sustain our national values. In households and communities, State capitols and our nation's capitol, in the workrooms and boardrooms of businesses, and on the battlefield, America seeks its destiny in the post 9-11 era. . . .

http://www.rand.org/nsrd/terrpanel/volume_v/volume_v.pdf (Full Report)

http://www.rand.org/nsrd/terrpanel/volume_v/volume_v_summary.pdf (Executive Summary and Key Recommendations)

http://www.rand.org/nsrd/terrpanel/volume_v/volume_v_report_only.pdf (Report Only)

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