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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.

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London Times
March 4, 2002

We Won't Dither Over Iraq This Time, Says Blair

By David Charter in Coolum and Tom Baldwin

TONY BLAIR yesterday began the countdown to military action against Iraq to stop President Saddam Hussein's efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

The Prime Minister confirmed that he would meet President Bush soon to discuss how to crack down on rogue states such as Iraq and North Korea before the world suffered another act of global terrorism.

In his most bellicose statement on the issue, Mr Blair told Australian television that Britain and the United States would not repeat the mistake of dithering over Iraq as they had done for too long over Afghanistan. Delays in taking action then, despite the clear warning of the US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, in which 231 people died, allowed al-Qaeda to prosper and plot the September 11 attacks, he said.

The Prime Minister said the threat may not only be from conventional weapons but also from nuclear or biolological attack. "This is something we have got to deal with," Mr Blair said during an interview with Australia's Channel Nine.

"If chemical, biological or nuclear capability fell into the wrong hands and if we did not act, we might find out too late the potential for destruction."

Although the Government has won widespread backing for Britain's role in Afghanistan, Labour backbenchers have given warning that there is no appetite within the party for military action against Iraq. A recent poll showed that 86 per cent of Labour MPs believed that there was insufficient evidence for widening the War on Terror to include Iraq.

Tam Dalyell, the Labour MP for Linlithgow and the Father of the House of Commons, has denounced Mr Blair's "warmongering propensities" and is expected to step up his attack when he speaks in a parliamentary debate on Iraq this week.

However, the Government knows that it has time to change opinion in the country and in the Labour Party before launching any military strikes. Ministers are understood to be preparing a dossier of evidence on Iraq's terrorist links and role in acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

Mr Blair, in Queensland for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting at Coolum, at first said that what was done about weapons of mass destruction "and in particular Iraq" remained an "open issue" for discussion, but he confirmed that a summit with President Bush over the second stage of the War on Terror would take place soon. It is expected to be held shortly after Easter.

"I will be going to the States in a few weeks' time to discuss these issues. It is clear we need to deal with this issue," Mr Blair said.

His strong language seemed to constitute a final warning to Saddam to allow United Nations weapons inspectors into Iraq to resume the work from which they withdrew three years ago — blaming lack of co-operation from his regime — or face the consequences.

"Iraq is in breach of all conditions of weapons inspectors," Mr Blair said. "We know they are trying to accumulate weapons of mass destruction. We know Saddam has used them against his own people. How we deal with this is a matter we must discuss and find the best way to deal with it.

"North Korea is spending billions on developing weapons of mass destruction and nuclear capability while some of its people are starving.

"For ten years, Afghanistan was like this but we did not do anything. There would not have been the consent to do anything. Even when they killed those people in the Embassy in Dar es Salaam and there was terror around the world, there was not the sense of urgency that we had to deal with it — but it may have been better to have had the foresight to deal with it then.

"This is not something that just America is talking about. This is something we have got to deal with.

"If chemical, biological or nuclear capability fell into the wrong hands and if we did not act, we might find out too late the potential for destruction."

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Baltimore Sun
March 4, 2002

U.N. Arms Inspections Agency Chief To Meet Senior Iraqi Official

UNITED NATIONS - For the first time since taking the helm of a revamped U.N. agency overseeing Iraqi weapons inspections, Hans Blix will come face to face with a senior Iraqi official at a meeting Thursday.

Blix will sit alongside U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan when he meets Iraq's foreign minister in New York to discuss the return of inspectors after more than three years. If asked, Blix said, he would have a simple message for Foreign Minister Naji Sabri: Allow inspectors back into the country and cooperate with them fully to end U.N. sanctions.

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Time
March 11, 2002

Can We Stop The Next Attack?

Six months after Sept. 11, America has taken the fight to al-Qaeda. But behind the scenes, The CIA and FBI have been in a desperate scramble to fix a broken system before another strike comes. A TIME investigation looks at the threats

By Romesh Ratnesar

For a few harrowing weeks last fall, a group of U.S. officials believed that the worst nightmare of their lives—something even more horrific than 9/11—was about to come true. In October an intelligence alert went out to a small number of government agencies, including the Energy Department's top-secret Nuclear Emergency Search Team, based in Nevada. The report said that terrorists were thought to have obtained a 10-kiloton nuclear weapon from the Russian arsenal and planned to smuggle it into New York City. The source of the report was a mercurial agent code-named dragonfire,

Who intelligence officials believed was of "undetermined" reliability. But dragonfire's claim tracked with a report from a Russian general who believed his forces were missing a 10-kiloton device. Since the mid-'90s, proliferation experts have suspected that several portable nuclear devices might be missing from the Russian stockpile. That made the dragonfire report alarming. So did this: detonated in lower Manhattan, a 10-kiloton bomb would kill some 100,000 civilians and irradiate 700,000 more, flattening everything in a half-mile diameter. And so counterterrorist investigators went on their highest state of alert.

"It was brutal," a U.S. official told Time. It was also highly classified and closely guarded. Under the aegis of the White House's Counterterrorism Security Group, part of the National Security Council, the suspected nuke was kept secret so as not to panic the people of New York. Senior FBI officials were not in the loop. Former mayor Rudolph Giuliani says he was never told about the threat. In the end, the investigators found nothing and concluded that dragonfire's information was false. But few of them slept better. They had made a chilling realization: if terrorists did manage to smuggle a nuclear weapon into the city, there was almost nothing anyone could do about it.

In the days after Sept. 11, doomsday scenarios like a nuclear attack on Manhattan suddenly seemed plausible. But during the six months that followed, as the U.S. struck back and the anthrax scare petered out and the fires at Ground Zero finally died down, the national nightmare about another calamitous terrorist strike went away.

The terrorists did not. Counterterrorism experts and government officials interviewed by Time say that for all the relative calm since Sept. 11, America's luck will probably run out again, sooner or later. "It's going to be worse, and a lot of people are going to die," warns a U.S. counterterrorism official. "I don't think there's a damn thing we're going to be able to do about it." The government is so certain of another attack that it has assigned 100 civilian government officials to 24-hour rotations in underground bunkers, in a program that became known last week as the "shadow government," ready to take the reins if the next megaterror target turns out to be Washington. Pentagon strategists say that even with al-Qaeda's ranks scattered and its leaders in hiding, operatives around the world are primed and preparing to strike again. "If you're throwing enough darts at a board, eventually you're going to get something through," says a Pentagon strategist. "That's the way al-Qaeda looks at it."

Thousands of al-Qaeda terrorists survived the U.S. military assault in Afghanistan and are beginning to regroup. Last weekend, U.S. forces attacked some 500 Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters holed up in the rugged, icy mountains outside the eastern town of Gardez, near the Pakistani border. The targets: four al-Qaeda training camps that were bombed last fall but, sources tell Time, have since been reoccupied by al-Qaeda. Over the past month, locals say, groups of armed men have moved into the area from the Pakistani border town of Miren-Shah. The latest battle involved at least 1,000 Afghan troops and 60 U.S. Special Forces, who advanced on an al-Qaeda encampment by taking control of roads around Shah-e-Kot. The lead forces were rebuffed by heavily armed al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters. U.S. aircraft, including B-52s, F-15Es, F-18s and AC-130 gunships, were called in to fire at enemy positions. At least one American was killed by hostile fire. “This could go on for several days,” a Pentagon official said.

As Time reported in January, Western intelligence officials believe that al-Qaeda may now be under the control of Abu Zubaydah, a peripatetic aide of Osama bin Laden’s who has run training camps in Afghanistan and coordinated terror cells in Europe and North America. A European terrorism expert says Zubaydah oversaw the training of 3,000 to 4,000 recruits in al-Qaeda terrorist camps, most of whom are “out there somewhere in the world right now.” Zubaydah has instructed operatives to shave their beards, adopt Western clothing and “do whatever it takes to avoid detection and see their missions through,” the expert says.

In the past six months, the Administration and Congress have mobilized massive amounts of government money, intelligence and personnel to track terrorists at home and abroad and tighten the country’s protective net. But all nets have holes. A Time investigation found some good news—notably that the CIA, FBI and other intelligence and law-enforcement agencies are finally starting to work as a team. But in other critical areas, such as gathering and analyzing intelligence, strengthening homeland security and rounding up al-Qaeda, the U.S. has yet to solve its most grievous problems. Much of the more than $1 billion that Washington has poured into intelligence services since 9/11 is merely high-octane fuel flooding a leaky and misfiring engine. America’s national security system is designed to fight Soviets rather than suicide bombers. Sources in the Pentagon, White House and Congress grumble that the CIA and the nation’s other intelligence bureaucracy were caught flat-footed by the Sept. 11 attack—“It was an abject intelligence failure,” a White House aide says—and many still doubt that the U.S. intelligence community is capable of seeing the next one coming.

Experts warn about mass contamination of the nation’s food supply and nuclear attacks on major U.S. cities precisely because these remote threats are the ones for which adequate defenses are not yet in place. The Coast Guard is arming itself against a possible terrorist attempt to destroy a major U.S. coastal city by detonating a tanker loaded with liquefied natural gas. The Bush Administration is bracing for another disaster. “We’re as vulnerable today as we were on 9/10 or 9/12,” says presidential counselor Karen Hughes. “We just know more.” Here is what Time has learned about America’s vulnerabilities—and how the U.S. is working to bolster its defenses on four crucial fronts.

Learning to Spy Again

Since Sept. 11, no criticism of the CIA has been more damning than the fact that the agency’s legions of highly trained spooks were less successful at infiltrating al-Qaeda than was a Marin County, Calif., 19-year-old named John Walker Lindh. “They didn’t see it; they didn’t analyze it; they didn’t locate it or disrupt it,” says a U.S. official. “It’s just that simple.” In Senate hearings last month, CIA Director George Tenet, a Clinton Administration holdover who managed to hold on to his job after 9/11 because he is close to Bush, stubbornly defended the agency’s record. “It was not the result of the failure of attention and discipline and consistent effort,” he insisted.

And yet intelligence officials acknowledge privately that Sept. 11 laid bare many of the agency’s most crippling weaknesses. Six months later, the problems remain—buried under billions of dollars in post-9/11 funding and stubbornly resistant to change. Insiders agree that the CIA’s failure to learn of the Sept. 11 plot stemmed in large part from the CIA’s inability to gather human intelligence about foreign threats. The agency, a senior Administration official concedes, “got out of the human intelligence business in favor of technical collection” after the fall of the Soviet Union. Today the average overseas assignment for an agency spy-handler is three years, barely enough time to learn one’s way around, let alone penetrate a terror cell. And with the passing of the Soviet threat, many CIA officials lost interest in doing dirty human espionage—which means recruiting dangerous characters who can act as spies and infiltrate terror networks such as al-Qaeda’s. And even when informants were coaxed into cooperating, the CIA still required almost all “fully recruited” spies to take a polygraph test, something that scares off useful sources and in the past has failed to catch double agents. “We recruited a whole bunch of bad agents,” admits a senior intelligence official. “We wasted a lot of taxpayer money that way.”

The CIA is larded with Russian specialists left over from the cold war, even as the agency struggles to recruit and train officers with proficiency in other tongues. In last year’s graduating class of case officers, just 20% had usable skills in non-Romance languages. When the war in Afghanistan began, the CIA had only one Afghan analyst. As

Time reported last month, American intelligence agents in Kabul almost blew the chance to question a top-ranking Taliban minister, who may have had information on the hiding place of Mullah Omar. The spooks had yet to hire a Dari translator.

In response to Time's questions about these shortcomings, two senior intelligence officials said the agency has worked hard to close the language gap and improve recruitment of informants. Since 1998, Tenet has instructed the CIA's espionage arm, the Directorate of Operations, to push its officers to diversify their language skills, boost recruitment and take greater risks. But despite some progress, a senior official admits, "we're not there yet." Robert Baer, a former CIA field operative in India, Tajikistan, Lebanon and Iraq, says the reforms did nothing to "break the cold war mold—it's all about the culture." The Administration has recalled old CIA hands with experience in Central Asia. Says an Administration official: "You ended up going back to retirees because the bench was so light on Afghanistan. We're still trying to get up to speed."

The dearth of qualified intelligence officers on the ground in Afghanistan has forced the U.S. to count on unreliable sources, dramatically increasing the risk of military mistakes, impeding the hunt for al-Qaeda leaders and giving Omar, bin Laden and their henchmen time to slip away. "The U.S. is totally dependent on locals, who have their own agenda," says an expert in the region. A senior intelligence official disputes the scope of the problem, telling Time that "this institution has never produced better human intelligence than it does today—but that doesn't mean that we don't need to do more."

Even when America sets its own agenda, there are serious problems. The U.S. spends more than 90% of its $35 billion annual intelligence budget on spying gadgetry rather than on gathering human intelligence, and most of that money goes not to the CIA but to spy agencies within the Department of Defense, such as the National Security Agency (which does eavesdropping and code breaking) and the National Reconnaissance Office (which flies imagery satellites). The priciest gadgets are not always the ones suited to fighting the terrorist threat. During the past five years, while the U.S. spent billions of dollars to build and launch about half a dozen radar-imaging spy satellites, the CIA and others built 60 Predator unmanned aerial vehicles (uavs) at about $3 million apiece. The Predators, not the satellites, killed terrorists in Afghanistan.

High-tech surveillance can do little to track adversaries like the Sept. 11 hijackers, especially if they are in the U.S. legally and careful about what they say on the phone. So why does the CIA persist in spying the wrong way? Part of the answer lies in the culture of secrecy that arose during the cold war and continues to rule the agency's hearts and minds. Today the secrets the CIA needs to pick up are often easily accessible—such as the travel plans of the Sept. 11 hijackers, two of whom managed to pay for their airline tickets with credit cards in their own names, even though the CIA had placed them on the terrorist watch list weeks before. Exploiting such "open sources" by combining them with newly discovered secrets is critical to fighting terrorists and others who hide in plain sight. And yet for years the agency discounted the value of open sources and let slip the quality of the intelligence analysts charged with studying them.

U.S. intelligence officials remain blind to this deficiency. Tenet insists that the agency's proper focus remains "the relentless pursuit of the secret." As long as U.S. intelligence continues to peer only in dark corners, we may struggle to discover what terrorists are hatching right in our backyard.

Share and Share Alike

Here's how the war on terrorism is supposed to work. In January a U.S. soldier prowling through an al-Qaeda compound in Afghanistan came across a document that contained outlines of a possible plot against the U.S. embassy in Sanaa, Yemen. The document contained the name of Fawaz Yahya al-Rabeei, a Saudi-born Yemeni who belonged to al-Qaeda, and it was passed to the CIA and FBI. Working with foreign intelligence services, the agencies came up with the names of 16 Rabeei associates and photographs of 13 of them. Then an FBI investigator poring over the list realized that the brother of one of the men was in U.S. custody in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. On Feb. 11 agents detailed to Camp X-Ray showed the prisoner the photos and persuaded him to talk. The prisoner told them that a terrorist attack—against U.S. installations in Yemen or even the U.S. itself—was planned for the next day.

At 9 that night—after consulting with intelligence officials, White House aides and Office of Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge—FBI Director Robert Mueller posted the names of the suspects and their mug shots on the FBI website and issued the government's most specific terror warning since Sept. 11. No attack took place, but two days later a suspected al-Qaeda operative named Sameer Muhammad Ahmed al-Hada blew himself up with a hand grenade in a suburb of Sanaa, while fleeing from police. Al-Hada was connected to trouble: his brother-in-law is wanted by Yemeni police for conspiring in the Sept. 11 hijackings, and another sister is married to Mustafa Abdul Kader al-Ansari, one of the 17 men the FBI believed had plans to attack America.

The Yemen case was a rare, real-time example of resourceful gumshoeing, timely intelligence and open communication among government agencies. The latter in particular went wanting in the days before Sept. 11. Most

notable is the story of Khalid al-Midhar. In January 2000 a group of al-Qaeda operatives met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to plot the attack on the U.S.S. Cole. Malaysian authorities caught the meeting on a surveillance videotape and turned it over to the CIA. Last summer the agency identified one of the attendees as al-Midhar, a Saudi who intelligence officials thought had entered the U.S. shortly after the meeting in Malaysia and left six months later. The CIA put his name on a watch list and handed it over to the Immigration and Naturalization Service—but by then al-Midhar had slipped back into the U.S. Within the next few days, the CIA briefed the FBI on al-Midhar. FBI officials say they initiated a frantic manhunt for al-Midhar but never found him. On Sept. 11, authorities believe, he flew American Airlines flight 77 into the Pentagon. Al-Midhar bought his Sept. 11 airline ticket under his own name, but American Airlines officials say no government authorities informed them he was on a terrorism watch list.

That Al-Midhar could elude three federal agencies, all of which knew his identity and the danger he posed, highlights the lack of coordination among U.S. intelligence agencies, whose biggest problem may be the intelligence system's splintered structure. The array of semiautonomous agencies—13 in all—share a secure computer network, but collaboration is not in their nature. Interaction between outsiders and CIA analysts or officials is difficult. Says a frustrated Administration official: "We don't have a place where it all comes together."

The broad ground rules that gave each intelligence bureaucracy its own role and swath of territory don't make much sense in the new war. The CIA has largely stayed out of domestic intelligence gathering, in part because of limits set by Congress in the '70s to protect citizens from the agency's excesses, such as dosing unwitting subjects with LSD. During the cold war and afterward, the Pentagon, FBI and CIA split the responsibility for tracking foreign threats, but each agency kept the others in the dark about what it was doing. That division of labor failed completely in spotting clues to Sept. 11, so it's good news that in the race to stop the next attack, the lines between fiefs have finally started to blur. The Sept. 11 terrorists crossed national boundaries at will. In response, more FBI agents are working overseas than ever before. The Patriot Act passed in October gives the CIA greater access to law-enforcement information and allows the NSA to obtain warrants more easily for domestic wiretaps. In Afghanistan, the CIA has unleashed its 150-man covert paramilitary force to conduct sabotage, collect intelligence and train Northern Alliance guerrillas.

The paragon of interagency cooperation is the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, which was created in 1986 as a way to get FBI and CIA agents working side by side. In the past three years, the CTC has broken up three planned attacks by the Hizbollah terror group outside the Middle East, all of them targeting locations where Americans could have been killed. The CTC is everything the rest of the intelligence community is not: coordinated, dynamic and designed for the post-cold war threat. As a result, its staff has doubled to 1,000 since Sept. 11, and the Administration has deluged the center with new funding.

But the CTC's staffers make up just 1% of the U.S. intelligence community. Some critics say the only sensible reform is for the CTC to become a model for the larger community—merging multiple intelligence agencies under the authority of the director of Central Intelligence. Congressional sources tell Time that an advisory panel headed by former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft will recommend just such a reorganization later this year. But the idea probably won't go anywhere. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is expected to oppose any proposal to take away the Pentagon's control over the Defense Department's intelligence agencies, where most intelligence dollars go. Tenet, who spent 10 years as a staffer on Capitol Hill, doesn't want to challenge Rumsfeld, who is at the height of his power. Those who know Tenet say he has little taste for taking on superiors. "[Tenet's] focus is always just going to be on getting the job done," says a source close to the Scowcroft panel.

A Better Shield

Once intelligence has been collected, analyzed and shared, it must be acted on—used to set priorities and bolster defenses. The government knows it can't wait. In the past six months, billions have already gone toward reinforcing cockpit doors, tightening the airline baggage-screening process and hiring 28,000 new federal employees at airports to replace the private security firms that let al-Qaeda through on Sept. 11. In October the Administration created a new Office of Homeland Security to deal exclusively with the job of preparing the country for future terrorist threats. Since he took the job of Homeland Security czar, former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge has had some rough sledding; Bush gave him no authority over Cabinet members or agencies, which means he lacks the clout to win crucial bureaucratic fights. But Ridge has shown his skill in the Washington art of writing checks. The Administration's $38 billion homeland-security budget proposes a $380 million system to track the entry and exit of noncitizens and gives $282 million to the Coast Guard for protecting ports and coastal areas. This week, sources tell Time, Ridge's office plans to announce a new color-coded alert system to warn local law enforcement and the public about threats within U.S. borders. Even the military is setting up a new bureaucracy, the U.S. Northern Command, dedicated to defending the homeland. By Oct. 1 the military hopes to put a four-star general in charge of a standing

domestic military force devoted to flying combat air patrols, guarding the borders and responding to attacks on U.S. soil.

Terrorists aren't likely to be deterred. There's plenty of intelligence that al-Qaeda operatives want to bring down more airliners—witness Richard Reid—and the government is still trying to get serious about stopping them. As recently as last month, Transportation Department investigators succeeded in slipping weapons and explosives past screening personnel and onto an aircraft at Miami International Airport.

Thanks to the new airport-security bill passed in Congress last November, airline security has been taken out of the hands of the FAA and given to the newly created federal Transportation Security Administration. But many of the changes that were supposed to be carried out by the TSA either haven't been implemented or have been killed by compromise. Federal baggage screeners are in place at only 15 of the country's 429 airports, and the TSA has not yet bought the 2,000 large detection devices it aims to have operating within nine months to inspect checked baggage for explosives. Airlines still aren't required to match bags to passengers on every plane; on some aircraft, the improvements to cockpit doors amount to nothing but "a silly little bar," in the words of one pilot. "It's easy to imagine hundreds of horrific possibilities," says TSA deputy head Steven McHale. "We can become paralyzed if we start thinking about all possible threats."

In countless other areas as well, homeland security still needs an upgrade. The Administration plans to hire 800 more customs agents to police the borders but still lacks a system for tracking whether immigrants who enter legally overstay their visas, which three of the Sept. 11 hijackers did. Ridge, who will visit the U.S.-Mexican border this week, has proposed the sensible reform of getting the various border-control agencies—Customs, ins, Border Patrol and Coast Guard—to operate under a single command and work off the same technology. But he lacks the power to make it happen. Despite calls for the Federal Government to improve security at the country's nuclear power plants and weapons sites—and the chilling discovery in Afghanistan of evidence that al-Qaeda may try to target them—little has been done to lock down the sites or to clear the air corridors above them. In October the FAA briefly banned aircraft from flying below 18,000 ft. and within 10 miles of 86 sensitive sites, including several nuclear power plants, but the ban was lifted in November and has not been reinstated.

Government agencies are starting to prepare for other previously unimaginable threats. Experts meeting last week in Lenox, Mass., said hackers in the Middle East have probed the huge computers that control the nation's electric-power grid, and the government has received reports of possible physical reconnaissance of power plants by terrorists. Republican Senator Jon Kyl frets about explosives, such as the three substances found in Reid's shoes, which in small quantities might be missed by airport screening devices and some bomb-sniffing dogs. Small amounts of old-fashioned explosives are potent enough to blow a hole in a fuselage, and experts can't say for certain whether airport detectors can spot them. "I don't really want to talk about this publicly," Kyl says, "but it remains difficult to do something about."

The homeland-security budget is aimed at keeping casualties down; almost all of the $9.5 billion allocated to combat bioterrorism, for instance, goes toward training and equipping local public-health authorities to treat victims and haul out bodies in the event of an attack. The assumption, of course, is that an attack will come. "We need to accept that the possibility of terrorism is a permanent condition for the foreseeable future," Ridge told Time. "We just have to accept it."

Catching Bad Guys

The single most effective strategy for pre-empting another attack is to hit the attackers first—to disrupt and root out the terrorists who are planning the next strike. That's hard but not impossible. The Sept. 11 hijackers kept low profiles, for example, but didn't plan the attacks in cloistered secrecy. Mohamed Atta and his crew received money from al-Qaeda paymasters through traceable banking channels. Nine of them were singled out for special airport-security screenings on the morning of the attacks, the Washington Post reported, yet managed to slip through. The two hijackers who were on the government terrorist watch list before Sept. 11 possessed valid driver's licenses under their own names and paid for their tickets with credit cards that the FBI could have easily tracked. In some cases, the FBI failed to share information it possessed on suspect individuals with other law-enforcement authorities; in others, the feds simply didn't pay close enough attention.

They do now. Since Sept. 11, the number of FBI personnel working on counterterrorism has grown from 1,000 to 4,000. A new cybercrime division monitors credit-card-fraud schemes that terrorists use to fund their activities. Stung by criticism over its historic reluctance to share secret evidence with local cops, the FBI now sees it doesn't have a choice. Edward Flynn, the police chief in Arlington County, Va., says the FBI is giving local cops more leads than they can handle. "They feel compelled to tell us this stuff," he says.

Meanwhile, arrests of al-Qaeda suspects in the U.S. have dwindled. A handful of people in federal custody are still being investigated for possible links to terrorist activity. The worldwide dragnet has snared 600 alleged al-Qaeda operatives. And yet the bottom line is sobering: after six months of gumshoe work by just about every law-

enforcement official in the U.S., the number of al-Qaeda sleeper cells that have been busted inside the country is precisely zero. Does that mean bin Laden's men have gone further underground? "We don't know," says an FBI official. "If you go back and look at the hijackers, they had zero contact with any known al-Qaeda people we were looking at. They didn't break laws. They didn't do anything to come to anybody's attention. Are there other people in the U.S. like that? We don't know."

As long as such uncertainty persists, so will the military assault on al-Qaeda abroad. The U.S. military campaign has removed bin Laden's sanctuary and degraded his infrastructure of terror. Pentagon sources say that the U.S. has killed as many as eight high-ranking al-Qaeda officials, but most of the 11,000 terrorists believed to have spent time in al-Qaeda camps are still on the loose. Efforts to apprehend al-Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan have slowed, as thousands have bought safe refuge in the hamlets and villages of the Afghan countryside. "The mission is to take al-Qaeda apart piece by piece," says Mohammed Anwar, the head of intelligence in Mazar-i-Sharif. "But it's very difficult work." CIA, FBI and military intelligence officials have spent eight weeks interviewing the 300 detainees in Cuba for information on the whereabouts of the al-Qaeda leadership, but defense sources told Time that any prisoners now in U.S. custody know little, if anything, about bin Laden's coordinates. While there is a genuine debate inside the government about whether he is still alive, there is far less argument about what will happen after Washington is able to confirm that he is dead. A U.S. official told Time last week that it is widely presumed that al-Qaeda sleeper cells will take retaliatory action once the terrorist leader is killed or proved dead.

With al-Qaeda sprinkled around the globe, it becomes harder to develop the intelligence needed to take the fight to the enemy. Last week the Administration gave its clearest signal yet that the war won't stop in Afghanistan or even the Philippines, when it announced plans to send special-ops troops to Yemen and the former Soviet republic of Georgia, both countries where al-Qaeda fighters are believed to be hiding.

By keeping the pressure up, the U.S. hopes to correct its biggest mistake of all. According to this view, the U.S.'s failure to retaliate massively after past al-Qaeda attacks against U.S. military barracks, battleships and embassies tempted bin Laden to go after ever more outrageous targets—and finally the World Trade Center. Now the U.S. has destroyed al-Qaeda's training camps and undermined bin Laden's capacity to lead. And yet the Sept. 11 hijackings were years in the making—which means bin Laden could have ordered up another, more lethal attack before his world came apart. "We were overwhelmingly defensive in our orientation before Sept. 11," Admiral Dennis Blair, the head of the U.S.'s Pacific Command, told Time. "Now we've gone on the offensive." The big question is whether we did so in time.

With reporting by Matthew Cooper, John Dickerson, Sally Donnelly, Michael Duffy, Elaine Shannon, Mark Thompson and Douglas Waller/Washington, Bruce Crumley/Paris, Tim McGirk/Kabul and Alex Perry/Mazar-i-Sharif

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Washington Times
March 4, 2002
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Al Qaeda Eyed For Russian Nukes

October scare for New York

By Robert Stacy McCain, The Washington Times

U.S. officials feared in October that Osama bin Laden's terrorist network had obtained a small nuclear weapon and considered the reports credible enough to alert government agencies of the danger, according to news reports.

An agent code-named "Dragonfire" alerted U.S intelligence officials that al Qaeda terrorists had gotten the 10-kiloton device from Russian arsenals and planned to smuggle it into New York City, Time magazine reports in its latest edition.

Counterterrorism investigators went on their highest state of alert but found nothing and later concluded the information was false, according to the magazine.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, U.S. officials have worried about the lack of security around the former Soviet nuclear arsenal. A major concern is that terrorist organizations might gain nuclear weapons.

Sen. Richard C. Shelby said that al Qaeda being in possession of Russian bombs is "always a possibility."

"We don't know how many Russian bombs are missing. Hopefully, none are," the Alabama Republican and member of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee said yesterday. He added that the United States recognizes it has to be prepared for that possibility.

“The administration is very much on the alert. This is a real threat,” he said on ABC’s “This Week,” adding that the government is prepared to protect against so-called “dirty” bombs — low-tech weapons that would kill by radiation.
There should be a “level of concern” about a nuclear threat from terrorists, said Sen. John McCain, Arizona Republican.
“But I’ve seen no hard evidence any of these terrorist organizations have acquired these weapons,” he said yesterday on CNN’s “Late Edition.”
On CBS’ “Face the Nation,” Mr. McCain said, “Look, our great fear since the collapse of the Soviet Union was that there was very large amounts of [nuclear] material and technology and scientists around that might be purchased in the old Soviet Union.”
Mr. McCain said, “It seems perfectly logical that [acquiring old Soviet weapons technology] would be one of the avenues that a dedicated group of terrorists would pursue.”
The intelligence report last October that al Qaeda had acquired a Russian nuclear weapon — and was planning to detonate it in New York City — alarmed U.S. officials, since such a bomb could inflict huge casualties.
Although small by the standards of nuclear weapons (some U.S. warheads have more than 100 times the explosive power), a 10-kiloton bomb detonated in lower Manhattan could kill 100,000 civilians, subject 700,000 more to poisonous radiation and flatten every building within a half-mile of the blast, Time reported.
New terrorist attacks against the United States are a matter of time, one counterterrorism official told Time.
“It’s going to be worse, and a lot of people are going to die,” the anonymous U.S. official said. “I don’t think there’s a damn thing we’re going to be able to do about it.”
According to the magazine, federal officials have assigned 100 civilian government officials to 24-hour rotations in underground bunkers. This “shadow government” would take charge if Washington is the target of the next major terrorist attack.
In response to the reports of al Qaeda having a Russian nuclear bomb, counterterrorism officials went on the highest state of alert. “It was brutal,” the magazine quoted a U.S. official as saying.
The October alert was highly classified. Neither New York Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani nor senior FBI officials were told of the suspected nuclear threat, according to the magazine.
The Washington Post reported in editions yesterday that the government has deployed hundreds of sophisticated nuclear sensors since November to U.S. borders, overseas facilities and sites around Washington.
In hopes of thwarting any bid at nuclear terrorism, the Energy Department is also developing a new generation of devices to detect nuclear radiation, administration officials told the Associated Press yesterday.
Although the emphasis on radiation detection has grown in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, several administration officials said on the condition of anonymity that they knew of no recent indications that al Qaeda had made any new progress toward obtaining nuclear materials.
Sen. Larry E. Craig said radiation sensors were used at such recent mass gatherings as the Salt Lake City Olympic Games and the Super Bowl in New Orleans.
“We clearly are in heightened alert, and we should be,” the Idaho Republican said on CNN’s “Late Edition.” “At the same time, the American people have to get on with their lives. But I want to make sure that they are as safe as we can possibly make them.”

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Washington Post
March 3, 2002
Pg. 1

Fears Prompt U.S. To Beef Up Nuclear Terror Detection

Sensors Deployed Near D.C., Borders; Delta Force on Standby

By Barton Gellman, Washington Post Staff Writer

Alarmed by growing hints of al Qaeda’s progress toward obtaining a nuclear or radiological weapon, the Bush administration has deployed hundreds of sophisticated sensors since November to U.S. borders, overseas facilities and choke points around Washington. It has placed the Delta Force, the nation’s elite commando unit, on a new standby alert to seize control of nuclear materials that the sensors may detect.
Ordinary Geiger counters, worn on belt clips and resembling pagers, have been in use by the U.S. Customs Service for years. The newer devices are called gamma ray and neutron flux detectors. Until now they were carried only by mobile Nuclear Emergency Search Teams (NEST) dispatched when extortionists claimed to have radioactive

materials. Because terrorists would give no such warning, and because NEST scientists are unequipped for combat, the Delta Force has been assigned the mission of killing or disabling anyone with a suspected nuclear device and turning it over to the scientists to be disarmed.

The new radiation sensors are emplaced in layers around some fixed points and temporarily at designated "national security special events" such as last month's Olympic Games in Utah. Allied countries, including Saudi Arabia, have also rushed new detectors to their borders after American intelligence warnings. To address the technological limits of even the best current sensors, the Bush administration has ordered a crash program to build next-generation devices at the three national nuclear laboratories.

These steps join several other signs, described in recent interviews with U.S. government policymakers, that the Bush administration's nuclear anxieties have intensified since American-backed forces routed Osama bin Laden's network and its Taliban backers in Afghanistan.

"Clearly . . . the sense of urgency has gone up," said a senior government policymaker on nuclear, biological and chemical terror. Another high-ranking official said, "The more you gather information, the more our concerns increased about al Qaeda's focus on weapons of mass destruction of all kinds."

In "tabletop exercises" conducted as high as Cabinet level, President Bush's national security team has highlighted difficult choices the chief executive would face if the new sensors picked up a radiation signature on a boat steaming up the Potomac River or a truck heading for the capital on Interstate 95.

Participants in those exercises said the gaps in their knowledge are considerable. But the intelligence community, they said, believes that al Qaeda could already control a stolen Soviet-era tactical nuclear warhead or enough weapons-grade material to fashion a functioning, if less efficient, atomic bomb.

Even before more recent discoveries, some analysts regarded that prospect as substantial. Some expressed that view when the intelligence community devoted a full-day retreat to the subject early last year in Chantilly, Va., according to someone with firsthand knowledge.

A majority of those present assessed the likelihood as negligible, but none of the more than 50 participants ruled it out.

The consensus government view is now that al Qaeda probably has acquired the lower-level radionuclides strontium 90 and cesium 137, many thefts of which have been documented in recent years. These materials cannot produce a nuclear detonation, but they are radioactive contaminants. Conventional explosives could scatter them in what is known as a radiological dispersion device, colloquially called a "dirty bomb."

The number of deaths that might result is hard to predict but probably would be modest. One senior government specialist said "its impact as a weapon of psychological terror" would be far greater.

These heightened U.S. government fears explain Bush's activation, the first since the dawn of the nuclear age, of contingency plans to maintain a cadre of senior federal managers in underground bunkers away from Washington. The Washington Post described the features of the classified "Continuity of Operations Plan" on Friday.

Bush's emphasis on nuclear terrorism dates from a briefing in the Situation Room during the last week of October. According to knowledgeable sources, Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet walked the president through an accumulation of fresh evidence about al Qaeda's nuclear ambition. Described by one consumer of intelligence as "an incomplete mosaic" of fact, inference and potentially false leads, Tenet's briefing raised fears that "sent the president through the roof." With considerable emotion, two officials said, Bush ordered his national security team to give nuclear terrorism priority over every other threat to the United States.

Tenet told Bush that Pakistan's nuclear weapons program was more deeply compromised than either government has acknowledged publicly. Pakistan arrested two former nuclear scientists, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Abdul Majid, on Oct. 23, and interrogated them about contacts with bin Laden and his lieutenants.

Pakistani officials maintain that the scientists did not pass important secrets to al Qaeda, but they have not disclosed that Mahmood failed multiple polygraph examinations about his activities.

Most disturbing to U.S. intelligence was another leak from Pakistan's program that has not been mentioned in public. According to American sources, a third Pakistani nuclear scientist tried to negotiate the sale of an atomic weapon design to Libya. The Post was unable to learn which Pakistani blueprint was involved, whether the transaction was completed, or what became of the scientist after discovery. Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is believed to include bombs of relatively simple design, built around cores of highly enriched uranium, and more sophisticated weapons employing Chinese implosion technology to compress plutonium to a critical mass.

At the October briefing, Bush learned of a remark by a senior member of al Qaeda's operational command. The operative had been an accurate, though imprecise, harbinger of al Qaeda plans in the past.

After U.S. bombing began in Afghanistan, an American official said, the same man was reliably reported to have said "there will be another attack and it's going to be much bigger" than the one that toppled the World Trade Center and destroyed a wing of the Pentagon on Sept. 11.

“What the hell did that mean?” the official said, recalling the stunned reaction of those briefed on the remark. Other reports reaching Washington described al Qaeda references to obtaining, or having obtained, special weapons. “The benign explanation is bucking up the troops” with false bravado, the official said, but the Bush administration took the report “extremely seriously.”

Searches of al Qaeda sites in Afghanistan, undertaken since American-backed forces took control there, are not known to have turned up a significant cache of nuclear materials.

The New York Times reported that U.S. personnel in Afghanistan sent three suspected samples to American labs for analysis but found no significant radioactive source.

There is evidence that some of al Qaeda’s nuclear efforts over the years met with swindles and false leads. In one case, officials said, the organization was taken in by scam artists selling “red mercury,” a phony substance they described as a precursor, or ingredient, of weapons-grade materials.

If al Qaeda has a weapon or its components, U.S. officials said, its whereabouts would be the organization’s most closely guarded secret. Addressing the failure of American searchers to find such materials in abandoned Afghan camps, one policymaker noted that “we haven’t found most of the al Qaeda leadership either, and we know that exists.”

The likeliest source of nuclear materials, or of a warhead bought whole, is the vast complex of weapons labs and storage sites that began to crumble with the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. Russia has decommissioned some 10,000 tactical nuclear weapons since then, but it has been able to document only a fraction of the inventory.

The National Intelligence Council, an umbrella organization for the U.S. analytical community, reported to Congress last month that there are at least four occasions between 1992 and 1999 when “weapons-grade and weapons-usable nuclear materials have been stolen from some Russian institutes.”

Of those thefts, the report said, “We assess that undetected smuggling has occurred, although we do not know the extent or magnitude.”

Victor Yerastov, chief of nuclear accounting and control for Russia’s ministry of atomic energy, has said that in 1998 a theft in Chelyabinsk Oblast made off with “quite sufficient material to produce an atomic bomb.”

An American official, commenting on that theft, said that “given the known and suspected capabilities of the Russian mafia, it’s perfectly plausible that al Qaeda would have access to such materials.” The official added, “They could get it from anybody they could bribe.”

Col. Gen. Igor Valynkin, chief of the Russian organization responsible for safeguarding nuclear weapons, said on Oct. 27 that any claim Russia has lost an intact warhead is “barking mad.”

The U.S. government is not accepting that assurance at face value. “We don’t know with any confidence what has gone missing, and neither do they,” said one American official.

Thefts of less threatening nuclear byproducts, especially isotopes of strontium, cesium and partially enriched uranium, have been reported more frequently. In November 1995, Chechen rebels placed a functioning “dirty bomb” using dynamite and cesium 137 in Moscow’s Izmailovo park. They did not detonate it. Al Qaeda is closely aligned with the Chechens.

There are limits, “governed by the laws of physics,” as one official put it, to American technology for detecting these materials. In broad terms they have to do with sensing radioactivity at a distance and through shielding, and with the balance between false positives and false negatives. There are classified Energy Department documents that catalogue what one of them called “shortcomings in the ability of NEST equipment to locate the target materials which if known by adversaries could be used to defeat the search equipment and/or procedures.” The Post has agreed to publish no further details.

A division of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, known as NIS-6, is leading efforts to build an improved generation of sensors. Some will use neutron generators to “interrogate” a suspected object, and others are planned for long-range detection of alpha particles.

A measure of the government’s grave concern is the time devoted by top national security officials to developing options for a crisis involving nuclear terrorism.

One hypothetical scenario, participants said, began with a sensor detecting what appeared to be the radiation signature of a nuclear weapon amid a large volume of traffic on a highway such as I-95.

According to two participants, the group considered how the Energy Department’s NEST teams, working with Delta Force, might find and take control of the weapon without giving a terrorist time to use it.

Roadblocks and car-by-car searches, for example, would create chaos, require hours, and give ample warning to those hiding the device. But without roadblocks the searchers might fail to isolate the weapon within a radius defined by the limits of sensor technology. If commandos found the device, they could expect to encounter resistance. Would the president delegate to on-scene commanders a decision that might result in nuclear detonation?

Which officials, meanwhile, should be evacuated? Would government inform the public of the threat, a step that would wreak panic without precedent in any country and complicate the job of finding the weapon?
"Evacuation is one of those issues you throw your hands up and say, 'It's too hard,' " said one participant in a tabletop exercise. "Nobody wants to make that decision, certainly not in advance."

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USA Today
March 4, 2002
Pg. 6

Q & A: Ridge Answers Readers' Questions

USA TODAY and USATODAY.com invited readers to submit questions for Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge. A total of 393 people sent more than 1,000 questions. All have been delivered to Ridge's office.

Q: Is the United States safer today in any measurable way than before Sept. 11?
A: Clearly when you go into airports, when you try to get into public events, there's obviously heightened security. What you don't see is the work in the private sector to make manufacturing facilities, water-supply operations and others more secure. So there are visible signs of enhanced preparation, more safety, and there are a lot of tangible but not so easily recognized changes that have made America safer.
Q: With so many agencies responsible for protecting us and the creation of even more agencies since Sept. 11, why do we need you?
A: Dozens and dozens of agencies have some responsibility for some portion of homeland security, and it is for that very reason the president has created this office so we could have, initially, better coordination and, longer term, to look at possible reorganization, so there won't be quite as many agencies and there'll be more direct lines of responsibility and accountability.
Q: How do you feel about the fear people feel when the government continuously warns about possible threats?
A: We have been working for the last couple months to come up with a national alert advisory system so we might be able to put the alert in some context, so that Americans can understand that we do expect a certain level of preparedness depending on the information that we receive. I am very hopeful that we can have that out for public comment within the next two weeks.
Q: What are you doing to protect drinking water?
A: In general, in a major water supply or reservoir, a terrorist would need truckloads of contaminants in order to have any impact on the quality of the water. Assuming they managed to bring enough toxic chemicals to pollute the water, there are detection and screening devices that are employed at virtually every water operation in the country. I don't believe it's absolutely universal, but every day we're getting closer to making it universal.
Q: What about rail safety?
A: There are chemicals and other hazardous materials on trains, and we have to be more wary of their disposition and the routes they take. Passengers should know there's a central dispatcher that can effectively stop the train. They should realize an intruder has to get outside to get into the engine, and it's virtually impenetrable.
Q: Is there any way to be prepared for a biological or nuclear attack?
A: We are in the process of dramatically improving our public health system: creating a national disease-surveillance system, increasing our national pharmaceutical stockpiles, advancing research on infectious disease. With regard to the potential of a radiological or nuclear weapon being deployed, there's detection technology that picks up the radioactive content. Technology can enhance our ability to detect such a weapon, and then we do have the capacity to disarm it.
Q: What's being done to secure nuclear facilities?
A: They are well-protected, I believe, against truck-bomb explosions or infiltration by a land-based terrorist effort. The concern that seems to be on most people's minds is an aviation terrorist attack. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is doing an analysis of the structure of nuclear plants. I can't give the precise dimensions, but Americans should know that we have some air power available to us. Some of it is ready to respond within minutes, some of it is in the air.
Q: Why is there no consistency in airport security?
A: We're in the process of taking over the airports. It will be a couple of months, and there'll still be some erratic application and different standards, but that's primarily the reason behind the president's initiative to federalize

standards. The other concern that I have and passengers have is waiting two and three hours, and I think we can do a better job.
Q: How can average citizens help prevent terrorism?
A: The president has initiated USA Freedom Corps, and within that is Citizens Corps, where moms and dads can help. We're going to increase emergency-response teams, create a volunteer medical corps and train neighborhood watch groups. You can learn more at www.usafreedomcorps.gov.
Q: Will we ever get back to normal?
A: This country has gotten stronger and safer and better prepared. Every day, I see technology, learn of private-sector initiatives and talk to local officials about their plans to respond to attacks. That reassures me and hopefully reassures America.

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Washington Post
March 4, 2002
Pg. 17

VA Orders More Study Of Deaths After Gulf War

Destroyed Iraqi Nerve Gases May Have Affected Soldiers

By Suzanne Gamboa, Associated Press
Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony J. Principi has ordered further study of death rates among Gulf War soldiers who may have been exposed to deadly gases from an Iraqi chemical weapons depot.
The Pentagon has said about 100,000 soldiers were exposed when the Khamisiyah chemical weapons facility was blown up by U.S. combat engineers. Military officials have steadfastly said the level was not hazardous, but have revised which soldiers they said were exposed.
After a new analysis of the vapor cloud, 34,000 soldiers the Pentagon initially said were exposed were removed from the exposure list.
The VA recently released a compilation of death rates and benefits claims that indicated those soldiers on the initial list are dying at a rate nearly 10 times as great as the soldiers the Pentagon now maintains were exposed to gases at Khamisiyah.
"On the surface, it's troubling and I'm concerned," Principi said last week after a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. "We don't know what the cause is, so we need to do some immediate follow-on research, and I've ordered that that be done."
The analysis did not differentiate how the veterans died -- some could have been killed in accidents or died of natural causes or of service-related illnesses -- or whether any deaths were attributable to exposure to nerve gases.
Principi said he is working with William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, to confirm the deaths and determine what caused them.
"This information came to me, obviously, as a surprise, and I just feel that we need to look further at the information," Principi said.
The Iraqi weapons depot was destroyed in March 1991. It was discovered only later that the depot and a nearby pit contained hundreds of weapons filled with lethal sarin, cyclosarin and mustard gases.
The Pentagon created a computer model of the vapor cloud in 1997 and sent letters to service members who, the model showed, might have been exposed.
Three years later, the Pentagon revised the computer model using new weather data and troop information. The new model showed a different track for the vapor cloud, and some different troop exposures.
In other veterans issues, Principi told the VFW crowd that the VA set a record in deciding claims last month, completing 62,536 compared with 29,036 in January 2001.
Principi said the $1.57 billion increase President Bush has proposed for the VA is the largest the agency has received but that he is not sure it will be enough to care for all veterans who request care.

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New York Times
March 4, 2002

The Inspection Ploy

By William Safire

WASHINGTON -- As predicted here, Saddam Hussein — faced with the certainty of a U.S.-led overthrow of his brutal regime — has restarted the business of postponing the attack until he can finish making weapons of mass destruction.

The Iraqi dictator is taking advantage of a tiny opening George W. Bush gave him. The U.S. president warned of what diplomats delicately call “regime change” in Baghdad unless Saddam acceded to the U.N.’s demand that its inspectors be allowed back into Iraq.

That ultimatum — U.N. inspections or else — leaves Iraq the chance to find a little wiggle room on the alternative to “or else.” Accordingly, Saddam has begun the drawn-out process of negotiating who will do the inspecting and who will not. He wants months of wrangling over the makeup of the U.N. team, to be followed by another negotiation over where the selected inspectors can go and where they must not, and yet another about how long a warning Iraq’s germ doctors get before a “surprise inspection.”

Though widely unreported, Iraqi gaming of the Security Council began last Friday. Saddam’s man at the U.N., Muhammad al-Douri, said that Iraq would not permit the return of the inspectors chosen by the U.N., led by chief inspector Hans Blix, because Iraq was certain that group was compromised by U.S. spies.

However — here comes the delaying gambit — Saddam is inviting Prime Minister Tony Blair to send in British inspectors. Blair has already claimed to have evidence of a dangerous Iraqi weapons buildup; what, asks Saddam, could be fairer or more reasonable than to let Britain see for itself that all such evidence is false?

Unless Secretary General Kofi Annan shows unexpected spine in his Thursday meeting with Saddam’s man, that gambit would buy Iraq more time. Saddam expects Britain’s media to press Blair to seize this chance to gain control of Bush’s actions. Three other members of the Security Council, France, Russia and China — all ardent believers in Saddam’s continuance in power — would lean on the U.S. not to be so bellicose as to insist the U.N. hold fast to its stand.

Saddam can count on the Saudi ruler, Prince Abdullah, to issue another vision: that failing to go along with Saddam’s “compromise” would show the world that America is using a concern for his nuclear and germ buildup merely as an excuse to invade a peace-loving Arab nation.

In the U. S. Senate, Daschle Democrats — eager for some popular way to criticize Bush’s war on terror — will worry aloud about “insulting our closest ally” by not deeming Britain capable of conducting intrusive inspections.

What should Bush do?

1. He should get on the hook to our special relation in London to make certain that Blair does not allow Saddam and his appeasers to drive a wedge between the two nations leading the war on terror.
2. He should tell Kofi Annan that to allow the makeup of the U.N. inspection team to be dictated by Saddam would make a mockery of Security Council authority.
3. He should inform the other permanent members of the Security Council that the only inspection team that can prevent U.S. action against Iraq is the team — augmented by U.S. surveillance equipment — that Saddam now refuses to accept.
4. He should send Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld to the Senate’s Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees to urge nail-nibbling Democrats not to be fooled by Saddam in his long-expected attempt to jerk us around again.
5. He should send Saddam a much more specific ultimatum, this time with less wiggle room: unless the team chosen by the U.N., with U.S. participation, is on the ground in Iraq, absolutely unencumbered, by a date certain — that’s it.

Even if forced to accept the experienced U.N. team, Saddam — needing a few more months to weaponize his germ arsenal — is sure to employ the same rope-a-dope with which he harassed previous U.N. inspectors. He will penetrate the team’s communications, enabling his mobile laboratories to scatter in advance of inspection. He will raise objections to searches of pristine mosques and sovereign palaces and charge American inspectors with espionage.

Let’s not get taken in again. Nuclear-bound Iraq has had three years unobserved. Time is on Saddam’s side.

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Washington Post
March 4, 2002
Pg. 19

The Wrong Target

By Jessica Mathews

The number one problem in Iraq is not Saddam Hussein but his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. Without them he is dangerous and despicable but not a threat remotely worthy of American intervention. This truth has a huge bearing on policy that has been largely ignored. It means that rather than seeking to oust Saddam Hussein from power, the U.S. goal ought to be to thwart his continuing attempt to acquire these weapons. The inability to make a clear choice between these two aims was the Clinton administration's costliest foreign policy error. The Bush administration seems prepared to make a choice -- but the wrong one.

The choice matters enormously because the two goals -- regime change and nonproliferation -- are not, as so many assume, complementary. In important respects they conflict. As a first course of action, only one carries any degree of legitimacy and at least the potential for wide international support. Only one might therefore strengthen, rather than undermine, the cooperation necessary for long-term success in the war against terrorism. Only one might help resolve, rather than exacerbate, the closely related threat posed by Iran. Only one has a legal basis for action (Iraq is in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions requiring dismantlement of its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs). For this last reason, only one serves the long-term U.S. interest in a world governed by the rule of law.

Proponents of getting rid of Saddam Hussein brush aside the "why" question as if the answers were either self-evident or immaterial. They are neither. There are many vicious, aggressive rulers in the world. Nor do we have the slightest interest in affirming the right of a government to attack another it considers evil. The answer that we would be acting to rid the region of weapons of mass destruction raises the obvious question of why not Iran, not to mention Israel. Perhaps the least-sound justification is that the United States would be acting in "preventive self-defense." Supply your own nightmare result of that becoming an acceptable norm of international behavior. Mine is the invitation to India to attack Pakistan to end terrorist attacks on itself -- a course likely to end in nuclear war.

The most common response, however, is to assert that no choice exists; that it is impossible to control weapons of mass destruction in Iraq without deposing Saddam Hussein. This argument fails on two counts. First, we don't know it to be true. An armed inspection regime has not yet been tried. Saddam Hussein's record indicates that he will choose staying in power over maintaining active weapons programs. So the real issue is not whether Saddam Hussein will continue to want these weapons -- he will -- but how tough the international community can be in forcing him to make the choice and for how long it can sustain its determination. Second, it is not clear that regime change can accomplish the nonproliferation goal. A successor regime in Iraq might be as committed to seeking nuclear weapons as Saddam Hussein. Only nuclear weapons, Iraqis might conclude, could prevent another foreign invasion. Iranians are likely to feel the same -- how else to prevent the same thing happening to them?

Because Iran is so split between a pro-reform, pro-American, population and elected government on the one hand and irredeemably anti-American mullahs who hold the power, the United States can do almost nothing to promote constructive change in Tehran. Eventually (not soon) the mullahs' conservatism, venality and economic incompetence will undo them. Except for the country's weapons of mass destruction and missile programs, time is on our side. But something must be done about the weapons, which means doing something about Iraq's, because fear of its neighbor drives Iran's nuclear program. But in doing so we must avoid giving Iran an excuse to renounce the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). If the government were to openly seek nuclear weapons to meet a perceived external threat, these weapons instantly would become the focus of Iranian nationalism, just as they did in Pakistan, and hopes for peace in the region would be set back immeasurably.

The tight link between Iraq and Iran's nuclear programs points to the right U.S. strategy. Washington's first goal should be to force Iraq's compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions. Rebuilding an international commitment to that end will take vigorous diplomacy to convince skeptical governments that that -- and not regime change -- is indeed our intent, and a focused effort to engage global public opinion. This probably will require making public proof of what both countries are doing -- as we did with pictures of Soviet missiles during the Cuban missile crisis. Only such a step would strip away the veil of hypocrisy behind which France and Russia, in particular, cloak their commercial interests while insisting that the United States exaggerates the threat. The inspectors in Iraq must be empowered to move without prior approval from New York and be accompanied by helicopter-borne troops to force immediate access to any site if Iraq balks.

Russian cooperation is key to success. To secure it, Washington should make clear to Moscow that Iraq's debts to Russia will be paid and drop its self-defeating opposition to Russian exports of conventional arms to Iran. But we

need not, and should not, take this whole job on ourselves; 186 other nations have signed the NPT and share an interest in its integrity. U.S. policy should prod, not preempt, that interest. Influential countries could be pushed to build a global consensus that Iraq's and Iran's use of the NPT as cover for an illegal weapons program is an intolerable threat. North Korea demonstrated how to do it. If others are allowed to follow that example, the treaty and the system of export controls, inspections and sanctions it supports won't be worth the paper they are written on.
An American decision to keep weapons of mass destruction out of Saddam Hussein's hands for as long as he is in power could work if it is pursued with the intent to make it succeed. If that is done, it is the clear choice over a course that ignores the Iranian half of the problem and that risks political chaos in Iraq and the region, the need for peacekeeping forces the world has no appetite to supply and long-term damage to the kind of world order the United States wants to live in.
The writer is president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

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New York Times
March 4, 2002

Tip On Nuclear Attack Risk Was Kept From New Yorkers

By Robert D. McFadden

A month after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, senior Bush administration officials received an intelligence report that terrorists had obtained a 10-kiloton nuclear weapon from the Russian arsenal and were planning to smuggle it into New York City, a government official said yesterday.
Confirming an account in today's issue of Time magazine, the official said the highly classified intelligence report had come from a source of questionable reliability and had circulated among a relatively few top officials who concluded, after weeks of investigation, that it was false.
The report was kept a tight secret — former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, the New York Police Department and even senior Federal Bureau of Investigation officials were not told — so as not to panic New Yorkers, Time said. It said a 10- kiloton bomb detonated in Lower Manhattan would kill 100,000 people, sicken 700,000 with radiation and flatten everything within a half-mile.
While the October tip was ultimately found to have no basis, Time said, it generated a few harrowing weeks of terrifying uncertainty in the small circle of agencies that knew about it — the White House Counterterrorism Security Group, part of the National Security Council, and the Energy Department's Nuclear Emergency Search Team, a top secret group based in Nevada.
The director of central intelligence, George Tenet, was among those briefed on the report in October, according to the official who confirmed the Time report. That official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, noted that top intelligence officials normally field dozens of warnings and threats daily, most of them false.
"During the immediate post-9/11 period and continuing on today there are large numbers of reports," the official said. "This was one of them, and it was dealt with appropriately."
At least one former New York official, Bernard B. Kerik, who was the police commissioner at the time, questioned the decision to withhold the information from New York officials.
"If they had information like that, that's appalling," Mr. Kerik said. "I was never told. I was concerned we weren't being fed all the information."
Mr. Giuliani, who was quoted by Time as saying he too was never told, had no comment, his spokeswoman, Sunny Mindel, said last night. Even as the report was being secretly investigated last fall, on Oct. 29 Mr. Giuliani called for new laws that would significantly increase the amount of information shared between federal and local law enforcement agencies. And his concerns were echoed that day by governors and other officials at a Congressional hearing on terrorism.
Asked last night about the government's decision not to inform New York officials of the intelligence report, Taylor Gross, a White House spokesman, said: "The president's No. 1 priority is making sure we protect the homeland and prevent any attacks from happening in the first place. If there is a credible and specific threat, we will coordinate closely with state and local officials to meet that objective."
The Bush administration has been criticized on several occasions in recent months for warning of potential terrorist attacks without providing specific information about the possible nature or locales of such attacks.

Time said the source of the report had been “a mercurial agent code- named dragonfire.” While his reliability was questioned immediately, the suggestion that the bomb had come from Russia’s arsenal dovetailed with intelligence reports that such weapons may have been stolen from the Russians in the 1990’s — specifically a report from a Russian general who said his forces were missing a 10-kiloton device, Time said. Russia has insisted that none of its nuclear weapons is missing.

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Washington Post
March 2, 2002
Pg. 10

D.C. Found Ready For Emergency

Disaster Experts Rank City 7th Among 30 in U.S.

By Carol D. Leonnig, Washington Post Staff Writer

A team of national disaster experts has rated Washington as “well prepared” for an emergency or terrorist attack, based in part on the city’s large number of physicians and federal grants.

Washington ranked seventh among the nation’s 30 largest cities in a study of resources and training that could be tapped in a disaster. New York was rated the best prepared, followed by San Antonio, Charlotte and Atlanta. The rankings were compiled by CNN and were based on subjective and objective assessments made by six national terrorism, emergency and law enforcement experts.

“We’re getting there,” said Mayor Anthony A. Williams (D). “The national experts say we’re prepared.”

Peter G. LaPorte, director of the D.C. Emergency Management Agency, said he is pleased about the ratings but does not think that the District has done as much as it should to prepare for emergencies.

“It shows we have made some improvement since September 11,” LaPorte said. “But it’s no reason for us to think we’re really well prepared for just about anything and can now rest.”

The District and key federal agencies were criticized for a poorly coordinated response after a hijacked plane hit the Pentagon on Sept. 11. That morning, D.C. employees were ordered to evacuate and then recalled by the city administrator a few minutes later to provide crucial city services.

Police officials initially suggested closing Metro, which proved to be an essential tool for evacuating 180,000 federal employees urged to leave their downtown offices. At the same time, traffic stalled for more than two hours at the 14th Street bridge after federal authorities closed the bridge without alerting District officials, who had been routing traffic to that southern exit from the city.

The experts evaluated the cities in four categories: transportation, hospital and other medical resources, federal emergency funding, and emergency management coordination. The experts rated all U.S. cities with populations of more than 350,000 and with police forces of more than 1,100 officers. Data were collected from November to January.

Washington had very high scores for all the objective categories except transportation, in which it ranked 27 out of 30. The low ranking was attributed to the city’s long drive times during rush hour.

Washington was ranked second in the medical category, with 328.7 physicians per 10,000 residents. Boston ranked first, with 364 physicians 10,000 people. The nation’s capital also ranked second for federal emergency preparedness grants: $19,613 per 10,000 residents. Miami was first, with $46,700.

Washington ranked first for the ratio of police officers to population, with 63.4 officers per 10,000 residents. New York ranked second, with 49.7 officers per 10,000 residents.

The panel of experts included Steven Charvat, director of disaster recovery for the D.C. Emergency Management Agency. Charvat said he didn’t recuse himself from judging his employer and didn’t give the District a perfect score. He said he did give the city extra credit for overhauling its emergency response plan after Sept. 11. “This isn’t French judging of the Olympics,” he said. “D.C. got a nice solid B.”

Another panel member, Lew Stringer -- North Carolina’s emergency medical director and head of the National Medical Response Team -- said he thinks that Washington and New York are among the best-prepared cities largely because of their size and regular brushes with disaster. He said the District’s recent exposure to pulmonary anthrax provided invaluable on-the-job training, though at a tragic cost.

“If it didn’t do anything else, it brought all the players to the table together so they knew what they would do in the time of a problem,” Stringer said. “It got people planning.”

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Los Angeles Times
March 3, 2002
Pg. 1

Science Could Help To Crack Anthrax Case

By Josh Meyer and Megan Garvey, Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON -- Federal investigators, stymied for months in their pursuit of the anthrax killer, said they are laying the groundwork for a science-based prosecution and are watching closely a small number of individuals believed capable of launching the bioterrorist attack-by-mail that left five people dead last fall.

FBI agents here and abroad have interviewed hundreds of people, executed dozens of search warrants, searched for the machine used to copy the letters and reviewed thousands of documents and records in connection with the case, according to those familiar with the investigation.

Still, officials said that they do not have a “prime suspect” in the case and that most of their progress has come in eliminating false leads. They believe their best chance at narrowing the list of potential suspects might lie in a scientific breakthrough that allows researchers to distinguish between stocks of the same strain of anthrax.

The FBI moved forward on that track last week, delivering subpoenas to U.S. laboratories known to have the same virulent Ames strain of anthrax used to kill five people and sicken at least 13 others.

Researchers who received the subpoenas--believed to have gone to 12 to 20 laboratories--said they have been asked to follow strict guidelines and then ship samples to Army researchers at Ft. Detrick in Maryland by Friday.

Martin Hugh-Jones, an anthrax expert at Louisiana State University whose laboratory received a subpoena, estimated it would then take scientists working with the FBI “three weeks to a month” to determine if any of those anthrax samples match the stock used in the attack.

But those who have conducted anthrax research point out that the list of samples the FBI is trying to acquire may not be exhaustive because, in the past, researchers traded samples somewhat freely. The government has regulated such exchanges of hazardous materials since 1996. FBI Director Robert Mueller said Friday that the demand for samples--long expected within the scientific community--comes now because the agency first wanted to establish investigative standards that they could explain to a jury and that would hold up in court.

Investigators have had to move carefully to establish “scientific procedures that were utilized to make that match, the same way we would have to with fingerprints and DNA and the like,” he said.

Mueller noted that the undertaking is “not a simple matter.”

“Down the road, we hope to be in a position to prosecute somebody,” Mueller said. “And when we are in a position to prosecute the individual responsible for this, we are going to have to come into court and explain to the jury exactly the process we went through to identify this individual.”

Scientists have worked aggressively to better understand anthrax since the bioterrorist attack began. Significant progress has been made since mid-November, when an anthrax-laden letter sent to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.) was found in barrels of quarantined government mail. The Leahy letter, which investigators opened only after considerable planning so that they could retain as much of the substance as possible, gave researchers enough material to conduct extensive testing on the lethal spores. Those tests are ongoing.

Last month at a conference in Las Vegas, Dr. Paul Keim, a Northern Arizona University researcher who is working closely with the FBI, announced that he had found a way to distinguish between stocks of the Ames strain--opening the possibility that the source of the attack spores could be definitively determined.

In addition, labs led by Paul Jackson at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico and Claire M. Fraser of the private Institute for Genomic Research in Rockville, Md., are working on how to determine a genetic fingerprint for the spores contained in the letters sent to Capitol Hill and to the media.

The FBI recently appealed again to the small community of anthrax researchers, asking them to consider whether anyone they know fits the profile of the likely suspect.

Glenn Songer, an anthrax researcher at the University of Arizona, said he doubted the plea would yield much useful information.

“I don’t think this is the sort of thing that would be done by a person so out of the ordinary--out of the normal--that he or she would stand out,” Songer said. “If you were intelligent enough, informed enough to do this sort of thing, you would be intelligent enough to keep it a secret.” But another researcher recently alleged that FBI officials

already suspected a specific person but that they had been slow to take action because that person had for many years worked on sensitive government projects.
Mueller last week dismissed those allegations, as well as grumblings that the FBI had failed to consult enough anthrax experts.
“Somebody has indicated that we have a suspect and that we have been dragging our feet because . . . that person was somehow employed by the federal government at some point,” Mueller said. “That is totally inaccurate. We have moved as fast as I think could be expected under the circumstances in all avenues of the investigation.”
A federal law enforcement official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said there is no prime suspect in the case but an evolving list of people that numbers “more than a handful.”
“A suspect suggests someone that you have information on or that we’re moving toward” in a criminal prosecution, the official said. “We’re not there yet.”
The anthrax attacks have left investigators baffled at many turns since early October, when Robert Stevens, 63, a tabloid photo editor in Florida, became the first person to die of inhalation anthrax in the U.S. since 1976.
In fact, Stevens’ illness at first was called “isolated” by Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson, who suggested he had contracted the bacteria while drinking from a stream.
But a week after Stevens’ death, evidence of a bioterrorist attack began to emerge. A case of skin anthrax was confirmed in an assistant to NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw.
In all, four anthrax-laced letters--to Brokaw, Leahy, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and the New York Post--were recovered. Investigators believe others were sent but not recovered.
Public health officials were slow to recognize the danger to those who worked in the postal facilities where the tainted letters were processed, and two Washington-area mail workers--Joseph P. Curseen Jr., 47, and Thomas L. Morris Jr., 55--died.
Still unexplained is how two women--one in New York City and the other in rural Connecticut--came in contact with the same deadly bacteria. Public health officials and law enforcement agents could find no trace of anthrax at any place the women were known to have been.
Because their cases fell so far from the known path of the anthrax letters, investigators at first thought the women’s deaths might provide clues that would lead them to the sender of the letters.
Kathy T. Nguyen, 61, lived in the Bronx and worked at a hospital in Manhattan. She rode the subway regularly but had few close friends. By the time investigators determined she was ill from inhalation anthrax, she was on a ventilator.
Perhaps most puzzling is the death of Ottilie W. Lundgren, 94, who never left her Connecticut home without assistance and kept a very limited schedule.
Even before Lundgren’s death on Nov. 21, the FBI had released a profile of the likely perpetrator, describing a “lone wolf” without terrorist links, an adult male with scientific knowledge who was familiar with the Trenton, N.J., area where the letters were mailed.
Still Mueller, whose comments last week were his most extensive on the anthrax case in some time, said the investigation was proceeding in a “number of directions” and that he could not rule out a tie-in between the sender and a terrorist group.
“We are not focusing on just one facility or even a series of facilities. We are open to any possibilities,” he said. “I would be reluctant to specify where we think ultimately we will find the individual.”

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Washington Times
March 2, 2002
Pg. 7

Lawmakers Criticize Iraq Inspection Plan

Members of Congress and former weapons inspectors yesterday criticized the Bush administration’s plan to press Iraq to allow the international inspectors to return, saying it won’t deter Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, but will allow him more time to delay democratic process.
Sen. Fred Thompson, the top Republican on the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee’s proliferation panel said, “It just means another cat-and-mouse game, at which point [Saddam] would run to the United Nations and get his friends there to protect him with regard to whatever he’s doing,”

Former weapons inspectors say there's no indication Saddam will drop plans to develop weapons of mass destruction and the ability to deliver them to distant shores.
"It appears that most of the proposals for getting inspectors back into Iraq are based on the premise that 'any inspectors are better than none,'" said Richard Spertzel, who was the United Nations' chief biological-weapons inspector in Iraq from 1994 to 1999.

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Washington Post
March 3, 2002
Pg. 1

Pakistani Scientist Who Met Bin Laden Failed Polygraphs, Renewing Suspicions

By Peter Baker, Washington Post Foreign Service
ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- It didn't seem all that strange to his son when Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood began spending part of his retirement in Afghanistan working on charity projects. But he was curious enough after one of those trips to ask his father if he had met Osama bin Laden there. "He said no," the son recalled.
Only after his father was arrested did Asim Mahmood learn the truth. His father had met with bin Laden twice. "What were you doing with him?" Asim said he demanded. "Why did you meet with him?"
Those are the same questions still being asked by intelligence officials here and in Washington. Mahmood was no ordinary retiree-philanthropist but one of the top nuclear scientists in Pakistan. In addition to lying to his son, intelligence officials concluded, Mahmood had failed a half-dozen lie detector tests they gave him.
The mysterious case of the Pakistani scientist touched off alarms in the West, and CIA Director George J. Tenet raced to Islamabad to personally look into the matter last fall. But four months of investigation by U.S. and Pakistani authorities have failed to yield a definitive explanation of what Mahmood was doing in Afghanistan before the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States. Was he handing over nuclear secrets to bin Laden, or has he been caught up in an investigation built largely on suspicion and circumstance?
Pakistani authorities maintain that whatever he might have discussed with bin Laden, Mahmood did not possess the specialized knowledge necessary to build a weapon by himself, and they decided in January not to prosecute.
Yet U.S. officials said they remain dissatisfied and have pressed Pakistan to keep Mahmood under wraps. He remains on the U.S. list of designated terrorists, his assets have been frozen and he lives under a form of house arrest with a guard watching over him 24 hours a day.
No evidence has emerged that bin Laden has obtained nuclear weapons, but he is believed by diplomats and intelligence agencies to have made serious attempts to secure them. "They were knocking on every door. They were trying every avenue," said an Arab diplomat who monitored al Qaeda activity from here. "This was for them the future. Why not? It's a weapon of mass destruction, so why not try to get hold of it? Whether it was biological, germ, chemical, gas, they were looking into every sort of possible thing."
They may have turned to Mahmood, who admired the radical Taliban militia that controlled Afghanistan, a neighbor of Pakistan's. He also held unusual views on such topics as the role of sunspots, genies and palm-reading in modern society. A 38-year veteran of Pakistan's nuclear program, Mahmood spent years working on a process to enrich uranium, and rose to chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.
His work did not focus on weapons construction, a fact that has convinced authorities and some independent specialists that he would not have been much use to bin Laden. Yet Mahmood helped develop the Kahuta plant near Islamabad that produces enriched uranium for bombs. Before his retirement he was head of the Khosab reactor in the Punjab region that produces weapons-grade plutonium. The production of such fissile materials has long been considered a key obstacle to any terrorists trying to build weapon.
Still, some nuclear experts maintain that the difficulty of creating fissile material means that a terrorist might be forced to try to buy it on the black market. As a result, investigators theorize that bin Laden might have been using Mahmood mainly to find other scientists who could have helped him use such purloined material to build a nuclear device or an unsophisticated "dirty bomb" that could spread radioactive material through conventional explosives.
Either way, Mahmood's philosophy seemed to make him an obvious target for Islamic radicals seeking a collaborator. Pakistani officials said he advocated the massive development of weapons-grade material to help arm

other Islamic countries. After he publicly and vociferously argued against government plans to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, he was demoted, and he eventually retired under pressure in 1999.

"Mahmood was one of the nuclear hawks," said Rifaat Hussain, a former Pakistani official who now heads the Defense and Strategic Studies Department at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad. "People say he was a very capable scientist and very capable engineer, but he had this totally crazy mind-set."

Mahmood represented a faction of scientists in the Pakistani nuclear program who promoted extreme Islamic views and became increasingly disgruntled with the country's more moderate leadership. "There are lots of them over there," said Pervez Hoodbhoy, a nuclear physicist at Quaid-i-Azam. "In recent years it's become a quite frightening place to go to. You see all these long beards."

After his retirement, Mahmood established a charitable organization that operated in Afghanistan. Authorities in Pakistan began focusing on Mahmood's activities last fall after receiving a tip from U.S. intelligence officials. Investigators suspected the organization was a front for dealings with bin Laden.

On Oct. 23, the Pakistani secret service arrested Mahmood, a fellow former government nuclear scientist, Abdul Majid, and five associates from the purported charity.

Most of the men were soon released, but Pakistan held Mahmood and Majid for two months for intensive interrogations conducted jointly with U.S. investigators.

The investigation established that Mahmood met with Taliban leader Mohammad Omar and bin Laden and discussed nuclear weapons with bin Laden. In an interview at his family's home here, Asim Mahmood said that his father had met with bin Laden twice and that bin Laden grilled him about how to build a bomb. But he insisted that his father sought out bin Laden only to solicit help with the charity and that he refused to trade in nuclear secrets.

"My father never went along," Asim Mahmood said. Bin Laden "asked him about how to make a bomb and things like that. But my father wouldn't help him. He told him, 'It's not so easy, you can't just build a bomb, you can't just do it with a few thousand [Pakistani] rupees. You need a big institution. You should forget it.' "

"He had to meet Osama bin Laden because he was trying to convince him to make a polytechnic college in Kabul," said Asim Mahmood, a 33-year-old physician. "My father thought, 'He's a rich man, he's got so much influence there, maybe he could help.' "

According to Pakistani sources, the nuclear scientist said during interrogation that bin Laden suggested he already had fissile material to build a bomb, having obtained it from former Soviet republics through a militant Islamic group, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Bin Laden asked Mahmood to help find other Pakistani scientists more versed in the mechanics of bomb-building, the sources said.

A U.S. source said Mahmood failed polygraph examinations during his questioning. Asim Mahmood confirmed that his father took "six or seven" lie detector tests and failed, but he called the technology unreliable. Although he said his father initially lied to him about bin Laden, Asim Mahmood said he has accepted his father's explanation that the whole situation was misinterpreted. Asim Mahmood also acknowledged that a diagram describing a helium balloon to disperse anthrax spores was found last fall in the building that housed his father's charity in Kabul, but he said it was planted by authorities after the building was abandoned.

Approached in the garden of the gated, two-story house where he lives under constant guard, the elder Mahmood declined to comment. Neither of the scientists is permitted to give interviews. "We're not allowed to see you," Majid said when reached by telephone at his home. "The restriction has been made by your government. Your government and our government don't allow us. I have given the truth to the investigators, but we are not permitted to tell it to anybody else. . . . We have done nothing, only welfare work."

Majid quickly hung up, afraid of the consequences of speaking longer, saying, "Even this telephone call is under observation."

Pakistan became the seventh country known to test a nuclear device when it set off underground bombs in 1998 in response to similar tests by arch-rival India. Analysts say they believe Pakistan has enough fissile material to assemble 30 to 40 warheads, and U.S. officials have been anxious about the security of the program.

But independent specialists cast doubt on whether Mahmood and Majid could have given bin Laden enough help to build a bomb. "They didn't deal with the weapons program, they had nothing to do with the designing of nuclear devices," said Zahid Malik, a biographer and friend of Abdul Qadeer Khan, the former head of Pakistan's nuclear program.

"He may not actually have much more knowledge than you would get from an undergraduate degree in nuclear physics," Zia Mian, a Pakistani nuclear scientist now based at Princeton University, said of Mahmood. "My suspicion is if you gave him a bucket full of plutonium he wouldn't know what to do with it, because he never worked with nuclear weapons, as far as we know."

Mahmood grew up in India and moved with his family to a small village 25 miles outside of Lahore after Pakistan was created by the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. He spent his childhood in poverty. He won a

scholarship to the University of Engineering and Technology in Lahore and, later, a job in the nascent Pakistani atomic energy program. He spent nearly six years in the 1960s in Manchester, England, where he earned a master's degree in nuclear engineering.

His career was marked by bureaucratic successes -- 10 patents, a top civilian award, recognition for his work in detecting leaks of radioactive water. But it also had moments of turbulence. He was replaced as head of the uranium-enrichment program by Khan, who was later recognized as the father of Pakistan's nuclear program for his pioneering work -- an event that started a lifetime feud between the two men.

Mahmood was investigated for two years in the 1970s because of suspicions that he was secretly a member of the Qadyani sect, an offshoot of Islam founded in the 19th century by a man claiming to be the manifestation of the prophet Muhammad. Members of the sect are often persecuted in Pakistan for not being genuine Muslims, but Mahmood eventually satisfied authorities that he was a true believer.

Indeed, his religious beliefs seem to have deepened as the years passed. In 1986, he founded the Holy Koran Research Foundation to explore the intersection between Islam and science, and began writing books advancing provocative theories.

In "Mechanics of the Doomsday and Life After Death," published in 1987, he asserted that natural catastrophes happened in locations where moral degradation has taken hold. In 1998, he published "Cosmology and Human Destiny" arguing that sunspots have determined the course of world events such as World War II, revolutions against colonial power in India, Vietnam and the Philippines and the Communist takeover of Eastern Europe.

Mahmood also became a practiced palm-reader and talked about the role of genies, the spirits called djinnis in the Koran. Once clean-shaven, Mahmood grew a long, unkempt beard as the Taliban and conservative Muslims require, and came under the influence of Israr Ahmad, a prominent, pro-Taliban radical Islamic cleric.

Ahmad styles himself as the "emir" of Tanzeem-e-Islami, an organization whose 2,000 members pledge loyalty to him. In an interview at the religious academy he runs in Lahore, Ahmad said he wants to foster a true Islamic state similar to the one the Taliban attempted. The cleric called the conflict that began in Afghanistan last fall "the last war between Islam and the infidels."

Ahmad, who asserted that the Israeli secret service and not bin Laden carried out the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, said Mahmood started coming to him in the late 1980s, when the cleric was shown preaching on television regularly.

"He's a practicing Muslim," Ahmad said of Mahmood, adding that Pakistani authorities went after Mahmood only to please the Americans. "Our government became oversensitive about these issues."

After his retirement in 1999, Mahmood founded Ummah Tameer-e-Nau (Islamic Reconstruction), an agency purportedly devoted to relief and reconstruction work in Afghanistan. Mahmood appointed Ahmad as the group's patron and traveled to Afghanistan several times, ostensibly to work on projects related to the organization.

Mahmood recruited others to help, including Sheik Mohammad Tufail, chief executive of Tufail F.W. Fabrication, an engineering firm in Lahore. Tufail was arrested in October and held for two months while being interrogated about his involvement in Mahmood's organization.

"It was exclusively a charitable thing," said Tufail's son, Sheik Mohammed Zubair, 43, sitting in the company's offices in Lahore, where a photograph of Pakistan's first nuclear test in 1998 hung from the wall. "It was just to rehabilitate those people, especially the people with no means. . . . To tell you the truth, we were never aware of Osama bin Laden or -- what's the other's name? -- Mullah Omar until the World Trade Center."

Among the charity's projects were a mill that had just begun producing flour when it was bombed by U.S. warplanes last fall, ambulance units in Kabul and a 12,350-acre land development near Kandahar, according to those involved.

"It was a legitimate project," investor Mohammed Hayat said of the land deal. "They wanted to level the ground and put in some tubes and wells and get it ready for cultivation. There is absolutely nothing [sinister about it]. . . . They were not interested in atomic bombs or anything."

Staff writers Bob Woodward and Barton Gellman in Washington and special correspondent Kamran Khan in Pakistan contributed to this report.

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Albuquerque Journal
February 27, 2002
Pg. 1

Sandia Tests May Lead To New Nuke

Lab Research Targets Bunkers

By John Fleck, Journal Staff Writer

Sandia National Laboratories is testing hardware that could be used for a new nuclear warhead to attack underground bunkers, labs President C. Paul Robinson said Tuesday.

Sandia researchers are using a large cannon to fire projectiles at rock and steel targets, Robinson said, simulating the forces involved when a warhead slams into the earth at high speed.

The tests are being used to develop conceptual nuclear weapons designs, Sandia vice president Joan Woodard said, and the military has not placed any orders.

To succeed, an earth-penetrating warhead must survive its collision with the earth and burrow underground before exploding.

The technologies being studied also could be used for warheads armed with conventional explosives, Robinson said.

No new warhead has been ordered, but federal defense officials have asked Sandia and the other U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories to study what would be needed to build a new bunker-busting bomb.

Robinson's comments came during a briefing for reporters Tuesday afternoon prior to his annual "State of the Labs" talk to community leaders at the Sheraton Old Town.

Robinson said the state of the labs was "in high gear," with Sandia researchers working on a range of anti-terror projects in addition to the new nuclear warhead design studies.

On the war against terror, workers used a Sandia-developed decontamination foam to clean up after anthrax mail attacks and Sandia radiation experts have helped the U.S. Postal Service set up equipment to decontaminate mail.

In Afghanistan, Robinson said, aircraft-mounted radar designed at Sandia has been used to make detailed airstrike target maps.

The result of the expanded work has been a growing budget and work force.

This year's budget at Sandia is $1.7 billion, up 8.5 percent from last year.

Sandia grew by 200 workers last year, according to Woodard, with a work force of 7,600, 6,400 of them based in Albuquerque.

Similar job growth is expected again this year, Woodard said.

The labs' subcontractor work force also is growing, she said, with another 2,000 subcontractor employees working at Sandia on any given day.

Work on the bunker-busting warhead design is part of an expanding nuclear weapons budget at Sandia. For 2003, the Bush administration has asked for a 13 percent increase in spending at Sandia on nuclear weapons work.

During much of the 1990s, Robinson said, the labs' nuclear weapons design skills were atrophying. In the last year, Sandia and the nation's other two weapons labs, Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore, have been asked to form small nuclear weapons design teams to look at advanced concepts for next-generation nuclear explosives.

"I've asked the labs to put together a small group at each location that lets new designers work with old hands to think about and explore what might be possible," Energy Undersecretary John Gordon told members of Congress in a Feb. 14 hearing.

A classified study in the late 1990s code-named SAND DUNE looked at the use of nuclear weapons as a tool to attack underground targets, which might include stockpiles of chemical or biological weapons.

Robinson said the new studies build on a nuclear weapon designed in the late 1980s. The warhead underwent explosive tests at the Nevada Test Site and was certified for manufacturing, but was then shelved before any were built, he said.

"We picked it up as a point of departure," Robinson said of the old design.

In the mid-1990s, Sandia weaponeers designed a new steel case for an existing warhead, the B61 bomb, so it could survive slamming into the earth, digging down before exploding.

Making the same thing work with a missile warhead is a much more difficult challenge, Robinson said, because of the higher speed at which the missile slams into the earth.

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Korea Herald
March 5, 2002

S. Korea, U. S. To Develop Strategy On North‘s Weapons

By Hwang Jang-jin, Staff reporter

South Korean and U.S. military authorities are pushing for a joint study to develop a comprehensive strategy to cope with North Korea’s missiles and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), Seoul officials said yesterday.

The government-level study will be aimed at working out concrete measures for their joint efforts to reduce the North’s military threat and proliferation of weapons, they said.

“South Korea has recently proposed to the United States launching a joint study on the North’s missiles and WMDs. The U.S. defense officials responded positively to our suggestion,” a ranking Defense Ministry official said on condition of anonymity.

Defense Minister Kim Dong-shin also said yesterday that Seoul is considering conducting the joint study with Washington in a text prepared for his address to the National Assembly Defense Committee.

The plan indicates that South Korea is willing to take a more active role in addressing concerns about the North’s nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, in an apparent departure from its earlier position that the matter should be discussed between the United States and North Korea.

“(South Korea) can no longer remain distant from the issues and leave them to the United States and North Korea, as the U.S. government puts top security policy priority on the threat of WMDs and terrorists armed with them,” he said.

The study is seen as a measure to follow up on an agreement made by the leaders of the two nations last month to cooperate closely to resolve the North’s missiles and WMDs issues.

After a summit with his U.S. counterpart, George W. Bush, President Kim Dae-jung said the two leaders had no differences in their views on the issues of the North’s missiles and WMDs. He added that they had agreed to resolve the issues through dialogue.

The ministry official said the proposal was made following a successful joint project between the two nations to reduce military tension on the Korean Peninsula.

Last Wednesday, defense authorities of two nations unveiled the result of their eight-month study on measures to build trust with the communist nation.

The measures include inter-Korean military exchanges, consultations and the opening of regular channels to prevent accidental conflict.

Ministry spokesman Hwang Eui-don said the study on trust-building measures is the first in a succession of Korean-U.S. programs that will form a four-stage roadmap toward peace.

The proposal was reported to the presidents and top security and foreign policymakers in Seoul and Washington recently, he said.

The study was first proposed by U.S. officials and was conducted by working-level experts at the Korean Defense Ministry, the U.N. Command stationed in South Korea, U.S. Forces Korea and the Combined Forces Command.

The United States is stepping up pressure on North Korea over its alleged development and sales of WMDs, missiles and related technology.

According to a recent CIA report, North Korea continues to export ballistic missiles to the Middle East, South Asia and North Africa. The report also said North Korea will have ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States by 2015.

Pyongyang is also believed to have amassed up to 5,000 tons of biochemical weapons in its arsenal and is capable of cultivating lethal germs, including anthrax and smallpox, according to a Defense Ministry report.

The Bush administration has offered to resume talks on a broad range of issues, including missiles and WMDs, but the North has yet to respond.

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(Editor's Note: Hyperlinks for two related GAO reports follow article.)
Washington Times
March 5, 2002
Pg. 10

Missile-Defense Success Exaggerated, GAO Says

The Pentagon and contractors exaggerated the success of the nation's first missile defense test in 1997, ignoring a flawed sensor that had trouble distinguishing a warhead from a decoy, congressional investigators said yesterday.
The Pentagon called the findings outdated.
Contractors TRW and Boeing, who jointly built the system that was tested, played down the problems, as did a Massachusetts Institute of Technology review team, according to investigators from the General Accounting Office.

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Missile Defense: Review of Allegations About an Early National Missile Defense Flight Test. GAO-02-125, February 28.

http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-02-125

Missile Defense: Review of Results and Limitations of an Early National Missile Defense Flight Test. GAO-02-124, February 28.

http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-02-124

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Washington Times
March 4, 2002
B2

Terrorism Worries Nuclear Plant's Neighbors

By Stephen Manning, Associated Press
LUSBY, Md. — Peace of mind for Frank Parker comes from the roar of a jet airplane overhead.
The military planes circling his home in southern Calvert County also fly over the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, offering Mr. Parker and his neighbors a sense of added security.
Lusby residents always have been aware of potential dangers from the plant — accidents or leaks that could lead to the spread of dangerous radioactivity. But those worries were remote until September 11.
After that, the fear of the unthinkable, a terrorist strike on the plant from the ground or from a plane crashing into the facility, became more real. It is why Mr. Parker listens for the jets every day, believing they keep watch for any attacks from the air.
"It's a frightening subject to think about. I think everybody has apprehensions about what might happen," he said, standing outside a drugstore in downtown Lusby.
Sitting on a bluff overlooking the Chesapeake Bay, Calvert Cliffs was completed in 1974. Its two reactors provide enough energy for half a million homes. It employs 1,200 workers and brings in big tax revenues for the region.
"People regard the power plant as a good citizen," said David Rogers, the Calvert County health officer. "It operates in a way that everybody is comfortable with."

Just 50 miles from the nation's capital, however, the power plant — combined with reports that terrorists may target power plants — causes some jitters, said Dave Hale, president of the county Board of Commissioners.
"You hear things out of Washington that power plants are a top risk, and it makes people think a lot more than they did a year ago," he said.
Maryland recently accepted an offer from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for 160,000 doses of potassium iodide. That would be enough for each resident living within 10 miles of Calvert Cliffs in Calvert, St. Mary's and Dorchester counties to receive two pills. It also includes enough doses for people in Cecil and Harford counties who live within 10 miles of the Peach Bottom plant in Pennsylvania.
The pills are meant to be a first line defense for people against deadly radiation in the event of a leak. State and local officials have not decided when and how the pills will be distributed.
Plans to obtain the pills were discussed well before September 11, said Mike Sharon, chief of the emergency response division of the Maryland Department of the Environment. But public worries after the attacks made the choice to take the pills clearer.
"Sure, it factored into our decision," he said. "The public concern helped prompt the decision."
Security at Calvert Cliffs also has been tightened since September. The facility remains on its highest alert level and likely will for a while, said plant spokesman Karl Neddenien.
He won't say what security measures have been taken or even whether U.S. military jets fly over the site. Nearby Patuxent River Naval Air Station assists with security, he said, but a spokesman for the base said its planes aren't patrolling over the plant.
Maps and some plant information have been deleted from the facility's Web site. The visitor center is closed, and public tours of the plant have been scrapped. The Coast Guard and state Department of Natural Resources patrol the water in front of the plant.
Federal officials have said there are no specific threats against any of the country's 103 nuclear power reactors. However, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued an alert to plants in January warning that terrorists might be planning an attack using a hijacked commercial airliner. That information was uncorroborated and later deemed not a credible threat.
Calvert Cliff's reactors, control room and storage areas for spent fuel are shielded by buildings designed to withstand hurricanes, tornadoes and other natural disasters, Mr. Neddenien said.
But there's no conclusive evidence the reactor could withstand a hit from a jet airplane.
"We cannot verify we could withstand that kind of impact," he said.
That poses a problem for current emergency plans in the event of an accident at the plant. Protocol would be to evacuate nearby residents, Mr. Sharon said, a plan that depends on early warning of a potential radioactive release. With an attack, there may not be enough time.
That bothers Mr. Parker. He lives near the bay, where only one road leads to Route 4, the highway that runs the length of the county.
"If they have enough damage at the power plant to pass out pills, those of us at the end of the street won't know about it. We'll be gone," he said.
The potassium iodide pills provide comfort to some residents, though. The county chapter of the League of Women Voters lobbied for the state to accept the pills.
"Why not? It's free," said Barbara Fetterhoff, one of the group's presidents who also lives near the plant. "We who live within 10 miles were very concerned."
Whether the pills will provide much protection is also questionable. They protect the thyroid against radioactive iodine, Mr. Sharon said, but not against other dangerous radioactive gases.
Mr. Sharon said the pills are safe to take, but some residents wonder about potential side effects.
"For me, with all kinds of health problems, I don't know whether it will work for me or against me," said Pat Jarboe, who works at a middle school a few miles from the plant.
But for many, all the talk about pills and terrorists does little to shake their confidence in the safety of the plant. That includes Pat Buehler, who runs his family's market in St. Leonard, a small crossroads town just north of Lusby.
"I never even think about that power plant," he said, sitting at a table outside the shop. "And I'm only three miles away from it."

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US Anti-Terror Unit To Be Deployed In Korea

By Sohn Suk-joo, Staff Reporter

The United States, which will participate in the World Cup tournament in Korea, will contribute an anti-terrorist military team while stepping up air defense over the Korean peninsula during the global soccer event.

In a bid to deter possible biochemical terrorist attacks, the U.S., which keeps 37,000 troops here, will send a special platoon to Seoul before the Word Cup finals begin on May 31, the Defense Ministry said yesterday.

The unit, which includes cars equipped with a biological integrated detection system (BIDS), will be deployed around major soccer stadiums along with Korean anti-terror units throughout the global soccer event, ministry officials said.

Its specially designed cars are able to detect germs within three minutes of biochemical attacks before activating decontamination mode.

The U.S. also plans to increase the number of deployments of its airborne warning control system (AWACS) aircrafts, which are deployed in Japan, to protect against possible aggression from North Korea before and during the World Cup soccer tournament.

Currently, AWACS planes fly two times a month across the Korean peninsula in tandem with U2 spy planes to gather intelligence under the command of NORAD (North American Aerospace Command) in Colorado, according to sources.

Military officials from South Korea and the U.S. have also agreed to coordinate their combined forces for emergency situations, saying that military helicopters will be ready to provide transportation in case of medical emergencies and search and rescue mission.

``We will invite three French officers who are experts on anti-terror measures this month to listen to their experience during the World Cup finals in France," Col. Lee Hong-ki, chief of the joint operations at the Defense Ministry.

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