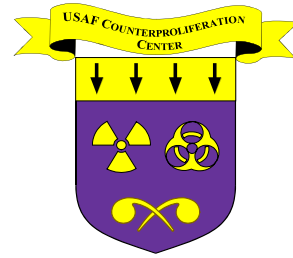


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USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER

CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL



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Bio-terror attack in any part of world 'would hit Ireland'

The Irish Examiner 05 Apr 2002

By Fionnuala Quinlan, Health Correspondent

THE Government was last night urged to invest heavily in measures to protect against bio-terrorists, as experts warned that an attack on any part of the world could hit Ireland.

American bio-terrorism expert, Dr Kristy Murray said investment and preparation were key to minimising the impact of an attack involving deadly toxins such as smallpox, anthrax or botulism.

"Any threat anywhere in the world is going to affect everyone. There is so much mobility between the US and Europe that any threat to the US will also threaten Europe.

Dr Murray, public health specialist at the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, warned that biological agents are not difficult or expensive to produce.

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist or a lot of money to produce these agents. It can be a poor man's weapon and at the same time cause a lot of harm," she said.

In 1999, the US Government invested \$121 million in bio-warfare prevention, but in the wake of September 11, they granted \$2 billion to the Centre for Disease Control.

Speaking at the Irish Medical Organisation conference in Killarney yesterday, Dr Murray outlined how the US had radically stepped up prevention and control measures in the wake of September 11.

IMO public health specialist Dr Joe Barry called on the Government to follow suit. "Ireland is vulnerable. We are talking about the health of humans, not sheep," he said, urging the Government to tackle the threat in the same way as the foot and mouth epidemic.

Director of the National Disease Surveillance Centre, (NDSC) Dr Darina O'Flanagan said the Government had stockpiled 600,000 doses of smallpox vaccine. "We secured that against a lot of competition from other countries and we were lucky to be able to get it," she said.

However, she said there were no plans to vaccinate the public in advance of an attack, as one in each million people vaccinated die of the disease.

The NDSC has recommended that public health staff be available around the clock to ensure rapid treatment, that the stock of smallpox vaccine be increased and that designated hospitals be equipped with special protective equipment.

GPs, public health staff and A&E workers are due to receive guidelines on recognising an outbreak of the six most dangerous toxins - anthrax, smallpox, plague, botulism, tularemia, and viral haemorrhagic fevers such as ebola or marburg.

http://www.online.ie/news/irish_examiner/viewer.adp?article=1706179

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Moscow Times
April 5, 2002
Pg. 3

Bushehr Reactor Tops Iranian Talks

By Tim Vickery, The Associated Press

Visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi and Russian officials on Thursday discussed the final phase of construction of a Russian-built nuclear reactor in Iran -- a project that has caused alarm in the United States and cast a continual shadow over U.S.-Russian relations.

Moscow has dismissed U.S. warnings that the \$800 million light-water reactor in Bushehr could help Iran develop nuclear weapons, and insisted the plant would remain under international control.

The Bushehr reactor is set to be built by December 2003 and start up by 2005. Officials from the two countries have discussed plans for building a second reactor at the same plant.

"Guided by the results of work on the first power unit, the sides are now discussing the possibility of completing construction of the second unit," said Viktor Kozlov, the head of Atomstroieksport company, which is building the Bushehr plant.

Kozlov said that a total of 5,000 tons of equipment, including the reactor's body, had already been shipped to Iran. About 3,900 Russian and Iranian workers are building the reactor, Kozlov said, according to Itar-Tass.

Alongside concern about the Bushehr plant, U.S. officials have alleged that some Russian companies were leaking missile technology to Iran. Speaking to reporters in Athens, Greece, Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov reiterated Moscow's strong denial that Russia had assisted Iran's missile or nuclear weapons program.

"Russia's alleged supply of nuclear or missile technologies to Iran has been discussed for a long time, but it is nothing but a myth," Ivanov said. At the same time, he said, Russia would continue selling conventional weapons to Tehran.

Meanwhile, in a university speech Thursday, Kharrazi voiced concern about the U.S. military presence in Central Asia, which President Vladimir Putin has accepted calmly. "It's we, the countries of the region, who must take care of security in Central Asia," he said, according to Itar-Tass.

In his talks with Russian officials, Kharrazi also discussed the status of the oil-rich Caspian Sea. Kharrazi predicted that Iraq's recent proposal to suspend oil exports to the United States as a lever to affect the Middle East conflict would work only if all oil-producing Islamic countries "make a unanimous decision," Interfax reported.

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New York Times
April 5, 2002

New Case Of Anthrax Is Tied To Bare Hands

By The Associated Press

ATLANTA, April 4 — A Texas laboratory worker who contracted skin anthrax last month probably got it because he was not wearing gloves when he handled vials of spores collected from last fall's mail attacks, the government said today.

The worker handled the spores a day after cutting his jaw while shaving, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported. He then apparently touched his face and developed an anthrax sore on his jaw.

The man is taking antibiotics and is recovering, the centers said.

His was the first known anthrax case in the United States since the mail attacks last fall that killed 5 people and sickened 13.

None of the 40 workers at the Texas laboratory had been vaccinated against anthrax, the centers said. The agency said the case highlighted the need for workers who regularly handle anthrax specimens to be vaccinated against the disease. Workers at many laboratories have been.

Neither the worker nor the laboratory was identified.

The agency said the incident apparently happened on March 1 as the worker was moving vials without wearing gloves, contrary to federal health recommendations.

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Los Angeles Times
April 4, 2002

Safety Is Still On Regarding Weapons Of Mass Destruction

By Avigdor Haselkorn

The violence in Israel and the occupied territories has stirred fears that the conflict will spiral into the use of unconventional weaponry. These fears are exaggerated.

While it is true that if the Palestinians possessed weapons of mass destruction they would have little compunction about using them, the fact that they haven't been used strongly suggests they lack them.

The political groundwork for such an escalation, though, has already been laid down by Yasser Arafat in his repeated accusations that Israel has used poison gas against his people. And many Palestinians believe that such attacks could indeed defeat Israel, or at least punish it for its "crimes." Israel has no incentive to resort to any means other than those currently employed in the conflict.

For Israel, unconventional weapons are an option of last resort.

Although Palestinian militants have dabbled in chemical warfare since the 1970s, their efforts have been amateurish. For example, since 1994 traces of various toxic chemicals have been found in at least five Palestinian bombing attacks. The most recent time was Dec. 1, when at least one of two bombs detonated simultaneously by suicide attackers in downtown Jerusalem contained rat poison.

In all cases, however, the blasts destroyed the pesticides' potency, thus preventing chemical injuries to the victims.

The situation could change, though, if some outside element were to undertake a mission using unconventional weapons on behalf of the Palestinians, or provide them the required arms and training.

For example, it has been reported that Nabil Oukal--Osama bin Laden's envoy to Gaza and the West Bank who was arrested by Israeli security in June 2000--was interested in poisoning water sources.

More worrisome, the London Times on Jan. 2 quoted "Israeli intelligence chiefs" expressing concern that the leaders of the military wing of Hamas living in Qatar, Syria and Jordan were "becoming ambitious and are trying to get hold of sarin and other nerve gases."

It is unclear if Bin Laden's Al Qaeda organization could pull off a major attack using weapons of mass destruction.

Using Sept. 11 as an indicator, it would seem more likely that such an attack would come in the form of a suicide mission on a country's own chemical, biological or nuclear facilities.

But in a state so preoccupied with security as Israel, such an attack would not be easy.

Moreover, rogue states like Syria or Iran have so far refrained from transferring toxic agents to any of the terrorist organizations they sponsor. They apparently appreciate the risks that such a consignment would potentially expose them to.

The exception could be Iraq's Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi leader believes that the Bush administration is gunning for him. His capacity to deliver chemical or biological agents via missiles or airplanes is insufficient to deter the U.S., and a desperate Hussein could view Palestinian suicide terrorists as an attractive option to deliver his weapons of mass destruction.

The Iraqi leader already is doing all he can to encourage suicide attacks against Israelis as a means to interfere with Washington's war plans. Even if he were to go, he would rather be remembered by his last "gift" to the Palestinians than by his chemical attacks on Kurds and Iranians.

But Israel is very much on guard for such nightmares and would do all in its power to preempt the threat. Even if its efforts failed, an unconventional Israeli response would be far from automatic. Much would depend on the impact of the attack. For instance, past Palestinian chemical warfare has not elicited harsh Israeli responses because the attacks themselves were so ineffective.

After the 1991 Gulf War, then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir hinted he would have kept his cool as long as Israeli casualties were light--even if Hussein had unleashed weapons of mass destruction against Israel. Shamir believed that his restraint would have enabled the U.S. to solve the Hussein problem once and for all.

Today, the situation is similar, and the Israeli civilian population is better protected against chemical or biological agents than a decade ago. Still, it is certain that if Israel suffered mass casualties as a result of a Palestinian terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction, its response would be overwhelming. Yet it need not be a response using unconventional weapons. Indeed, given the growing presence of U.S. troops in Iraq's vicinity, there is a good chance it will not be.

Avigdor Haselkorn is the author of "The Continuing Storm: Iraq, Poisonous Weapons and Deterrence" (Yale University Press, 1999).

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Washington Times
April 5, 2002
Pg. 19

Nuclear Terrorism: Facts And Fantasies

By S. Fred Singer

Following the attacks of September 11, there has been much concern about further acts of terrorism, with nuclear terrorism heading the list. For some reason, the public seems to be more afraid of radioactivity than poison gas or even biological agents. This even though radioactivity is easy to detect, rarely lethal and cannot cause epidemics as can viruses or bacteria. This fear is being exploited by opponents of nuclear power who keep coming up with a multitude of scary scenarios.

Three general types of nuclear terrorism are much in the news: One is the so-called "dirty" bomb, which does not create but simply disperses radioactive material, packed around conventional explosives. Another concern is release of radioactivity from an aircraft impact or the internal sabotage of an operating nuclear reactor or of storage of highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel. Green activists, who would love to shut down reactors, assiduously promote this particular fear.

Finally, we have the possible explosion of a nuclear bomb. Of the three, the dirty bomb makes no sense at all; impact or sabotage is extremely unlikely to succeed. Only a real nuclear bomb using fissionable uranium or plutonium poses a serious threat, but even there countermeasures can be taken.

The dirty bomb is mostly hype. A report based on a three-year study by the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements claimed that contamination from such an attack would likely extend to several city blocks and that radiation would be "catastrophic but manageable." However, quite simple considerations show that such a bomb is merely a terror weapon without teeth; it would cause panic but it does not kill. And media stories actively promote such panic since the public fears anything that's even remotely connected with radioactivity.

A dirty bomb makes no practical sense. To produce significant radioactivity over an area of, say, 1 square mile, the initial concentration within a small bomb would have to be roughly 10 million times greater and would quickly kill the terrorists trying to assemble the material. The radioactivity also creates large amounts of heat energy, sufficient to melt most containers. What's more, any such bomb would be easy to detect at long distance if it emits gamma rays. We therefore conclude that a dirty bomb is mostly hype.

Similarly, damaging a nuclear reactor by impact or by sabotage is unrealistic. As compared to the World Trade Center towers, a reactor presents a very small target that is difficult to hit. Furthermore, it is protected by at least 3 feet of reinforced concrete, which even a large plane is unlikely to penetrate. On top of all that, it is easy to guard against impact with strategically placed steel towers or steel cables that would break up any aircraft. While they may not stop the plane's engines, the fuel will be spilled before the reactor is hit. The same kind of protection can be provided for the nearby storage of spent fuel, which is also enclosed with thick concrete.

A ground attack is also unlikely to succeed. Even if terrorists could penetrate the normal security barriers, they would find that the control personnel had shut down the reactor. Turning it off can be done quickly. And even if a meltdown could be produced, the thick concrete containment structure prevents the escape of radioactivity into the environment. Chernobyl had no such containment.

In the extremely unlikely event of a total reactor accident, the consequences are less severe than generally pictured. We have already seen the worst scenario that one can imagine: Even so, Chernobyl killed only some 30 people — those who were directly involved in putting out the fire. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the subsequent health effects have been minor: no increases in leukemia or birth defects; only cases of thyroid cancer that could have been avoided by taking protective potassium-iodide pills. Certainly, more people died from the panicky reaction to Chernobyl, including thousands of unnecessary abortions by women in Western Europe who feared the consequences from the release of radiation.

We are left then with the only serious threat: nuclear bombs delivered by ships or even suitcases. But constructing and exploding a nuclear bomb is not a job for amateurs. It requires an infrastructure that can only be provided by a government.

Even if the bomb is stolen, it must come from the arsenal of a known national government. The outstanding technical problems are detection of fissile material by remote sensing and establishing the provenance of the bomb for purpose of retaliation. Both are feasible and — I hope — being worked on. By announcing that we have, or are close to, solutions to these two problems we might achieve deterrence.

In addition, we must have good intelligence and apply vigilance, diplomatic pressure, military threats of retaliation, and even pre-emption. But that's why we elect national leaders and invest in national defense.

S. Fred Singer, a physicist, is emeritus professor of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia and a visiting Wesson Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

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INVESTIGATIONS

A Sophisticated Strain of Anthrax

Last fall FBI profilers announced that the person who sent deadly anthrax-laced letters to news organizations and Capitol Hill was probably a grudge-bearing, sociopathic male laboratory nerd with knowledge of the geography of Trenton, N.J. But a new scientific analysis sent to top government officials suggests the anthrax attacker may be a scientific whiz so smart that he succeeded in making a “weaponized” form of the bacterium more sophisticated than any previously known.

Government sources tell NEWSWEEK that the secret new analysis shows anthrax found in a letter addressed to Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Patrick Leahy was ground to a microscopic fineness not achieved by U.S. biological-weapons experts. The Leahy anthrax—mailed in an envelope that was recovered unopened from a Washington post office last November— also was coated with a chemical compound unknown to experts who have worked in the field for years; the coating matches no known anthrax samples ever recovered from biological-weapons producers anywhere in the world, including Iraq and the former Soviet Union. The combination of the intense milling of the bacteria and the unusual coating produced an anthrax powder so fine and fluffy that individually coated anthrax spores were found in the Leahy envelope, something that U.S. bioweapons experts had never seen.

Hopes that the anthrax genetic code would point to its lab of origin are fading. Insiders now say that the Leahy strain traces back to an anthrax epidemic in Texas cattle in the 1970s, samples from which were very widely distributed. The new chemical findings are so puzzling that sources now fear the FBI's already slow-moving investigation could be set back still further. Using psychological profiles and earlier scientific analyses, the FBI had begun to focus on the possibility that the anthrax letters might have been sent out by a disgruntled scientist or technician who once worked on a U.S. government biological-weapons program. Court records indicate that over the last several years, budget cuts and layoffs at Fort Detrick, the Frederick, Md., Army base which houses the U.S. government's main germ-weapons lab, produced a platoon of disgruntled former employees with microbiological expertise and possible grievances against the government. But investigators question whether any laid-off U.S. government scientist is able enough—and has access to the right equipment—to produce the unusual substance found in the Leahy letter.

One alternative to the theory that the anthrax was produced by a brilliant loner is that it came from a team of scientists with access to sophisticated labs—the kind of team and labs that could be assembled only by a government. U.S. investigators can't rule out the possibility that a foreign government, perhaps Iraq but more likely the former U.S.S.R., could have put together such a team. They have no leads on its possible existence, however. Another possibility is that an American scientific psycho bought the anthrax from a foreign government team. But there is no evidence to back this theory, either.

— *Mark Hosenball, John Barry and Daniel Klaidman*

<http://www.msnbc.com/news/735231.asp?cp1=1>

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U.S. Health Care System Grapples With New Role

Md. Typifies Challenges of Bioterror Response

By Susan Okie

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday, April 7, 2002; Page A03

BALTIMORE

Peter Beilenson is a doctor whose patient is a city. And since last fall's terrorist attacks, Beilenson, Baltimore's health commissioner, has been checking his patient's vital signs first thing every morning.

He looks at how many ambulance runs were made on the previous day, and why. He checks how many children were absent from elementary schools. He watches sales of over-the-counter flu remedies at the city's biggest pharmacies. He tracks how many dead cats and dogs were picked up on city streets: A spike in the number could be the first evidence of the release of a chemical or biological weapon.

"This is . . . an early-warning system," Beilenson said. "You find one of these things askew, you call and check." Beilenson's stepped-up monitoring of his city's well-being reflects a new, unprecedented level of vigilance on the part of public health officials nationwide. In the wake of Sept. 11 and the ensuing anthrax outbreak, state and local health departments -- downsized and starved of funds for decades -- have been catapulted into a critical new role as protectors of national security. And the nation's already overtaxed emergency rooms are trying to plan for a possible flood of casualties.

"Prior to 9-11 we were focused on the HIV-AIDS problem, focused on teenage pregnancy, focused on immunizing kids," said Mohammed Akhter, executive director of the American Public Health Association. "Those things are now on the back burner."

To defend against future bioterrorist attacks, the nation's vast and decentralized health system has begun creating better methods to recognize an attack at once and responding rapidly and decisively. Like Beilenson's city Health Department but on a grander scale, the nation's public health system now resembles an organism trying to grow a nervous system.

But ensuring prompt action is only half the battle: Health officials fear that the possible toll of such an attack could overwhelm an emergency medical care system already operating dangerously near capacity. And so officials around the country have begun searching for ways they might handle the inrush that could follow a terrorist attack.

"Just think about 100 sick people showing up at an emergency room and not having the beds," Akhter said. "In a big emergency, . . . there'd be lines of people outside the hospitals."

Watching for Symptoms

The health of Americans is entrusted to an array of guardians that traditionally have operated independently of one another. They include hospitals and clinics, doctors and managed-care organizations, local and state health departments, agencies in charge of emergency services and disaster planning, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which provides federal funding and support to health departments as well as coordinating the response to major disease outbreaks.

After last fall's events, many public health experts believe this immense network needs to develop keener senses for perceiving threats, nerves to relay information rapidly and a brain to guide the response.

The changes underway in Baltimore -- at the city Health Department and at Maryland state agencies -- reflect changes taking place around the nation. Maryland is in a better position than many states: It has a centralized public health system in which county health departments are staffed by state employees, as well as a nationally recognized statewide network for coordinating emergency responses and treating trauma victims.

In Maryland and elsewhere, statewide planning for mass casualties involving chemical or biological weapons began in the mid-1990s. But to many participants, the drills and scenarios involving such weapons seemed far-fetched -- until Sept. 11.

Now, Jerry Huffman, a systems analyst with the Baltimore Health Department, logs onto his home computer by 5 a.m. most days to begin checking e-mail reports on the previous day's ambulance runs. Shortly after 9, Huffman delivers a sheaf of colored graphs to the health commissioner's office. At a glance, Beilenson can tell whether anything unusual is going on.

The daily statistics are a form of "syndromic surveillance," a means of seeking early clues to disease outbreaks. First used extensively in New York, the approach has been employed by the CDC and by other state and local health departments, especially during crowd-drawing events where health officials worry about terrorist incidents or outbreaks of infectious disease.

Critics of syndromic surveillance argue that it has never picked up a true disease outbreak, raising questions about whether its benefits justify the potential cost of large-scale use. Such systems would not have detected last fall's anthrax outbreak, for example -- it involved too few cases and was identified by reports from individual doctors. The CDC, however, would like to see it used more widely. "I think it's a creative and very important and useful way to better prepare us for bioterrorist events or even new naturally occurring diseases," said Jeffrey P. Koplan, who was CDC director during the anthrax episode.

But alerting officials that something is amiss is only half the equation. If a terrorist attack occurs, containing it will also depend on how hospitals and health departments react.

The anthrax episode tested those reflexes at health departments around the nation. At the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, it transformed the job of Julie Casani, who heads the department's new bioterrorism division, from planning for the unthinkable to coping with a real crisis.

For several weeks during the outbreak -- in which Maryland had three confirmed cases of inhalational anthrax and the department investigated 85 other possible cases -- Casani's Baltimore office became the nerve center relaying information among Maryland's hospitals and doctors, its local health departments and CDC experts.

The staff monitored frequent e-mail advisories from the Health Alert Network, a national communications system linking state and local health departments with the CDC. In turn, they transmitted bulletins to a list of health officials and doctors groups that mushroomed by the day. Casani said the staff waited until evening to send out each day's bulletin because the facts and recommendations changed so fast.

"If we put something out at 3 in the afternoon, by 4 it would have been obsolete," she said.

State and local health officials in Maryland and elsewhere praised the CDC's epidemiologists and researchers for providing superb medical and laboratory expertise. But some echoed the widely voiced skepticism of the agency's ability to provide rapid, decisive guidance during a bioterrorist attack or similar emergency.

Casani noted that the CDC was hampered because scientific understanding of how finely milled anthrax spores would behave was sketchy and changed during the outbreak. And, she added, various federal officials sometimes offered contradictory advice that confused doctors and patients.

"There was no doctor who stood up and said, 'This is what we have, and this is what we're going to do,'" she said.

"We needed a Dr. Giuliani."

Red Alert, Yellow Alert

In the communications center on the fifth floor of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services (MIEMS), operator Norm Gifford fielded calls from Baltimore's ambulances. On Gifford's computer console, a screen listed the 24 hospital emergency rooms in Region 3, the Baltimore area. It was not yet 2 p.m., but already yellow or red boxes had popped up next to more than half the hospitals on the list.

A yellow alert means a hospital's emergency room is so busy that ambulances are instructed to take patients elsewhere unless they are too unstable to travel. A red alert means, "Don't bring anyone who would require intensive care or cardiac monitoring: Our beds in those units are filled."

MIEMS is the state agency that coordinates emergency communications among ambulances and hospitals throughout Maryland. On an average day, Region 3 operators field about 240 calls from ambulance crews ferrying patients to Baltimore area hospitals. It's up to Gifford and other operators to advise crews where to take them.

"At this time of year, flu season, hospitals become overloaded," Andrew J. Pilarski, director of the institute's Emergency Medical Resource Center, said recently. "It's not unusual to look up there and see only a handful of hospitals not on alert."

Health officials said the same pattern is occurring all over the country. In recent years, in response to economic pressures, hospitals have eliminated empty beds, cut staff and trimmed inventories of drugs and supplies. Even at normal times, hospitals in many regions are short of beds, and emergency departments are frequently so full that even critically ill patients must be diverted elsewhere.

Now, health and hospital officials are struggling to draw up detailed plans for dealing with the possible consequences of terrorist attacks. But because the nation's hospital system is operating so close to capacity, experts said, preparing for mass casualties can seem like an exercise in futility.

In Maryland, which has more than 15,000 hospital beds, officials have figured out strategies to free 800 beds at most, said Richard L. Alcorta, state medical director for emergency services at MIEMS. "That is something that we found a little alarming," he said.

Hospitals might be able to reopen unused wards or set up extra beds in medical office buildings, said Frank Monius, assistant vice president for administration at the Maryland Hospital Association. But they would still have to provide doctors, nurses and other workers to care for the additional patients. And in a chemical or biological attack, those workers would need protective gear and the training to use it properly.

Experts said planning for mass casualties is a problem that the federal government and the health system have barely begun to address. Although federal agencies -- the National Institutes of Health and the CDC -- are responsible for supporting medical research and public health, there is no comparable government agency in charge of ensuring the availability of immediate medical care in a disaster, they said.

"Mass casualty medical care must be recognized as a public safety function, and therefore as a government responsibility," said Joseph Barbera, an emergency physician and co-director of the Institute for Crisis, Disaster and Risk Management at George Washington University.

Officials are also worrying about how to gear up laboratory and health department resources to handle disease outbreaks that could be much bigger than the recent anthrax episode. They said it might take years to replace the trained staff, expertise and resources that have been lost to the public health system during the last two decades. Part of the dilemma is deciding how big a disaster to plan for -- and how to get ready without neglecting other important public health duties, such as immunizing children and preventing the spread of AIDS, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

"When it comes to national preparedness, I think there's a minimum level of preparation that should be everywhere," Akhter said. "Because the terrorist picks the agent, picks the time and picks the place. If it happens to be an infectious agent, it's a matter of hours before it spreads to all parts of the country."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A7395-2002Apr6.html>

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Germany's Army Will Step Up Biowarfare Research

Fri Apr 5, 1:33 PM ET

By Hannah Cleaver

BERLIN (Reuters Health) - The German army intends to triple its investment in research into protection against biological weapons, bolstering its research staff working against diseases such as anthrax and bubonic plague from 20 to 60.

It has stressed that the work, to be carried out at the Munich-based Medical Academy's Institute for Microbiology, would be only in protection rather than development of weapons themselves.

Staff Medical Sergeant Joachim Nimmrichter has been quoted by German paper "Sueddeutsche Zeitung" as saying that there were also plans to establish a centre for biowarfare protection from the current institutions for radiobiology, microbiology and chemo-toxicology.

And although improvement in rapid detection of biological weapons would be welcomed by pressure groups, an emphasis on vaccines would be a waste of money, Dr. Jan van Aken, director of the Sunshine Project Germany, told Reuters Health.

He said, "Vaccination to protect the general public is really a waste of time and money. Even if everyone could be persuaded or even forced to accept a vaccination despite the side-effects, by the time everyone was vaccinated against, say, anthrax, the whole world would know about it and those planning the attack would use a different disease."

Van Aken also said that any institute or government that intended to develop or use the weapons would first need a vaccine for its own troops.

He said, "It's awkward having the army do this work. If this was being done by Iraq or Iran they would have been bombed to bits by now."

He called for the research to be brought out into the open, and be conducted by civilian authorities rather than the military. "With the military comes secrecy," he said. "It is all much better done by civilians such as the researchers at the Robert Koch Institute."

Professor Reinhard Kurth, president of the Robert Koch Institute, said he was satisfied that the army also had to develop biological defences for its soldiers, for example when they were sent overseas to contaminated areas.

He said that civilian vaccination programmes should be, and were, being developed independently of what the army was doing--and could also be highly useful to create a buffer of vaccinated people in case of a localised outbreak.

He told Reuters Health, "In my opinion, and it is the general opinion of experts in this field, the potential threat through biological weapons is worse than that from chemical and atomic weapons. Biological agents such as viruses and bacteria move very fast and are far less geographically limited than the others, even though they have terrible

consequences. And since September 11 we have to reckon with a greater criminal energy and money supply than previously considered."

He said one of the main international focuses in the biological weapons field was that of smallpox and warned that the concern and even panic that an outbreak of the disease could spark could be far greater than that caused by the anthrax outbreaks last autumn.

The Berlin-based Institute has recently been promised around 3.5 million euros a year to work on improving the country's "biological security," although some feel this sum should be at least doubled in order for the necessary work to be conducted.

The Sueddeutsche report said the army's main emphasis would be on developing diagnostic techniques, antibiotics and vaccination for a wide range of pathogens.

The German army has an annual budget of 5.2 million euros for biological weapons research, it reported. This compares poorly, say critics, with the US government, which has already signified that it intends to triple its expenditure to reach \$5.9 billion, or 6.7 billion euros, by next year.

http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/nm/20020405/hl_nm/biowarfare_germany_1

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Fight Over Food Supply Safety

Amid fears of terror, Congress, industry disagree on regulations

By Thomas Frank

WASHINGTON BUREAU

April 7, 2002

Washington - Shortly after Sept. 11, the Bush administration and Congress realized how easily a terrorist could wage an attack in the United States using food and raced to strengthen food-safety laws.

But the food industry, through persistent lobbying, blocked and weakened many proposals sought by the administration and Congress aimed at helping contain a foodborne assault.

The result: both houses of Congress have approved measures that officials say will make modest improvements in the largely unregulated areas of food processing and importing. As the House and Senate seek a compromise on their slightly differing bills, the food industry continues seeking to weaken and delay proposed new regulations.

The fight comes as experts and officials warn that a bioterrorist attack on food would be an easy and effective way to incite panic and economic devastation.

Terrorists could import anything from the highly contagious foot-and-mouth disease, which nearly ruined the British beef industry last year, to biological agents developed as agricultural weapons.

A virus wiped on a cow's nose could spread to hundreds of thousands of cattle, forcing them to be destroyed.

Contamination of imported food could scare Americans off eating imports, and a domestic outbreak could crimp U.S. food exports.

Fatalities are possible, but the public health system likely would contain outbreaks and limit deaths, bioterrorism experts say, as the anthrax attacks last fall showed.

"The real power of an agricultural bioterrorism event is the economics of it," said Jerry Jaax, a bioterrorism expert at Kansas State University.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said last fall that he was "more fearful about ... [food safety] than anything else," and that imported food posed the greatest risk. The department's Food and Drug Administration inspects only between 1 percent and 3 percent of imports.

The FDA is responsible for the safety and proper labeling of all domestic and imported food, except for meat, poultry and egg products, which the Agriculture Department regulates. But the FDA has only 150 inspectors for the 132 U.S. ports that receive food shipments, and only 750 inspectors for an estimated 57,000 domestic food processors and plants.

The FDA inspects about 10 percent of the processing plants it regulates each year. The Agriculture Department has an inspector in every meat plant.

Emergency funds allocated last year will add 400 FDA port inspectors and 84 domestic inspectors.

But as Thompson told the food processors association last fall, "It is not simply a matter of money. We also need

enhanced authority to prevent potentially contaminated foods from entering into commercial channels."

Yet Thompson and his staff moved cautiously, meeting with food industry lobbyists and seeking only new controls that "they could get without too much opposition from the food industry," said Caroline Smith DeWaal, food safety director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

Kelly Johnston, chief lobbyist of the National Food Processors Association, said: "We've never been persuaded that the provisions in either of the bills [pending in Congress] are necessary to ensure the FDA has the authority it needs to deal with terrorism. The FDA already has vast authorities on the books now."

In October, Thompson gave Congress a bill with modest new regulations that reflected a substantial food industry victory by not asking that the food industry be empowered to recall contaminated food.

"HHS got talked out of it," said Susan Stout, vice president of federal affairs for the Grocery Manufacturers Association, which argued that food companies recall products quickly on their own and that government-ordered recalls are slowed by legal procedures. "Some of the industry arguments held up."

The victory reflected the food industry's strength and determination to limit new regulations. Food processing in the United States generates \$460 billion a year in revenue. Food processors gave \$14.5 million in federal political contributions in 1999 and 2000, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Johnston, the food processors' lobbyist, was a long-time congressional aide who rose to become executive secretary to the Senate.

"The industry's great fear was that FDA would be given a lot of additional regulatory power that they would then exercise regularly instead of just under circumstances where they thought there was a threat of bioterrorism," said Carol Tucker Foreman, director of the Consumer Federation of America's Food Policy Institute and a former assistant agriculture secretary under President Jimmy Carter.

Two food associations raised concerns last month about new voluntary anti-terrorism guidelines the FDA published, saying they feared some inspectors, or the courts, could interpret them as mandatory.

In another instance, the food processors association opposed giving states any more federal money for food inspections unless states were restricted to using the money only in instances when the federal government declared a health emergency.

"We didn't want to have the federal government subsidize an unnecessary expansion of the state's role in food safety where it really wasn't warranted," said Johnston, the group's lobbyist.

The industry lost that fight as the House and Senate each approved bills providing unrestricted state funding.

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.), a strong advocate of greater controls, said there's little distinction between regulations that protect against bioterrorism and more general regulations.

"I think the industry is being very short-sighted by standing in the way of adequate inspections and regulations with teeth to make sure America's food supply is safe, not only from acts of bioterrorism but from unsanitary conditions," Clinton said.

Clinton sought to address the safety of imports by allowing the FDA to inspect foreign food plants and verify that they meet health standards imposed on domestic plants. The Agriculture Department has that authority. Roger Viadero, the Agriculture Department's inspector general in the 1990s, calls it "the single most important thing in keeping product that doesn't belong here out."

But Clinton's proposal was excluded from a bill the Senate passed in December after the food industry argued the authority is unnecessary and unwieldy because more than 150 countries import FDA-regulated food.

What remains before Congress are proposals to give the FDA new authority to require food companies to register with it, inspect company records, require notice of arriving imports and detain suspect food. The industry is lobbying to weaken those powers, which 27 food associations described in a March 20 letter to Thompson, the health secretary.

Anxious about federal authorities looking through company records, the industry wants to limit access only to when the FDA believes food poses a serious health threat, instead of allowing it any time food is suspected to be adulterated or misbranded - a far broader standard.

Concerned about how registration would be implemented, the industry wants the details to be set by the FDA after soliciting public comments. That process can take several years and could even kill the registration requirement, congressional aides said, because it would be in the hands of the administration, which did not call for registration in its own proposal. The House and Senate bills have no public comment and simply require registration within six months.

"It's a half-loaf," Clinton said.

<http://www.newsday.com/features/food/ny-usfood312658868apr07.story?coll=ny%2Dfoodday%2Dheadlines>

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New York Times
April 8, 2002
Pg. 1

U.S. Warns Russia Of Need To Verify Treaty Compliance

By Judith Miller

The Bush administration has informed Moscow that Washington is curtailing many new disarmament projects because of concern about Russia's compliance with treaties banning chemical and biological weapons, according to senior administration officials.

Some existing projects will also lose additional money, they said.

American law requires that the government decide each year whether Russia is "committed" to complying with its treaty undertakings. In a cable sent last week, the State Department said the United States had not been able to certify that commitment and, therefore, the administration would be unable to start new initiatives or provide new financing for programs to reduce the threat posed by each side's nuclear, biological and chemical arms.

The decision to send the cable is seen as a victory for skeptics of Russia within the White House. Critics had been pushing for months for a tougher stand toward Russia on weapons of destruction and its compliance with arms control treaties, even though the administration has concluded that the programs benefit American national security. The cable, coming a month before President Bush is to meet the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, in Moscow, does not accuse Russia of violating the germ and chemical weapons treaties. Nor has the administration absolutely ruled out a certification in the future.

But the decision puts Moscow on notice that Washington insists on more cooperation and candor with respect to weapons of mass destruction. "This is a signal of our seriousness about compliance on arms control and the need to meet all obligations under the chemical and biological weapons conventions," a senior administration official said. But several arms control advocates called the action disturbing. "It's in our country's interest to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction from leaking out of Russia in any way we can," said Rose Gottemoeller, a former assistant secretary of energy for nonproliferation under President Bill Clinton and now a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "So undercutting these programs is tantamount to shooting yourself in the foot."

The decision to send the cable was prompted by American concern over a range of actions by Moscow, including its recent refusal to share a bio-engineered strain of anthrax developed by Russia's scientists, despite repeated promises to do so. Officials said Russia had also declined to provide a complete history of the decades of secret work on biological and chemical weapons.

The lack of certification affects a range of disarmament activities — from military exchanges to American help in stopping the theft of Russian nuclear warheads. Such projects account for about \$370 million in programs carried out under the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act, an effort started in 1991 on Capitol Hill that has enjoyed strong support from Congress and the Clinton administration, and record budget requests from Mr. Bush.

Officials said the bulk of the \$1.3 billion in projects intended to reduce the threat of unconventional weapons would not be affected by the lack of certification. For example, the \$500 million in disarmament projects supervised by the Department of Energy do not require the certification.

But the approximately \$450 million in programs managed by the Defense Department and the \$70 million run by the State Department will probably be affected, officials said.

Several scheduled visits to discuss new projects have been canceled, officials said. In addition, several State Department projects would soon run short of cash, they said.

The threat reduction program has helped countries in the former Soviet bloc destroy nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and associated infrastructure, and stop the theft or spread of such weapons.

In exchange for American aid and scientific cooperation, the law requires that the administration certify that Russia is "committed" to complying with the treaties it has signed banning and restricting such weapons. While several similar programs permit the president to waive the certification requirement if the program is deemed vital to national security, the law authorizing Cooperative Threat Reduction projects contains no such waiver.

The Clinton administration issued the certification each year and most recently in January 2001. But the Bush administration did not issue the certification when it was due this January. "There was an election," one official said, noting that this administration took a different approach toward treaty commitments.

In March, Mr. Bush's top aides and cabinet members decided to ask Congress to give the administration the authority to waive the certification requirement. The administration has included the request for such authority in the emergency supplemental spending bills for the State Department it sent to Capitol Hill.

Those officials also recommended that the administration inform Russia that it had not issued the certification and, therefore, that there would be no new Cooperation Threat Reduction projects. Nor would existing programs be extended beyond their current level of financing.

House and Senate aides said in interviews last week that while it was likely that Congress would grant the waiver authority, it was unlikely to do so before Mr. Bush travels to Russia to meet with Mr. Putin.

Hard-liners in the administration have grown increasingly disturbed by Russian actions with respect to its chemical and biological weapons treaty commitments. Though the United States has approved plans to help Russia destroy vast stocks of chemical weapons, officials noted, Moscow has yet to acknowledge that it made in Soviet times "fourth generation" chemical weapons agents, which are many times more lethal than the most advanced nerve agents the United States produced.

Concerns about the Soviet offensive biological weapons activities and Russia's ostensibly defensive program are also increasing, several officials agreed. In light of recent accounts from Soviet defectors from the germ weapons program, one official said, it was absurd that Russia continued denying that the Soviet Union had developed and turned pathogens, some of them genetically manipulated to resist antibiotics and vaccines, into terrifying weapons. Moreover, while Western scientists have been able to visit several former Soviet facilities where such weapons were made, Russia has not given any foreigners access to the four biological laboratories that have been controlled by the military. Russia maintains that it is not violating the biological or chemical warfare conventions, and argues that American military labs are not open either.

Administration officials had hoped that the situation would improve after Mr. Bush and Mr. Putin announced at a summit in October that they would expand cooperation against bioterrorism.

But two days before Mr. Putin's arrival for the summit, officials said, Washington was notified that Russia's Export Control Commission had refused to let Russian scientists share with the United States a genetically modified strain of anthrax that its scientists said seemed to defeat Russia's anthrax vaccine — at least in hamsters.

Under a scientific strain exchange agreement concluded during the Clinton administration, Russia was supposed to provide a sample of the strain. Since then, Russia's deputy prime minister has reaffirmed the commission's decision not to share the strain, American officials said.

"Russia's actions, like its declarations about what was done in Soviet times, the lack of transparency in its ostensibly defensive programs, and its refusal to share the strain, among other things, raise serious questions about Russia's willingness to abide by its treaty obligations," one official said.

"What we're trying to do," one senior official said, "is send a signal that we require full compliance with the chemical and biological weapons conventions."

"But we've also made clear in the review of our assistance programs to Russia and the record size of our budget requests that these programs are very much in our own national security interests," the official said. "We're trying to find a way to bring these two goals together."

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London Daily Telegraph

April 8, 2002

Pg. 1

We Are Ready To Hit Iraq, Says Blair

By Andy McSmith and Toby Harnden in Crawford

TONY BLAIR declared for the first time last night that Britain was ready to take military action against Iraq and publicly endorsed President Bush's contentious policy of a "regime change" to oust Saddam Hussein.

Speaking in Texas after a weekend summit with Mr Bush, the Prime Minister brushed aside the concerns of his Labour backbenchers to deliver his toughest message yet that war against Saddam might be inevitable and to emphasise that Britain would act with America.

"We must be prepared to act where terrorism or weapons of mass destruction threaten us," said Mr Blair in his speech at the George Bush Senior Presidential Library in College Station. His audience included George Bush Snr, the former president who led the coalition against Iraq in 1991.

"If necessary, the action should be military and again, if necessary and justified, it should involve regime change," Mr Blair said to sustained applause.

"I have been involved as British Prime Minister in three conflicts involving regime changes - [Yugoslavia's president] Milosevic, the Taliban, and Sierra Leone. Britain is immensely proud of the part our forces have played." Despite their bellicose statements in private and clear intention to attack Saddam's regime when the time is right, American officials have been reluctant to speak openly of military action. Mr Blair's decision to do so will be a boost to the White House.

Mr Blair pledged that there would be no "precipitave action" against Saddam's "brutal" and "detestable" regime but issued a blunt warning to the Iraqi leader that he had to allow weapons inspectors back into his country "any time, any place that the international community demands".

The furthest that Mr Bush would go at his joint press conference with Mr Blair on Saturday was to say that he had "explained to the Prime Minister that the policy of my government is the removal of Saddam and that all options are on the table".

At the same press conference, Mr Blair carefully avoided such language, saying only that: "It has always been our policy that Iraq would be a better place without Saddam Hussein. I don't think anyone can be in any doubt about that."

The Iraq section of his speech appeared to have been drafted at the last minute by the Prime Minister and will clearly have been agreed with President Bush.

"If the world makes the right choices now, at this time of destiny, we will get there," Mr Blair said in an address that will delight the Bush administration. "And Britain will be at America's side in doing it."

A more cautious note was struck by Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, who suggested that Mr Bush might change his mind about overthrowing Saddam if Iraq complied with United Nation resolutions.

Saddam remained defiant, saying: "We will fight them with the reeds of the marshes, with stones, missiles and airplanes and with all we have, and we will defeat them.

"If half of your air-defence capability is destroyed you fight with the other half and if the other half is destroyed you fight with daggers."

Mr Blair also used his Texas speech to offer to send British observers to Israel and the occupied territories as part of an international team to monitor any ceasefire brokered by Colin Powell, the US secretary of state, who arrives in Morocco today.

Washington has welcomed the plan put forward by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, but with nothing like the enthusiasm shown by Mr Blair. It would be opposed by members of the Israeli cabinet, which objects to the condition that Israel should withdraw to its pre-1967 borders.

Mr Blair called for "a ceasefire, agreed now" so that political dialogue could begin.

"In monitoring such a ceasefire and in ensuring that the Palestinian Authority genuinely take action against the terrorists, we and others stand ready to help in any way we can.

"Only some external assistance can establish the minimum trust to get security back on the agenda in a realistic way. And without a proper ceasefire, we can't even take the first steps."

The White House repeated its calls for Israel to pull out of the West Bank. Condoleezza Rice, Mr Bush's national security adviser, said troops should be pulled out "now, without delay, not tomorrow".

But Mr Powell said he was "pleased" that Ariel Sharon, the Israeli prime minister, says he is expediting his operations and the Bush administration appeared confident that a withdrawal would begin within 48 hours.

Israeli forces meanwhile intensified the assault on Nablus and Jenin.

The army has suffered mounting casualties, but said it had killed more than 30 armed Palestinians in close combat since Friday in Nablus. It met dogged resistance from gunmen who erected barricades and planted makeshift mines. On Israel's northern border, Hizbollah guerrillas attacked Israeli troops occupying the foothills of the Golan Heights and Israel responded by firing artillery and rockets into south Lebanon.

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London Times
April 8, 2002

Iraq Action Is Delayed But 'Certain'

By Philip Webster, Political Editor, in Crawford, Texas

MILITARY action aimed at toppling Saddam Hussein is likely to be delayed for at least a year but is certain to happen because it is an "article of faith" for President Bush, senior American and British diplomats have disclosed. In spite of renewed warnings from Mr Bush that he wants to end the Iraqi leader's reign, the President is understood to be reconciled to a lengthy approach designed to bring on board world opinion and ensure that Saddam is replaced by a leader more acceptable to his people and the rest of the region.

During prolonged talks at Mr Bush's Prairie Chapel ranch at the weekend, Tony Blair and the President are believed to have envisaged a three-phase plan to tackle the Iraqi dictator: first recreating a coalition for action by convincing Iraq's neighbours that Saddam can be ousted; then taking military action against him; and finally ensuring that a successor regime is capable of running the country.

The conflicting signals that have continued to emerge from the two leaders — Mr Bush has used gung-ho language while Mr Blair has appeared more cautious — are thought to be caused by the expectation that it will be many months before an Iraqi campaign could be launched.

Those differences in emphasis were evident, despite the obvious warmth between the two men, at their press conference in a school gymnasium in Crawford, Texas, on Saturday.

Mr Blair went out of his way to reassure those who feared "precipitate" action. It would not happen, he said. But Saddam could not be allowed to develop weapons of mass destruction "without let or hindrance". The Prime Minister, however, preferred to challenge Saddam first on the weapons inspectors. "He has to let the inspectors back in: anyone, any time and place," he said. It is Mr Blair's preferred method of keeping the international coalition on board. If Saddam refuses to allow the inspectors access — an unlikely scenario — he will be in breach of UN resolutions. "The whole world will then believe he has something to hide," a diplomatic source said. "Then Mr Blair feels world opinion on action against Saddam will change."

US and British sources close to the talks say that there was no rift on principle. A well-placed source said: "The President believes Mr Blair will back him when the time comes. The difference here is that Mr Bush has come to office determined to finish the job that his father started — certainly before the next presidential election in 2004 — and Mr Blair has to tread much more carefully because of opposition in Europe and in the Labour Party.

"But that does not mean that Mr Blair does not support action against Iraq. He does, but he wants as many people on side as possible to counter the failure of Saddam to fulfil UN resolutions," he said.

British diplomats say that Mr Blair has no doubt about the President's determination to tackle Saddam. They say that his decision to change policy on Israel was his recognition that progress in the Middle East was essential to keeping on board key Arab allies for any action against Iraq.

Mr Bush told the press conference: "I explained to the Prime Minister that the policy of my Government is the removal of Saddam and that all options are on the table."

Mr Blair was then asked if removing Saddam was his policy as well. He side-stepped the question saying: "It has always been our policy that Iraq would be a better place without Saddam Hussein." But he insisted that no decisions had been taken. "How we proceed in this situation, how we make sure that the threat, posed by weapons of mass destruction, is dealt with, that is a matter that is open."

He added: "How we approach this is a matter for discussion."

Sensing Mr Blair's discomfort Mr Bush interrupted: "Maybe I should be a little less direct and a little more nuanced and say we support regime change." But the President's passion over Iraq was plain in the answer to a later question on whether there was link with the War on Terror.

"I see the linkage between someone who is willing to go into his own neighbourhood and use chemical weapons in order to keep himself in power and, at the same time, develop weapons that could be aimed at Europe, at Israel, anywhere. I cannot imagine people not seeing the threat and not holding him accountable."

Then he delivered the words which appeared to confirm that Mr Blair has given him the private assurances he needs. "History has called us into action. The thing that I admire about this Prime Minister is that he does not need a focus group to convince him of the difference between right and wrong."

Mr Blair said it rather differently: "All the options are open. After September 11 this President showed that he proceeds in a calm and measured and sensible but firm way. That is precisely what we need in this situation, too."

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New York Times
April 7, 2002
Pg. 20

If Iraq Bends, U.N. Inspectors Are Ready

By Michael R. Gordon

WASHINGTON, April 6 -- After poring over confidential reports and satellite photos, Hans Blix and his United Nations team are preparing to conduct inspections to determine whether Iraq had abandoned its efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction.

More than 50 inspectors would be based in Baghdad, according to the plan. No sites would be off limits. Iraqi officials would be required to hand over documents about the history of their secret weapons programs. Mr. Blix's plan may be the only way, short of war, for Saddam Hussein and President Bush to resolve their differences over charges that Iraq retains and is still pursuing weapons of mass destruction. So far, however, Iraq and the United States are on a collision course, raising the question of whether Mr. Blix's inspectors will ever have a chance to do their job.

Iraq's new Foreign Minister, Naji Sabri, is scheduled to meet with the United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan, this month. But many diplomats believe that the surge in Israeli-Palestinian violence is likely to make Iraq less willing to cooperate with the United Nations. The theory is that Mr. Hussein's government will conclude that Washington will find it all but impossible to win Arab backing for an offensive against Iraq, thus removing the pressure on Iraq to agree to wide-ranging inspections.

The Bush administration, for its part, has signaled its determination to keep the tensions in the Middle East from distracting it from its goal of confronting Iraq. The administration's strategy seems to be to demand unrestricted inspections, with the expectation that Baghdad will frustrate the request and give Washington a rationale for a military campaign to oust Mr. Hussein.

"I made up my mind that Saddam Hussein needs to go," Mr. Bush said in a television interview this week. "I am confident that we can lead a coalition to pressure Saddam Hussein and to deal with Saddam Hussein."

There are situations in which inspections might yet be an option. For Iraq, accepting them might be the only way to mobilize international support against an American military strike if the Middle East conflict should be defused. For Washington, it might be the only way to contain Iraq's programs to develop nuclear, biological and chemical arms, as well as the missiles to deliver them, if politics preclude Arab support for an American strike.

Given the enmity between Washington and Baghdad, however, a final military reckoning seems the more likely option.

At his United Nations headquarters, Mr. Blix stoically asserted that inspections remained a possibility. "This is our working assumption and we are preparing ourselves for it as best we can," he said.

A former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency and a diplomat from Sweden, Mr. Blix was a compromise choice to serve as chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. The organization replaced an earlier monitoring body, the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq, which was disbanded after Iraq thwarted the work of inspectors and the Clinton administration responded in 1998 by ordering air strikes.

Washington initially favored Rolf Ekeus, the original head of the earlier monitoring organization. But his appointment was blocked by Russia and France, which have been eager to see economic sanctions lifted against Iraq and were hopeful that Mr. Blix would be less strict than Mr. Ekeus might have been.

Some American specialists say, however, that Mr. Blix seems determined to take a rigorous approach. Mr. Blix asserts that cosmetic inspections are worse than none at all and that his mandate provides for immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access.

Robert J. Einhorn, a top State Department official during the Clinton administration, said, "The Russians and the French underestimated how tough he would be."

The initial goal set by the United Nations Security Council for Mr. Blix's inspectors is not as sweeping as that established for the earlier group of United Nations monitors. The object is to not prove that Iraq is completely free of weapons of mass destruction but to demonstrate that substantial progress is being made. The reward is more modest too: sanctions would be suspended, not lifted.

"It is a less ambitious agenda but at the same time perhaps one that might be more easily attained," Mr. Blix said in an interview. "It does not require that every last piece of program be eradicated but simply that progress has been made."

Under Mr. Blix's plan, 50 to 100 inspectors at a time would be in Iraq. The pool of potential inspectors would be 230, however, so that a new group would be periodically assigned. Already, potential inspectors have undergone training, including coaching in the sensitivity they would be expected to show toward Islamic culture.

Access to the hundreds of suspected weapons sites is just part of what would be required of Iraq.

"They will have to help by coming up with the evidence," Mr. Blix said. "They have the archives, the bills of lading and budget documents."

The first stage of inspections, which would take several months, would involve identifying the main tasks Iraq would need to perform to address suspicions about its weapons programs. Given full cooperation, Mr. Blix said that within a year he would likely be able to report significant headway in clearing up discrepancies.

"If we have the kind of cooperation the Security Council has requested, we can get a high level of assurance," he said. "We would not get certainty. Nor do I think you can do it with occupation."

Some former inspectors, however, said they doubt that Iraq would ever provide enough access to demonstrate that it has ended all its weapons program, which is what the inspectors said really counts.

"I am doubtful that Iraq would ever agree to the extraordinary access that would be required, particularly for monitoring biological weapons areas," said Charles A. Duelfer, the deputy chairman of Unsc, the first United Nations organization formed to monitor Iraq.

Iraq's stance will become clearer after Mr. Sabri, its foreign minister, comes to the United Nations in mid-April. At a United Nations meeting last month, the Iraqi delegation professed interest in a resolution but did not agree to inspections. Mr. Sabri also gave Mr. Annan a list of 19 questions that suggested Iraq might not cooperate unless it received assurances from Washington that it would never attack.

"How will the relationship between Iraq and the council be normalized under the present declared U.S. policy, which aims at invading Iraq and overthrowing its national government by force?" was one of the questions.

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Washington Post

April 7, 2002

Pg. 22

U.S. Postpones Plans To Reveal Findings On Iraq

Mideast Crisis Delays Campaign at U.N. to Expose Alleged Efforts to Obtain Prohibited Weapons

By Colum Lynch, Special to The Washington Post

UNITED NATIONS -- Faced with a crisis in the Middle East, the Bush administration postponed plans here last week to launch a new campaign to expose Iraq's latest attempts to acquire prohibited chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, according to U.S. and other Western officials.

U.S. diplomats were planning to provide Security Council members with an intelligence briefing alleging Iraq is developing banned missile technology, but rising Arab criticism of U.S. support for Israel's military offensive prompted a delay. Although U.S. officials say they still intend to present their findings, it remains unclear when the briefing will be scheduled.

"We believe that Iraq is taking steps to reconstitute its weapons-of-mass-destruction capability, to develop new and longer missiles and to increase its conventional capability," a senior U.S. official said. "Iraq should allow inspectors to return forthwith without any preconditions, and the inspectors will be able to ascertain whether we're right or not." Administration officials declined to characterize the new information they intend to present to the council, but they said they have photographs and other information showing that Iraq is seeking to build new missiles capable of delivering chemical and biological payloads farther than 93 miles, the maximum distance allowed by the United Nations.

The briefing would have marked the first time the United States has supplied the 15-member council with classified U.S. intelligence on advances in Iraq's secret weapons programs since U.N. inspectors left the country in December

1998. It was designed to bolster an American and British effort to prove that Iraq has reconstituted its deadliest weapons programs.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair recently delayed plans to publish a similar account of Iraq's weapons developments to avoid fueling anti-Western sentiments in the Arab world and because of concerns that the evidence was not sufficiently convincing. A diplomat familiar with the British findings said that they would be persuasive to someone familiar with the underlying intelligence but that they might not "convince the more doubtful."

"It's nonspecific," the diplomat said.

CIA Director George J. Tenet told a Senate Armed Services Committee last month that he suspects Iraq is seeking to expand a range of banned weapons programs, but he has yet to release hard evidence to support the claim. "Baghdad is expanding its chemical industries in ways that could be diverted quickly into chemical weapon development," Tenet told the committee. "We believe Baghdad continues to pursue ballistic missile capabilities that exceed the restrictions imposed by U.N. resolutions. We believe that Saddam never abandoned his nuclear weapons program." Hans Blix, the Swedish diplomat who heads the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), which is responsible for conducting inspections in Iraq, said he has reviewed satellite imagery showing new construction on installations destroyed by U.S. warplanes during Operation Desert Fox in 1998. Blix said he has also received intriguing tips from friendly governments about Iraq's attempts to rebuild its weapons programs. But he said he can prove nothing until he has inspectors on the ground. "We cannot exclude the possibility that they retained something from the past or that they have produced something new," Blix said in an interview. "But if I had clear-cut evidence of Iraq still possessing or producing weapons, I would go to the Security Council with that evidence."

The briefing was calculated to strengthen the U.S. case for the resumption of full-scale, unconditional weapons inspections in Iraq two weeks before U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan is scheduled to meet April 18-19 with an Iraqi delegation to discuss the terms for the possible return of inspectors.

U.S. officials are concerned that Iraq is seeking to prolong the talks to delay the fulfillment of its obligations and to potentially exact concessions from Annan and Blix in the event that inspectors return. "The procedures are clear; UNMOVIC is ready to go, and they should let them go," the senior U.S. official said. "We don't see any purpose in endless discussions in New York. The right thing for the Iraqis to do is to say, 'We will welcome the inspectors. Dr. Blix, when would you like to come?'"

Under the terms of a cease-fire accord ending the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Iraq is obliged to destroy its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as well as medium- and long-range missiles with a range of more than 93 miles. It also must grant unfettered access to U.N. weapons inspectors. But the inspectors left in 1998 on the eve of Desert Fox, and Iraq has not permitted them to return.

U.N. inspectors destroyed most of Iraq's proscribed missiles, but they were never able to account for seven Scud-like training missiles. They have also failed to gain credible assurances that Iraq has abandoned its attempts to produce medium-range missiles. The U.N. inspectors have also been unable to account for massive stockpiles of chemical and biological materials Iraq possessed before the Gulf War.

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London Times
April 8, 2002

Musharraf Warns India He May Use Nuclear Weapons

By Roger Boyes in Berlin

PAKISTAN is ready to use its nuclear weapons if it comes under serious threat from India, its President, General Pervez Musharraf, said yesterday.

His statement, made in a lengthy interview with Der Spiegel, the German news magazine, comes at a delicate time. Only hours before publication, the authorities in Indian administered Kashmir had accused Pakistan of preparing to infiltrate at least 3,000 Islamic militants into the contested region. As global attention focuses on the Middle East, the tension between India and Pakistan is starting to crackle.

"Nuclear weapons are the last resort," General Musharraf said. "I am optimistic and confident that we can defend ourselves with conventional means, even though the Indians are buying up the most modern weapons in a megalomaniac frenzy." Nuclear weapons could be used, he said.

"If Pakistan is threatened with extinction, then the pressure of our countrymen would be so big that this option, too, would have to be considered." In a crisis, he said, the atomic bomb also had to be part of the calculation. Neither India nor Pakistan are bound by treaties obliging them to reveal the extent of their arsenals, nor have they signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The main concern of Western strategists is that neither country has a nuclear doctrine defining when and how such weapons could be used. As a result, the possibility of nuclear attack slips quickly into political rhetoric.

There is little clarity about the number of warheads available. Some defence experts say that Pakistan could have as many as 150 nuclear warheads pitted against India's 200 to 250. The Centre for Strategic International Studies in Washington has made a lower estimate, indicating that India has about 60 nuclear warheads. The Federation of American Scientists believes that Pakistan has about 25 warheads.

Most of these would have to be dropped by aircraft rather than delivered by missile. However, testing is being conducted in both countries. Pakistan has test-launched its Shaheen I and Ghauri I and II missiles, the latter with a range of 2,500 kilometres. A longer-range missile is being developed. India has tested its Agni II missile, which could hit anywhere in Pakistan.

General Musharraf said that there had been contact between his country's nuclear scientists and followers of Osama bin Laden. "But we know today that the scientists involved had only a very superficial knowledge and that the al-Qaeda terrorists did not come closer to their dream of building their own atomic bomb," he said.

Of the Kashmir situation, he said: "The Indians have reduced a legitimate liberation struggle to a case of cross-border terrorism." The Indians, he said, had massed troops at the border. "We were very close to a major war."

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Boston Globe
April 5, 2002
Pg. 13

Military To Play Role At Home

Joint Chiefs head sees swift change

By Tatsha Robertson, Globe Staff

The first military command charged with defending the continental United States from terrorist attacks and responding to natural disasters could be formally approved by the end of the month, Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said yesterday.

The operation, dubbed the Northern Command, would take over responsibility for protecting domestic airspace and organizing the military's response to natural disasters, as well as chemical, biological, nuclear, and other major attacks, Myers said during an interview with the Globe.

The new unified command, which the Pentagon proposed after the Sept. 11 attacks, needs approval by President Bush, but Myers said that could come as soon as two weeks. Although the command is expected to be located at an existing military installation in the United States, Myers said, the specific site has yet to be decided. The focus of the command would extend to Mexico and Canada, much in the same way that regional US commands are now responsible for Europe, the Pacific, the Middle East, and other areas of the world.

"We believe it reasonable to include those two countries because they are on our borders and security is, of course, intertwined with them," Myers said.

The idea, which has been endorsed by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney, has not come without controversy. Critics say the new command could force soldiers to be responsible for duties they are not trained to handle. Others say it would divert the armed services from its main responsibilities. Civil libertarians argue that increased military control on American soil could lead to civil rights abuses.

Myers, however, said the new command would simply unify existing military functions, including the use of Air Force jets patrolling over US cities and Navy ships running coastal checks. It therefore, he said, would not violate the Posse Comitatus Act, an 1878 law that prohibits the regular military from performing domestic police work.

"This should not raise the issue of Posse Comitatus and the military acting in an enforcement role," Myers said.

"There is no new mission envisioned for this command. But we do want to organize ourselves better for this."

Randy Larson, director of the ANSER Institute of Homeland Security in Arlington, Va., said the role of Northern Command would be important but small and would comply with the Posse Comitatus law.

"It's going to happen," said Larson. "Let's say there is some huge chemical attack, and it overwhelms the local and state. The governor will ask the president for help. At that point" the Federal Emergency Management Agency "would come in and then FEMA would call the Northern Command."

Larson said the command would be run by a four-star general and have two functions: deal with homeland security issues and maintain civil support. He said homeland security duties would focus on protecting national aerospace and defending the military's computer network operation. Civil support would include protecting borders and airports.

Myers said the federal government planned to use existing infrastructure and staffing for the command.

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New York Times

April 7, 2002

Pg. 20

G.I.'s Search Afghan Caves, Finding Trove Of Material

By Dexter Filkins

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan, April 6 -- A team of American soldiers completed a sweep today of a large cave network believed to have been used recently by Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters, carrying away photos, dossiers and vials containing an unidentified white powder.

Some 500 troops from the Army's 101st Airborne Division arrived here this afternoon after the five-day mission, which took them into the subterranean complex in Khost Province near the border with Pakistan. The men said they had ventured into more than 15 caves, some of them hundreds of feet deep, complete with bedrooms, warehouses and even iron-barred jail cells. After cleaning out the caves, the men used C-4 explosives and antitank missiles to seal them.

When the soldiers ran out of ordnance, they marked the caves they could not destroy and brought their coordinates back to base. Apache helicopters were to go back later to finish the caves off.

"Some of the stuff looked pretty old, but the locals said Osama bin Laden had been there," said Capt. Lou Bauer, 29, of Windsor, N.Y.

The search of the caves appeared to represent a new phase in the American operation in Afghanistan. After the end of the large American operation last month in the Shah-i-Kot Valley, where hundreds of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters were thought to have been killed, American troops appear to be moving toward smaller operations against targets that are more dispersed.

In a statement today, Gen. Tommy R. Franks, the chief commander in the war here, said that American forces had no large-scale operations against Taliban and Al Qaeda forces planned soon. There are some 6,500 American troops in Afghanistan, as well as the first members of a 1,700-man British commando brigade.

The operation into the caves also appears to represent a shift for the American troops, who left unsearched many of the caves used by Taliban and fighters in the Tora Bora region last December.

The American soldiers said they had destroyed the caves so they could not be used again by Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters who might be trying to re-enter Afghanistan.

The caves, many of them fortified during the American-backed war against the Soviet Union in the 1980's, lie just a few miles from the border with Pakistan, where hundreds of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters are believed to have fled in the past few months. The caves lie in a region called Zhwara, about 30 miles from the Shah-i-Kot Valley, from which many Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters were thought to have escaped.

So far, Pakistan is off-limits to American troops, and American and Afghan officials worry that the fugitive fighters appear to be planning guerrilla attacks from their Pakistani sanctuaries. Although Pakistani officials insist that the 12,000 soldiers they have deployed in the border region are keeping a lookout for Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters, there have been persistent reports that these fighters are regrouping in the largely ungoverned area.

Lounging near the airstrip of this old Soviet base, the American soldiers said it appeared that the caves had been used recently by Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. In addition to destroying several hundred rounds of mortar shells and bullets, the men said they had carted off five bags filled with documents.

Included in the haul were dozens of what appeared to be personnel files of Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters, complete with mug shots and write-ups of each one.

The men in the photographs appeared to be of Middle Eastern origin, the Americans said, and much of the writing in the documents appeared to be in Arabic.

There were several signs that Al Qaeda or Taliban fighters had been in the caves fairly recently, the soldiers said. One soldier said he found what appeared to be a relatively new box of 155-millimeter howitzer shells. Another said he found a body in a small mausoleum that appeared to have been recently entombed. One soldier found a copy of USA Today dated May 17, 2001.

The most intriguing discovery were dozens of vials filled with white powder.

The soldiers said they were not sure what the substance was; some speculated that it might be anthrax, others that it could be heroin or cocaine.

"I'm not sure what it was, maybe drugs," said Sgt. First Class Chuck Nye, one of the soldiers who took part in the cave searches.

The soldiers said they also searched an abandoned village, called Shodiaka. They said the village appeared to have been recently abandoned, and they found some of the same white powder stored in clay jars there.

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New York Times

April 6, 2002

Two Days Of Learning What To Do, And What Not To Do

By David W. Chen

When Anna Simeone, a forensic chemist with the New York Police Department, arrived at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn on Thursday for a two-day workshop on bioterrorism, she expected that the exercise might be a bit academic, the equivalent, perhaps, of "an interesting seminar in grad school."

Instead, Ms. Simeone felt enlightened, humbled and awed by the experience of getting instruction from Army medical experts, participating in a simulated nuclear fallout exercise and figuring out how to decontaminate a mannequin that had just been exposed to nerve or mustard gas.

"Everything was so interesting; it was like information overload," Ms. Simeone said yesterday after watching an Army expert in chemical agents explain treatment methods. "It's just a little scary to think that this could actually happen, right here," she said.

Ms. Simeone could have just as easily been speaking for the 160 or so people from nearly three dozen city, state and federal agencies, as well as hospitals and community groups, who were trying to learn how to better respond to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism.

The workshop was the Army's first comprehensive bioterrorism seminar for civilians, officials said. And the session was the first gathering since Sept. 11 for such a large and diverse collection of local agencies and groups for the purpose of preparing for bioterrorism.

The Army had actually been planning a much more modest version of this workshop since July, mainly to recruit health care professionals. But after Sept. 11, the scope of the workshop changed and expanded, largely at the behest of Councilman Martin J. Golden, who represents Bay Ridge, where Fort Hamilton is situated.

By Thursday, just about every major agency with even a tangential connection to security or health care in New York was represented. Naturally, the police and fire departments were present. So, too, were the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Coast Guard and the Kings County District Attorney's office.

Even Community School District 20 in Bay Ridge was represented.

"Wherever there is a health danger I have to make sure the superintendent and the district are notified," said Trudy Adduci, director of math, science and health for the school district.

The training session began Thursday with classroom presentations on current domestic and global threats, an overview of the 1995 chemical attack on the Tokyo subway system and a discussion of the potential tools of domestic bioterrorism, among other topics.

What made the biggest impression among some participants, though, was the discussion about nuclear threats, in which they offered advice (subways or basements can be excellent fallout shelters) and dispelled misperceptions (do not pack your family and your worldly possessions into a car and flee the scene because you'll only clog highways and other passages for emergency vehicles).

"It's scary to think that the P.D. has to learn this stuff, because you never thought you had to learn it before," said Sgt. Chris Batignani of the New York Police Department. "But even a quick intro is better than never seeing it before it happens. That way, you know the basics."

There was more classroom instruction yesterday, but a big dollop of practical exercises as well, that played out on a baseball field in the shadows of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

At one location, Sgt. First Class Mark Epstein and other officials from the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Sciences Branch at the Army's Academy of Health Services in San Antonio offered a demonstration of the latest in chemical-warfare protective suits, skin decontamination kits and radiological devices.

At another site, Maj. Joe Gresenz used three mannequins, lying on gurneys, to explain how one should — and should not — treat a person who has been contaminated with either nerve or mustard gas. He talked, for instance, about the proper way of removing the patient's clothing. He also explained how one would use either water or a bleach solution to treat exposed skin areas.

And at another site, Maj. Steve Cima led a nuclear fallout exercise in which participants were asked to fan out across the baseball field with simulated radiation-detection devices, and determine not just the level of radiation level, but also how much time they could safely treat an exposed patient.

Two minutes? Two hours? Timing was everything.

"When we train our new officers, we're training them for the battlefield," Major Cima said. "And on the battlefield, all the soldiers have training and equipment, and it's much easier to manage those hazards. But in a civilian environment, they don't."

Not everything, of course, was novel to the participants. After all, the Police Department's Emergency Services Unit and the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, to just cite two examples, frequently have similar training sessions. In fact, the most recent multi-agency operations exercise organized by the Office of Emergency Management had been planned for Sept. 12.

But even the most experienced emergency workers said that there was much to be learned in two days of coursework.

Dr. Vincent Eletto, an emergency physician at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, said that he would recommend that the hospital use soft brushes, and not its current supply of bristly brushes, in preparing to treat patients who had been exposed to chemical agents, because the brushes would be too rough on emaciated skin. He had also never participated in a nuclear fallout drill. "You are working against time here, and the speed — you don't realize how quickly you have to work," said Dr. Eletto, who, like the other participants, now plans to convey the same information to colleagues.

"There is only so much you can do, and to be effective, you have to make tough decisions as to who you can save," he continued. "But you know what? I feel very good about what happened here this week. I may not be in the military, but I'm a part of the civil defense."

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U.S. News & World Report
April 15, 2002

Many Leads, Many Dead Ends

Frustration inside the FBI's anthrax investigation: a so-far perfect crime

By Chitra Ragavan

Less than a sugar packet's worth of evidence, and not a whole lot of clues. That's what the Federal Bureau of Investigation's massive anthrax probe comes down to six months after a spurt of mystery mailings killed five people, sickened 17 others, paralyzed mail delivery, and terrified the nation. The FBI's aggressive—and some declare flawed—probe of the attacks has run into one dead end after another, causing frustration and disappointment. "As an investigation, it's a nightmare," one official tells U.S. News.

Whoever was behind last fall's anthrax attacks committed a so-far perfect crime. Five anthrax-laced letters were mailed to the Sun tabloid in Florida, the New York Post, television anchor Tom Brokaw, and Sens. Tom Daschle and Patrick Leahy. The FBI has turned up no fingerprints, no match to the handwriting, no witnesses, and no source for the bacterium, *Bacillus anthracis*. It was so finely aerosolized that it floated through the fine weave of the envelopes, so lethal that it killed or sickened those who touched or inhaled it. Much of it dissipated or was lost, to the dismay of FBI investigators, leaving little beyond that sugar packet's worth—the .871 grams extracted from the Leahy letter. Its DNA is now being sequenced in hopes of identifying its lab source, though whether that will ever point to the killer is uncertain.

This investigation has been a grind for the bureau, which has deployed hundreds of agents at a cost of millions of dollars. Agents, many with science degrees, have run a list of 80 questions past nearly 5,000 "persons of interest"—including perhaps 600 thought to have specific expertise—and pursued thousands of tips and leads to no avail.

They've more than doubled the reward to \$2.5 million. They've obtained subpoenas, conducted surveillance, searches, and polygraphs, done swabs and forensics tests, knocked on doors. Yet they say they have drawn a blank on the most basic questions: who, how, and why.

Curious cases. Investigators say they still don't understand the case of Kathy Nguyen, 61, a New York hospital worker who suddenly developed symptoms in October and died from inhalation anthrax before she could be interviewed. Despite enormous effort by the FBI, how she became infected remains a mystery. More curious is the death of Otilie Lundgren, 94, of Oxford, Conn. Investigators took nearly 450 swabs of her house, her closet, her garden, her mailbox and other places. "That's a lot of swabbing to not come up with even one spore," says a federal investigator.

Recently, one Connecticut health official theorized that Lundgren may have become infected from bulk mail (that she ripped before tossing out) possibly sorted on the contaminated Trenton, N.J., postal machines that processed at least two of the anthrax letters. But U.S. Postal Inspector Dan Mahalko says bulk mail gets presorted by the sender and is merely routed via loading docks of the Postal Service. Perhaps another false lead.

So far, say senior FBI officials, they've found no motives. They are proceeding on gut sense that could be wrong, using a psychological profile that could be flawed. Was Osama bin Laden behind it? Investigators believe not but haven't ruled it out. Was it a foreign power like Iraq? Most likely not, they say, but they're still pursuing that possibility. Was it a neo-Nazi extremist or an abortion foe? They don't think so but don't rule it out either.

What the FBI thinks is this: Whoever sent the letters probably lived in or knew the Trenton area where several of the letters were mailed. The perpetrator probably is a single, older white male with a grudge against the U.S. government. He may be a full-fledged or amateur scientist, who may not have intended to kill. Agents think this is so because he had meticulously taped the edges of the envelopes and included warnings of lethality plus advice on antibiotic cures. They surmise that he may have acted to send a message that the federal government should invest more in biodefense—or perhaps to somehow profit from that investment.

That theory has narrowed the massive scope of the FBI investigation. The bureau began with a daunting universe of more than 20,000 scientific labs including government defense facilities, biopesticide labs, and drug companies. The FBI says it is still interested in the possibility that, say, someone who knows how to make *B. thuringiensis* (a common grub- and beetle-killing organic pesticide) could also have made the killer anthrax bacterium. But they also are looking very closely at the government biodefense labs.

A confounding factor has been the scientific community's lax security practices in handling of pathogens, often traded informally at scientific conferences. Even the government's own U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) at Fort Detrick, Md., now both a source of expertise and one focus of the FBI investigation, has had repeated security breaches. And there were no records of which lab had what strain of anthrax. The FBI now has helped develop a database.

Lab work. The anthrax from the Leahy letter brought other challenges: so many tests to conduct but so little evidence. Scientists wanted to first irradiate the anthrax to destroy its virulence, to protect the investigators, but fretted that might skew the tests. So they experimented first on the pesticide *B. thuringiensis* because of its similarity to *B. anthracis*.

The next question was where to conduct the tests. The FBI lab expertise is in "human forensics," investigating conventional murders, says Mark Wheelis of the University of California-Davis, adding, "This is an entirely new area." FBI officials say they turned to premier federal labs for help and created a scientific advisory panel of 20 top scientists. But the FBI, often faulted for its secrecy, managed to anger and alienate many outside experts, especially in the biodefense community.

One of the FBI's strongest critics is Barbara Rosenberg of the Federation of American Scientists. She asserts that the FBI for months has known who did it, was foolish to cast such a wide net, waited too long without arresting a suspect, and has placed unrealistic hopes on the genetic testing. "It's a stalling mechanism," Rosenberg told U.S. News. "I suppose they don't want the suspects to think they're close on the trail." Rosenberg speculates that the FBI is hobbled by the secrecy involving the government's own biodefense programs. "I hope it's not because they are hesitant to point the finger at someone," she says. That infuriates investigators. "It's insulting anyone would suggest we are sitting on evidence," fumes one FBI official. "This is murder; five people are dead."

Rosenberg and some of her peers say they've named names to the FBI of who they think did it. The FBI says none has panned out (chemical analysis has shown the powder was not made using any known U.S. technique). Officials say Rosenberg is "misinformed and uninformed." The bureau also has pooh-poohed a recent memo written by two biodefense experts at Johns Hopkins University. They concluded that one of the hijackers who went to a Florida doctor last June seeking treatment of a "black lesion" or a "gash"—the description varies—probably suffered from cutaneous, or skin, anthrax. But the FBI says exhaustive testing for anthrax anywhere the hijackers were present came up empty.

In its investigation, the FBI has had other challenges. What if one of its scientific advisers is, in fact, the killer? Consider the story of William Patrick, patriarch of the nation's bioweapons program, owner of five patents for "weaponizing" anthrax. Patrick, who ran the offensive biological weapons program in the '60s at USAMRIID, says he wasn't approached until four months into the investigation. Feeling slighted, Patrick asked the FBI agent why it had taken so long. He says the agent replied, "Well, Mr. Patrick, you were a suspect." Patrick, 75, paused to digest that. "Well," he recalls telling the agent, "I suppose I was."

Whodunit? -- Seven weeks of terror

Anthrax-laced letters killed five people and sickened 17, caused widespread alarm, challenged the nation's public-health system, and left FBI agents hunting for clues.

Oct. 5: Robert Stevens, a photo editor at American Media in Boca Raton, Fla., dies of inhalation anthrax.

Oct. 12: NBC announced that an aide to news anchor Tom Brokaw has cutaneous (skin) anthrax caused by a letter sent to NBC from Trenton, N.J.

Oct. 15: A letter to Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) from Trenton tests positive for anthrax. In New York, the infant son of an ABC employee tests positive for cutaneous anthrax after she brings him to work.

Oct. 18: An aide to CBS News anchor Dan Rather and a New Jersey letter carrier test positive for skin anthrax. A day later, the New York Post says an employee has skin anthrax. Another New Jersey postal worker tests positive for skin anthrax.

Oct. 21-23: Two Washington D.C., postal workers, Thomas Morris and Joseph Curseen, die of inhalation anthrax. A postal worker in Hamilton, N.J., is hospitalized.

Oct. 25-28: A U.S. State Department employee and a New Jersey postal worker are diagnosed as having inhalation anthrax.

Oct. 31: A New York woman, Kathy T. Nguyen, dies of inhalation anthrax.

Nov. 16: FBI finds an anthrax letter addressed to Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) that is similar to the one received by Daschle.

Nov. 21: Otilie W. Lundgren, a 94-year-old retiree, dies of inhalation anthrax in Connecticut. She is the last known anthrax victim.

-- *With Douglas Pasternak, Nell Boyce, David E. Kaplan, and Nancy Shute*

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New York Times

April 7, 2002

Pg. 11

Russian Lab Storing Germs Faces Cutoff Of Electricity

By Patrick E. Tyler

MOSCOW -- A large repository of anthrax, plague and other deadly bacteria stored in a high-security laboratory complex 100 miles south of here is facing a threat never imagined in the Soviet era -- the meter man.

An official from the Moscow region's Mosenergo electric utility arrived recently and threatened to turn off the electricity for lack of payment at the 90-building campus, which served as the secret biological weapons program of the Soviet era.

A headline in the newspaper Izvestia warned, "Deadly Viruses From a Moscow Regional Depository Threaten Moscow."

Actually, there are no viruses at the State Scientific Center of Applied Microbiology in Obolensk, just every kind of deadly bacteria that was studied for use in the secret biological weapons program of the Soviet Union. (A large virus repository is in Siberia.)

Russian and Western officials say that while it is unlikely that any public health threat would result from a power cutoff, there is enough uncertainty that none were willing to say that categorically.

"We have quite reliable systems of protection in case of emergency," Gen. Nikolai N. Urakov said by telephone. He is the longtime director of the center, which has been working with Western scientists to convert the complex into a biomedical manufacturing site.

"But we are scared by this threat of a sudden shutdown of electricity," he added, "because it is a kind of psychological pressure on us." In the event of a shutdown, he said, scientists must destroy all bacteriological experiments under way.

About 3,000 strains of bacteria are stored at the center, many of them in cryogenic casks cooled with liquid nitrogen and isolated from the environment by layered enclosures and oversize air-handling systems, and all dependent on electricity.

The greatest danger from a shutdown of electric power would be the defrosting of live germs now preserved in a frozen state.

"The main threat is to the organisms themselves rather than that they might escape," said Raymond Zilinskas, a biological warfare expert at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. "Under the worst case, these things would be defrosted from minus 70 degrees, and it would be a real mess to clean it up afterward because you wouldn't know for sure whether everything was dead."

General Urakov would like the United States and Western countries that have contributed about \$6 million to the transformation of the bioweapons complex to throw in another \$500,000 a year to pay the center's electric bills and arrears. An American scientist who works closely with the center said the Russian government was responsible for keeping the lights on.

The confrontation at Obolensk is another example of how the basic capitalist imperative for enterprises to be self-sustaining can clash, often alarmingly, with the old remnants of Soviet weapons science.

Two years ago, because of an overdue power bill, the Russian national power company cut electricity to a strategic base where nuclear missiles stood on high alert, though the silos themselves did not lose power. Armed troops marched to the substations and turned the power back on.

Last January and February, the national utility, United Energy Systems, cut power to a number of military installations around the country, including the Russian Space Forces monitoring center on the Kamchatka Peninsula. In most cases, power has been quickly restored. Often investigations show that the tug of war with the utility forces the military to spend budgeted funds for electrical power instead of diverting money to other uses, which at times have included building country residences for generals.

Western aid for conversion of General Urakov's bioweapons laboratory spiked in 1997, when it was learned that Iran had made overtures to the institute to purchase its expertise.

Russian scientists and military leaders who now depend on Western financing to destroy nuclear, chemical and biological weapons have been known to orchestrate a sense of crisis to increase financing.

But Randall Lee Beatty, an American scientist working on the conversion of the Obolensk facility, said, "This is a crisis."

Mr. Beatty is a director of the International Science and Technology Center, which finances about half of General Urakov's budget to support about 350 Russian biowarfare scientists and technicians. "We know they have not paid their electricity bill for 14 months," he said. "But this is one of the important archives for dangerous pathogens in the world, and it would be a shame if it were destroyed for not paying the light bill."

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London Times

April 8, 2002

Japan May Go Nuclear, Hawk Tells Beijing

By Robert Whyman in Tokyo

A SENIOR Japanese politician has said that Japan is capable of producing thousands of nuclear warheads overnight to counter China's rapid military build-up.

In a speech at the weekend, Ichiro Ozawa, the leader of the opposition Liberal Party, raised the issue to underline Japan's concerns at its neighbour's growing military might. "China is undergoing an expansion of its military power in a bid to join the ranks of the superpowers," Mr Ozawa said.

Mr Ozawa, 59, a former leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, told an audience in Fukuoka, western Japan, that he had mentioned the nuclear option during a recent meeting with a Chinese official. He said that he had told the visitor: "If you become too conceited, the Japanese people will get hysterical."

He said: "If Japan wishes, it can produce thousands of nuclear warheads overnight. Japan has enough plutonium at its nuclear power plants for three to four thousand of them. If that happens, we will never be beaten in terms of military strength."

Mr Ozawa, known for his hawkish views, emphasised that his remarks were aimed at encouraging China to speed up its transition to democracy, and to build a closer relationship with Japan. Some commentators said, however, that his

remarks could disturb the recent improvement in relations with Beijing as the two countries mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties. Junichiro Koizumi, the Prime Minister, is due to visit China this week to attend an economic forum, and Li Peng, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress and, in effect, China's number two politician, was on a tour of the Japanese provinces at the weekend. Mr Ozawa's comments reflect a growing wariness towards China, seen as a potential threat to Japan's security but also as an increasingly formidable economic rival. Unease about China's growing might prompted Tokyo to cut its loans to Beijing in the 2001 financial year. Mr Ozawa, by raising the question of nuclear weapons, has risked causing serious offence at home as well. Japan adheres to a longstanding ban on possessing, producing, or allowing nuclear weapons into the country, reflecting a national aversion born of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War. Japanese politicians normally prefer to avoid reminding the world of their country's undoubted ability to build up a nuclear arsenal speedily. The country's nuclear energy programme has created large amounts of weapons-grade plutonium which is intended for its reactors. Japan has more than 30,000kg of plutonium, which experts estimate is sufficient to build 6,000 nuclear weapons.

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Washington Times
April 9, 2002
Pg. 1

District Not Ready For Germ Attack

Firefighters worry old gear isn't safe

By Matthew Cella, The Washington Times

The District is vulnerable to a biochemical attack because its hazardous materials team is composed of firefighters whose training is inadequate and whose gear is so worn out that they fear for their safety, according to a report on the city's emergency preparedness.

The report, submitted by the Marasco Newton Group in December, found the city's hazardous-materials unit deficient in all 10 criteria it measured, including staffing, training and competency.

It recommended that the unit "needs improvement" or "needs significant improvement" in all areas.

"Although many of the [crew members] were dedicated firefighters, the existing HAZMAT unit suffers from a lack of funding, training, staffing, equipment and top fire management support," the report says. "A number of [those] assigned to the unit expressed concern for their own safety and their ability to provide a competent response to the community."

The report said "a number of outside agencies" shared "concerns regarding the safety and competencies of the hazardous materials unit within [the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services]."

The team of six specialists who prepared the report talked with representatives from the Secret Service, the FBI, the U.S. Capitol Police, and emergency officials from Northern Virginia and Montgomery and Prince George's counties. Among the report's findings:

- The city's hazardous materials unit is "cobbled together using overtime staff."
- Hazardous materials training is "substandard," the department has provided "little or no refresher training, and many training records are missing."
- Many department personnel that have hazardous materials training and experience have been promoted or reassigned from the unit, "thus depriving the District of valuable resources."
- Rescue vehicles carry very limited detection and decontamination equipment, and no containment equipment. Skills maintenance, including use and calibration of monitoring equipment, has been minimal.

The report was commissioned by D.C. Mayor Anthony A. Williams, but it has not been widely distributed in the four months since it was submitted to the city. It has been seen by D.C. Fire Chief Ronnie Few and Assistant Chief of Operations Adrian Thompson but not by Kathy Patterson, chairman of the D.C. Council's Judiciary Committee, which oversees the fire department or many other city officials.

"Whatever deficiencies the report identifies, management in the department is working to rectify," fire department spokeswoman Lisa Bass said yesterday.

Chief Few is expected to testify tomorrow before a congressional committee on the state of emergency preparedness in the District.

The 32-page report, titled "Assessment of Capability for Sustained Hazardous Materials Response for the City of Washington, D.C.," was produced for Marasco Newton by subcontractor Environmental Hazards Management Institute.

The institute's emergency-response experts read internal memos from Mr. Williams and the highest-level officials in the fire department. The team also interviewed city and federal personnel, as well as emergency officials from surrounding jurisdictions about the District's problems.

What makes the lightly-industrialized District so vulnerable to emergencies?

Apart from its symbolic attraction to terrorists, the report points out the city's role as host to emotion-laden national and international events, such as the International Monetary Fund/World Bank meetings due to start April 20. Given the violent protests that occurred two years ago, such incidents make an alert, well-trained hazardous materials team all the more important in the District.

Also, the potential for accidental biochemical spills is great. The report cites a "high" risk of a hazardous materials incident from a significant number of universities, hospitals, military and law enforcement facilities, research labs and printing and engraving plants in the city, as well as spills along well-traveled rail-freight lines.

Based on the unique design of the District, with its many traffic circles, the report says it would be hard to evacuate people from the city and to move emergency vehicles through it.

Taking into consideration the number of elderly or disabled residents, those who don't speak English and the surprising number of people who don't have telephones or vehicles, the report assesses the city's vulnerabilities as "high."

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