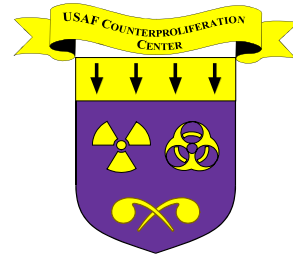


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Washington Times

September 27, 2002

Pg. 1

Rumsfeld Links Al Qaeda To Saddam

By Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld yesterday accused Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein of harboring al Qaeda terrorists and aiding their quest for weapons of mass destruction.

His charges, based on "evolving" intelligence reports, marked the Bush administration's most detailed account of links between Baghdad and al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden's terror group that carried out the September 11 attacks. "We do have solid evidence of the presence in Iraq of al Qaeda members, including some that have been in Baghdad," the defense secretary said. "We have what we consider to be credible contacts in Iraq who could help them acquire weapons of mass destruction capabilities."

Mr. Rumsfeld's presentation at a Pentagon news conference came the day after White House National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice disclosed for the first time an intelligence report that said Iraq helped train al Qaeda members to use chemical weapons.

Her words were reiterated yesterday by White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer. "Al Qaeda and Iraq are too close for comfort," he said.

The back-to-back disclosures were part of a new White House push to tie Saddam's regime to al Qaeda. If the White House can convince the public that Iraq helps the group that attacked America and killed more than 3,000 persons, the link would strengthen the case for a U.S.-led attack on Iraq.

Until the past two days, the White House, and chief ally Great Britain, have focused on Baghdad's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction as justification for a pre-emptive attack and the establishment of a new Iraqi government.

President Bush is contemplating an invasion but has not yet made a decision or approved a specific war plan, his aides say.

Since shortly after September 11, Pentagon civilian hard-liners have pushed the CIA and other intelligence agencies to find and document ties between Iraq and Baghdad. The "linkage" issue was resisted at first by some in the CIA. But Mr. Rumsfeld's aides persisted, and intelligence reports were produced establishing links.

"The knowledge that the intelligence community has of the al Qaeda relationship with Iraq is evolving," Mr. Rumsfeld said. "It's based on a lot of different types of sources of varying degrees of reliability. Some of it, admittedly, comes from detainees, which has been helpful, and particularly some high-ranking detainees."

Said Miss Rice, "This is a story that is unfolding, and it is getting clear, and we're learning more. We're learning more because we have a lot of detainees who are able to fill in pieces of the puzzle. And when the picture is clear, we'll make full disclosure about it."

Mr. Rumsfeld said he had asked the intelligence community to declassify some aspects of the reported Iraq-al Qaeda ties. Upon his return to the Pentagon from a NATO conference in Poland this week, a report was awaiting that detailed links in an unclassified form.

The thrust of the administration's case during the past two days is based on:

- * "Very reliable reporting" of senior-level contacts between al Qaeda and Baghdad going back a decade and occurring recently.

- * Unidentified al Qaeda detainees and other sources, who say Iraq helped al Qaeda in its quest to acquire weapons of mass destruction and aided training in those weapons.

- * Discussions by Iraq to provide a haven to al Qaeda members on the run, some of whom already have "found refuge" there.

"We know that several of the detainees, in particular some high-ranking detainees, have said that Iraq provided some training to al Qaeda in chemical-weapons development," Miss Rice said Wednesday night on PBS.

"No one is trying to make an argument at this point that Saddam Hussein somehow had operational control of what happened on September 11, so we don't want to push this too far," she said.

Earlier yesterday, allied aircraft carried out two strikes against air-defense targets in southern Iraq. Both targets threatened pilots enforcing a no-fly zone south of Baghdad, the Pentagon said.

Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said pilots used precision-guided munitions to bomb a facility 80 miles south of Baghdad and a target-acquisition radar at a military-civilian airport at the port city of Basra.

"The radar site that was struck was on the military side of the field and, in fact, way off the end of the military side of the field," Gen. Pace said, rebutting Iraqi assertions that civilians were killed. "When you take a look at the picture of this, it is out in, basically, desert."

This summer, Mr. Rumsfeld authorized commanders to not only bomb air-defense targets that directly threatened pilots, but also command centers that support missile and radar sites. Military sources say the attacks will better prepare the battlefield for a war against Iraq.

The Washington Times quoted a U.S. official in 1996 as saying bin Laden was in contact with Iraqi intelligence agents while based near Khartoum, Sudan. He had also reportedly contacted Iranian intelligence officers in Afghanistan about seeking political asylum.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20020927-60557328.htm>

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Wall Street Journal
September 27, 2002

U.S. Steps Up Case Against Iraq, Both In Congress And At The U.N.

By David Rogers and Carla Anne Robbins, Staff Reporters of The Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON -- The Bush administration stepped up activity across the board to press its case for confronting Saddam Hussein -- lobbying Congress, maneuvering privately at the United Nations and stressing the threat of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons.

In making its arguments for war with Iraq, officials said, the administration has begun putting increased emphasis on the potential that Baghdad could use unmanned aircraft to distribute chemical and biological agents, such as anthrax. U.S. and British intelligence have reported previously on Iraq's efforts to transform the Czech L-29 jet trainer into a pilotless plane capable of distributing such weapons of mass destruction. But the administration's focus now is more on the threat of smaller unmanned vehicles, which could be controlled from greater distances if Baghdad were to gain access to sophisticated software and communications links.

Emphasizing such a threat dovetails with White House efforts to convince the U.N. and Congress to approve resolutions supporting a strong stand -- even military action -- against Iraq. And on both those fronts, the administration claimed progress Thursday.

At the U.N., American and British officials agreed on the rough text of a new Security Council resolution declaring Iraq in "material breach" of past U.N. resolutions, spelling out explicit tasks for Iraq to comply and threatening tough consequences if it fails to do so. Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman and a British envoy are expected to travel to France and Russia this weekend to make the case for support, and Secretary of State Colin Powell telephoned the foreign ministers of Russia and China Thursday.

At the same time, the White House agreed to significant revisions in the draft text of a bipartisan congressional resolution authorizing the president to commit U.S. troops against Iraq to defend "national-security interests" and enforce U.N. demands for disarmament. Democrats cautioned that no final agreement had been reached, but in phone calls to lawmakers and meetings at the White House, Mr. Bush sought to defuse partisan tensions surrounding the war debate that had been building this week.

The intensity level even moved up briefly on the military front. U.S. jets struck an airport in the southern Iraqi port city of Basra. A Pentagon official said the strikes were in response to the firing of anti-aircraft artillery and surface-to-air missiles by Iraq at allied aircraft patrolling zones declared off-limits to Iraqi planes. Baghdad condemned the action as a "breach of international civilian aviation regulations."

In describing its view of the threat from Iraq, the administration thus far has said little publicly about what new intelligence it has received on so-called unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs. But U.S. officials say Iraq's pursuit of new UAV technology represents a serious concern for the White House and the Central Intelligence Agency. Prime Minister Tony Blair's government released a 50-page intelligence dossier this week that makes reference to Iraqi attempts to convert the L-29 into a UAV "potentially capable of delivering chemical and biological agents over a large area." A prior CIA analysis also cites the L-29 program: "These refurbished trainer aircraft are believed to have been modified for delivery of chemical or, more likely, biological warfare agents."

Some U.S. officials play down the threat that the L-29s and the newer unmanned vehicles might pose, arguing that they are slow, low-flying and could be easily spotted and shot down, and therefore don't pose a serious military threat. But other officials are concerned that they could be used in a terrorist-like attack against an unsuspecting civilian population, perhaps in Israel or other allied states, and expand the reach that Iraq would have with chemical and germ weapons.

More broadly, there seems a greater emphasis on the immediate threat posed by such agents. British intelligence estimates that Iraq is one to five years away from producing a nuclear bomb, a more conservative estimate than that used by President Bush. But the same British report disclosed new details about Iraq's capability to launch chemical and biological warheads within 45 minutes of an order to use them.

At the same time, the administration has tried to draw a closer connection between Iraq and al Qaeda terrorists on the same issue of chemical and biological weapons. Condoleezza Rice, the president's national-security adviser, was the first to make the claim in a television interview Wednesday night.

But the administration also has had to backtrack somewhat in trying to draw the al Qaeda link. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld conceded that many of the details of the Baghdad/al Qaeda connection were still sketchy. "We have what we consider to be credible evidence that al Qaeda leaders have sought contacts in Iraq who could help them acquire weapons-of-mass-destruction capabilities," he said.

Mr. Rumsfeld also said the Pentagon had stronger evidence that members of al Qaeda have found refuge in Baghdad since the Sept. 11 attacks in New York and Washington and noted that contacts between al Qaeda and Iraq go back at least a decade. He said the U.S. now believes that "Iraq and al Qaeda have discussed safe-haven opportunities in Iraq, reciprocal nonaggression discussions," he said.

Mr. Rumsfeld also joined the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the chiefs of the military services to brief the president on the readiness of the military and its ability to execute a potential invasion of Iraq, a defense official said.

On the diplomatic front, U.S. officials will spend the next few days trying to win the support of France and Russia, both of which are reluctant to confront Baghdad, for the proposed new language for a Security Council resolution. Testifying on Capitol Hill, Secretary of State Powell declared: "This time ... there must be hard consequences" for Iraq if it keeps defying the U.N.

U.S. officials said the resolution would set swift deadlines for Iraq to comply with U.N. resolutions and for U.N. weapons inspectors to report on their progress. It also would outline specific steps Iraq must take to prove that it is cooperating, including providing inspectors with "unfettered access" to sensitive presidential sites, a provision certain to draw Baghdad's ire.

A senior U.S. official said that the length of the deadline would be a key subject for discussion in this weekend's meetings, as would the question of how explicit a threat of force to include, should Iraq again fail to comply.

On the congressional front, the White House has bowed in some respects to lawmakers in the revised Iraq resolution. It would invoke the War Powers Act, which draws Congress into approving military actions, and requires progress reports from the president every 90 days. No conditions are set on Mr. Bush's authority to commit U.S. troops as "he determines to be necessary and appropriate." But prior to doing so, he must report to Congress that he has decided that diplomacy alone won't adequately protect U.S. security and "is not likely to lead to enforcement" of U.N. resolutions.

Democrats said they still want a greater emphasis on the war against terrorism and a commitment that U.S. forces will be deployed as part of a larger allied coalition. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, a South Dakota Democrat, said Senate debate on the resolution will begin next week, even as he seeks more changes in the interim.

Republicans would prefer a simple up-or-down vote on the White House resolution and a Democratic alternative. Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott, a Republican from Mississippi, said he was open to further revisions but not if that means "diluting" Mr. Bush's authority.

-- *Jeanne Cummings contributed to this article.*

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Washington Times
September 27, 2002
Pg. 16

Agency Disavows Report On Iraq Arms

By Joseph Curl, The Washington Times

The International Atomic Energy Agency says that a report cited by President Bush as evidence that Iraq in 1998 was "six months away" from developing a nuclear weapon does not exist.

"There's never been a report like that issued from this agency," Mark Gwozdecky, the IAEA's chief spokesman, said yesterday in a telephone interview from the agency's headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

"We've never put a time frame on how long it might take Iraq to construct a nuclear weapon in 1998," said the spokesman of the agency charged with assessing Iraq's nuclear capability for the United Nations.

In a Sept. 7 news conference with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Mr. Bush said: "I would remind you that when the inspectors first went into Iraq and were denied — finally denied access [in 1998], a report came out of the Atomic — the IAEA that they were six months away from developing a weapon.

"I don't know what more evidence we need," said the president, defending his administration's case that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was building weapons of mass destruction.

The White House says Mr. Bush was referring to an earlier IAEA report.

"He's referring to 1991 there," said Deputy Press Secretary Scott McClellan. "In '91, there was a report saying that after the war they found out they were about six months away."

Mr. Gwozdecky said no such report was ever issued by the IAEA in 1991.

Many news agencies — including The Washington Times — reported Mr. Bush's Sept. 7 comments as referring to a 1998 IAEA report. The White House did not ask for a correction from The Times.

To clear up the confusion, Mr. McClellan cited two news articles from 1991 — a July 16 story in the London Times by Michael Evans and a July 18 story in the New York Times by Paul Lewis. But neither article cites an IAEA report on Iraq's nuclear-weapons program or states that Saddam was only six months away from "developing a weapon" — as claimed by Mr. Bush.

The article by Mr. Evans says: "Jay Davis, an American expert working for the U.N. special commission charged with removing Iraq's nuclear capability, said Iraq was only six months away from the large-scale production of enriched uranium at two plants inspected by UN officials."

The Lewis article said Iraq in 1991 had a uranium "enrichment plant using electromagnetic technology [that] was about six months from becoming operational."

In October 1998, just before Saddam kicked U.N. weapons inspectors out of Iraq, the IAEA laid out a case opposite of Mr. Bush's Sept. 7 declaration.

"There are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance," IAEA Director-General Mohammed Elbaradei wrote in a report to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair on Sept. 7 cited an agency "report" declaring that satellite photography revealed the Iraqis had undertaken new construction at several nuclear-related sites. This week, the IAEA said no such report existed. The IAEA also took issue with a Sept. 9 report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies — cited by the Bush administration — that concludes Saddam "could build a nuclear bomb within months if he were able to obtain fissile material."

"There is no evidence in our view that can be substantiated on Iraq's nuclear-weapons program. If anybody tells you they know the nuclear situation in Iraq right now, in the absence of four years of inspections, I would say that they're misleading you because there isn't solid evidence out there," Mr. Gwozdecky said.

"I don't know where they have determined that Iraq has retained this much weaponization capability because when we left in December '98 we had concluded that we had neutralized their nuclear-weapons program. We had confiscated their fissile material. We had destroyed all their key buildings and equipment," he said.

Mr. Gwozdecky said there is no evidence about Saddam's nuclear capability right now — either through his organization, other agencies or any government.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20020927-500715.htm>

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Washington Post
September 27, 2002
Pg. 19

Unwanted Debate on Iraq-Al Qaeda Links Revived

By Karen DeYoung, Washington Post Staff Writer

In a series of statements over the past 48 hours, the Bush administration has reignited debate over an issue it laid aside weeks ago: whether there is evidence of substantive, ongoing ties between al Qaeda and the government of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

On Tuesday, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said there is evidence of links between al Qaeda and Iraq, which he said had been discussed during a CIA briefing for NATO defense ministers meeting in Warsaw. On Wednesday, President Bush spoke of "the danger . . . that al Qaeda becomes an extension of Saddam's madness," and noted that "you can't distinguish between al Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror."

Wednesday night, White House national security adviser Condoleezza Rice said al Qaeda captives, "in particular some high-ranking detainees, have said that Iraq provided some training to al Qaeda in chemical weapons development. . . . And there are some al Qaeda personnel who found refuge in Baghdad" after U.S. attacks against them began in Afghanistan last October.

While the comments appeared to announce new proof of such ties, administration officials offered no details to substantiate them, leaving what some officials acknowledged was a confusing picture of both the strength and the substance of the evidence

"We have solid evidence of the presence in Iraq of al Qaeda members, including some members who have been in Baghdad," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said yesterday. "We have solid reporting of senior-level contacts between al Qaeda and Iraqi officials going back a decade, and, as Condi said, of chemical and biological agent training."

But Rumsfeld, back from Warsaw, took a somewhat different approach. He told reporters that rather than the "chemical and biological training" Rice and Fleischer said was provided by Iraq, there was "credible evidence that al Qaeda leaders have sought contacts in Iraq who could help them acquire weapons of mass destruction capabilities." That report, he said, had come from only one source.

Another senior administration official with access to current intelligence, who asked that his name not be used, said that the report, dating from "the 1990s," included "no indication that those contacts were ever made or that they ever got anything."

While there was evidence that "senior al Qaeda . . . have been in Baghdad in recent periods," Rumsfeld said he did not know if they were there now. The second official, again referring to intelligence information, said that "just how high those people were, or whether they were there with the knowledge and support of the Iraqis, is unknown."

"We had dots," another senior official explained. "Now we have more dots. The density of the dots is increasing. Can we connect them categorically? No. Al Qaeda people have sought refuge" in Iraq, the official said. "Can we say Saddam Hussein welcomed them? We can't say that. You look for some kind of consensus on [intelligence] analysis, but it's very subjective."

It was the murky nature of intelligence reporting that led Bush and his advisers to decide weeks ago to focus their appeals to Congress and the United Nations for tough new measures against Iraq on the most clear-cut case they could make. Hussein's continuing efforts to assemble an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and defiance of a decade of U.N. Security Council resolutions were considered beyond dispute.

Although Bush frequently cites the potential nexus between Iraqi weapons and anti-American terrorist groups such as al Qaeda as the greatest threat to this country, officials decided not to make it part of their public indictment against Hussein. While many are convinced the nexus exists, and cite new intelligence reports coming in daily, it was determined that raising the al Qaeda-Iraq connection risked division instead of the domestic and international unity Bush seeks.

But this week, the administration seemed to veer widely by jumping directly into the al Qaeda thicket. "There's a lot of head-scratching going on," said one dismayed official. "We were all on message, and to kind of throw this out there might be perceived as an act of desperation" at precisely the time they were starting to gain traction on Capitol Hill and U.N. headquarters in New York.

Testifying on Iraq before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell met significant skepticism.

"To say 'Yes, there is evidence here but I don't want to tell you any more about it,' that does not encourage any of us," Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) said in reference to a Rumsfeld demurrer this week. "Nor does it give the American public a heck of a lot of faith that what anyone is saying is true."

Powell replied that there were proven "linkages" over the years, but that "perhaps part of the confusion on this issue is that we are learning more over time" as more captive al Qaeda members and Iraqi defectors are questioned.

Much of this new information, Powell said, had been explained to them by CIA Director George J. Tenet in recent closed-door briefings. "I encourage you to look at what George said. We are doing the best we can not to strain our credibility. That is not in our interest and that is not our intention."

Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.), the committee chairman, interjected: "I was at the briefing with the classified testimony, and let the record show I dissent" from Rumsfeld's characterization of the extent of the evidence.

Several senior administration officials bemoaned the spotlight now focused on an issue they had chosen, at least for now, to bypass. Rumsfeld and others blamed the news media for seizing on it, and said they were merely trying to respond to reporters' questions. Rice, who made her Wednesday comments during an interview on PBS's "Jim Lehrer News Hour," had agreed to appear on the show to talk about the administration's new national security strategy document released Sept. 20, but was asked to expand on Rumsfeld's Warsaw comments, an aide said.

When a reporter asked Rumsfeld yesterday why the administration was making an "orchestrated" public case, he replied: "I've been out of town, and I don't know anything about an orchestrated pattern. What I know is I was asked questions when I walked in here, so responded. If that's an orchestra, it's a funny orchestra."

Staff writers Glenn Kessler and Walter Pincus contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A8563-2002Sep26.html>

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Aerospace Daily
September 27, 2002

Official: NORTHCOM Will Plan For Worst-Case Scenarios

One of the most valuable aspects of U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) will be its ability to jointly plan for worst-case scenarios, such as the use of weapons of mass destruction within the country, according to Peter Verga, special assistant to the secretary of defense for homeland security.

"With regard to what we're calling the 'high-end' problems - the extraordinary circumstances under which we might have to operate - having a single command responsible for both the planning and execution of those activities is important," Verga said during a Heritage Foundation briefing in Washington Sept. 26.

"What Northern Command ... will bring to the fight is that unity of thought, unity of effort, and the ability to plan for catastrophic situations which we have not been able to concentrate on," he said. One hypothetical example of a "high-end" event would be the simultaneous detonation of nuclear weapons in multiple U.S. cities, Verga said.

Established in April, NORTHCOM is the first command to have unified responsibility for the defense of America (DAILY, April 18). It will encompass the continental U.S., Canada, Mexico and portions of the Caribbean and Alaska. NORTHCOM will be stood up at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colo. on Oct. 1.

The commander of NORTHCOM will be Air Force General Ralph "Ed" Eberhart, who already is the commander of Northern Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and U.S. Space Command.

According to Verga, NORTHCOM may be called to: perform military operations within the U.S. in "extraordinary circumstances," such as a large-scale terrorist attack; to support other government agencies following an attack or natural disaster; or to help provide for security around special events such as the Olympics.

The president, he added, also can make the determination of what constitutes "extraordinary circumstances," and call on NORTHCOM to perform various activities.

"There may be a point in time where the president has to say to the secretary of defense or the combatant commander, 'This has happened and I want you to get in there and help sort it out' until we can go back to what I'd call 'normal function,'" he said.

Although NORTHCOM will add another layer of bureaucracy when civil authorities call on the military for aid, Verga estimated that 90 percent of civil support by the military will occur roughly the same way it does now, at the same level of responsiveness.

"This is very, very much new territory, especially for the U.S. military," Verga said. "We haven't operated inside the United States since the Civil War, and we like it that way ... but this is a different world, and we have to be prepared to do that."

Posse Comitatus

Verga said the Defense Department has concluded that any activities of NORTHCOM won't be inconsistent with the Posse Comitatus Act - a Reconstruction-era law proscribing use of the Army and Air Force to enforce laws, except where expressly authorized by the Constitution or Congress.

"As we have looked at Posse Comitatus and looked at the missions of the Department of Defense, and the potential missions of NORTHCOM, we do not see any conflicts between the two," Verga said. "The president cannot order things that are inconsistent with Posse Comitatus, because one of the things that [it] provides for is [for] the president to essentially waive Posse Comitatus.

"There's plenty of laws on the books that allow whatever type of military action would be necessary inside the United States," Verga said.

-- Jefferson Morris

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USA Today
September 26, 2002
Pg. 8D

Saddled With A Big Burden

This horse was only defense Army had against botulism

By Steve Sternberg, USA TODAY

One unsung hero of the Gulf War wore a halter, not a helmet, and rarely strayed far from the corral.

The horse's name was First Flight. He supplied the U.S. Army with the best available antidote for one of Iraq's scariest bioweapons, botulinum toxin.

Botulinum toxin is the most poisonous substance known, more potent than the most lethal nerve agents. Made by *Clostridium botulinum*, a common bacterium, the toxin shuts down nerves that control breathing and swallowing, leaving victims paralyzed. Until victims' nerves regenerate, which takes weeks or months, they require full life support.

But effective equine antitoxin can cut that recuperation time in half. And First Flight, a 1,200-pound thoroughbred, was famed for the antitoxin he produced over 15 years of military service before his death in 1999.

A dark bay gelding, First Flight apparently won no garlands: The Jockey Club, racing's official registrar, has no record that he ever raced. He entered the military as a caisson horse for funerals at Arlington National Cemetery, but he didn't last long. Strong-willed and skittish in crowds, he is said to have bolted during a funeral procession with a general's coffin.

"He was feisty and spirited and full of himself," says U.S. Army veterinarian George Lewis, who helped launch the Army's antitoxin program.

First Flight made medical history on Sept. 26, 1978, when Lewis injected him with a vaccine made of weakened toxin to activate his immune system. A second horse, Abe, got a similar shot soon after. Lewis hoped to make the two horses the first source of antitoxin to all seven known subtypes of botulinum.

He also hoped the vaccine would protect them when he gave them their first injection of "hot toxin."

"That's the time you lose a lot of sleep," Lewis says. "I slept in the barn the first night, stayed close beside them for a couple of days. Fortunately, it was all right."

Both horses were soon moved from Fort Detrick's Large Animal Research Facility in Maryland to the University of Minnesota, in St. Paul, where scientists had pioneered research in the extraction of antibodies from blood serum. Although the potency of Abe's antibodies proved disappointing, First Flight's were worthy of a Thoroughbred. He gained his first measure of fame in 1991, when antitoxin-bearing antibodies from his blood saved 52 Egyptians during a botulism epidemic. Twenty-one people who did not get his antitoxin died.

He also proved a lifesaver during a horrifying ordeal when a young Ohio family, the Bairds, nearly lost their third child to botulism in 1997. The little girl, Tessler Baird, was less than a week old when her mother noticed that the infant seemed to be choking. Within hours, she was paralyzed. She was admitted to Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, where doctors kept her alive by placing her on a respirator.

Most adults get botulism from improperly preserved food, because the bacterium grows best in a vacuum. But babies get botulism by ingesting spores, which are often found in honey or riding on dust in the air. The spores germinate in the infants' oxygen-free intestines, poisoning them from within.

California researchers make a human form of botulinum antitoxin for infants -- by extracting antitoxin antibodies from the blood of people vaccinated against botulism -- but Tessler turned out to have been affected by a rare type of botulinum toxin that wasn't covered by the California antitoxin. Her doctors contacted U.S. Army physicians, who shipped out a dose made from First Flight.

The Bairds faced a terrible dilemma. The human body views equine antitoxin as foreign; the remedy posed a risk of rejection. "You could kill someone with the treatment," says Lewis, now retired.

Tessler's parents could opt for antitoxin or leave the little girl in intensive care for the time it would take for her paralysis to subside. They decided to take the risk; in a week, Tessler was breathing on her own again.

First Flight's biggest contribution to his country came as the U.S. Army was gearing up for war with Iraq. On New Year's Day 1991, as the biggest military buildup in the Middle East was underway, an Army plane ferried an unusual cargo to Saudi Arabia -- 2,549 doses of First Flight antitoxin.

Military strategists feared that Iraq was producing bioweapons on an industrial scale, but they had paid scant attention to the relatively small U.S. biodefense program. Lewis, then a colonel, was a Pentagon biodefense liaison during the Gulf War.

He says the news of the troops' vulnerability shocked the brass -- notably Secretary of State Colin Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"In Desert Storm/Desert Shield, we've got one of the most powerful men in the world, someone I think the world of, with his generals," Lewis says. "He's trying to make decisions on, when do we go here, when do we go there, when do we invade . . . He's just moved a world's record amount of tonnage.

"And I say, 'Oh, by the way, we've got a two-horse program.' "

Powell ordered the Army to buy more horses.

Lewis says the Army bought nearly 60 more horses. Each was vaccinated against only one of the seven types of botulinum toxin, so the Army could ensure that the resulting mixture of antitoxins was uniformly potent against every type of botulinum.

Fortunately, Iraq didn't use its bioweapons arsenal. About three years after the war, the antitoxin program was abandoned. The remaining horse serum was stored for future processing.

Eventually Abe died of natural causes at the University of Minnesota veterinary school. In 1998, the additional horses were donated to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.

First Flight retired from "active research status" in 1993, at age 28. He was trucked from Minnesota back to Fort Detrick.

By all accounts, he lived a pampered life. He was confined to his stall, an Army memo says, "any time weather forecasts call for harsh weather conditions." His pasture mates were handpicked.

First Flight died of natural causes on May 17, 1999, in the pasture at Fort Detrick. He was 31. The horse that had flunked out of the caisson corps was put to rest with the military honors befitting his contribution to medical research. A plaque marks his grave.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-09-26-horse_x.htm

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Los Angeles Times

September 30, 2002

Pg. 1

Fear And Loathing In Kuwait

Gulf: The emirate expects reprisal from Iraq for any U.S. strike. Still, there is a desire to topple the 'evil cancer,' Hussein.

By Tony Perry, Times Staff Writer

KUWAIT CITY -- At the Al Walima Coffee Shop in this capital's old downtown, the talk is all about Saddam Hussein and about President Bush's threat to use U.S. military power to force a regime change in Baghdad.

"America should remove Saddam as quickly as possible. He is a cancer, an evil, evil cancer," said owner Hassan Abdullah Zackariah, 55.

As the United States and Britain continue their push to get Hussein to knuckle under to their demands, Zackariah's sentiment is common among the men who spend their afternoons here drinking tea, smoking water pipes, discussing politics and watching the Arab news network Al Jazeera.

But Zackariah and the others also worry that if the U.S. moves to topple Hussein, Iraq will retaliate by attacking Kuwait, possibly with missiles carrying chemical or biological weapons or by sabotaging the oil fields.

U.S. officials, who view Kuwait as a launch site for a possible attack on Iraq, argue that no country in the region would benefit as much from Hussein's ouster. Maybe so, but no country is more nervous about suffering collateral damage either.

"The day the U.S. attacks Saddam, he will attack Kuwait, for sure," said Zackariah, whose establishment was closed and ransacked by Iraqi soldiers during their brutal seven-month occupation in 1990 and 1991. Abu Muhanned, 50, a retired employee of the Ministry of Commerce, agreed: "Everybody is afraid for Kuwait. Kuwait suffered very much."

Arabic- and English-language newspapers here are closely monitoring the movement of U.S. military personnel and weaponry to what is called Camp Doha—actually a portion of a Kuwaiti air base that has been dedicated for use by the U.S. And, while attempting to avoid an appearance of crisis, the government is announcing new steps nearly every day to reassure citizens that it is prepared to withstand an Iraqi attack.

The Ministry of Health announced last week that it has imported specially designed tents to withstand chemical or biological warfare by providing pressured air. The move was made in "the face of expected 'events' in the region." Half a million gas masks are in storage.

The government has also declared that it is planning an early warning system so residents will know if a nuclear, biological or chemical attack is imminent.

Meanwhile, gas masks are also selling briskly, some Kuwaitis are planning to leave the country if war is declared, and the Kuwait Stock Exchange is plunging.

Some residents are themselves paying \$13,000 or more for airtight tents that promise to protect their families for up to 500 hours from biological or chemical agents in the air.

"If the U.S. strikes Iraq, Saddam will take his fury out on us," said Abdullah Mina, 32, a banker who bought one of the tents.

Although there is no indication that the U.S. has even a fraction of the personnel or equipment at Camp Doha that would be needed to launch an offensive, each new report in the local press seems to ratchet up both Kuwaitis' eagerness to be rid of Hussein and their apprehension about being on the front line.

Newspapers last week featured front-page stories about the arrival of more Patriot missiles, defensive weapons meant to shoot down incoming Scud missiles.

The Patriot batteries are to be deployed around the Ali al Salem and Ahmad al Jaber air bases, where the U.S. and British aircraft that enforce the "no-fly" zone in southern Iraq are stationed. The presence of the Patriots is both reassuring and unsettling to the Kuwaitis.

"I am not afraid for myself, but I am afraid of the destruction," Hassan Askanani, 51, a pharmacist, said as the image of Condoleezza Rice, Bush's national security advisor, was being shown on Al Jazeera.

Despite a massive rebuilding program, the physical and psychic scars from the Iraqi invasion 12 years ago have yet to heal completely in this country of 2.2 million that sits atop 9% of the world's oil.

A study done last year for the World Health Organization concluded that 20% of ethnic Kuwaitis—who were singled out for particular brutality by the Iraqis—suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Land mines still litter the desert and Faylakah island, Kuwait's main archeological site.

Lately, though, civil defense training—including some conducted by German and Czech military personnel—has been stepped up, and school evacuation drills have been ordered.

"We want to be safe. Everybody in Kuwait wants to be safe if the Americans go after Saddam," said Khaled Sabah, 32, an accountant. "My wife is worried about the children. Everybody is worried about the children."

Doctors say U.S. authorities have inquired about the number of doctors and the availability of certain medicines.

On Sunday, the Ministry of Commerce announced that it will issue food rationing cards to non-Kuwaitis in case food supplies are threatened. Kuwaitis, who are outnumbered by the expatriates, already have such cards.

With uncertainty in the air, rumors are also taking hold. One was that the U.S. Embassy had ordered all Americans to leave because a strike was imminent. The embassy, which received numerous calls, denied that any such order or advisory had been issued.

To veteran Kuwait watchers, the edginess is not unexpected as the rhetoric escalates between Washington and Baghdad.

"The Kuwaitis have an educated opinion about what war is like," said Rep. Darrell E. Issa (R-Vista), one of Congress' leading experts on the Persian Gulf. "This is a nation that knows what it's like to be hostages and refugees."

Foreign Minister Sheik Sabah al Ahmed al Jabbar al Sabah has said that while Kuwait would endorse a U.S. strike if it was backed by a United Nations resolution, it opposes a unilateral strike by the Americans.

Defense Minister Sheik Jabbar Mubarak al Sabah said he has no doubt Hussein would strike Kuwait, a comment that sent a jolt through the local populace.

"History has proved that the Iraqi regime has no moral or political restraint from launching any action against its own people or neighbors," he said.

Still, U.S. officials insist that support for the U.S. is stronger here than in any other Persian Gulf nation. Even local Islamic political figures, who have criticized U.S. policies toward Afghanistan and Israel, support a tough stand against Hussein.

Issa said he believes Kuwaitis do not want to be seen as backing the U.S. unequivocally out of concern that that would be interpreted as a desire for revenge against Iraq.

But, he noted, the Kuwaitis have two major grievances against Hussein, both of which the Bush administration is citing as proof of the Iraqi leader's treachery: Baghdad's refusal to pay war reparations to Kuwait and its failure to provide an accounting of 600-plus Kuwaitis who disappeared during the occupation.

In returning from the United Nations last week, the foreign minister noted with approval that the resolution being sought by the U.S. and Britain cites the Kuwaiti POW issue as one of the reasons for a possible strike against Iraq.

An estimated 9,000 U.S. troops are now at Camp Doha, which was established after the liberation of Kuwait in February 1991. Tanks, heavy artillery, bombers and C-130 gunships are being repositioned here from other regional bases, including those in Saudi Arabia.

A thousand combat Marines from Camp Pendleton arrived last week for a month of live-fire desert-warfare training with Kuwaiti soldiers along the Kuwait-Iraq border.

Although the training was scheduled long before the recent crisis, Marine officials have made clear that it could be put to immediate use. One training exercise will involve how to continue fighting if attacked by nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, known in military jargon as NBC.

"We're keeping the blade sharp," said Col. Anthony M. Haslam, commander of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. "We have to be able to fight anywhere in the world. It helps when you know the ground."

Ron Bee, a senior analyst with the UC San Diego-based Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, said that despite the government's seeming reluctance to entirely back the U.S., there is no doubt that Kuwait would be in America's corner even without a U.N. resolution.

Bee noted that Hussein has never renounced his claim that Kuwait belongs to Iraq. Moreover, many Kuwaitis believe that Iraqi agents are ever present here.

"Kuwait is a lot like South Korea: Both depend for their security on the United States, but sometimes our needs and their needs are different," Bee said. "It can be a kind of split-personality relationship, but in the end, Kuwait knows its survival is at stake."

Cafe owner Zackariah says much the same thing.

"In Kuwait, we have God, the emir and America," he said. "We live under their umbrella."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-kuwait30sep30.story>

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Los Angeles Times
September 30, 2002

A New Son Is Rising Over Iraq

By Bob Drogin, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON -- He is rarely quoted in the newspaper or shown on television. He has never given an interview and apparently has never delivered a speech in public. He is said to stutter.

Most Iraqis, it is said, would not recognize the short man with the thick mustache if they encountered him on the street—though two who did tried to kill him recently, according to an opposition group.

Qusai Hussein, 36, the younger son of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, has emerged as a significant figure in the regime and an object of growing U.S. concern. He commands key military, security and intelligence forces and, U.S. officials say, directs lucrative smuggling networks in violation of United Nations sanctions.

If an invasion killed or dislodged his father, Qusai could well be left in control of the regime's deadliest weapons.

A British government report revealed last week that the elder Hussein may have delegated to Qusai authority over Iraq's suspected arsenal of chemical and biological weapons. The disclosure was the latest sign that Qusai has eclipsed his infamous older brother, Uday, as the Iraqi strongman's most trusted aide and heir apparent.

U.S. officials say Qusai's growing power has emerged as a wild card as U.N. inspectors plan to return to Iraq to search for possible weapons of mass destruction—and as the Bush administration weighs how best to topple Hussein's regime.

"If Saddam is knocked out early, and command and control breaks down, then how do they fire their stuff?" said a senior U.S. intelligence official who is involved in the planning. "Who's going to push the button?"

"Qusai is someone who, A, would be loyal to his father, and, B, if he gives the orders, those orders will be followed like his father's," the official added. "There's contingency planning going on, and he's a big part of it."

According to U.S. and British intelligence, Hussein's regime in recent years has produced both biological and chemical weapons and can deliver them with artillery shells, free-fall bombs, sprayers and ballistic missiles. They could be deployed within 45 minutes, officials say.

Would Qusai use them? Former U.N. weapons inspector Terrence Taylor isn't sure. "These are not Taliban, theologically motivated people," said Taylor, now president of the International Institute for Strategic Studies-U.S.

"This is a secular ruling clique, a Mafia-type group. They want to survive. So they're going to try to strike deals."

Qusai had no known role in his father's past military adventures, including the war against Iran in the 1980s and the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 that led to the Persian Gulf War the following year.

But Qusai knows about Iraq's clandestine weapons programs. Iraqi defectors have told U.S. officials that starting in the mid-1990s, he headed a special unit of as many as 2,000 men whose job was to hinder and hamper U.N. weapons inspectors.

According to these accounts, one team from Qusai's group would create traffic jams and other diversions to delay the inspectors, while another team would rush to move incriminating records, equipment and other items that the inspectors were seeking.

David Kay, a former U.N. weapons inspector, says Qusai can be seen "lurking in the background" in photographs of key inspections. Another former inspector, who asked not to be identified, says Qusai was part of a high-level Iraqi committee that "decided what to give up and what to conceal. He was involved up to his eyeballs."

U.N. inspectors withdrew from Iraq in frustration in December 1998 and have yet to return.

Experts say Qusai's influence has grown dramatically since then, especially in the military and security structure of the Iraqi police state. Getting to the top wasn't hard; his father appointed him to every post.

Qusai oversees the Republican Guard, the best trained and armed military unit, and the Special Security Organization, which is entrusted with protecting the president and with hiding any weapons of mass destruction. The SSO also monitors telecommunications between Iraq and the outside world, Iraqi exiles say.

The two posts, as well as a recent appointment as head of the northern army, the force that presumably would defend Baghdad against an attack from Kurdish areas in the north, give Qusai operational control over some of the most important units in Iraq's armed services.

Qusai also helps run the Mukhabarat, Iraq's largest and most dreaded intelligence and internal security service.

The U.N. Commission on Human Rights, Amnesty International and other human rights groups have accused the Mukhabarat of torturing suspected dissidents or their families.

A former Mukhabarat member, Khalid Janabi, told U.N. investigators last year that members of a special unit, the Technical Operations Directorate, have raped relatives of suspected opponents and then used videotape of the assaults to ensure future cooperation.

Qusai's public profile increased dramatically in May 2001, when he was elected in a secret ballot—and his brother was not—to the ruling Arab Baath Socialist Party's leadership council at a party conference in Baghdad.

Not everyone was pleased. According to a U.N. report, Iraqi security forces executed a leading Shiite Muslim cleric, Hussein Bahar Uloom, for refusing to "publicly express approval" of Qusai's election. Human rights observers say the killing was part of a campaign to eliminate Shiite clerics opposed to the secular Baghdad regime.

Still, the state-run television announcement of Qusai's election reportedly caught many Iraqis by surprise. He has shunned the spotlight, remaining a behind-the-scenes player in the daily deadly intrigue of Iraqi politics.

Judith Yaphe, a former CIA analyst and an Iraq expert, says Hussein may yet undermine Qusai. "He doesn't want his son to have too much power and authority because he might think, 'Gee, if I got rid of Dad' If you're Saddam Hussein, you have to think like that," she said.

Other analysts say Qusai's rise has fueled feuds among the Iraqi elite.

On Aug. 1, two men in an Oldsmobile shot and wounded Qusai in the arm as he rode in a convoy through Baghdad's Mansour district, according to the Iraqi National Congress, an opposition group based in London. The assailants were killed at a military roadblock, the group says, and their identities remain unknown. The CIA says it cannot confirm the incident.

Trained as a lawyer, Qusai is said to live a quiet life, devoted to his wife and three sons. One Iraqi defector has said that he is a heavy drinker, but U.S. officials say the evidence is not clear.

"He's viewed as level headed, restrained, not a wild man," said Kenneth Katzman, an Iraq expert at the Congressional Research Service.

"He's seen as stable, low profile, very loyal to his father," said an intelligence official.

Qusai is also viewed as a shrewd player in Iraq's \$2-billion-plus black-market economy.

Analysts say Qusai and the government agencies he runs have taken control of much of Iraq's illicit sales of crude oil and diesel fuel to Turkey, Lebanon and especially Syria, according to a report by the Coalition for International Justice, a Washington-based research group that has studied Iraq's economy. The sales violate U.N. trade sanctions imposed after the Gulf War.

"He's really become a major player over the last 18 months to two years," said Susan Blaustein, co-author of the report.

Defectors have said that Qusai's Mukhabarat has set up front companies in Jordan that re-export goods legally imported into Iraq for civilian use under the U.N. "oil for food" program—goods such as medicine, baby food, vehicles, spare parts and electronics. The intelligence agency also has muscled into the lucrative trade in black-market cigarettes from Cyprus, the coalition says.

"Qusai is likely able to make good use of the money, not so much to support a lavish lifestyle as to retain the loyalty of the thousands of members of his various services," the coalition report says.

Qusai's rise to power reflects, in part, the decline of his older brother, Uday. Perhaps the only Iraqi more feared than his father, Uday was shot and severely injured in a 1996 attempted assassination.

Uday, 38, is Iraq's media baron, a flamboyant figure who races a red Porsche and controls Iraq's most popular radio and TV stations and its largest newspaper. He heads student groups, the bar association and the Iraqi National Olympic Committee. Iraq wants to bid to host the 2012 Summer Olympics, and the U.N. in June approved spending \$20 million generated from legal sales of Iraqi oil to begin building a 100,000-seat stadium in Baghdad.

Uday also is known for his violent temper. Human rights groups say Hussein's elder son runs a black-garbed paramilitary force called Saddam's Martyrs that has torn the tongues out of supposed enemies and used swords to execute victims outside their homes.

He also allegedly has maintained a private torture chamber, known as the Red Room, in a building by the Tigris River. He has used whippings, beatings and immersion in sewage to punish Iraqi athletes who lose, according to two national team soccer players who defected.

Hussein's sons "differ only in that Uday kills people for fun and Qusai kills people in a very businesslike fashion," said former CIA chief R. James Woolsey. "If Saddam dropped over of a heart attack tomorrow and we were dealing with Qusai, we would be no better off."

Times staff writer Sonni Efron contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-qusai30sep30.story>

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Los Angeles Times
September 29, 2002
Pg. 1

Pentagon Battles Unknown Preparing For A Toxic War

Military: Despite gains since Gulf War, soldiers fighting in Iraq could be exposed to many agents.

By John Hendren, Times Staff Writer

FT. LEONARD WOOD, Mo. -- Defense strategists have made sweeping advances since the 1991 Persian Gulf War to protect U.S. troops from chemical and biological warfare: intensified training, improved gas masks, cooler and lighter protective suits, and sensors to detect hazardous agents sooner and from greater distances.

Yet the science of defending against such weapons remains in its infancy. As another war looms against Iraq--the only nation known to deploy toxic agents since World War II--even the world's best-trained and -equipped soldiers are vulnerable. The Pentagon has sought to prepare for the worst by sending chemical specialists to the Chemical Defense Training Facility at Ft. Leonard Wood, the only site where actual toxins are used in military training. About 60,000 already have trained at the facility, which expects 4,500 more from all four branches of the armed services this year and 6,000 next year. They, in turn, train their front-line colleagues.

Some recent technological advances hold the prospect of saving hundreds of soldiers' lives. For example, a specially equipped vehicle that during the Gulf War could not identify chemical weapons on contact without forcing soldiers out of its protective hull can now spot a toxic cloud three miles off without stopping.

But for biological weapons, that kind of advance detection remains several years away. The best equipment available today can detect biological agents only half an hour after exposure, though usually in time to treat victims. Even that marks an improvement over 1991, when biological weapons couldn't be detected at all.

More worrisome, this equipment--a two-person lab mounted on a Humvee--can identify only 10 biological agents. (Which 10 is classified information, but likely includes those Iraq is thought to possess--anthrax, botulinum, ricin and aflatoxin--as well as often-mentioned threats such as plague and smallpox.)

Novel biological agents could go undetected, killing or incapacitating soldiers who might not show the effects for hours or even days. Because existing devices search the air, they would not detect if a man infected with smallpox--a kind of walking time bomb--strolled past.

"One of my biggest fears is that there will be something that is totally unknown and unexpected," said Anna Johnson-Winegar, a former United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq and now deputy assistant secretary of Defense for chemical and biological defense.

Lethal agents also could be modified to maximize their effect and make them even harder to spot. VX, for example, could be turned into a nearly undetectable "dusty VX" by impregnating the liquid toxin on a particle of silicone or dust and making it airborne.

"And that's not even going into the whole area of the genetically engineered microorganisms," Johnson-Winegar said. "It's pretty easy to make them antibiotic-resistant or put some type of a coating or shell on them so that our detectors don't work." Knowing which weapons Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has is tricky because of his elaborate security measures and the fact that the technology used to make these weapons can be as simple as a beer-fermenting vat. No weapon inspectors have gone into Iraq since 1998.

What does seem clear is that Hussein is more likely to resort to chemical or biological weapons in a new U.S. attack--a point emphasized by British Prime Minister Tony Blair when he presented a British intelligence dossier against Hussein on Tuesday. During the Gulf War, Hussein was deterred by the expectation that he could lose the war and still retain power as long as he did nothing to provoke an overwhelming response from coalition forces. (Some speculate that Gulf War Syndrome, a malady among returning U.S. troops, was the result of an unknown agent, although none has been found.)

With President Bush insisting on ousting the Iraqi leader this time, Hussein "will not hesitate to use these weapons," says former Iraqi Gen. Najib Salhi, who defected in 1995. Although special operations soldiers likely would be among the first on the ground in an assault on Iraq, military strategists believe Hussein would probably direct chemical and biological attacks at larger fixed targets such as airfields and bases. "Port facilities [and] airfields are always more lucrative to hit because there are more people there," said Gen. Paul V. Hester, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

Iraq has loaded toxic weapons on Scud missiles and, according to U.S. intelligence officials, has equipped unmanned planes with crude spraying devices, though it's not known whether these delivery devices are effective. Even so, the vulnerability is extreme.

In general, chemical weapons such as mustard gas and VX can kill quickly over a limited area but lose their lethality over time and distance. They can be detected in nanoseconds by the right equipment, giving soldiers time to don protective gear.

Sarin, the gas that cultists used to kill 12 and sicken 5,000 in a Tokyo subway in 1995, is lethal in confined spaces but dissipates quickly in the open air. VX can linger in liquid form for days or even weeks, leaving a lethal contact hazard that diverts soldiers from battle to cleanup.

"If I were a bad guy, [VX] would be the chemical agent of choice if I were to hit an airfield ... or a city or a state," said Maj. Gen. John Doesburg, commander of the Soldier & Biological Chemical Command in Aberdeen, Md.

Biological weapons are harder to detect and take days to show their lethal effects. Anthrax is long-lasting and comparatively simple to produce and deliver; it can be made by two people in a crude lab for \$2,000. Botulinum, by contrast, is harder to produce and cannot survive long in heat or sunlight. Smallpox takes up to two weeks to kill and can be passed from one person to another unwittingly. "Soldiers will be concerned because you can't see it, you can't touch it, you can't smell it--but you're told it's there," Doesburg said.

Even basic industrial chemicals could pose a threat. The Pentagon's current chemical detectors are not set up to identify common hazardous chemicals such as chlorine gas, which the Germans used in World War I.

Asked about nightmare scenarios, one defense researcher said, "Think Bhopal"--referring to a 1984 industrial accident in which a toxic cloud of hydrogen cyanide spewed from a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, killing more than 2,000 people within hours. As many as 20,000 later died from gas-related illnesses.

The new technologies and improved equipment that the Pentagon has brought out since the Gulf War include:

- * Chemical masks and suits: The armed services are replacing the hot and heavy Battle Dress Overgarment--a charcoal suit with a strap-on hood--with a sleeker, cooler one-piece suit.

- * Portable detection kits: M-256 kits have been distributed to every unit. Soldiers would use them to identify nerve, blister and blood agents such as hydrogen cyanide.

- * The Fox chemical detection vehicle: An amphibious armored car introduced by the Germans during the Gulf War to detect nerve agents, it now also detects blister agents, such as mustard gas, from three miles away. U.S. forces have 113 of them, nearly double the total in 1991.

- * The Biologically Integrated Detection System: Created in 1996, this Humvee-mounted lab alerts operators that one of 10 biological agents has been found, but it can't identify which one; the findings must be verified with a laboratory, a procedure that can take hours. It also can detect a change in the size and number of particles in the air--possibly because of a dust cloud or an unknown virus. Operators also tote a new \$60 hand-held device that can detect eight biological agents on contact.

- * Decontamination systems: Cleaning an area struck by chemical or biological weapons can take days, requiring soldiers to spray a toxic decontaminant on exposed vehicles, buildings and equipment. Army researchers are now testing a system similar to de-icing trucks used at airfields. The GL1800 looks like an armored telephone truck, with a carriage that can lift an operator 42 feet to spray contaminated equipment from a safe distance. The new system

uses an experimental nontoxic decontaminant. Among the first soldiers likely to face the prospect of toxic weapons in combat are from the 101st Airborne Division at Ft. Campbell, Ky.

The 101st underwent accelerated chemical training before going to Afghanistan and its troops now ponder the daunting prospect of chemical warfare in Iraq. Several soldiers fresh from Afghanistan said they're paid to take what comes.

If Hussein used chemical or biological weapons, "he'd be an idiot," said Staff Sgt. John Hughes, a 38-year-old licensed practical nurse who returned from a seven-month stint in Afghanistan in mid-July. "I don't think it'd be a problem. It's something that the infantry trains on all the time."

Added Chief Warrant Officer Edward Anthony Greer, 38, a Black Hawk helicopter pilot from a tough area of Gary, Ind., who also returned from Afghanistan in July, "I'm from Gary. I learned to dodge at an early age."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/la-na-chemwar29sep29004440.story>

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Washington Post
September 30, 2002
Pg. 10

Skepticism Greets Seizure Of Suspected Uranium

By Karl Vick, Washington Post Foreign Service

ISTANBUL, Sept. 29 -- Turkish police arrested two men near the Syrian border with a lead tube reportedly containing uranium, but international monitors said they were evaluating the incident with skepticism.

An initial report Saturday said the tube contained as much as 35 pounds of refined fissionable material -- about half as much as in the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. But an official requesting anonymity discounted the report late today, saying that police mistakenly included the weight of the lead container in the estimate, according to the Agence France-Presse news service.

The undetermined radioactive material actually weighed three ounces, the official said.

The later report reinforced skepticism already being voiced at the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. body that monitors nuclear proliferation. A spokeswoman said agency specialists "laughed" when they saw news photos of the container stamped with misspelled words and the phrase "Made in W. Germany."

The agency nonetheless takes the incident seriously, said the spokeswoman, Melissa Fleming. "What's significant is intent -- if there's a buyer," she said. "We'll have to rely on Turkey to tell us that."

Turkish officials were not available for comment today. However, suspicion immediately focused on Iraq, just 150 miles from Sanliurfa, the city in southeastern Turkey where the two men were arrested.

The Bush administration and independent analysts say Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is trying to acquire weapons-grade uranium or other fissionable material for nuclear weapons. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, a research organization based in London, issued a report this month saying that Iraq could produce an atomic bomb within months after acquiring such material.

British officials said in a report last week that Iraq had attempted to obtain nuclear material from unnamed countries in Africa.

The container was discovered in a taxi hired by the two suspects, identified in news reports as Mehmet Demir and Saliyah Yasar. The men were arraigned Saturday night on charges of trafficking.

The contents of the container awaited testing at the Turkish atomic energy department, which was closed today.

Fleming said the International Atomic Energy Agency had been unable to reach Turkish specialists by phone, fax or e-mail.

Turkey, which bridges Europe and Asia, is a crossroads for illicit trafficking of drugs and immigrants. In 1998, Turkish authorities seized almost 10 pounds of unprocessed uranium and six grams of plutonium smuggled from the former Soviet Union. Last November, police in Istanbul arrested two men who offered undercover agents two pounds of uranium wrapped in a newspaper.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A20656-2002Sep29.html>

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Chem-Bio Protections Fall Short, Panel Told

By John M. Donnelly

Eleven years after the Gulf War showed shortcomings in the U.S. military's chemical and biological protective gear, and with a similar conflict apparently on the horizon, the United States has made insufficient progress in fielding systems to help soldiers survive and fight amid germs and gas, an internal congressional memo says.

The Sept. 26 briefing memo prepared by the House Government Reform national-security subcommittee staff cites "much progress" in this area, then adds: "However, the sluggishness in the development and procurement of [chemical and biological] defense items in the area of contamination avoidance, protection systems and decontamination still poses a major challenge for the Department of Defense."

U.S. forces may face chemical and biological weapons if they are involved in a war with Iraq. But as one U.S. official knowledgeable about the troubled efforts to improve U.S. defenses against such weaponry said, "I'd hate to be one of the poor servicemen" who finds in battle that his equipment is flawed or not available.

The protective-gear issue takes on added urgency as the world focuses on Iraq's reported stocks of anthrax, botulinum, mustard gas, sarin and VX; and its reputed delivery means: 20 Scuds (some of which can reach U.S. troops and allies in Kuwait, Israel and Saudi Arabia) and shorter-range missiles, artillery shells, rockets and some aircraft.

Many of the shortfalls in defensive equipment have been disclosed by Defense Week over the last few years. The problems include:

- a 1999 Pentagon report that half the gas masks in the U.S. inventory were not in working order, because they couldn't withstand the rigors of training or were misused by soldiers;
- an internal Navy audit in 2002 showing that many Marine Corps battalions were not training for mission scenarios while wearing their protective gear, as required;
- the Defense Logistic Agency's continued acquisition of 780,000 "battle dress overgarments" in the late 1990s after criminal investigators had told officials the suits were being intentionally produced with flaws by a company called Isratex;
- the Pentagon's inability to this day to prove it has located a quarter of a million of those potentially defective Isratex suits.

Now, the subcommittee memo reveals how numerous other programs to detect agents, protect individual warfighters and their units, or decontaminate people and equipment are either behind schedule or not working.

At press time, the Pentagon could not make an official available to respond to the criticisms.

The Pentagon is spending \$1.3 billion on chemical and biological defensive systems in fiscal 2003. Those initiatives fall into four main areas: contamination avoidance; protection; decontamination; and medical systems.

Missing chemical suits

One of the problems is inadequate inventory systems to track the available assets. Referring to the quarter of a million missing Isratex suits, the report says: "The subcommittee has received information indicating there are unresolved doubts about the quality and utility of [Army and Air Force battle dress overgarments] in the Middle East."

The same statement could be made about Korea and elsewhere, two U.S. officials said.

While there appears to be no evidence that defective suits are on pre-positioned ships or at forward operating bases, there is also no evidence that they are not. The Defense Logistics Agency told Defense Week a year ago that an extensive search was made for the Isratex suits. Although the suits remain "unaccounted for," the agency said it believes they have been consumed in use.

However, the agency acknowledges it can't prove that, and so worries abide.

The suit that replaces the Isratex suit is called the Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology, or JSLIST. The General Accounting Office testified to the House panel in June that the military has an incomplete picture of its JSLIST and other inventories. In fact, the military was accidentally declaring as excess—and selling on eBay—many JSLIST suits for \$3 each, even as officials were simultaneously buying hundreds of thousands of them from the contractor for \$200 a copy.

Besides the quantity of JSLIST suits, the quality has also been questioned. Last year, Defense Week disclosed that the military has already begun to look for an improved version of JSLIST (itself an upgrade), because it does not protect its wearer when the suit is soaked with sweat or seawater. This is particularly a concern for Navy SEALs and other special-ops teams.

However, the military may have already bought most of the 4.4 million JSLIST suits it plans to purchase by the time it makes a decision on the upgrade, which is still being tested; that decision is not expected until 2007, officials have said.

Procurement goals unmet

Besides the suit problems, the military is having difficulty meeting its procurement goals for several new "contamination-avoidance" systems. A U.S. official said the problem is not so much lack of funding but misdirected funding, combined with engineering setbacks and, in some instances, a lack of industrial capacity.

The Joint Chemical Agent Detector, or JCAD, is expected to automatically detect, identify and quantify the presence of chemical agents, including with a pocket-sized alarm system. In fiscal 2001, the Pentagon was supposed to buy 216,126 of them. Instead, the panel's memo says, "the JCAD target performance was zero of 216,126."

Because of the delays, the memo says, "some have questioned what detection capability will soldiers have that they did not have in the Persian Gulf War."

In that conflict, alarms and decontamination kits suffered glitches due to mechanical problems and a lack of training in their proper use. Moreover, there were problems with the "availability, durability and suitability of protective clothing," the memo said.

Another new detection apparatus developed since then, the Joint Biological Point Detection System, is supposed to alert forces to the presence of germ agents. The Pentagon intended to buy 143 of 1,997 in fiscal 2001—but it bought only five.

The goal of transitioning the program to procurement "will be delayed at least two years again raising capability concerns in the event of a biological weapon attack," the memo said.

Medical shelters unbuilt

Another initiative, the Chemical Biological Protected Shelter, or CBPS, is supposed to provide a mobile, safe place to perform medical operations. As of fiscal 2001, the Pentagon has procured 138 shelters—versus a target of 779.

That is significant, it turns out, because the old shelter, the M51, does not work, the memo says: "All of the Army's M51 protective shelters were coded as unserviceable in fiscal 2001" because of "filtration and transportation problems. As a result, there is a question of whether DoD has a sufficient supply of CBPSs to provide a hazard-free environment for forward tactical medical treatment to meet surge requirements."

In addition, this summer U.S. Central Command, responsible for the Middle East, requested a new type of foam to decontaminate equipment because the existing foam, Decontamination Solution 2, is "a corrosive liquid proven harmful to soldiers and only marginally effective against biological agents," the House panel briefing said.

Finally, a new Modular Decontamination System has been developed to rinse off trucks, tanks and armored personnel carriers. But the Pentagon is not buying these quickly enough either: The fiscal 2001 goal was 130 of 465 units, yet the Pentagon did not buy any, the memo said, "which raises questions whether U.S. forces will have available decontamination equipment on-hand and are properly trained on the use of that equipment in the event of a [weapon of mass destruction] attack."

The House panel will hold a hearing on chemical and biological protection tomorrow morning, at which witnesses from the Pentagon, military services and independent audit agencies will probe the issue. A closed, classified session will follow in the afternoon.

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New York Times
September 30, 2002

Plastic Pods For Biological Attacks

By Teresa Riordan

THE nation's hospitals have been preparing for the possibility of biological or chemical attack by establishing decontamination wards, where those who have been exposed to dangerous agents can be quarantined.

But moving victims to those wards remains problematic. How can hundreds or even thousands be transported without exposing health care workers to contagious or otherwise harmful agents?

Perhaps with an inexpensive, disposable plastic pod that seals off the human body much like a giant Ziploc sandwich bag, although one outfitted with a battery powered blower that brings in fresh air and an exhaust fan that filters biochemical particles.

The Army is testing such pods. Several recently issued patents, one of them in August to the Army itself, involve different types of pods. Several more patent applications are pending.

In at least one version, the pod is sealed by a tongue-and-groove zipper of the type found in plastic sandwich bags. In another version, the pod can be sealed with an adhesive similar to that found on disposable diapers. All the pods feature plastic sleeves that enable a health care worker to work on a patient without being exposed. The pods also have leak-proof ports for administering medicines or running respirators. Nylon ribs keep the plastic from collapsing on the patient.

Isovac Products, based in Oak Burr, Ill., said it had produced several prototypes that were being tested by the Army. Joseph Petrovic, the company's president, said the invention occupied a middle ground between two other approaches: a "Vickers box," a heavy, expensive piece of equipment used to transport ebola and anthrax victims, and something known as a "desert wrap," which was used during the Persian Gulf war.

"The Vickers thing might work, but who can pick up a 200-pound device with a 200-pound person it?" Mr. Petrovic said. "And you can't pay \$30,000 apiece if you need 50,000 of them."

The desert wrap, Mr. Petrovic said, was "pretty much a body bag" made out of material that would stop chemical agents.

"They cut a little window in it so you could see the patient," he said. "But it didn't work very well because it was very claustrophobic and the soldiers were going crazy inside of it."

While the new pods may be useful on the battlefield or in the event of an attack, they can also have many domestic uses — protecting burn victims from infection, for example, or preventing the spread of infection from a bleeding H.I.V. patient.

"After transporting an H.I.V. person, it's a lot of work to decontaminate the ambulance, and it's out of commission for 24 hours," Mr. Petrovic said. "Patients could stay in the pod from the ambulance right through the emergency room."

With Army financing, Mr. Petrovic, James Gauger and George Stefanek developed the pod idea while they were researchers at the IIT Research Institute, a nonprofit research and development organization based in Chicago and in McLean, Va. Robert Mullins, a fourth co-inventor, is still an employee of IIT Research.

When the colleagues left three years ago, they applied for new patents on the idea. Dr. Russ Zajtchuk, a retired brigadier general and former commander of the Army Medical Center at Fort Dietrich, joined the venture as vice president of marketing and research.

"The IITRI version wouldn't have worked, because it wouldn't have passed the leakage tests and absorption tests," Mr. Petrovic said. "Some plastics work and some don't, and the way you weld them together makes a big difference, so there was a lot of engineering work left to be done."

IIT Research continues to patent new aspects of the pod. A patent awarded to the institute in November notes that a patient can be rinsed with a decontaminant liquid while in the pod and then the fluid can be removed "simply by elevating the head end of the pod with respect to the foot end."

John Navarrete, an institute spokesman, said the company was developing a pod, but he could not comment on the product.

Among the other recent pod-related patents, one granted to the Army covers the use of Heimlich valves, which permit air to move in one direction only, to improve air flow in a pod.

Another pod-related patent went to Gentex, a company that produces protective military gear and is based in Carbondale, Pa. The Gentex pod is covered with a camouflage-print cloth that is infused with a patented biocide, instead of plastic.

When will hospitals be able to stockpile these pods, which are also billed as easy to store? Not any time soon, Mr. Petrovic said.

"We got started on this stuff before Sept. 11 of last year," he said. Instead of speeding progress, the terrorist attacks slowed it down, Mr. Petrovic said. "Everything got delayed because the government got restructured."

Elizabeth Arwine, a patent lawyer for the Army, said she could not comment on the pod patents. But she did say that last week the Army had granted a license to a company for another of its technologies — a skin cream designed to protect soldiers from chemical attack.

The company, Dorman Feik Burnett Pharmaceuticals of San Antonio, said that it planned to sell the cream to emergency and health care workers as well as consumers.

The cream, a white paste the consistency of a sunscreen lotion, contains polytetrafluoroethylene resins, which are similar to the substances that coat nonstick cooking pans. The product could be used by firefighters, police officers and health care workers in the event of chemical spills or attacks, the company said.

But it might also be used to protect hairdressers who handle harsh chemicals in hair colorants. Hikers might use it as well; in Army testing, the cream was found to protect against urushiol, the main irritant in poison ivy.

H. Paul Dorman, chief executive of Dorman Feik Burnett, declined to reveal the financial terms of the licensing agreement.

Last year, the Army earned about \$850,000 in royalties from inventions patented by its employees. Like all inventors employed by the Army whose inventions are licensed, Michael J. McCreery, the cream's inventor, will receive 20 percent of royalties.

Although the cream has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for military use, further F.D.A. approval is needed before it can be sold to consumers.

Mr. Dorman said that private citizens might want to include the new skin cream in their terrorism-defense arsenals. But "you would not want to have this as being your sole barrier against chemical agents," he cautioned. "We don't want to give a false sense of security to anybody."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/30/technology/30PATE.html>

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Bloomberg.com
September 27, 2002

Chemical, Biological Defenses An Issue In Iraq Plans

By Tony Capaccio

Washington -- The U.S. military says it's still not satisfied with its equipment to protect troops against chemical and biological weapons.

More improvements are needed to masks, protective suits and sensors that detect chemical and biological agents, and mobile shelters for treating contaminated troops are lacking, officials say.

"Are we fully equipped and prepared? No," said Anna Johnson- Winegar, the Pentagon's deputy assistant secretary for chemical and biological defense. "Are we better than we were a number of years ago? Yes."

President George W. Bush is pressing Congress and the United Nations for authority to disarm Iraq by force if diplomacy fails. Iraq has chemical and biological weapons and the U.S. "must assume" they'd be used against invading troops, says Air Force General Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The U.S. has started vaccinating troops against anthrax and has requested supplies of a new foam that removes toxic agents from tanks, trucks, armored personnel carriers, sensitive electronics, even airfields. It's also building inventories of gear to alert and protect troops in case of attack.

Army and Pentagon officials will face questions from a congressional panel Tuesday on troops' readiness against chemical or biological attacks. It's the first hearing in Congress on this issue since 2000.

Congressional concerns over U.S. readiness to fight in a contaminated environment could undermine support for an attack.

Warning Systems, Masks

The Pentagon said it wasn't satisfied with its readiness to weather chemical or biological attacks in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Iraq had the weapons then and didn't use them.

The new gear that's now being mobilized includes:

-- 52 models of a stationary biological agent detector called Portal Shield have been installed in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Portal Shield is produced by Camber Corporation, a private company in Huntsville, Alabama.

-- 74 laboratories, each mounted on an Army Hummer, that can detect and analyze up to eight different biological agents. Contractors for the Biological Integrated Detection System, or BIDS, include Harris Corp., Bruker Analytical Systems, Environmental Technologies Group and TSI Inc.

-- 1.3 million protective masks, including over 800,000 in Army stocks. The new M40 silicone rubber mask is considered a major improvement in comfort and protection over the natural rubber M17 gas used during the Gulf War. The masks are made by ILC Dover, of Frederica, Delaware, and Mine Safety Appliances of Pittsburgh.

Protective Suits

The military also has 1.6 million new protective suits -- 418,000 more than on Sept. 11 of last year, according to the Defense Logistics Agency. The Pentagon says the camouflage suit -- which includes gloves and boots -- is lighter, less bulky and cooler than systems used during the Gulf War. Once contaminated, a suit must be discarded within 24 hours. Each serviceman is typically issued two.

Six private companies make the so-called "Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology": Crawford Apparel, Belfast, Maine; Group Home Foundations, also in Belfast; NCED, El Paso, Texas; Peckham Vocational Industries, Lansing, Michigan; Southeastern Kentucky Rehabilitation Industries, Corbin, Kentucky; and, Tingley Rubber Corp., South Plainfield, New Jersey.

"The department has improved the status of individual protective equipment, but there are still concerns about future requirements and on-hand inventories to meet those needs," says Raymond Decker, a division director on defense issues for the U.S. General Accounting Office.

Pentagon's Credibility

"I had little confidence in our capability 10 years ago to defend against chemical and biological attack," says Representative Christopher Shays, chairman of the House National Security subcommittee, which is holding Tuesday's hearing. "I do believe it is a lot better but there's part of me that wants to second-guess the military based on past experience."

The Pentagon's credibility is being challenged because of poor preparations for the 1991 Persian Gulf War and post-war charges that both the anthrax vaccine inoculation and programs to destroy chemical weapons were mismanaged and that nerve gas antidotes might have contributed to the illness in veterans known as Gulf War Syndrome.

"I felt that when we were aware of the deficiencies of the equipment, there was a real effort to hide it from public view," Shays said in an interview. "I believe they have been working overtime to correct that."

"We'll be looked at very carefully to see what improvements we made both in quantity of material as well as the quality of the types of things we've been able to provide," Johnson-Winegar said of overall concerns about the defense program.

Medical Shelters Lacking

Shays says his panel at its hearing Tuesday will explore two basic areas: availability of protective gear and whether the gear is as durable as advertised.

One concern is a shortage of shelters that can be driven to the front to provide protection for the initial treatment of contaminated troops. "There is a question of whether the Defense Department has a sufficient supply," says a briefing memo for the Shays panel.

The current shelters are "unserviceable," the Pentagon said in an April report to Congress. None of the planned 779 new shelters was in stock a year ago. The Pentagon in March 2000 said the first shelters would be fielded that April. "There is a limited industry base," Johnson-Winegar said. "We are continuing to work with the manufacturers to get them out. They have a limited capacity to make it."

Contractors include Engineering Air Systems Inc. of St. Louis and the Chemfab Corp., Merrimack, New Hampshire. "They are not getting enough units produced and in the field," Decker said. "Medical treatment would be in jeopardy. Troops in a contaminated environment would be at serious risk."

Durability an Issue

Shays says he'll quiz officials on the durability of the equipment. "Will it last for weeks?" he said. "This involves making sure our troops are very trained on this stuff."

At issue is the M40 Protective Mask and the JSLIST suits, -- post-war improvements widely acknowledged to be improvements over the bulky systems used during the Gulf War.

The mask gained notoriety during a June 2000 Shays hearing when declassified Pentagon Inspector General reports and a 1999 Pentagon survey disclosed that many masks had at least one critical defect.

Some defects were the manufacturer's fault while most were caused by normal wear and tear and poor maintenance. The Shays panel will hear in closed session the conclusions of a classified May 30 IG report that includes this issue in a review of U.S. Central Command protective equipment, Shays said.

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USA Today
September 30, 2002
Pg. 1

Large-Scale Vaccination Called Risky

Though rarely, smallpox shots can be deadly

By Anita Manning, USA Today

SAN DIEGO -- Scientists warned over the weekend that widespread vaccination against smallpox in advance of a terrorist attack could cause many more deaths than last fall's anthrax attack, and, in an era of uncertainty, it may be up to each American to decide whether to take the risk.

The warnings follow a report Friday that the Bush administration plans to announce a policy to offer voluntary smallpox vaccinations to thousands of hospital emergency care workers, health care providers, fire and police personnel and, ultimately, all Americans in case an attack occurs.

Federal health officials here at an international meeting of the American Society for Microbiology would not confirm that report on Sunday. "A number of policies are under consideration," said Julie Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said no decisions have been made. "We continue to review and examine this issue."

Some scientists and political leaders have said mass vaccination could thwart a bioterrorist attack. But in June, a panel of experts advised pre-attack immunization only for teams of health investigators and hospital workers. Unless there is heightened risk of attack, the panel concluded, the vaccine's side effects outweigh its benefits.

For every 1 million immunized, one or two people would die from the vaccine, Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said Sunday. About half of those vaccinated for the first time suffer muscle aches or fever. Serious side effects were rare during mass vaccinations in the 1960s, he said, and complications in people being revaccinated were even more rare. It's estimated that 64% of today's workforce probably was vaccinated before 1972, when routine smallpox vaccination ceased.

But it's a different world today. Ronald Atlas, president of the microbiology society, said 20% to 25% of those who suffered reactions were people who had not been vaccinated but caught the vaccine virus from recently immunized people. Today, with so many more cancer patients, people with HIV/AIDS and others with weakened immune systems, the number of serious side effects could be "much higher, by orders of magnitude."

"If someone told me we were going to be attacked tomorrow, I'd be the first to favor mass vaccination," Atlas said. But "as long as the perceived risk is low, risking the death of hundreds, to thousands, of Americans is not a step I'd endorse. We have to assume the vaccine will kill more people than last fall's anthrax attack," in which five died.

The implications of vaccine side effects may not be widely understood, said Michael Osterholm, a special adviser to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson. "I would like to see universal smallpox vaccination," he said. "It would be the first time in history we would eliminate a bioterrorist threat. But at what price?"

<http://www.usatoday.com/usatoday/20020930/4491867s.htm>

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Washington Post
September 29, 2002
Pg. 15

Iraq To Deliver Weapons Reports

Filing May Signal Tack on Inspections

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

A preliminary test of whether Saddam Hussein has changed his approach to a resumption of U.N. arms inspections will take place in Vienna on Monday, when the Baghdad regime is to deliver three years of semi-annual monitoring declarations that it has refused to produce since the international inspectors left Iraq in 1998.

The documents, required under previous U.N. resolutions, disclose Iraq's accounting for the number and location of so-called dual-use equipment, such as machine tools, and materials, such as chemicals, that can be employed for civilian purposes or for the development or production of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.

At a Sept. 17 meeting to prepare for resumption of inspections, senior Iraqi official Saeed Hasan, who oversees relations with the United Nations, agreed to deliver the documents in Vienna to Hans Blix, the chief U.N. inspector, as part of preparations for resumption of inspections. Iraq had one day earlier proposed that inspections resume.

While U.N. officials would view delivery of the declarations as one sign that the Iraqi president may be serious, a White House spokesman described it as "one very small step against a pile of obligations he has ignored." He added that President Bush laid out a much broader agenda in his Sept. 12 speech at the United Nations for determining whether Hussein is prepared to stop thwarting inspectors while continuing to develop weapons of mass destruction.

These promised Iraqi papers are far different from the "full, final and complete declaration" on the status of all banned Iraqi weapons programs that is demanded in the draft U.N. Security Council resolution now being circulated. Such a "final" disclosure has been demanded of Saddam Hussein since 1991, and each time inspectors found more than Baghdad had reported, the "final" report was amended, said U.N. officials.

Even if the Iraqis deliver the reports, the real work of the two-day Vienna session between Blix and the Iraqis is to settle on practical arrangements required by Security Council resolutions to renew inspection and monitoring of Iraq.

Blix told the Iraqis at the Sept. 17 meeting that he needed agreement on issues such as visas for entering and leaving Iraq for his inspectors and their support personnel; accommodations for the inspectors; landing sites for fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters; and advance clearance for overflights of Iraq. He wants to reopen the previous ongoing monitoring and verification center in Baghdad with its offices and laboratories that have been closed for four years, replacing old computers and other equipment for communication inside Iraq and with New York. He also wants to establish regional offices outside Baghdad in Basra and Mosul.

The new documents, which should run to thousands of pages, will be compared with reports provided between 1991 and 1998 and should help Blix determine a baseline of what existed before and what has been introduced since the inspectors left. That data would help determine priorities for any resumed inspections. Blix has said he has constantly updated the database of Iraqi sites with open-source satellite imagery in addition to what he received from governments.

Although Blix outlined an inspection schedule that would run for more than six months, the United States is working on a new inspection resolution that would require resumed inspections to reach some tentative conclusions on Iraq's cooperation in a shorter time.

Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan said Iraq would not accept any extra procedures for weapons inspections as contained in the draft resolution envisaging a 30-day deadline for Baghdad to provide the new "final" declaration of its programs for weapons of mass destruction.

"Our position on the inspectors has been decided, and any additional procedure that aims to harm Iraq is unacceptable," Ramadan said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17186-2002Sep28.html>

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