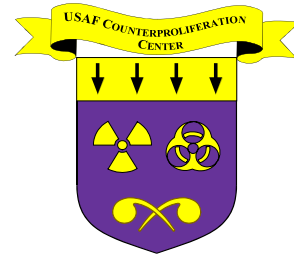


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CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL



Air University

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U.S. Effort Aimed At Iraqi Officers

Stopping Biological Weapons Is the Goal

By Walter Pincus

Washington Post Staff Writer

Monday, September 30, 2002; Page A01

The Pentagon is preparing a campaign aimed at deterring Iraqi officers from firing chemical or biological weapons during a U.S. invasion because intelligence officials believe President Saddam Hussein has given field commanders conditional authority to use the weapons in the event of an attack, according to defense and intelligence officials. The effort would include massive leafletting of Iraqi military positions -- a tactic used by U.S. forces during the Gulf War in 1991 -- but also might employ covert techniques that would enable the U.S. message to reach Iraqi commanders, the officials said.

Final authority to use weapons of mass destruction has resided with Hussein. But the Iraqi president's knowledge that the United States would seek to take down Iraqi command centers and communications systems at the outset of any military strike means he has likely already given authority for firing chemical and biological weapons to his most loyal commanders in the field, the officials said. They said Hussein issued similar orders before the Gulf War. As a result, the sources said, the Pentagon plans to appeal directly to these officers not to use the weapons. One of the biggest challenges before military planners is determining which Iraqi military units can be encouraged to defect in the event of a U.S. invasion and how to communicate with them, defense officials have said.

A British intelligence report released Tuesday by Prime Minister Tony Blair said Iraq could deploy nerve gas and anthrax weapons on 45 minutes' notice. It also said Hussein may have already delegated authority to order use of such weapons to his youngest son, Qusai, who leads the Republican Guard -- elite units that control deployed weapons of mass destruction.

The Pentagon's campaign was signaled recently by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, Rumsfeld said, "Wise Iraqis will not obey orders to use WMD [weapons of mass destruction]. . . . The United States will make clear at the outset that those who are not guilty of atrocities can play a role in the new Iraq. But if WMD is used, all bets are off."

Rumsfeld added that if the order to use chemical or biological weapons were made by Hussein, "that does not necessarily mean his orders would be carried out. He might not have anything to lose, but those beneath him in the chain of command most certainly would have a great deal to lose."

A Pentagon official said Rumsfeld's comments "are at least the start of telling them we are serious."

After the Gulf War, coalition force interrogators learned that Hussein had decided ahead of time to give commanders the go-ahead to use chemical weapons if Baghdad's communications were interrupted.

One administration source said the Iraqi president issued specific orders to use the weapons if "the allies were winning the ground war and they had crossed a line due west of the city of Al-Amarah," which is 200 miles south of Baghdad. Iraqi unit commanders were also told they should employ the weapons against Iranian forces if they crossed the border during the war and moved into Iraq's Maysan Province, where Al-Amarah is located.

Although Iraq's chemical artillery shells and warheads were deployed during the war, they were not used. U.S. officials now believe this was because the United States had repeatedly cautioned Iraq before the fighting started that use of such weapons would draw an immediate and possibly overwhelming response that would topple Hussein from power.

One reason the Pentagon has adopted a plan to dissuade Iraqi officers from ordering the use of chemical or biological weapons is that, unlike in 1991, this deterrent has been rendered moot by the administration's decision to make removing Hussein the goal of any military action.

Whether a plan to deter Iraqi commanders from employing the weapons will work is a matter of disagreement among military experts. The Republican Guard units that control the weapons are run by Hussein's most loyal officers.

"They will face a short-term or a long-term problem," one former senior intelligence official said. "We may come after them when the fighting is over. But there may be a Saddam loyalist with a gun who is threatening to kill him right away if he doesn't follow orders."

Judith Yaphe, an Iraq specialist at the National Defense University, said that in 1991, according to documents found after the war, Hussein had tried to persuade his commanders to use the weapons because they would be killed anyway. Also, Hussein had placed loyalists with the commanders to enforce his wishes. "The question is, are they still there?" she said.

Richard Russell, a CIA area analyst who specialized in Iraq and is now at the National Defense University, said the effort to deter individual commanders “makes sense as an attempt.” But he noted that Iraqi operational security was very good in the Gulf War and “you have to assume it is much better now.”

After Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990, U.S. officials talked openly of American forces making preparations for waging combat in a chemical environment. Then-Secretary of State James A. Baker III told Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz that Hussein’s government would be endangered if such weapons were used. Then-Defense Secretary Richard B. Cheney hinted that if such an attack took place against Israel, that country might respond with nuclear weapons.

In the war’s aftermath, U.S. intelligence officials learned that Iraq had been deterred from using chemical weapons by the threat of massive retaliation. Iraqi artillery units armed with chemical shells were segregated from the rest of the forces and chemical munitions were never moved to Kuwait and never moved toward the front as coalition forces approached, and in some cases breached, the Iraq-Kuwait border.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A20313-2002Sep29.html>

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Old smallpox supply enough

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN DIEGO - By diluting long-stored doses, the United States now has more than enough smallpox vaccine to protect the entire population in case of a bioterrorist attack, a top health official said yesterday.

Testing some of the 86 million doses of vaccine that were found in March shows they can be watered down and still offer potent protection against smallpox.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said the diluted vaccine has been tried on more than 100 volunteers to see whether it still works. The results show the cache contains enough to vaccinate everyone in an emergency.

“This is very reassuring,” said Fauci, speaking at an infectious disease conference in San Diego sponsored by the American Society for Microbiology.

The last smallpox case in the U.S. was in 1949, and routine vaccination stopped in 1972. However, the Soviet Union stockpiled tons of the virus during the Cold War, and experts worry some of that might be used as a weapon by terrorists.

Many experts assumed vaccination would begin again once new smallpox cases were discovered. But last week, government officials said they are planning to offer smallpox vaccine to all 280 million Americans before such an attack.

However, that would involve distributing vaccine still being made for the government. The first of that supply should arrive by the spring from Acambis Inc., which has been contracted to make 209 million doses.

In the meantime, health officials say they have enough old vaccine that, when watered down, will be effective to protect the nation.

The 86 million doses Fauci reported on yesterday were found by the pharmaceutical company Aventis Pasteur in March in a walk-in freezer at a remote mountainside lab in Pennsylvania. They have been there since the 1970s, officials said.

“We really are fully protected. We have enough doses to cover everyone right now,” said Dr. Michael Osterholm of the University of Minnesota, a federal bioterrorism adviser.

Whether everyone would need to be vaccinated, however, is unclear. Many adults were vaccinated in childhood, and even though defenses against the virus fade over time, experts assume many retain some protection against smallpox.

http://www.nydailynews.com/news/wn_report/story/22936p-21718c.html

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CDC sees progress in terror response

But survey indicates some laboratories lack training, a plan

By Stephen Smith, Globe Staff, 9/30/2002

SAN DIEGO - Nearly a year after anthrax attacks killed five people, the nation's top disease tracker declared yesterday that considerable progress has been made in preparing the US health-care system to respond to bioterrorism.

But Dr. Julie Gerberding, the newly appointed director of the Centers for Disease Control, conceded that much work remains to be done in reforming a public-health network lambasted for its haphazard handling of the anthrax mailings.

"We're describing to you the truth that not everything is ready," Gerberding said at the premier gathering of infectious disease specialists, the Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy. "But our response capacity is much higher than it was a year ago."

Still, survey results presented yesterday at the conference indicated that 15 percent of the laboratories that might handle rogue biological agents lack plans on dealing with bioterrorism. And 20 percent of the microbiologists who responded to the Internet survey reported that they had not received formal laboratory training on bioterrorism. The study, conducted in July and August by researchers from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, demonstrates the continuing need to educate hospital laboratories in the detection and the handling of potential agents of bioterrorism, said lead researcher Susan Sharp.

Those hospital labs often would be the first to identify a threatening substance.

The specter of bioterrorism is compelling scientists who track and research diseases to become less hidebound by the almost compulsive circumspection that had come to define science in the past century, said Gerberding and Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

In fact, when the Bush administration awarded \$1.75 billion to the National Institutes of Health for biodefense research, it came with a stern mandate, Fauci recalled.

An administration official told Fauci that it would not be acceptable for NIH researchers to spend several years studying bioterrorism and then pronounce "we have learned a lot," the veteran scientist said. Instead, the government scientists are expected to develop treatments and vaccines - and to do it with lightning speed.

"We had to start thinking in a way that we as scientists had not thought before," Fauci said.

A similar change in thinking has emerged at the CDC. The experience with anthrax, Gerberding said, taught the agency that it needed to improve drastically its ability to communicate with physicians and with the public.

Part of that shift in attitude means CDC scientists must be willing to convey information in real time, even if they don't have an answer to every question.

"We must be in the mode of telling people, 'This is what we know today. And be prepared - it might change tomorrow,'" Gerberding said.

To that end, CDC is addressing one of the most widespread complaints from a year ago, and one given voice yesterday by physicians who dealt with frantic patients in the months after the anthrax attacks.

Last fall doctors lamented that they often had to rely on the media and word of mouth for the latest information on how to distinguish a case of anthrax poisoning from a routine bout of flu. Gerberding promised yesterday that in the event of future biological attacks, doctors would be able to call a hot line staffed by a disease expert equipped to answer questions.

But the success of national strategies for dealing with bioterrorism will ultimately rely on the efficiency of local public-health systems. And specialists in the field warned during the infectious disease conference that significant improvements are still needed in public health, as well as in academic programs devoted to the field.

"Schools of public health have largely been dinosaurs slipping into tar pits over the past couple of decades," said Michael T. Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota.

Now, said Osterholm and other specialists, public-health authorities must begin acting less like academics and more like firefighters and police officers, prepared to respond swiftly whenever danger strikes.

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/273/nation/CDC_sees_progress_in_terror_response+.shtml

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ANTHRAX THREAT ONE YEAR LATER: U.S. boosts medical defenses, but doctors say job not over

M.A.J. McKenna - Staff

Sunday, September 29, 2002

One year ago this Friday, a lab test at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention produced a result that scientists had been dreading: A desperately ill Florida journalist was infected with anthrax.

Over the next month, events confirmed what many feared: The United States had experienced a fatal bioterrorist attack. Contaminated mail is thought to have killed five people, including Bob Stevens of Florida, and made 17 others ill.

Coming three weeks after the assault on the World Trade Center, the anthrax attacks profoundly shook the country. They triggered dramatic changes within the CDC and the National Institutes of Health and spurred federal authorization of more than \$1 billion to state governments.

One year later, federal and state officials and outside experts say the country is better prepared to counter a second attack. But significant weaknesses remain in the network that is designed to detect and deal with bioterrorism.

"We are a lot better off than we were a year ago," said Dr. Rice Leach, a former chief of staff for the U.S. surgeon general who is now health commissioner of Kentucky.

"But this time next year, if nothing else happens, we'll be in better shape than we are now."

The greatest changes have occurred at the CDC, the Atlanta-based agency responsible for protecting the population against disease outbreaks, regardless of source.

Rapid response teams, some vaccinated against smallpox, have been trained to leave at a moment's notice. Incoming members of the Epidemic Intelligence Service, the agency's disease detective cadre, were taught to handle terrorist incidents. New labs have opened and more are under construction. A network of collaborating labs across the country has been expanded.

Dr. Julie Gerberding, appointed CDC director in July, has orchestrated internal changes that smooth out the agency's complicated management structure and create bridges among its 12 independent divisions. She created the Office of Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response, whose chief reports directly to her rather than to the director of one of the divisions. And she ordered an emergency communications plan that links the CDC to states, hospitals and media and includes toll-free hotlines answered 10 to 15 hours a day. The hotlines have been used this summer to distribute West Nile virus information. So far, there have been about 15,000 calls.

The rapid changes have thrown some CDC staff members off balance, fretting that the focus on bioterrorism is overwhelming the agency's responsibility for all aspects of public health. Gerberding trusts the staff to adapt.

"I personally think the sense of urgency is a very healthy thing for CDC. It speeds up our internal processes and it helps to get people to commit to the kinds of changes we need to make," she said.

"But I don't think adding bioterrorism, or terrorism of any sort to our list of priorities represents that much of a change for us. We have always responded to public health threats, and this is a new category of threat that has taken center stage for a while."

As an indication of how the agency has changed, the CDC points to its handling of this summer's West Nile virus outbreak, which by week's end had resulted in more than 2,206 cases and 108 deaths. The agency has treated the disease as a proxy for a bioterrorist attack, tracking cases and lab results through its Emergency Operations Center and staying in close touch with state health departments.

"Their response to West Nile is so different from their response to anthrax," said Dr. Georges Benjamin, state health director in Maryland, where several anthrax victims lived.

During the anthrax crisis, the CDC was "functionally gagged," he said.

"But with West Nile, they've had information out to the states right away. They've had the CDC director on TV right away, and they've had the whole public health community engaged in making sure people put the risk of West Nile in perspective. Now, that's an outbreak with no national security implications. It remains to be seen whether they will revert to the old behaviors when there are concerns about secrecy and security."

'You can't rush science'

The CDC is not the only federal agency altered by the imperative to counter bioterrorism. The Department of Health and Human Services, the Cabinet-level agency over the CDC, NIH and Food and Drug Administration, rapidly created the Office of Public Health Preparedness and a terrorism advisory council headed by Dr. D.A. Henderson, who led the global effort to eradicate smallpox.

The NIH received \$1.5 billion in emergency funds to create research into bioterrorism organisms, treatments and protective vaccines.

"It is the largest increase in any year, in any discipline, in any institute, in the history of the NIH," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, where much of the work is being done.

"It far exceeds the initial ramp-up to respond to AIDS."

Since late 2001, the NIH has launched projects that developed early versions of vaccines for anthrax and Ebola virus. It carried out studies that showed the smallpox vaccine stockpile --- both the freeze-dried 15 million doses

held by the government before Sept. 11 and the 80 million doses donated by a manufacturer this year --- could be diluted five to one, for enough vaccine for all Americans.

"We feel we're right on pace," Fauci said. "You can't rush science. The thing we need to do now is to get the state and local public health infrastructure back up to snuff, so that when we need to move quickly, we can get new vaccines and therapeutics out to the community."

That infrastructure --- a web of researchers, laboratories and data and communications networks extending from the federal government to city and county health departments --- was in decay for years. Six months before the World Trade Center attacks, a CDC report warned that more than half of public health workers did not have public health degrees, while 45 percent of local health departments could not send broadcast faxes to labs and doctors' offices and 20 percent had no access to e-mail.

A recent report by the Trust for America's Health, a nonprofit group focused on environmental health threats, found most state and regional public health labs need such basic improvements as new freezers and better areas to process specimens. Five of six labs said dealing with suspected anthrax samples last fall slowed down their ability to diagnose other diseases.

To shore up the infrastructure, the CDC this summer gave the states \$918 million in emergency funds, to be used only on the health response to bioterrorism. The Health Resources and Services Administration added \$125 million to prepare hospitals.

"The system is only as strong as its weakest link," Gerberding said. "My highest priority is to ensure not only that we can detect a threat, but that we can get countermeasures deployed, down to the level of individual citizens. I worry that in some jurisdictions, that capacity does not exist."

Facilities short of staff

State health agencies overwhelmingly say they are grateful for the extra funds. Before receiving the money, each state had to submit to HHS a binding plan for how it would be spent. But the ways the money is being used vary by state, from upgrading lab equipment and retraining personnel to adding high-speed computer lines and trading in beepers for text pagers.

Beyond the known weaknesses in local public health, the money's arrival has exposed some unrecognized pitfalls. "The magnitude of the work that has to be done is going to be limited not by the dollars available, but by the staff available to do it," said Dr. Don Williamson, state health director of Alabama. "There are not enough master's degree epidemiologists in the country to man the positions that all of us are hiring for."

From state to state, small gaps remain that together make for major holes in planning. Some have full communication down to the level of local health departments, but no idea yet on how to get emergency alerts to individual doctors or free-standing clinics. Others are not prepared to handle a delivery from the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile; medications arrive in bulk and must be broken down into doses.

Many say they have nowhere near the staff they need to execute broad countermeasures such as widespread smallpox vaccination. And almost all are concerned about the capacity of hospitals to absorb mass casualties. "We got \$2 million for hospital planning," said Williamson of Alabama. "It's a good start, but it doesn't begin to touch what the ultimate need is going to be to get hospitals ready: redesigning isolation rooms, re-engineering air flows, the things we would have to do to really deal with smallpox."

'We learn as we go'

There is concern among some officials that they will not be able to move fast enough to cope with the changes.

"Most of public health is very deliberative, very thorough," said Leach, the Kentucky commissioner. "Everyone gets involved in a consensus process and tells us everything they're going to do in two or three years. But what if something happens tomorrow?"

Behind that concern lurks a second one: that if the money is not spent fast enough, either state budgets or the next round of federal funding will be cut. The president's budget request for fiscal year 2003, which begins Tuesday, calls for \$940 million for the states and \$518 million for hospitals. The budget is still being negotiated by Congress. Asked what the single biggest change has been since the anthrax attacks, state and federal officials pointed not to new labs or staff, nor even to a new awareness of the threat of bioterrorism. The greatest adjustment, they said --- and the hardest thing to convey confidently to the public --- is that they now work in a world in which so much is uncertain that health messages can change from day to day.

If there were another attack, "we would prepare people for the fact that we learn as we go," Gerberding said. The CDC's message, she said, would be: "This is what we know today; this is what we don't know; this is what we're going to do to find out. Tomorrow we will update you again."

ANTHRAX CASES IN THE UNITED STATES

Letters carrying anthrax spores were presumably sent to:

Sen. Tom Daschle in Washington

NBC anchor Tom Brokaw in New York
American Media's Sun tabloid in Boca Raton, Fla.
New York Post
Microsoft Corp. in Reno, Nev.

SITES WHERE ANTHRAX WAS FOUND

New York City and New Jersey:

1. NBC offices, New York
2. New York Post offices
3. CBS anchor Dan Rather's office, New York
4. Morgan mail center, New York
5. Regional mail center, Hamilton, N.J.
6. Princeton, N.J., post office
7. Office of N.Y. Gov. George Pataki

Washington area

1. Voice of America and Food and Drug Administration building
2. Justice Department offsite mail facility
3. Supreme Court and its offsite mail facility
4. White House mail facility, Bolling AFB
5. CIA offsite mail facility, McLean, Va.
6. State Department headquarters mailroom
7. State Department offsite mail facility, Sterling, Va.
8. Walter Reed Army Institute of Research mailroom, Silver Spring, Md.
9. Brentwood postal facility, Washington
10. Post office, southwest Washington
11. Office of Sen. Tom Daschle, Washington
12. Senate office building, Washington
13. U.S. Senate mailroom
14. U.S. House mail center
15. Offices of three U.S. representatives
16. Offsite congressional mail facility

Other sites around the United States

1. Indianapolis postal facility
2. Kansas City, Mo., postal facility
3. Connecticut suburb
4. Sun tabloid offices in Boca Raton, Fla.
5. Two postal facilities in Boca Raton
6. Lake Worth, Fla., postal facility

FATALITIES FROM INHALATION ANTHRAX:

Oct. 5: Bob Stevens, photo editor at The Sun in Boca Raton, is the first U.S. death from inhaled anthrax since 1976.
Oct. 21: Washington postal worker Thomas L. Morris Jr. dies.
Oct. 22: Washington postal worker Joseph P. Curseen dies.
Oct. 31: New York hospital worker Kathy T. Nguyen dies.
Nov. 21: Otilie W. Lundgren, a 94-year-old retiree, dies in Connecticut.

EASTERN SEABOARD HIT HARD

Map of the United States with affected states highlighted.

Sources: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Associated Press, Knight Ridder, New York Times
/ SCHAUNA WRIGHT / Staff

http://www.accessatlanta.com/ajc/epaper/editions/sunday/news_d36949dea6c6800f0096.html

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Plan To Destroy Russian Weapons Nears Collapse

By Peter Eisler, USA Today

WASHINGTON — The U.S. government has spent \$230 million trying to build a Russian plant to destroy thousands of tons of deadly chemical munitions from the old Soviet arsenal. This month, unless Congress acts, the Pentagon will begin closing down the project without laying a single brick — or eliminating a single weapon. The facility was designed to wipe out one of the world's most worrisome stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction: nearly 2 million artillery shells and missile warheads filled with deadly nerve gasses. Stored in open racks in a cluster of wooden warehouses in the town of Shchuch'ye, they're among the most portable, ready-made weapons of mass destruction a terrorist could obtain. Even the smallest shells, which fit in a briefcase, can kill 100,000 or more if set off in a crowded city.

There have been no reported thefts at Shchuch'ye (SHOO-che), but U.S. officials note that such an act would be hard to detect and represents a serious threat. President Bush called the stockpile's destruction a "vital mission" in a national security address last winter at The Citadel military college in South Carolina.

Yet the U.S. effort to build the plant that would dismantle and neutralize the arms at Shchuch'ye has been unraveling quietly for years. Now, it's close to collapse.

The project is the most costly and ambitious of U.S. efforts to help eliminate Russia's chemical arsenal. With the \$230 million spent so far, design and site preparation are complete for the plant. But hundreds of millions of dollars pledged for construction have been frozen for three years by congressional critics who distrust Russia's plans to destroy its stockpile.

Pentagon officials, having kept the project alive with a trickle of residual funds, say they will start canceling construction contracts this month because their money runs out today, the start of the new fiscal year. Even if the cash is released later this fall, the holdup has added years to the project — and to Russia's entire chemical weapons disposal schedule.

The delays in destroying the 5,400 tons of weaponized nerve gas at Shchuch'ye are emblematic of setbacks that have plagued U.S. and international efforts to help Russia wipe out its 40,000 tons of mostly Soviet-made chemical weapons. It's the world's largest collection of nerve and skin-burning blister compounds, stored both in bulk and in munitions. Virtually none has been eliminated.

The U.S. assistance is part of a multibillion-dollar Cooperative Threat Reduction program Congress began in 1992 to help newly independent Soviet states secure and destroy nuclear, biological and chemical weapons they inherited. A decade later, the effort to address Russia's chemical stocks is perhaps the least successful of its cooperative assistance initiatives. Russia's balky, cash-strapped, demilitarization campaign has no chance of eliminating the arsenal by 2007, the deadline in the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention for destroying stockpiles worldwide. Critics say Russia's slow progress shows a lack of commitment, and they argue that continued assistance for the Shchuch'ye project is unwarranted.

The critics "don't realize how serious this situation is," says Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., who helped set up the assistance program. "This is the kind of stuff, at Shchuch'ye, that (terrorists) are after. We have an opportunity to get rid of it, and we're not moving forward."

The unaddressed threat

The weapons at Shchuch'ye represent one-seventh of Russia's chemical arsenal, nearly all of it inherited from the Soviets. The Soviet chemical warfare program, which continued secretly into the early years of Russian statehood, was the world's most advanced. Besides working with such widely used nerve gases as VX and sarin, the Soviets built a secret program, called novichok, or "new shock," that created more lethal toxins from agricultural compounds.

The Shchuch'ye stockpile, one of seven in Russia, is a major concern:

*The weapons are portable and ready to use, making them a more attractive target for theft than the bulk containers of toxins stored at other Russian sites. Many of the shells and warheads at Shchuch'ye are easy to hide and are launchable from widely available artillery pieces and rockets.

*The stockpile is vulnerable. It sits in an impoverished region near the border with Kazakhstan and Asian havens for al-Qaeda and other terror networks. Security, despite recent upgrades, is weaker than at Russian nuclear facilities and other sensitive sites. There's no reliable inventory, so thefts by an insider could go unnoticed.

*The munitions are deadly. Most of the shells and warheads are packed with sarin, soman and VX gasses, all of which can kill in minutes. An 85mm shell of sarin — the smallest artillery piece at Shchuch'ye — can kill up to 140,000 if set off in a densely populated area. It can fit in a briefcase.

Paul Walker, who toured Shchuch'ye as a congressional staffer on the first U.S. inspection, in 1994, calls it “one of the most vulnerable and worrisome sites worldwide.”

“It certainly has the potential of becoming a Wal-Mart for terrorists,” says Walker, now with Global Green USA. It's part of an environmental organization, Green Cross International, set up by former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev to facilitate elimination of weapons stockpiles.

The money spent on the Shchuch'ye plant so far is about a quarter of the \$888 million that U.S. officials pledged to complete the project. It is the largest American investment in helping Russia eliminate chemical arms.

The Pentagon also has spent millions to install alarms and other safeguards at both Shchuch'ye and Kizner, a chemical stockpile in central Russia. U.S. officials say the upgrades addressed the sites' big weaknesses, though they remain worried about insider thefts or a well-executed raid.

Other U.S.-backed initiatives focus on dismantling chemical weapons production facilities and providing research equipment and jobs to former weapons scientists who might otherwise be lured to work for rogue states or terrorists. European nations fund similar projects, including a German-financed disposal plant set to start running this winter at Gornyy, a bulk-container stockpile 500 miles southeast of Moscow.

But the Shchuch'ye plant is the key to Russia's chemical demilitarization plans, which envision expanding the facility to destroy munitions from several stockpiles.

The Russian Embassy in Washington declined to comment on the funding freeze. Officials in Moscow have said it's unwarranted. They note that they've boosted budgets for the program and replaced military managers with more committed civilians.

“We are fulfilling all of our obligations,” says Nikolai Platé, of the State Commission on Chemical Disarmament. He dismisses criticism that Russia has hidden the true size of its arsenal.

Officials would not underestimate the size of the stockpiles because that might result in less assistance, he says.

“The U.S. promised this money, and they should give it to us and come see that we will use it to destroy the weapons,” Platé says.

Old suspicions, new hurdles

Questions about Russia's tally of its chemical weapons were a central issue when a small group of mostly Republican lawmakers blocked spending for the Shchuch'ye project in late 1999. The hold lasted until Congress approved \$35 million for Shchuch'ye in its 2002 budget. But critics set conditions that still left the Pentagon unable to spend the funds.

The spending restrictions are far stricter than those for other threat reduction programs. Such rules generally require the administration to “certify” that states receiving assistance are making progress in getting rid of the arsenals they inherited. But the added conditions for Russian chemical weapons programs include six criteria, requiring that Russia provide a detailed inventory of its chemical weapons and more verifiable plans for destroying them.

Critics “are using these criteria as a stick to hit the Russians,” says Michael Moodie, an arms control negotiator in the first Bush administration who now runs the Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute in Washington.

“Their feeling is, ‘If we're going to have these assistance programs, we're going to make it as hard as we can for the Russians.’”

The Bush administration has asked Congress for authority to waive the funding criteria. But the idea has hit resistance.

Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, an Armed Services Committee member, says it's more likely that Congress will pass a limited, short-term waiver later this year.

“A blanket waiver removes some of the leverage we have to make sure Russia complies with the intended purposes for these funds,” he adds, noting that Russia's demilitarization program has a history of management problems. “The bigger issue is how big is the problem and if we spend this much money, how much of a dent will it make?”

Foes of a waiver accuse Russia of lying about the size and nature of its stocks. They note that despite admissions about the novichok program by its former managers, Russia has not detailed what became of those toxins.

They also say Russia has not provided sufficient U.S. access to chemical weapons sites.

“They want a confession, and what we need is a solution,” says former Democratic senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, who now runs the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a foundation that seeks to eliminate excess Soviet weapons. He says the Russians have shown “good faith” and may not know the full extent of their arsenal.

Nunn says U.S. officials should seize the chance to destroy the weapons at Shchuch'ye. “It's going to take unprecedented cooperation to make this work,” he says.

The multibuilding complex planned for Shchuch'ye would drain the weapons, neutralize and immobilize their toxins in asphalt, and incinerate the shells. It was to begin operation by 2006, but is at least two years behind schedule. The Pentagon is requesting \$126 million for construction at the site in the new fiscal year. Officials say they need at least the \$35 million that is frozen in the bank to keep the project viable after the residual, pre-freeze money they've used to sustain it runs out today.

"If we don't get this money, we're going to have to start taking down the (contracting) teams we've assembled," says Thomas Kuenning, chief of Cooperative Threat Reduction for the Pentagon's Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

If the money is released now, construction could begin in weeks, Kuenning adds, but the start-up time will grow exponentially if it becomes necessary to line up new contractors. "Eight months from now, it may take a year. Those people will go and find other work."

Without the assistance, most U.S. officials agree, Russia has no hope of meeting the Chemical Weapons Convention deadline for stockpile destruction, even given the likelihood that it will be extended to 2012 at Russia's request.

U.S. stockpiles, interests

The United States also will be pressed by that deadline, despite having smaller chemical weapons stocks — 30,000 tons vs. Russia's 40,000 — and far more money.

The Pentagon has destroyed a bit more than 25% of its chemical weapons, and officials say the job can't be done by the treaty's original 2007 target. Meanwhile, cost estimates for eliminating the entire stockpile have climbed from \$15 billion to \$24 billion.

Russia, its economy in shambles, hopes to spend about \$6 billion.

Critics say Russia's comparatively small financial commitment and its reluctance to open the books on its arsenal justify the hold on money for Shchuch'ye.

Rep. Curt Weldon, R-Pa., who chairs the House military procurement subcommittee, sees some validity to the criticism, though he wants the project funded. "The Russians have got to be more transparent, more flexible. You can't just blame the Congress."

Supporters of the Shchuch'ye project say it must be viewed in the larger context of U.S. interests.

"I don't think the Russians have been completely up front with us," says Amy Smithson, a chemical weapons expert at The Henry L. Stimson Center who testifies often before Congress. "Does that mean we should allow the weapons to sit there? We have a chance to address a serious national security problem. It behooves us to do so."

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/acovtue.htm>

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statement for the record by David M. Walker, comptroller general of the United States, before a joint hearing of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

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Washington Times

October 1, 2002

Pg. 11

Records Reveal CDC Sent Germ Strains To Iraq In 1980s

By Associated Press

Iraq's bioweapons program, which President Bush wants to eradicate, got its start with help from Uncle Sam two decades ago, according to government records.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta sent samples to several Iraqi sites that U.N. weapons inspectors determined were part of Saddam Hussein's biological weapons program, CDC and congressional records from the early 1990s reveal. Iraq had ordered the samples, saying it needed them for legitimate medical research. The CDC and a biological sample company, the American Type Culture Collection, sent strains of all the germs Iraq used to make weapons, including anthrax, the bacteria that make botulinum toxin and the germs that cause gas gangrene, the records show. Iraq also got samples of other deadly pathogens, including the West Nile virus.

The transfers were done in the 1980s, when the United States supported Iraq in its war against Iran. They were detailed in a 1994 Senate banking committee report and a 1995 follow-up letter from the CDC to the Senate.

The exports were legal at the time and approved under a program administered by the Commerce Department.

"I don't think it would be accurate to say the United States government deliberately provided seed stocks to the Iraqis' biological weapons programs," said Jonathan Tucker, a former U.N. biological weapons inspector.

"But they did deliver samples that Iraq said had a legitimate public health purpose, which I think was naive to believe, even at the time."

The disclosures put the United States in the uncomfortable position of potentially having provided the key ingredients of the weapons it is considering waging war to destroy, said Sen. Robert C. Byrd, West Virginia Democrat. Mr. Byrd entered the documents into the Congressional Record this month.

Mr. Byrd asked Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld about the germ transfers at a recent Senate Armed Services Committee hearing. The senator noted that Mr. Rumsfeld met Saddam in 1983, when Mr. Rumsfeld was President Reagan's Middle East envoy.

"Are we, in fact, now facing the possibility of reaping what we have sown?" Mr. Byrd asked Mr. Rumsfeld after reading parts of an article in Newsweek magazine on the transfers.

"I have never heard anything like what you've read, I have no knowledge of it whatsoever, and I doubt it," Mr. Rumsfeld said. He later said he would ask the Defense Department and other government agencies to search their records for evidence of the transfers.

Invoices included in the documents read like shopping lists for biological weapons programs. One 1986 shipment from the Virginia-based American Type Culture Collection included three strains of anthrax, six strains of the bacteria that make botulinum toxin and three strains of the bacteria that cause gas gangrene. Iraq later admitted to the United Nations that it had made weapons out of all three.

The company sent the bacteria to the University of Baghdad, which, U.N. inspectors concluded, had been used as a front to acquire samples for Iraq's biological weapons program.

The CDC, meanwhile, sent shipments of germs to the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission and other agencies involved in Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. It sent samples in 1986 of botulinum toxin and botulinum toxiod — used to make vaccines against botulinum toxin — to the Iraqi chemical and biological weapons complex at al-Muthanna, the records show.

Botulinum toxin is the paralyzing poison that causes botulism. Having a vaccine to the toxin would be useful for those working with it, such as biological weapons researchers or soldiers who might be exposed to the poison, Mr. Tucker said.

The CDC also sent samples of a strain of West Nile virus to an Iraqi microbiologist at a university in the southern city of Basra in 1985, the records show.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20021001-8211716.htm>

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Report: Seized Material Not Uranium

Mon Sep 30, 8:43 PM ET

By Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Atomic energy officials said Monday that a substance seized by police near the Syrian border was not weapons-grade uranium as Turkish officials first reported, according to the Anatolia news agency. Atomic Energy Institute chief Guler Koksal said the material was harmless, containing zinc, iron, zirconium and manganese.

The announcement ended days of speculation that the substance might have been destined for neighboring Iraq, which the United States accuses of trying to smuggle in nuclear material for a secret weapons program.

Police, acting on a tip, recovered the material in a taxi last week in Sanliurfa province, near the Syrian border. Two Turks who were trying to sell the material as uranium were released from custody.

The seizure alarmed intelligence agencies around the world when the Turkish police said it weighed 35 pounds last week. On Monday, police said the material weighed only 5 ounces.

The disparity occurred because authorities initially included the weight of the lead container in which the material was placed, police said.

http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20021001/ap_on_re_mi_ea/turkey_uranium_6

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Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily

October 1, 2002

Weapons Grade Uranium Moving In Middle East; Iraqi WMD And Delivery Development Being Undertaken In Libya

Analysis. By Gregory R. Copley, Editor

The seizure at the end of September 2002 of weapons grade uranium on the Turkish-Syrian border, and the presence of some 20,000 Iraqi technicians and specialists in Libya, working on weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile delivery systems, complicates the political posturing of the United States, the United Nations and other governments on the question of sending weapons inspectors to Iraq to verify compliance with UN resolutions and the terms under which the 1991 Gulf War was ended.

Turkish paramilitary police were reported on September 28, 2002, to have seized more than 15 kg (33 pounds) of weapons-grade uranium and detained two men accused of smuggling the material. Officers in the southern province of Sanliurfa, which borders Syria and is about 250km (155 miles) from the Iraqi border, were reportedly acting on information from an informant when they stopped a taxi cab and discovered the uranium in a lead container hidden beneath the vehicle's seat. Authorities said that they believed the uranium came from an east European country and had a value of about \$5-million. Israel Radio quoted Turkish police as saying that the uranium originally came from a former Soviet state.

It was not immediately clear when the seizure operation was carried out. The Turkish Anatolian News Agency only gave the first names of the suspects, which appeared to be Turkish. Police in Turkey seized more than one kg of weapons-grade uranium in November 2001; that had been smuggled into Turkey from an east European nation. The movement of such large quantities of weapons grade fissionable material meant that evaluations of when countries such as Iraq could field viable nuclear weapons would have to be re-considered. Given the fact that Iraqi and other Arab scientists were now thoroughly familiar with the requirements for nuclear weapons, and had done all of the major engineering, only the production of weapons-grade uranium or plutonium was left as the major challenge. All estimates of the time it would take Iraq, for example, to produce a viable nuclear weapon were based on the local production of the fissionable material on a "milligram by milligram" scale.

At the same time, Libyan sources have told GIS that they believed that it was possible that the bulk of the “heavy engineering” of Iraq’s strategic weapons programs had been undertaken for some years in Libya, rather than in Iraq itself. This included weaponizing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) payloads (biological, chemical and nuclear) for deployment on ballistic missiles, including the NoDong 1 systems acquired from North Korea (DPRK) in 2000. Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily of November 8, 2000, reported:

“The Libyan acquisition of NoDong-1 SSMs is the result of a joint Egyptian-Iraqi-Libyan crash program to overcome delays in production of indigenous SSMs. Initially, the Egyptians and the Iraqis wanted to expedite the production of their own missile in Libya. Cairo arranged for Tripoli to provide cover for the revival of the Bad’r/Condor program which could no longer take place in Iraq and now also not in Egypt because of the exposure by the US of the North Korean (DPRK) rôle and a consequent US pressure to stop the program. Therefore, the Libyans initiated their relations with the DPRK on behalf of Cairo and Baghdad.”

With the bulk of the major strategic weapons program of Iraq being developed outside the country, UN weapons inspections inside Iraq become meaningless. Even before the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, Libya and Iraq had maintained a close cooperation — reported on extensively at the time by Defense & Foreign Affairs publications — in the flow of defense matériel and technology, often using Sudan as the staging ground.

At the same time, Libya was itself developing its chemical and biological weapons programs on an unfettered basis, having moved its facilities away from those earlier discovered at such facilities as Rabta. These activities have also been documented extensively by GIS Libya sources in Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily, and can be found in the Libya Special Reports section of GIS.

Libyan opposition activists inside the country have said that they cannot understand why the US has ignored the Libya-Iraq connection for so long, and why it has toyed with the idea of normalizing relations with the present Libyan leader, Mu’ ammar al-Qadhafi and his son, Saif al-Islam, given the continued commitment of Qadhafi to WMD and terrorism. Some Libyan opposition sources have said that, given Qadhafi’s known terminal illness — confirmed to GIS by Qadhafi’s doctors and by other African leaders close to Qadhafi — they may not be able to wait for US support to remove Qadhafi. It was possible, then, that a move against Qadhafi by internal opponents could come even before a US attack on Iraq. If so, this would materially impact Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein’s ability to utilize his strategic weapons.

What was significant about the November 8, 2000, reports was that the NoDong 1 missiles already operational in Libya were targeted at European cities. These were missiles reportedly partly paid for by Iraq.

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Wall Street Journal

October 2, 2002

Pg. 1

How Vulnerable Are Troops If Iraq Taps Poison Agents?

By Greg Jaffe and Carla Anne Robbins, Staff Reporters of The Wall Street Journal

CAMP DOHA, Kuwait -- In the Persian Gulf War, Iraqi troops loaded Scud missiles and artillery shells with chemical and biological agents, but never fired them at American forces. This time, things may be different.

Here at a desert base 50 miles from the Iraqi border, U.S. Army Maj. James Blankenhorn, an expert in chemical and biological weapons, worries about what that threat means for his troops. His primary concern isn’t Iraq’s arsenal of Scud missiles, which is badly depleted, or its rockets and artillery shells, which don’t have the range to be much of a threat beyond Iraq’s borders.

Maj. Blankenhorn thinks Baghdad’s best chance to wreak havoc would be to use a less-conventional technique: deploy a small group of special-operations forces via truck, boat or crop-duster. They would spray chemical or biological agents five or 10 miles upwind from this base, which figures to be a key staging ground for any American move into Iraq.

Wind and temperature conditions would have to be just right, or the cloud might blow out to sea or evaporate. Still, if the base is crowded -- as it probably will be in the weeks leading up to a war -- a few hundred soldiers could be contaminated before sensors sounded and they scrambled into their protective gear. If Iraq used a long-lasting chemical, such as VX nerve agent, Camp Doha, with its hundreds of tanks, armored vehicles and humvees and thousands of troops, could be shut down for weeks of decontamination.

‘Portal Shields’

The possibility that Iraq will use biological or chemical weapons is one of the most difficult issues facing the White House and Pentagon as they contemplate a new effort to oust Saddam Hussein. In recent weeks, the Pentagon has

quietly stepped up preparations to defend against such an attack. Five new biological-weapons detection systems, dubbed "Portal Shields," have been sent to military bases in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, all likely launching pads for a U.S. attack on Iraq. A sixth is on its way here.

In the next few weeks, the Pentagon will also ship 35,000 gallons of an experimental foam that can be used to decontaminate both soldiers and sensitive electronic equipment exposed to chemical weapons. The U.S. Central Command, which will oversee any military action, has told manufacturers it could need as much as one million gallons, according to a defense official.

The Pentagon has also extended the tours of its chemical and biological reserve units -- called up after Sept. 11, 2001 -- for another year of active duty. And psychological-operations officers are developing a campaign of leaflets and broadcasts to warn Iraqi officers that they will be tried for war crimes if they follow orders and launch a biological- or chemical-weapons attack.

Safer at the Front?

Paradoxically, military planners say U.S. forces closest to the front lines may be much less vulnerable than military or civilian targets farther away. Thanks to better sensors and extensive training, most soldiers at the front could don protective suits before being contaminated in a chemical-weapons attack -- although reacting to a biological-weapons attack would be harder. A large-scale, clandestine attack on a base like Camp Doha could be far more deadly and a logistical nightmare that disrupts support for thousands more troops in the field.

The most frightening scenario, and the one defense officials concede they are least prepared for, is if the Iraqi leader launches a chemical or biological attack on civilian populations either in a neighboring Arab state -- chiefly Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain -- that is hosting U.S. forces or against Israel. The goal would be to weaken the resolve of Arab neighbors by intimidating them or by drawing Israel into the fight. With the exception of Israel, which has purchased the best gas masks and sensors for its citizens, none of the states in the region is currently prepared for such an attack, defense officials say.

There are also some notable gaps in the Pentagon's planning and potential problems with equipment. Civilians working at ports that will be used to bring equipment into the Gulf region haven't all received proper protective gear and training for a chemical- or biological-weapons attack. Defense officials say they are working on the problem. Meanwhile, about 250,000 defective protective suits, produced in the late 1990s, cannot be accounted for. Some probably remain in the Pentagon's 4.5-million-suit inventory, according to a report by the General Accounting Office presented at a congressional hearing Tuesday. The report also warned that many soldiers haven't received adequate training in using the hot, bulky suits.

Mr. Hussein already has proved his willingness to use such weapons. During the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88, Baghdad launched chemical attacks mainly with rockets and artillery shells filled with mustard gas. The attacks wounded more than 40,000 unprotected Iranian soldiers and killed 2,000 to 3,000 troops. The Iraqi dictator appeared ready to do even more in the Gulf War. According to reports from United Nations weapons inspectors, in the weeks straddling late 1990 and early 1991, Mr. Hussein ordered his military to fill 75 Scud warheads, hundreds of aerial bombs, and thousands of rockets and artillery shells with sarin nerve agent, mustard gas, anthrax spores, botulinum toxin and the cancer-causing agent Aflatoxin.

No one is sure why he never used these weapons, but many analysts assume that he was deterred by the first Bush administration's threats of "overwhelming retaliation." With the current Bush administration's declared goal to overthrow or even kill Mr. Hussein, such threats may not deter the Iraqi dictator this time around.

It's difficult to estimate the size of Iraq's current arsenal. But its appetite for such weapons has been considerable.

U.N. weapons inspectors destroyed 2,850 tons of mustard gas -- enough to contaminate hundreds of miles of territory -- and about 5.5 tons of sarin, cyclosarin and VX nerve agent, which could kill troops over a six-square-mile swath. The inspectors also destroyed about 2,210 gallons of anthrax and nearly 5,000 gallons of botulinum toxin. It isn't clear how much the inspectors didn't find. And Iraq has now had four years without inspections, during which time it has almost certainly restarted production at both biological- and chemical-weapons plants.

While the volume of toxins sounds terrifying, the means of delivering the weapons will determine a lot about their effectiveness. To start, Mr. Hussein is thought to have at most only a few dozen Scuds -- the most frightening weapon of the Gulf War and the one with the longest-reach. Scuds, artillery shells and rockets can't disperse deadly chemicals or bacteria over a wide area, and the blast from their explosive warheads destroys much of what the weapon carries. Less than 3% of anthrax and less than 0.05% of botulinum toxin can survive a blast, according to U.S. Army research. Less than 70% of VX nerve agent and less than 50% of mustard gas typically survives the explosion.

Pentagon officials also say that even for troops exposed, there are ways to counter the effects. Nearly half a million soldiers have already been vaccinated against anthrax. An attack with VX can be countered by an injection of

atropine -- standard issue for troops in the field -- although the side effects, mainly dehydration and fatigue, could sideline a soldier for at least 24 hours.

Despite a 10-year push to develop new sensors, there are still some deadly chemical and biological agents that can't be detected. Military officials believe that Iraq has tried to produce a powder version of VX nerve agent, known as "Dusty VX," that is extremely hard to detect and decontaminate.

Perhaps most worrisome is the psychological impact of such an attack on the morale of troops and host countries. "As soon as a biological or chemical attack occurs, everyone feels exposed, everyone feels symptoms. That's its power," says Camp Doha's Maj. Blankenhorn.

U.S. military analysts say they can imagine several scenarios in which such weapons would be used:

Front-line troops: Some analysts believe that Mr. Hussein would only order an attack in extremis, as U.S. troops advanced on Baghdad or his hometown of Tikrit.

To halt advancing troops, chemical weapons, which would incapacitate troops in minutes, are more likely to be used than biological agents that take days before they sicken the enemy. Such an attack carries big risks for the attacker.

"When you use artillery shells you have to worry that if the wind conditions aren't right it will blow back on your own troops," says Bill Patrick, who researched chemical weapons for the U.S. military for decades.

And while a chemical or biological attack could kill dozens of troops, defense officials play down the threat of large casualties on the battlefield. The likelihood of a direct attack on ground troops also may depend on how many ground forces the U.S. decides to send into Iraq.

The Iraqis' biggest problem, defense officials say, would be delivering such weapons over a large area. Since each of Mr. Hussein's artillery shells and rockets can't carry a lot of agent, the Iraqi leader would have to fire hundreds of artillery and rocket rounds spread out over the entire battlefield. During the Gulf War, U.S. pilots easily destroyed Iraqi artillery and rocket launchers whenever they massed in the desert. Mr. Hussein also has been developing unmanned aerial drones, which carry large tanks of agent and could spray a fine mist over troops. But the drones are slow-moving and would be easy targets for U.S. fighter jets.

Another factor that probably would limit the damage from such an attack are U.S. chemical-weapons sensors, which have been developed since the Gulf War and would give troops ample time to don protective gear. Today's chemical sensors can identify both mustard gas and nerve agents in less than a second. The Army's M-93 Fox chemical reconnaissance vehicle, fielded in the early 1990s, uses an infrared beam to detect a chemical cloud as far away as three miles, allowing troops to maneuver around suspicious clouds and to put on protective gear before they are contaminated.

The real weakness would be with biological weapons. The Army's biological sensors can detect eight to 10 biological agents in about 15 to 45 minutes. That's far better than what the U.S. brought to the fight during the Gulf War, but it still doesn't give soldiers enough time to don protective gear. The sensors, however, should give doctors ample time to treat troops infected with agents such as botulinum toxin, Q fever or tularemia, before serious symptoms take hold. Most soldiers have been vaccinated against anthrax.

That said, an attack would still slow a U.S. advance, as soldiers near the infected area donned heavy jackets, gloves and pants lined with charcoal filters to screen out chemical agents. They would also have to put on masks, which limit peripheral vision. If the attack took place in spring or summer, when temperatures regularly soar above 100 degrees, it would be very hard for soldiers to advance on Baghdad without losing significant numbers of men to heat exhaustion.

Attacks on airfields or ports: If Mr. Hussein's goal is to kill U.S. soldiers and slow down an invasion, he might strike in the early days of a campaign at regional ports or airfields when those facilities are filled to capacity with U.S. forces gathering for the fight.

For years military planners have speculated that Mr. Hussein's best means for delivering his chemical and biological weapons to U.S. ports and airfields was with small teams of terrorists. In 1997 a Pentagon team of 18 generals and admirals projected different ways such an attack could take place, according to a Pentagon report.

In one scenario, small teams of Iraqi soldiers unleashed mustard gas from an old bread truck outfitted with agricultural sprayers. The truck was mistakenly let on base by troops who thought it was delivering food. In another scenario, a helicopter took off from a barge floating about 15 miles from the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia and sprayed cholera into the air, infecting thousands of U.S. Marines preparing to board ships. The Marines didn't fall ill until they were at sea.

Finally, the generals envisioned speedboats, loaded with chemical and biological weapons, ramming into docks near key U.S. ports in Bahrain and Kuwait -- a scenario eerily reminiscent of the 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Yemen. Although Mr. Hussein's Scud arsenal is depleted and less of a threat than a terrorist attack, he could use the missiles to strike U.S. ports and airfields. Key U.S. bases in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar are all within range of Mr. Hussein's Scuds, which can travel distances of about 405 miles and carry as much as 55 gallons of agent -- about 10 times

more than an artillery shell. But Mr. Hussein's Scuds aren't very accurate and, like artillery shells and rockets, which rely on explosive charges to disperse chemical or biological substances into the air, they can't spread their poisons over a great distance.

Civilian populations: With few Scuds left in its arsenal, Iraq could decide its best use would be against an Arab state hosting U.S. troops. An even more likely target would be Israel with the hope of drawing it into the fight, and turning the Arab world even more against the Americans.

During the Gulf War, Iraq fired 39 Scuds in and around Tel Aviv. Although the Scuds contained no chemical agent, they produced widespread panic. At U.S. insistence, the Israelis didn't respond. But Israeli officials have made clear that won't be the case this time around, especially if the Scuds are carrying chemical or biological weapons.

In recent years, to protect its major cities, Israel has purchased the same chemical and biological sensors that the U.S. military relies on. But it isn't clear how well the sensors, which were designed for battlefields and bases, will work in big cities where cars and tall buildings often create unpredictable wind patterns.

Although all Israeli citizens are required by law to get fitted for gas masks, the vast majority don't practice with the masks as much as U.S. soldiers do. If a Scud loaded with chemical weapons were to land in a busy marketplace, the casualties could soar into the hundreds.

A terrorist attack with chemical or biological weapons on a major Israeli city could produce even larger casualties. If the terrorists were using deadly sarin nerve gas, which vaporizes quickly, they would have to strike on a hazy day to ensure the chemicals don't dissipate into the atmosphere. In the case of a VX or mustard-gas attack, the terrorists would need to rely on wind to spread the droplets. If successful, thousands could die.

If Mr. Hussein were to strike one of his Arab neighbors, where there are few sensors and scant protective gear, casualties could be far higher than Israel.

Another major wild card involves the exact kinds of agents Mr. Hussein possesses. Iraq was one of the last countries in the world to have a smallpox outbreak, in the early 1970s. If Iraqi scientists saved some smallpox, Mr. Hussein could unleash on a city human agents infected with the disease but not yet showing symptoms. Such attacks would be impossible to detect until people began to fall ill, and the death toll would be high. A recent Pentagon-funded study, dubbed "Dark Winter," estimated that terrorists infected with smallpox might be able to spread the disease to three million people in a matter of two months.

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Washington Post

October 2, 2002

Pg. 1

Iraq Agrees To Inspections, With Limits

Hussein Palaces Partly Exempt; U.S. Lobbying For New Rules

By The Washington Post Foreign Service

VIENNA, Oct. 1 – Under threat of attack by the United States, Iraq agreed today to permit the return of U.N. arms inspectors under current Security Council rules, promising unrestricted access to suspected weapons research facilities except for surprise visits to presidential palaces.

Hailing the agreement as a step forward, U.N. officials said they expect to send an advance team to Baghdad by the end of the month. But the Bush administration insisted that the inspections – to verify whether Iraq has eliminated its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs – should resume only if the U.N. teams can operate under a new, far more intrusive Security Council resolution backed by the threat of force.

President Saddam Hussein's government declared in Baghdad that it would prohibit renewed inspections if the Security Council changed the rules as proposed by Washington. "To the evil ones . . . we clearly say that if they imagine that drums of war which they are beating . . . may push Iraq to concede its national rights and what has been guaranteed to it by the U.N. charter and relevant Security Council resolutions, they are mistaken," said a statement issued after a cabinet meeting led by Hussein.

At the United Nations, U.S. diplomats lobbied for votes for the proposed resolution. So far, only Britain among the five veto-wielding Security Council members has voiced support for Washington's determination to stiffen the inspection rules under threat of force. And even London has hesitated about endorsing the Bush administration's ultimate goal: overthrowing Hussein.

U.N. diplomats said Russia and China have begun to support France's proposal for a resolution requiring Iraq to comply with toughened weapons inspections, but without threatening military action. France said the council would instead consider a range of consequences if Iraq failed to comply.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, voicing the Bush administration's stand, insisted anew that U.N. inspectors could do their jobs properly only under the expanded authority outlined in the proposed U.S. resolution. "We do not believe they should go back in under the old set of resolutions, under the old inspection regime," he told reporters at the State Department. "We do not believe they should go in until they have new instructions in the form of a new resolution."

Against that background, Iraqi representatives at two days of talks in Vienna seemed eager to get inspectors back into their country. "We are happy to reach an agreement," said Amir al-Sadi, an adviser to Hussein who headed the Iraqi delegation. "We expect the advance party and experts to be in Iraq in about two weeks."

The inspectors left in 1998, after a rancorous period of disagreements over restrictions imposed by the Iraqis that led President Bill Clinton to order a round of cruise missile strikes.

Under the accord reached here, Iraq agreed to lift the delays and bureaucratic obstacles that had hindered entry to a variety of military, intelligence and other locales during the last inspections. However, Hussein's presidential palaces would still be off-limits to "immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access," U.N. officials acknowledged. Limits on inspecting the palaces, some of which include extensive grounds, are laid out in a four-year-old memorandum of understanding negotiated between U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and the Iraqi government, then endorsed by the Security Council. Among the requirements is that international diplomats be present when inspectors go in. Revision of the memorandum was not on the agenda here despite the U.S. demands, and Iraq did not offer unilaterally to change the procedures.

"I don't know why this is critical," al-Sadi said with a shrug.

Despite the limitation, U.N. officials said they considered the agreement a step forward. Except for the palaces, "We have assurances from the Iraqi side that we will have unrestricted and uninhibited access to all sites in Iraq," said Mohamed ElBaradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency. "Of course, this has to be tested." The inspectors' return depends on the Security Council, which must decide whether to send them back and under what conditions. Iraq's decision to ease some restrictions but maintain those on the presidential palaces thus played into the already tough struggle among the council members.

The chief U.N. weapons inspector, Hans Blix, who headed the U.N. delegation here, deflected questions about whether he would advise Washington to drop the war option and the insistence on including presidential palaces on the list of inspection sites. "I wouldn't be so presumptuous," he told reporters.

Blix had pressed the Iraqis to open "sensitive sites" other than the palaces to intrusive inspections.

Iraq's concessions partially reversed policy that evolved during the off-again, on-again inspections that lasted from 1991 to 1998. To visit "sensitive sites," inspectors often had to call in a high-level Iraqi minister, a time-consuming process. The Iraqis also insisted on limiting the number of inspectors at such places, among them bases of Republican Guard army units and offices of the ruling Baath party.

Those kinds of delays have now been thrown "out the door," a U.N. official said.

The Iraqi delegation pledged to ease other logistical problems. Inspection aircraft will be permitted to land at Saddam Hussein airport near Baghdad, instead of having to use another facility 50 miles away. Iraq will not object to inspectors on the basis of nationality – meaning, implicitly, that Americans can be on the team. In the past, Iraq had sometimes objected to U.S. members. Also, visa procedures will be streamlined.

The Iraqis provided a four-year backlog of information on the state of "dual use" technology, which can be employed for military or civilian purposes. The supply of such data was suspended in 1998. Such "technical matters are often critical," said Blix, chief of the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

One negative note in the agreement was Iraq's declared inability to "provide full guarantees about safety in no-fly zones." The two zones in the north and south of the country, which are off-limits to Iraqi aircraft, are patrolled by U.S. and British military jets. It is not clear what danger exists. In the past, the United Nations has notified the Americans and British of its flights into the zone.

A spokesman for the International Atomic Energy Agency, which hosted the talks, anticipated U.S. objections to the limited agreement. But he pointed out that even under the previous inspection regime, more weapons of mass destruction were destroyed than during the Persian Gulf War bombing campaign of early 1991.

In particular, he said, the IAEA had received full cooperation and certified Iraq to be free of nuclear weapons. The IAEA is returning to determine whether Iraq had undertaken an atomic bomb development program in the past four years.

"The history of seven years was not all trouble," he declared.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A29998-2002Oct1.html>

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Omaha World-Herald
October 2, 2002

StratCom Begins Lofty New Mission

By Joe DeJka, World-Herald Staff Writer

Things are looking up - way up - at the new-and-improved U.S. Strategic Command.

Be it warning U.S. soldiers of a Scud missile attack, tracking a four-inch chunk of space junk or spying from space to search for terrorists, StratCom's broad new mission launches the critical Nebraska-based command into orbit. Nebraska Gov. Mike Johanns and the first StratCom commander, retired Gen. Lee Butler, were among a crowd of about 300 people who gathered Tuesday afternoon in a hangar at Offutt Air Force Base near Bellevue to watch the retiring of the flag of the old Strategic Command and the unfurling of the flag of the new command.

Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Paul Wolfowitz, deputy secretary of defense, presided at the ceremony.

"As al-Qaida demonstrated, our enemies operate in many countries and across many borders, spreading their evil," Wolfowitz said. "The new Strategic Command, with its focus on space and information capabilities, will improve our ability to warn and defend against all manner of attack - nuclear and non-nuclear."

Adm. James Ellis, the current commander of StratCom who is the nominee to head the new StratCom, said the merger will place at the president's fingertips a broader arsenal than just nuclear weapons.

Ellis said the heart of the new command's strength lies in its ability to project power around the globe through space and information warfare.

"For the first time," Ellis said, "almost every capability in modern conflict will be resident within one command."

Ellis said the past decade has been an "unprecedented period of nuclear disarmament" in which the Strategic Command "stared down the challenges of the post-Cold War world."

StratCom's new logo shows an ironclad fist gripping lightning bolts and an olive branch with four satellites circling the Earth behind it. The old logo had the same fist in the foreground with representations of an airplane, a submarine and a missile in the background.

The old Strategic Command lasted 10 years.

It was fashioned in 1992 to replace the Strategic Air Command after the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union disintegrated.

Myers said the new Strategic Command will "retain primary responsibility for nuclear forces while at the same time define, plan, develop and conduct space operations. We're even looking at new global missions that could come to this new command, including taking the lead for missile defense worldwide."

Myers was commander in chief of U.S. Space Command, Air Force Space Command and the North American Aerospace Defense Command from August 1998 to February 2000. As chairman of the Joint Chiefs, he is the military's senior ranking member and the president's principal military adviser.

The Space Command headquarters previously was at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

Myers was in Colorado Tuesday morning to preside over the end of that command and the start-up of the new homeland defense command known as Northern Command.

http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u_np=0&u_pg=36&u_sid=520810

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Los Angeles Times
October 2, 2002

Chemical Warfare Gear Lost, Audit Finds

Military: Poor tracking raises fears that Pentagon is putting troops' lives in peril.

By John Hendren, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON -- The Pentagon has lost track of up to 250,000 defective chemical warfare suits, a congressional audit found Tuesday, prompting concerns among lawmakers that the military was playing "Russian roulette" with the lives of American soldiers who face the prospect of chemical or biological warfare in Iraq.

A report by the General Accounting Office found that the Defense Department has shown improvements since a spate of problems during the Persian Gulf War in preparing for chemical and biological attacks.

But the report said the military has persistent problems in training and equipping soldiers and keeping track of equipment such as the protective chemical suits.

As a result, the report concluded, the “risk for protective-clothing shortages may increase dramatically from now through at least 2007.”

Defense officials countered that many of the suits might have been used and discarded. Even if the suits still exist, front-line soldiers would be unlikely to wear them because most have been given more modern suits.

The report drew criticism from members of the House Government Reform subcommittee at a hearing on national security, where it was released. If the U.S. wages war on Iraq, said Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.), panel chairman, “it must be assumed those men and women will face chemical and biological weapons,” a situation that could leave them playing “Russian roulette” with faulty suits.

Some House members who have voiced opposition to attacking Iraq questioned whether they should approve a resolution giving the Bush administration authority to wage war against Iraq while such problems persist. “I’m not going to support going blindly into warfare that could result in great bodily harm to our fighting men and women,” said Rep. Diane Watson (D-Los Angeles).

The defective suits were among 800,000 recalled in 2000 after investigators found that Istratex, a bankrupt New York company, had delivered them with holes, poor stitching and other problems that would allow chemical or biological agents to permeate them.

Defense officials have tracked down 550,000, but they haven’t found the rest. George Allen, head of the Defense Logistics Agency, said he believed the defective suits had been used and discarded, but their fate is unknown because of poor controls at military bases.

When Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman (R-N.Y.) asked if that means some military units have flawed suits, Allen said, “Sir, I cannot say for certain if there is or is not.”

The Pentagon has an estimated 4.5 million protective suits on hand. Of those, 1.5 million are new Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology models, which are given to soldiers most likely to be among the front-line troops in Iraq or elsewhere.

But the tracking system for them remains inadequate, the GAO report found. At 293 sites visited by GAO investigators in the last three years, local commanders’ tracking systems for the new suits ranged from computer spreadsheets to chalkboard listings to, in some cases, no system at all. This follows a previous GAO report that found tracking so ineffective that some units were buying \$200 protective suits while others were selling them on eBay for \$3 apiece.

A 1996 audit found that troops deployed early in the Gulf War lacked required equipment such as protective clothing and decontamination kits. Soldiers and Marines were inadequately trained for chemical and biological warfare, and vaccine and immunization stocks were inadequate.

Major improvements have been made in preparing soldiers since then, Anna Johnson-Winegar, assistant Defense secretary for chemical and biological defense, told the House panel.

The report said that despite improvements, defense officials lacked a coherent strategy to address low-level exposure to chemical warfare agents.

The new audit found ongoing shortages of some protective equipment. One Air Force wing had only 25% of the masks deemed necessary to treat contaminated patients and half the kits required to decontaminate patients exposed to chemical or biological agents. Many Army and Marine units were lacking in the required number of chemical specialists.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-gao2oct02.story>

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Bloomberg.com

October 1, 2002

U.S. Military In Gulf Said Ready For Chemical, Biological War

By Tony Capaccio

Washington -- U.S. military units that would fight in Iraq are prepared for attacks by chemical and biological weapons, the Pentagon Inspector General said.

IG auditors since February 2000 have visited 287 units in 31 states and countries to assess preparedness, Joseph Schmitz said. The bottom line is that “first-to-fight” units in the U.S. and the Persian Gulf are adequately equipped and trained, he said.

“The problems that we have identified in those visits can be corrected,” Schmitz said. “Some commands, such as the U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command, have established vigorous programs to protect personnel from chemical and biological weapons.”

Schmitz testified at a congressional hearing on the U.S. military’s readiness to fight on a contaminated battlefield. 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. last week took a major step toward war preparation when the Central Command issued a \$371,000 contract to buy 32,000 gallons for delivery by Nov. 1 of a new foam that cleans chemical and biological agents from military vehicles. The quantity is enough to clean off up to 1,300 new Army M1A2 tanks, said Kevin Irvine of EnviroFoam Technologies of Huntsville, Alabama.

The U.S. also has started vaccinating troops against anthrax, a biological agent that may be in Iraq’s inventory. “I have no reason to doubt -- based on our audit reports -- the statement that we will be ready to do whatever we have to do,” Schmitz said after the hearing. “The tip of the spear is ready.”

Doubts Raised

Several Democrats on the House Government Reform National Security Subcommittee, including John Tierney of Massachusetts and Dennis Kucinich of Ohio, joined retiring Republican Ben Gilman of New York in grilling Pentagon officials on flaws in the military’s readiness program.

They cited the IG’s report that as many as 250,000 older defective protective suits remain unaccounted for in an overall inventory of four million suits. U.S. troops fighting in Iraq may be inadvertently issued the defective suits, they argued.

The inventory issue, while troubling, wouldn’t affect combat inventories, George Allen, a Defense Logistics Agency official, said. The military has nearly 1.5 million pairs of new protective suits on hand that would be issued to troops deployed to the Gulf.

“Unequivocally, we could equip the forces with the newer suits and know with virtual assuredness that they are also good suits,” Allen said.

Praise for 5th Fleet

Schmitz singled out for praise the commanders of the Navy’s 5th Fleet in Bahrain for their attention to protection issues. The fleet is based in Manama, Bahrain and is the nerve center for U.S. naval operations in the Gulf, including the maritime interdictions to stop smuggled Iraqi oil.

Schmitz in a brief interview after the hearing also praised CENTCOM commander General Tommy Franks for his focus on improving chemical-biological weapons preparedness. CENTCOM would run any war in Iraq and Franks has been drawing up plans for a potential invasion.

“General Franks’ is one command we highlight in our report as a ‘stellar’ exemplar of command focus and command priority on these issues,” Schmitz said. “CENTCOM is obviously very crucial to what goes on in Iraq so in that sense, there’s some optimism.”

The IG in a classified May 30 report on CENTCOM’s personnel protection inventories, inspection and training procedures, generally found improvements over earlier audits that uncovered numerous gas masks with critical defects.

“We saw improvements in the nature and the frequency of the inspections they were doing,” Donald Bloomer, an IG readiness specialist, said in a brief interview. “The command emphasis is a lot greater than there used to be.”

The follow-up investigation was launched after a June 2000 hearing disclosed earlier classified IG reports that nearly 10,000 of 19,000 standard issue Army protective masks examined, including many in the Central Command region, had critical defects because of manufacturing or maintenance problems.

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USA Today
October 1, 2002
Pg. 4

Anthrax Case Remains Frustrating Mystery

By Toni Locy and Laura Parker, USA Today

WASHINGTON — As the hunt for the bioterrorist who sent anthrax by mail enters its second year, investigators who have logged tens of thousands of hours in their search say they are no closer to solving the case.

FBI agents face the same mystery that unfolded before a horrified nation last fall: There are five fatalities in four states and four “weapons” — letters contaminated with anthrax that seems to have come from the same strain. But there are no links to a culprit and no motive.

“Do I think this case will be solved? Yes, I do,” says Clint Van Zandt, a former FBI profiler. “I think there will be something scientific or something behaviorally that will break this case. But Ted Kaczynski took 18 years.”

Kaczynski, known as the Unabomber, killed three people and injured 23 with packages he sent through the mail. He was caught after his brother turned him in.

In their crash course about the science of the deadly bacteria, investigators have identified the strain. They have located a mailbox in Princeton, N.J., where they say they believe at least one of the letters was mailed. They have conducted 4,700 interviews. But they lament that they have not reached what one investigator calls “a turning point.” They have been unable to link two of the victims — Kathy Nguyen, 61, a New York hospital worker and Otilie Lundgren, 94, a Connecticut retiree — to any contaminated letters.

The investigation also has been hampered by the recovery of only minuscule amounts of anthrax spores. Investigators must balance the need to use the spores to develop forensic tests against their fears that they are destroying too much of the evidence.

The culprit is also a killer of few words. Unlike Kaczynski, who wrote letters to newspapers and a lengthy manifesto that gave himself away, the four anthrax letters were written in just 78 words.

Another letter that contaminated a Florida tabloid photo editor, the first victim, has not been recovered. So agents can only speculate about its intended recipient.

And investigators have not been able to determine why the recipients of the other four letters — the New York Post, NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw and Democratic Sens. Tom Daschle and Patrick Leahy — were chosen. Knowing why Daschle and the publisher of six supermarket tabloids were sent letters could tell investigators more about the sender. Or perhaps not.

Roscoe Howard, the U.S. attorney in Washington, whose office is coordinating the investigation, says a big break may be needed to solve a case this complex.

“You always need a break,” he says. “You just do, whether it’s (Lincoln assassin) John Wilkes Booth breaking his leg or Kaczynski’s brother coming forward.”

The investigation began when the photo editor, Bob Stevens, checked into a Florida hospital with flu-like symptoms. He died two days later, on Oct. 5.

Anthrax-contaminated letters began turning up in Manhattan, at NBC and the New York Post. Then, Daschle received his letter; it contained an especially potent and deadly dose. By late November, four other people were dead and 17 others were sick with anthrax infections.

The general lack of knowledge about anthrax hamstrung investigators at the beginning. For example, ignorance was so widespread that a lab in New York that examined anthrax in one of the letters was contaminated because of faulty procedures.

The investigation was slowed in the early stages in other ways. Agents sorted their way through more than 17,000 hoaxes and false alarms.

The FBI and the scientific community got off to a rocky start, further complicating one of the most complex investigations in the agency’s history. During the early days, FBI agents who are used to dealing in absolutes had great difficulty understanding scientists who are accustomed to hypotheticals. That gap frustrated both sides, law enforcement officials say.

Distrust set in as the FBI realized that the very people it was counting on to help solve scientific mysteries — microbiologists and bioterror experts — were also potential suspects.

Van Harp, agent in charge of the FBI’s Washington office, wrote a letter in November to the American Society for Microbiology telling the scientists just that.

Bioweapons scientists at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah and the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick, Md., volunteered to help educate the agents about anthrax, and then submitted voluntarily to polygraph tests to eliminate themselves as potential suspects. But some were asked to sit for hours of polygraphs, sometimes multiple times.

The FBI profile of the anthrax killer originally described an adult male with a science background who worked in a laboratory where he had access to anthrax. Profiles often change during an investigation, but the FBI refuses to discuss any revisions it may have made. Still, agents say they believe they are looking for one culprit.

There is a finite number of people with the expertise to have produced the finely ground anthrax spores found in the letters. Agents have reduced that number to about 30 to 40 scientists.

“We are learning things every day — about spores, about what constitutes a crime scene, about who could do these things,” Howard says.

Over the summer, investigators honed in on Steven Hatfill, 48, a former Army scientist who taught police and paramedics how to respond to bioterrorism. He was among those who had voluntarily submitted to polygraph testing.

In June and again in August, the FBI searched his apartment in Fort Detrick. Word leaked to the news media, and the search was conducted with news helicopters hovering. The episode infuriated Hatfill, who has denied any involvement.

Attorney General John Ashcroft stopped short of naming Hatfill a suspect. He describes Hatfill as a “person of interest.” It’s a term that is unfamiliar to veteran FBI agents and one that does not appear in the U.S. Attorneys Manual, the federal prosecutors’ handbook.

Law enforcement officials say the focus on Hatfill has left the false impression that the investigation is narrowing. But, the officials say, FBI agents are almost fearful of ignoring any lead or crossing anyone off their list.

As a result of the attention, Hatfill was fired from Louisiana State University.

For the FBI, the anthrax attacks — more than the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks — have forced the agency to re-examine the way it approaches murder investigations. The basics no longer apply. Where exactly was the crime scene — the victims’ homes, the postal facilities that handled the anthrax letters, the tabloid headquarters in Florida, the Capitol? Since the attacks, investigators have returned to all of the sites repeatedly.

“It’s a complex crime, one that just needs time and patience to solve,” Howard says.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-09-30-anthrax-usat_x.htm

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USA Today
October 1, 2002
Pg. 4

Survivors Still Wrestle With Pain, Fatigue And Shortness Of Breath

By Laura Parker, USA Today

Ernesto Blanco, who ran the mailroom for six Florida tabloid newspapers, was the second man to get anthrax in last fall’s attack. The first, photo editor Bob Stevens, died. Conventional wisdom then held that inhalation anthrax was almost always fatal and that Blanco would die, too.

But Blanco, who is now 74, beat the odds and is back at work. “He’s really doing great,” says Blanco’s granddaughter, Veronica Carner.

David Hose, 60, a State Department mail sorter who also was infected with inhalation anthrax, doesn’t feel so lucky. He suffers chronic fatigue, memory loss, high blood pressure, shortness of breath and pain.

“I figure we were all pretty strong and healthy before, or we’d all be dead,” he says. “Now, I am not working. I can’t do a lot of heavy lifting. I can’t walk very far without getting out of breath. I am limited that way.”

In all, 18 people survived the bioterrorism attack that killed five people a year ago. Six of the survivors lived through inhalation anthrax.

Initially, all of the survivors were expected to make a full recovery after treatment with powerful antibiotics. But with few exceptions, such as Blanco, many of them are still sick.

They suffer from a laundry list of symptoms that have left many of them debilitated, depressed and unable to work. Memory loss is a prominent symptom, as is anxiety, pain and fatigue.

Doctors are baffled. For starters, there is little medical research to draw on because so few people in the past survived anthrax. So it became all but impossible to predict long-term effects. It is also difficult to distinguish which of the symptoms, such as fatigue, are linked to anthrax instead of another condition, such as stress.

Riddles come up nearly every week. Hose, for example, has developed asthma for the first time in his life. No one can tell him why.

A month ago, his blood pressure shot up, he had chest pains and he was so badly out of breath that his doctor insisted he go to a hospital emergency room. Four hours and an electrocardiogram later, Hose was no closer to an answer. He is very discouraged that the cause could not be diagnosed.

“I decided from then on if I kept having pains, I would just work my way through them,” he says. “I don’t know what causes them, and they don’t either, evidently.”

Like Hose, Leroy Richmond, 57, suffers memory loss and fatigue. A mail handler at Washington’s Brentwood mail processing center, he was hospitalized for 27 days last fall and nearly died.

He also began to experience panic attacks for no logical reason. "There was a time when the least little thing became a monumental event," he says. He has been prescribed an antidepressant to help curb the attacks. He says he is not angry that he became one of the victims of the anthrax attack. But he worries that because the attack wasn't as visual as the one on the World Trade Center that the public will become complacent about bioterrorism.

"The possibility of this happening again looms, and it's not remote that it may happen again," he says.

The survivors are of great interest to researchers at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md. They want to study the group, especially the six who survived inhalation anthrax, to discover the long-term effects of the infection.

"It's an incredibly unique situation," says Cliff Lane, clinical director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at NIH. "In the past, most patients died. You didn't have post-inhalation survivors. It's very difficult to know what one might find, which is what makes it important research."

Contributing: Deborah Sharp

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-09-30-victims-usat_x.htm

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Insight Magazine

October 15, 2002

How Saddam Got Weapons Of Mass Destruction

By Kenneth R. Timmerman

Recent intelligence information revealing dramatic progress in Iraq's nuclear-weapons program has given a new urgency to U.S. and British efforts to build international support for war with Iraq, according to Iraqi opposition leaders interviewed by Insight in London.

The information, from recent defectors and other sources working with the broad-based Iraqi National Congress (INC), indicates that Baghdad has made "a recent breakthrough" in production of the fissile material needed to produce the bomb. It was buttressed on Sept. 24 when the British government released an "unprecedented" white paper based in part on classified intelligence information on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. As U.N. inspectors ultimately discovered after several years of investigations in Iraq, the lack of nuclear-weapons materials was the only obstacle that blocked Iraq from joining the nuclear club before the Persian Gulf War in 1991. It remains so today.

The warnings from the opposition INC coincide with new assessments of Iraqi weapons programs from independent think tanks. "If Iraq were to acquire material from another country, it is possible that it could assemble a nuclear weapon in months," the Carnegie Endowment in Washington concluded in a recent report.

Former Clinton national-security official Gary Samore is more circumspect in a just completed "net assessment" of Iraq's weapons programs for the International Institute for Strategic Affairs in London. While he agrees that Iraq rapidly could assemble a weapon with fissile material from abroad, he doubts Iraq can produce special nuclear material on its own. "That will take much longer, with a relatively higher risk of detection than for chemical- or biological-weapons production," he tells Insight.

But the think tanks also admit that they are just guessing. For the last four years there have been no international weapons inspectors in Baghdad. The only hard information on Iraqi weapons programs has come from Iraqi defectors and from U.S. national-technical means, including spy satellites and overflights of Iraq by combat air patrols. The U.S. intelligence community has all but admitted publicly that it has no human sources in Iraq.

"We know that Saddam Hussein pursued weapons of mass murder even when inspectors were in the country," President George W. Bush reminded the United Nations on Sept. 12. "Are we to assume that he stopped when they left?" To credit this regime's good faith is "to bet the lives of millions and the peace of the world in a reckless gamble."

A former senior Iraqi intelligence officer tells Insight that information obtained by the INC during the last few months indicates "Iraq has made significant progress recently in uranium enrichment." That conclusion is based on Iraqi purchases of specialized magnets from Germany and aluminum tubes for enrichment centrifuges from South Africa, as well as firsthand reports from defectors and sources in place who have visited new clandestine nuclear- and biological-weapons production sites during the last 18 months.

Among those clandestine sites are several new uranium-enrichment plants, INC says. "Iraq is no longer using large, easy-to-spot facilities, but small-scale production plants that fit in small areas," a senior INC official says.

According to Insight sources, Iraqi engineers are miniaturizing the bomb design to make it fit onto a missile, using modeling software and fast new computers recently imported through Dubai, and actively enriching uranium using centrifuges and gaseous-diffusion membranes.

“Yes, there is a new urgency,” says Ahmed Chalabi, a member of the six-man INC leadership committee in London. “We see an acceleration of these programs that shows Saddam is hell-bent on acquiring fissile material not just to build one bomb, but to have a stockpile of weapons,” he tells Insight.

The Iraqi regime is turning increasingly to South Africa to procure nuclear materials and forbidden equipment needed for its weapons programs, INC sources tell Insight. A top Iraqi intelligence official, Nadhim Jabouri, has been dispatched to the Iraqi embassy in Johannesburg to handle contacts with South African nuclear engineers. He also is in touch with Armscor, the state armaments directorate (also known as Denel), which supplied Iraq with advanced 155 mm howitzers during the Iran-Iraq war.

To grease the skids and arrange travel documents, Iraqi procurement agents operating in Amman, Jordan, go through the first secretary of the South African embassy, Shoeman du Plessis. The willingness of the South African government to sell nuclear material and weapons to Iraq, and their fear of getting caught, could explain the virulent outburst by former South African president Nelson Mandela, who told Newsweek recently that the U.S. — not Saddam Hussein — presents “a threat to world peace.”

The credibility of the INC information was given a new boost in a White House report issued to buttress the president’s U.N. speech. The section on Iraqi weapons programs began by citing Adnan Saeed al-Haideri, an Iraqi specialist who visited scores of clandestine weapons sites before defecting to the INC in November 2001. Al-Haideri had become Iraq’s top authority in specialized epoxies used to seal minute cracks in concrete structures and clean rooms to prevent leaks that could give away their location. His skills made him an essential partner of Iraq’s Special Security Organization, which used him to hide mini-production labs and storage facilities in private houses and other sites across Iraq.

When the CIA debriefed him in December 2001, al-Haideri identified 300 separate clandestine sites used by Iraq to hide biological and chemical weapons and nuclear materials. Some of the equipment was hidden in lead containers stored in fake wells lined with concrete. Al-Haideri said he was called in to seal cracks in the concrete because the Iraqis feared U.S. surveillance satellites would pick up the slightest radioactive emissions.

Al-Haideri’s access to Iraq’s best-kept secrets provided the United States with a “motherlode of intelligence,” one source familiar with his debriefing tells Insight. Iraq is so worried about what he told the CIA that a senior official took reporters in early August to a Baghdad site he claimed al-Haideri had identified as a biological-weapons production plant. Instead, the official claimed, it was a “livestock vaccination laboratory.” Reporters were shown abandoned monitoring cameras installed by the United Nations. Dust-covered equipment and bottles littered the floor. Pointing to this “evidence,” their Iraqi escort claimed that al-Haideri “is lying to the CIA” and was “motivated by our enemies.”

Early this spring, intelligence analysts in Washington monitoring the progress of Iraq’s nuclear-weapons programs were stunned when they discovered plans by a known Iraqi procurement front, al-Wasel & Babel, to purchase large quantities of special aluminum tubes for uranium-enrichment centrifuges. The procurement had been spread over a 14-month period, beginning in mid-2001.

The involvement of al-Wasel & Babel set off alarm bells. “This is a known front for the Iraqi intelligence services and their parallel procurement network controlled by Saddam Hussein’s son Qusay,” the former intelligence officer says. Some shipments quietly were intercepted en route to Iraq, but a large number of the tubes slipped through, according to intelligence sources. Using these special aluminum tubes, Iraq now is believed to be operating a miniature uranium-enrichment “cascade” at a clandestine location, hermetically sealed to prevent telltale emissions. Al-Wasel & Babel is a joint venture between the Lootah group in Dubai and the Rawame family, an Iraqi clan with close ties to Saddam Hussein, that operates primarily out of Jordan. Their agent in Baghdad, Jamil al Hajaj, hand-delivers tasking messages from the regime to procurement agents operating outside of Iraq. Al-Wasel & Babel previously has been identified by U.S. intelligence as a conduit for clandestine purchases of Japanese fiber-optic cable through China. When Insight called the group’s commercial manager in the city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, a Pakistani named Sabr Montaz al-Qoreishi, we were told that al-Hajaj was arriving from Baghdad on Sept. 14.

Al Wasel & Babel is registered with the United Nations as a legitimate partner in oil-for-food deals and reportedly has handled close to \$900 million of Iraqi government contracts. Money from Iraq’s blocked account with the Banque Nationale de Paris (BNP) is routed to al-Wasel’s account (No. 104 481 4976) at the al-Riggah branch of the Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank in Dubai, contractual documents obtained by Insight show.

The former intelligence officer, who now works with the INC, provided details of the dual networks Iraq has set up to get around the U.N. trade restrictions. For five years he personally ran a procurement network based in Dubai for

the Special Security Organization, the elite of Saddam's vast intelligence apparatus in charge of overseas procurement and with hiding key equipment and material for Saddam's weapons programs. He was arrested by the regime in 1998, viciously tortured, then given an injection and dumped on the street. Bleeding from his nose, mouth and stomach, he managed to escape to Northern Iraq and ultimately to Turkey, where human-rights workers treated him successfully for thallium poisoning, a favorite method of the regime for executing its enemies.

Saddam's thuggish older son, Uday, controls the first network. Its primary purpose is to flood the U.N. sanctions committee with export requests to trigger the release of funds from the escrow account with the BNP in New York City where since 1991 the proceeds from Iraq's oil revenues have been deposited. In some cases, the former officer said, Uday uses cutouts and middlemen to sign fictitious contracts with European companies for goods such as food and medicine that routinely are approved by the United Nations. "Once the contracts are approved, the money is released from the escrow account," he says. "Iraq then pays the company up to 40 percent for the paperwork, and lets them keep the goods. Saddam desperately needs the 60 percent in cash for forbidden goods and could care less about food or medicine."

French exporters, interviewed by Insight, explained yet another finesse of Saddam's commercial network. They said they had been approached by an Iraqi front company known as ALIA, based in the Garden district of Amman, Jordan. "Uday uses ALIA to squeeze a 10 percent commission from exporters that gets kicked back to the regime," an exporter tells Insight. Large companies such as Renault Vehicules Industriels, Schneider Electric SA and Dow Agrosiences have used ALIA to sell several hundred million dollars worth of U.N.-approved goods to Iraq, according to export documents obtained by Insight. The Iraqi purchases included off-road vehicles, large quantities of specialized pumps and chillers that could be used for uranium enrichment, 2,000-liter and 5,000-liter reactor vessels needed to produce chemical weapons and chemicals for pesticides. All ostensibly were sold for civilian purposes and approved by the U.N. sanctions committee in New York.

In France, ALIA also is known as SOFRAG ALIA Development France, according to the documents. It applied to the United Nations for permission to export \$1 million worth of oil-well logging equipment to Iraq under an approved program to rebuild Iraqi oil fields. Such equipment is particularly sensitive because it includes neutron generators which U.N. weapons inspectors discovered were key components in the crude gun-implosion nuclear device Iraq had designed and tested before the 1991 gulf war.

The availability of dual-use equipment such as neutron generators provides an additional sense of urgency to the United States and Britain in making the case for war against Iraq. This is how Saddam Hussein built his war machine in the 1980s and early 1990s, arms experts and analysts who track the arms industries in developing countries agree. And yet, instead of tightening export controls on such sales, the United Nations dramatically loosened them in May after intense lobbying from France, Germany, China and Russia convinced the State Department to go along.

"Before the new rules," one French exporter of agricultural equipment tells Insight, "it took us anywhere between 12 and 18 months to get a contract approved by the U.N. sanctions committee. Now they are required to give us an answer within 10 days, and failure to reply means the contract is automatically approved."

Particularly worrying is the loosening of restrictions on high-tech equipment. Goods now available for export to Iraq under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1409, which was adopted in May, include a broad range of equipment with clear military applications — from agricultural sprayers that can be used to disperse biological weapons, to fiber optics and telecommunications hardware that have been used by the Iraqi military to improve and harden its integrated air-defense network.

Until recently, state-owned Chinese companies were the main suppliers of fiber-optics gear to Baghdad [see "Rogues Lending Hand to Saddam," Feb. 18]. But new documents obtained by Insight show that Europe's premier technology giants now are getting into the act. Siemens of Germany and Alcatel of France have racked up sales worth several hundred million dollars that recently were approved by the U.N. sanctions committee, directly and through overseas subsidiaries. Both companies were partners of Iraq's Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization before the 1991 gulf war. Their return to Iraq, albeit under the auspices of providing civilian telecommunications equipment, gives Baghdad access to the most advanced technology currently available in the West.

Now, Saddam has agreed to the return of U.N. arms inspectors, but it will take them months to develop the cadres and tradecraft to counter Iraqi deception, Samore believes. Chief arms inspector Hans Blix "is operating with a skeletal staff because he has insisted that experts who come to work for him quit their government jobs to reassure Iraq that they won't engage in intelligence collection." In his previous role as head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Blix regularly certified that Iraq was engaged in purely civilian nuclear research, thus allowing Saddam to import massive amounts of nuclear technology, which was used to develop nuclear weapons.

But the U.N. sanctions have become irrelevant for another reason. Since 1999 there has been no monitoring of trade across the international land borders with Iraq. “King Abdallah [of Jordan] threw Lloyds of London out of the port of Aqaba, where they were supposed to monitor Iraqi imports,” the former Iraqi intelligence officer says. “There are regular convoys of trucks to Baghdad from Jordan, and now a direct rail link from Syria carrying military spare parts and production gear, including equipment needed in Iraq’s nuclear-weapons plants.”

In June, Iraq brought in by rail from the Syrian port of Tartous a shipment of 60 military jet engines to upgrade aging MiG-21 fighters, the source says. More recently, Iraq purchased four Kolchuga air-defense missile batteries from Ukraine and brought them in through Syria. In exchange for its aid, Iraq is supplying Syria with 250,000 barrels of oil per day through the reopened Baniyas pipeline. Syria uses the Iraqi oil for its domestic consumption, freeing up oil for its own small-scale production to earn hard currency on the export market.

In Europe, meanwhile, reaction to Bush’s U.N. speech was mixed, with many editorialists claiming the president had “not made the case” for war with Iraq. But, behind the scenes, well-informed sources tell Insight that the fix is in, the result of intensive backroom bargaining during the last six months by administration envoys. One well-informed businessman close to French President Jacques Chirac believes that the French rejection of the U.S.-U.K. war plans is just for show. “What Chirac is really afraid of is losing face,” the businessman tells Insight. “Chirac fears that the Franco-German alliance in Europe is being outmaneuvered by Britain and its new allies, Italy and Spain. When push comes to shove, he will sacrifice the French companies now doing business in Iraq and throw in his lot with the United States.”

Samore has made four trips to Moscow in recent months and believes that securing Russian acquiescence will be the most difficult. “[Russian President Vladimir] Putin is probably inclined to go along with Bush at the U.N.,” Samore believes. “But people in the Russian security and foreign-policy establishment are resentful of the concessions he’s already made to Washington, and don’t want to lend legitimacy to a U.S. effort to install a pro-U.S. government in Baghdad. It could get ugly.”

Iraqi opposition leaders, who also have had quiet discussions with top Russian officials in recent months, believe Moscow’s main concern is getting some return on the \$15 billion Iraq owes the former Soviet Union for arms purchases and industrial assistance in the 1980s. “I think the Russians are straightforward and keep their word,” said one opposition source. “We don’t expect any problem with them.”

\$20 Billion in Cash Transfers

The just-released British intelligence assessment of Saddam Hussein’s weapons programs (which is available at the prime minister’s Website (www.official-documents.co.uk/document/reps/iraq/contents.htm) highlights Iraq’s recent procurement successes. In addition to seeking “the supply of significant quantities of uranium from Africa,”

intelligence shows a pattern on Iraqi purchases of high-tech gear specially adapted for a revived nuclear-weapons program which the sanctions were unable to stop. According to British intelligence, these purchases include:

*vacuum pumps that “could be used ... in a gas-centrifuge cascade needed to enrich uranium”;

*“an entire magnet-production line ... for use in the motors and top bearings of gas centrifuges”;

*anhydrous hydrogen fluoride and fluoride gas, both of which are required for “converting uranium into uranium hexafluoride for use in gas-centrifuge cascades”;

*a large filament-winding machine “which could be used to manufacture carbon-fiber gas-centrifuge rotors,” and a large balancing machine needed for the “initial centrifuge-balancing work”;

*“repeated attempts covertly to acquire a very large quantity (60,000 or more) of specialized aluminum tubes” of the specification needed for gas centrifuges to enrich uranium.

Added to this, the British report says intelligence “has confirmed that Iraq wants to extend the range of its missile systems to more than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles), enabling it to threaten other regional neighbors,” and can now produce biological-warfare agents using “mobile laboratories.”

In presenting the Joint Intelligence Committee assessment — the first of its kind to be released to the public — Prime Minister Tony Blair emphasized that “Iraq is preparing plans to conceal evidence of these weapons, including documents, from renewed inspections,” explaining the cynicism with which Saddam’s promises to allow U.N. weapons inspectors back into Iraq has been greeted in Washington and London.

Saddam Hussein’s European Helpers

Agco SA (France) — farm equipment (\$24.5 million)

Alcatel CIT (France) — telecommunications equipment (\$37.4 million)

ALLDOS Technique de Dosage (France) — specialized pumps (\$1.6 million)

BWT France SA (France) — U.V. disinfection equipment (\$5.5 million)

Envirotech Pump Systems (France) — Specialized pumps and spare parts (\$25 million)

Hexacorp (France) — water chillers (\$2.9 million)

Irrifrance (France) — agricultural sprayers, large reactor vessels (\$8.3 million)

Levant Overseas Development Ltd. (France) — insecticide, chemicals, unidentified spare parts (11 contracts, \$9.5 million)

Liebherr (Germany) — excavators, mobile cranes (\$14 million)

Pompes-Salmson (France) — specialized pumps (\$1.7 million)

Potain SA (France) — tower cranes (\$6.5 million)

Renault Vehicules Industriels (France) — heavy trucks, transporters (\$25.5 million)

Schneider Electric (France) — controllers (\$3 million)

Sofrag Alia Development (France) — well-logging units (\$1 million)

Siemens SAS (France) — pumps, spares, telecommunications gear (\$4.92 million)

Siemens Medical (Germany) — medical equipment, linear accelerators (\$12.7 million)

Siemens AG (Germany) — power-generating equipment (\$171 million)

Siemens Information (Italy) — microwave links (\$3.1 million)

Siemens Sanayi vfe Ticaret (Turkey) — Telecommunications and power-generation equipment (\$58.5 million)

Source: U.N. sanctions committee

Kenneth R. Timmerman is a senior writer for Insight magazine.

<http://www.insightmag.com/news/284402.html>

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Washington Times

October 3, 2002

Pg. 15

Talks Focus On Weapons, Technology

By Nicholas Kravev, The Washington Times

The first U.S. official to visit North Korea in two years arrives today in Pyongyang to discuss nuclear weapons, missile technology and conventional forces even as key Republican senators are calling for a suspension of support for the two nuclear reactors under construction for the benefit of Pyongyang.

A parallel objective of the visit by James Kelly, assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs, is to gauge the reclusive state's willingness to deal with the United States.

In a letter to Mr. Bush dated Sept. 26, the senators said building the reactors should be conditional on the North's granting U.N. weapons inspectors full access to all of its suspected nuclear sites.

The letter was signed by Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott, Mississippi Republican, and Republican Sens. Jesse Helms of North Carolina, Jon Kyl of Arizona, Robert C. Smith of New Hampshire and Mike DeWine of Ohio.

The five senators said they "have been skeptical" of the framework since the beginning and "feared it would allow Pyongyang to work clandestinely on its nuclear weapons program at the same time it receives tangible benefits from the agreement."

They also cited a National Intelligence Council report saying that North Korea has already produced "one, possibly two, nuclear weapons."

The administration yesterday tried to lower expectations for Mr. Kelly's visit, although it said it was hoping for a "useful and productive" trip.

"We are not expecting him to come back with an agreement in his pocket, but at the same time we wouldn't have sent him if we didn't think that there is some value in the trip," a State Department official said.

The administration was reluctant to disclose Mr. Kelly's schedule and agenda even in basic details, saying that the officials he would meet and the specific topics he would discuss would not be clear until the last moment because of North Korea's infamous unpredictability.

The State Department said, however, that security issues — such as Pyongyang's frozen nuclear program, its production and exports of missile technology and its huge conventional force — are Washington's top priorities in any meetings with the North Koreans.

Mr. Kelly's visit was supposed to take place earlier this year, but was postponed because of objection by hard-liners in the administration and a fatal naval clash in the Yellow Sea between vessels from North and South Korea in June, for which Pyongyang later issued a rare apology.

The eight-member U.S. delegation was in Seoul yesterday for meetings with South Korean Foreign Minister Choi Sung-hong, two top national security advisers to President Kim Dae-jung, Yim Sung-joon and Lim Dong-won, and other officials.

“We hope special envoy Kelly’s visit to North Korea will serve as a launching pad for improving ties between the North and the United States,” said Park Sun-Sook, a spokeswoman for Mr. Kim. “We also hope the visit will produce best results to help bring about peace and stability to the Korean Peninsula.” Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright traveled to Pyongyang in October 2000 for talks with President Kim Jong-il.

She won a pledge from the North’s leader to stop making missiles if the United States would find rockets to launch its satellites into outer space.

In the final months of the Clinton administration, officials sought to cement such a deal and have President Clinton travel to Pyongyang for a summit.

The effort proved unsuccessful, and Mr. Bush rejected negotiations shortly after coming to office and ordering a review of U.S. policy toward North Korea.

After talks in North Korea, Mr. Kelly plans to fly back to Seoul and then to Tokyo to brief officials on his discussions.

Mr. Kelly will be traveling as a special envoy of Mr. Bush, who in January branded the North, along with Iran and Iraq, as part of “an axis of evil” with intentions to develop weapons of mass destruction.

The State Department said last week that Mr. Kelly’s agenda would include North Korea’s missile proliferation, the nuclear program that it suspended in a 1994 deal with Washington, its heavy deployment of conventional weapons and troops along the border with South Korea, and human rights issues.

The United States keeps about 37,000 troops in South Korea as a deterrent against the North.

North Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju is expected to take part in the negotiations in Pyongyang.

The North revived stalled reconciliation with South Korea in August and hosted an unprecedented visit by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Sept. 17.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20021003-22388908.htm>

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Washington Post

October 3, 2002

Pg. 17

EPA Drops Chemical Security Effort

Agency Lacks Power to Impose Anti-Terror Standards, Lawyers Decide

By A Washington Post Staff Writer

The Bush administration has abandoned efforts to impose tough new security regulations on the chemical industry to protect against possible terrorist attacks, following months of intense internal fighting within the administration and resistance from the industry.

The decision marks a victory for major chemical manufacturers who have argued they can improve security without regulatory intervention.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman, who confirmed the decision yesterday, said the administration now intends to support bipartisan legislation to address continuing security problems in the industry -- possibly a plan being drafted by Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.) that would give chief oversight responsibility to a new Department of Homeland Security.

But administration officials have scrapped efforts to give the EPA tough new regulatory authority under the Clean Air Act to force chemical plants to identify and rectify serious security problems in producing and storing hazardous materials.

“It’s a question of which [approach] is more effective,” Whitman said at a news conference yesterday, announcing new EPA homeland security strategies. While Whitman and Tom Ridge, the White House homeland security director, had strongly favored the regulatory approach to speed up the process, lawyers in other agencies prevailed in arguing that the EPA lacked the legal authority and would be “pushing the envelope,” Whitman said.

She said there is still time this year for Congress to pass legislation to regulate chemical industry security. However, President Bush and Senate Democrats are deadlocked over legislation to create a Department of Homeland Security, and House leaders would be reluctant to act on chemical industry security this year even if the Senate were able to agree on a measure.

Anti-terrorism experts, environmentalists and some lawmakers say there is little doubt that plants storing large amounts of chlorine and other toxic chemicals are potential terrorist targets. Internal administration documents

disclosed this summer warn of at least 30 plants near heavily populated areas that require immediate government attention.

“The administration’s decision not to put forward their own chemical security plan and instead wait for some ambiguous, bipartisan bill later looks like political stalling that is likely to lead to further delay on public safety,” said Jeremiah Baumann of the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. Rick Hind, a toxic chemicals expert with Greenpeace, called the administration’s approach “an unbelievable nothing-burger.”

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in late July approved a bipartisan bill drafted by Sen. Jon S. Corzine (D-N.J.) that would have required plants to identify vulnerabilities in their operations and develop plans to correct them, subject to EPA approval.

Corzine had hoped to attach his bill to the homeland security department legislation, but his plan has encountered stiff resistance from the American Chemistry Council -- representing the largest chemical manufacturers -- and an array of other manufacturing and agriculture groups. Yesterday, Corzine said: “Chemical plant vulnerability remains a pressing homeland security concern. Federal standards are the only way to ensure that this threat is addressed adequately and consistently across the country.”

Industry lobbyists said many companies already have done all that is necessary, including building fences, hiring more guards and eliminating stockpiles of deadly liquid chlorine. They said there were serious legal questions about whether the EPA could invoke the Clean Air Act to impose anti-terrorism standards on chemical plants.

Chris VandenHeuvel, a spokesman for the American Chemistry Council, said that while the industry “supports a federal role” in protecting chemical plants, “we just don’t think it belongs at EPA.”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A35214-2002Oct2.html>

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Philadelphia Inquirer
October 2, 2002

For Decades, Mailing Germs Was Routine

By Faye Flam, Inquirer Staff Writer

Revelations that the U.S. government shipped directly to Iraq samples of germs that could be made into biological weapons raises some obvious questions: How could we have done such a thing? And are we still doing it, if not to Iraq then elsewhere?

The answer to the second question is no - but we were until recently. As for the first, scientists say that what seems clear in hindsight wasn’t even on the radar screen a few years ago.

“It was not a good idea, but it was standard operating procedure,” Jonathan Tucker, a U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq in 1995, said yesterday.

For decades, American laboratories routinely sent samples of anthrax and other potential germ-warfare agents around the world. At least 72 shipments to Iraq in the 1980s, now the subject of congressional hearings, were legal and routine at the time.

American Type Culture Collection (ATCC), a nonprofit biological supply center based in Manassas, Va., sent two samples of a particularly deadly anthrax strain to Iraqi labs in the late 1980s.

Both were approved by the Commerce Department.

In other cases, scientists saw no need to notify the government.

“The Commerce Department had restrictions, but most people totally ignored them,” said Gigi Kwik, a fellow at the Center for Civilian Biodefense Strategies at Johns Hopkins University. “Most research that goes on - 99.99 percent of it - was pretty legitimate.”

Iraqi scientists requested anthrax bacteria for research into the cattle-borne disease. It is endemic there, causing major losses of livestock and occasional human deaths. Iraq also requested the germs that cause gangrene, botulism, and West Nile virus infection, all purportedly for research.

“You see the dilemma,” Tucker said. “These materials are not only biological weapons; they also cause natural diseases.”

ATCC, the source of the anthrax shipments, still stores and sends thousands of samples to medical researchers around the world - although it now must get federal approval for the most dangerous pathogens.

Iraq would not necessarily have needed anthrax from America to create weapons. Because Iraq has its own anthrax problem, Iraqi engineers could get the bacteria from the soil or from sick cattle.

“The United States government was a bit naive in approving these sales, but at the time there wasn’t much concern about bioterrorism,” said Tucker, who is now a fellow at the Washington-based nonprofit Institute of Peace.

The anthrax shipments came to light during a 1995 congressional hearing into the possible causes of gulf war syndrome.

Then-U.S. Sen. Donald Reigle reported that the United States shipped to Iraq pathogens that might be used for germ warfare at least 72 times. Records from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta indicated that the agency sent samples of West Nile and other mosquito-borne disease agents between 1985 and 1989.

Iraqi scientists made the request to help study the diseases, a CDC spokesman said.

No restrictions were imposed, despite evidence that Iraq had used chemical weapons in its war against Iran earlier in the 1980s.

Concern about the use of germs as weapons began to raise alarms in the United States in the 1990s. During the gulf war, the United States bombed a suspected biological weapons factory in 1991. After the war, weapons inspectors discovered extensive evidence that Iraq had continued making biological weapons at an animal feed factory.

The Commerce Department began to more closely scrutinize all exports to Iraq.

In 1993, a coalition of 33 countries voluntarily began controlling the shipments of germs and equipment that could be used to make them into weapons, although the common, informal exchanges of biological agents among research colleagues remained routine. Many were sent in the mail.

More alarms went off in 1996, when an American named Larry Wayne Harris ordered a sample of the bacteria that cause bubonic plague through the mail. "There were no questions asked. They shipped material to him," Tucker said, although Harris was later caught.

That incident spawned the 1997 federal law requiring the CDC to approve all shipments of 36 deadly agents, including anthrax and plague.

The anthrax-stuffed letters that were sent through the mail last year, killing five people, prompted more restrictions. Now the CDC must oversee not only shipments of anthrax but all labs that possess the germs for research purposes.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/nation/4192136.htm>

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US plans a system to detect bioattack

By Stephen Smith, Globe Staff, 10/3/2002

The US Centers for Disease Control yesterday announced plans for a national early warning system against bioterrorist attack, using a system pioneered at Harvard that will look for signs of an anthrax, smallpox, or other disease outbreak in the aches, pains, and sniffles of 20 million patients.

The CDC is committing \$1.2 million to a trial of the computerized surveillance network, which will review thousands of diagnoses daily for unusual patterns, such as a sudden increase in reports of flu-like symptoms that could signal an anthrax attack.

Early detection is pivotal. If smallpox and anthrax infections are caught in their first stages, patients can be treated much more effectively. In the case of smallpox, the spread can be contained.

"A system like this may give public health officials a three-day lead time. And that lead time may result in the saving of a great number of lives," said Dr. James Nordin, a clinical investigator at HealthPartners Research Foundation in Minnesota, which is participating in the experiment.

In addition, the system could provide early warnings of less sinister disease outbreaks, such as the flu or food poisoning. The lack of such surveillance in Milwaukee in 1993 resulted in hundreds of thousands of people getting sick from a water-borne illness before authorities recognized its scope.

The national system, expected to be operating within a year, will mirror a network begun in Boston nearly a year ago, in the midst of the anthrax scare.

Dr. Richard Platt, a Harvard infectious disease epidemiologist, led the team that created that surveillance network, which had not been scheduled to start until August 2002. But in the days following the Sept. 11 attacks, the decision was made to bring it on line as quickly as possible.

The anthrax attacks that began in early October of last year, ultimately killing five people, underscored the need for a national system for tracking bioterrorism. Since the attacks, public health officials have been even more concerned about smallpox because, unlike anthrax, it can be spread from person to person.

Since last fall, 14 Harvard Vanguard treatment centers have reported data every day on 250,000 patients. So far, the system has detected no suspicious patterns in the Boston area.

Now, Platt presides over the national coalition of researchers designing a system capable of tracking medical trends in all 50 states.

“It may be possible to get an earlier signal of a bioterrorism event by looking at the pattern of symptoms like cough than you could get by waiting until the first clearly recognizable bioterrorism infections appear,” Platt said. In many cases, the symptoms the surveillance network will track seem surprisingly routine - things like upper and lower respiratory infections and small rashes accompanied by fever. But that’s exactly the point: to look for small signs of big problems.

The system will take information from health plans, clinics, and a company that runs a telephone hotline staffed by registered nurses who answer patient calls. It represents an unusual banding together of disparate, frequently competing, arms of the US health care system.

But Platt knew that if doctors and other medical staff were asked to complete more paperwork in a field already drowning in documents, a tracking system was doomed to fail. Instead, the surveillance system prepares computers to review standard medical reports. Those reports are automatically measured against years of medical history for unusual patterns.

That way, the system will be able to determine, for instance, if the number of respiratory cases on a Thursday in early October varies dramatically from Thursdays in past Octobers. Then, the computer hunts for geographic clusters of cases.

“There’s a big difference,” Platt said, “between having five people who are sick in a ZIP code with 100 people than a ZIP code with 10,000 people.”

When worrisome patterns emerge, public health authorities will be alerted so that they can open an investigation to ascertain whether a cluster of coughing is attributable to a winter virus or whether it’s evidence of a rogue bacterial agent circulating.

Smallpox is a leading example of how early intervention can translate into effective treatment and a limited spread of disease.

Researchers know that if patients are inoculated soon after being exposed to smallpox, that shot can stop symptoms from manifesting. And centuries of experience with the disease show that it’s vital to contain it geographically - something best done before thousands of people are exposed.

If the national trial proves successful, infectious disease specialists predict that the network will be expanded to cover an even broader spectrum of patients.

While the fear of bioterrorism is prompting creation of the national system, its greatest value may prove to have nothing to do with terrorists.

The need for such a network was demonstrated in 1993 when Milwaukee’s water supply was fouled by a microbe called cryptosporidium due to runoff from a cattle lot. More than 400,000 people became ill and 100 died, in part because it took days for disease trackers to realize an epidemic was felling thousands.

“These investments in the surveillance system are clearly going to have multiple purposes in making the public health system stronger,” said Dr. Steven L. Solomon, acting director of the division of health care quality promotion at CDC.

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/276/nation/US_plans_a_system_to_detect_bioattack-.shtml

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