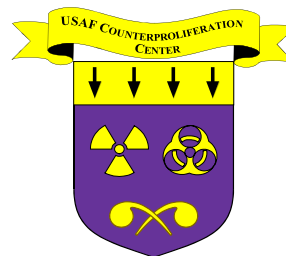


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U.S., U.N. Differ On Arms Hunt

White House Urges Intrusive Inspections

By Colum Lynch, Washington Post Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 16 -- With an advance team of U.N. weapons inspectors due to arrive in Baghdad on Monday after a four-year absence, the United States and the United Nations are divided over how aggressively the inspectors should conduct their hunt for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs in Iraq, U.N. and U.S. officials say.

The Bush administration is insisting on the most intrusive inspections possible, pushing U.N. arms experts to probe where previous inspectors could not, and to impose strict reporting requirements on the Iraqi government. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell cautioned Thursday against the view that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein will be given any "slack" in the inspection process that would deter the United States from using force if Iraq fails to cooperate.

The U.N.'s chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, has argued for a more measured approach to achieving disarmament. Blix spelled out his aims last month in Vienna at a meeting with recruits to the inspections teams; he said they should be "firm" with their Iraqi counterparts but never "angry and aggressive."

The division reflects broad differences in the U.N. Security Council that remain unresolved despite the council's unanimous approval Nov. 8 of Resolution 1441, which sets out stringent new terms for inspections in Iraq. And it may foreshadow clashes between the United States and its partners in the United Nations as Blix and his teams begin their inspections Nov. 27.

In a letter today to Iraq's parliament explaining why he accepted the resumption of inspections, Hussein reiterated his contention that Iraq is "devoid of weapons of mass destruction."

The claim was dismissed by President Bush in his weekly radio address. "We have heard such pledges before, and they have been unfortunately betrayed," Bush said. "Our goal is not merely the return of inspectors to Iraq; our goal is the disarmament of Iraq. The dictator of Iraq will give up his weapons of mass destruction, or the United States will lead a coalition and disarm him."

While Bush has argued that the 15-nation Security Council should have "zero tolerance," making even minor infractions a potential cause for military action, Blix, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and other key Security Council members, such as Russia and France, maintain that Iraq will be held accountable only for serious violations. "The U.S. does seem . . . to have a lower threshold than others may have" to justify military action, Annan told reporters in Washington on Wednesday before meeting with Bush. "I think the discussion in the council made it clear we should be looking for something serious and meaningful, and not for excuses to do something."

Annan's view reflects those of U.N. members who have interpreted comments by senior White House and Pentagon officials as suggesting that conflict with Iraq may be inevitable.

Since the Security Council vote, administration officials have argued that the resolution prohibits Iraq from firing on U.S. and British warplanes enforcing "no fly" zones over northern and southern Iraq. The resolution says Iraq shall not take or threaten hostile acts against U.N. member personnel upholding "any" previous resolutions, but the United States has differed with other U.N. members over whether the Security Council ever sanctioned the "no fly" zone policy.

Asked about the matter in Canada on Thursday, Powell acknowledged that "one could argue" with the U.S. interpretation. But he said the United Nations was seeking a "new spirit of cooperation" from Iraq, and that, therefore, firing on aircraft would suggest Iraq's behavior had not changed. "If they were to take hostile acts against United States or United Kingdom aircraft patrolling in the 'no fly' zones, then I think we would have to look at that with great seriousness," Powell said.

The issue was thrust into the open today as administration officials said they have determined that an attack by Iraqi air defenses Friday against U.S. and British warplanes patrolling a "no fly" zone in southern Iraq was a "material breach" of Baghdad's obligations under the terms of the resolution. The Iraqi government said that seven civilians were killed and four injured by allied planes responding to the attack.

Blix and Mohamed El Baradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, will arrive in Baghdad on Monday with more than 25 technical specialists. Blix told reporters Friday that he and El Baradei will meet with senior Iraqi officials while their team tends to communication and transportation. About 12 arms experts are to arrive Nov. 27 and formally begin the inspections. They will be joined by another 80 inspectors in the following weeks.

U.N. officials have voiced concern that the United States will press for the kind of provocative inspections that characterized the 1991-1998 disarmament effort by the U.N. Special Commission, known as UNSCOM. Blix, who assumed leadership of UNSCOM's successor agency in 2000, is trying to change the culture of the arms inspectors, whose predecessors aroused deep animosity in Iraq for using tough tactics to gain access to U.N. sites. The conduct and composition of the inspections teams have emerged as a major issue. Iraq and other Arab governments appealed to Blix, who has employed more inspectors from the United States than from any other country, to hire more Arab arms experts, who might be more in tune with Iraq's religious and cultural sensitivities. Iraqi Foreign Minister Najib Sabri made it clear in a letter to Annan on Wednesday in which Iraq accepted the resolution that his government will be monitoring the inspectors for evidence that they are spying on behalf of the United States.

"The fieldwork and the implementation will be the deciding factors as to whether the true intent was for the Security Council to ascertain that Iraq is free of those alleged weapons or whether the entire matter is nothing more than an evil cover" for U.S. aggression, Sabri wrote.

UNSCOM, which was established at the end of the Persian Gulf War in 1991 to eliminate Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and missiles with ranges longer than 90 miles, is credited with destroying more Iraqi weapons than U.S.-led forces during the conflict. But it was shuttered in late 1999, following revelations that the United States had used the inspection agency to collect intelligence on the Iraqi government.

The Security Council established a successor agency, the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, or UNMOVIC, in December 1999 to complete Iraq's disarmament. The new inspectors have been placed on the U.N. payroll to decrease the likelihood that they will serve the interests of their governments.

Iraq refused to allow the new inspection agency to resume its work, however, until it was confronted by a credible threat of U.S. military action.

The United States has pressed Blix to appoint a senior U.S. official to manage the flow of American intelligence to the inspection agency. It has also insisted that Iraq be required to permit its scientists and their families to be interviewed abroad, and imposed a 30-day deadline on Iraq to provide a complete account of the status of its chemical, biological and nuclear facilities.

Blix has not yet agreed to the U.S. request about having an American in charge of monitoring the intelligence flow. Although Blix has pleaded with Washington to increase its intelligence support for UNMOVIC, he has also expressed concern that the relationship could compromise his organization. He said today in Paris that the former inspection agency had "lost its legitimacy by being too closely associated with intelligence and with Western states." Speaking to reporters Friday before leaving New York, Blix said there may be "practical difficulties" in conducting interviews outside Iraq. He also has questioned whether Iraq could file a full declaration on its petrochemical industry within the 30-day deadline, making it clear that he would judge Iraq's "intention" before deciding whether Iraq has violated any of the resolution's requirements.

Some former weapons inspectors say they are concerned Blix may be falling into an Iraqi trap and have urged him to undertake an even more aggressive approach to inspections than UNSCOM. "Blix may go too far down this line," said David Albright, a former nuclear inspector who heads the Institute for Science and International Studies. "If you are too weak, the Iraqis will read you in a second and take advantage of it."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64597-2002Nov16.html>

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Los Angeles Times
November 17, 2002
Pg. 1

Iraq May Be Concealing Bioweapons In Trucks

Western analysts believe the fleet could evade inspectors and pose extreme danger in war.

By Paul Richter and Greg Miller, Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON -- As U.S. forces weigh storming across the Iraqi border in the coming months, their ability to handle the armored columns of an aging army they crushed 11 years ago is not much in doubt. Far less certain is their ability to deal with another threat: a shadowy fleet of nondescript trucks crisscrossing Iraq that Western intelligence believes is carrying biological weapons.

Rumbling along Iraq's highways or threading their way through crowded city streets, these mobile weapons labs may look like ice cream trucks, motor homes or 18-wheeler tractor trailer trucks, officials and experts say. But their cargo is believed to be germ agents such as anthrax, botulinum toxin and aflatoxin that theoretically could kill hundreds of thousands in an attack.

Dubbed "Winnebagos of death," the anonymous vehicles are hard to locate, even with sophisticated sensors.

Military officials are sharply divided about how to handle them, even if they can be found, with some arguing that bombing the mobile labs risks a catastrophic release of germ agents.

Finding such labs will be one of the toughest challenges facing United Nations weapons inspectors as they return to Iraq after a four-year absence and try to track down any biological, as well as chemical or nuclear, weapons that President Saddam Hussein's regime might have stockpiled.

If the labs evade detection, U.S. intelligence analysts fear, the officers or scientists who operate them might try to use germ agents in a desperate counterattack or spirit the materials away to sell to terrorists or foreign governments. If such materials fall into the hands of a group such as Al Qaeda, that would turn the military campaign into what "could be the greatest proliferation disaster in history," said Daniel Benjamin, a former National Security Council official and coauthor of "The Age of Sacred Terror."

Those entrusted with the labs are "loyal servants of the regime," Benjamin said. They would be unlikely to carry out terror attacks on their own initiative, he said, but their fears about a bleak future under an American-installed regime could give them incentive to sell the material.

"There's nothing to prevent any one of them from pulling off by the side of the road and having the most lethal pathogens loaded into a cooler or rucksack, and disappearing," Benjamin said.

A senior U.S. intelligence official compared the task of finding the labs to the frustrating search last month for a white truck that was believed to hold a sniper who terrorized the Washington area.

"Look how many white vans were stopped here in D.C. looking for a sniper," he said. "There are a lot of trucks [in Iraq], a lot of trailers.... I think it's going to be real hard to find them."

While the labs are "not our No. 1 problem," the official added, they are a threat "that needs to be considered, and weighs heavily on our commanders' minds."

The mobile labs are the latest troubling aspect of the unconventional weapons program that Hussein launched about 30 years ago and worked doggedly to conceal from the U.N. weapons inspectors who were sent to disarm the country after the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Iraqi Supply Questioned

Iraq has acknowledged that it developed quantities of several pathogens that could kill hundreds of thousands in an attack. The regime insists it has destroyed all of its supplies -- an assertion the U.S. flatly rejects. In fact, some U.S. officials and outside experts believe Iraq has augmented its deadly arsenal with smallpox.

While Hussein didn't use chemical or biological weapons in the Gulf War, officials believe he would be more likely to do so if he believed his regime was collapsing.

Iraqi officials are suspected of having hidden caches of biological and chemical weapons materials in hundreds of sites across their country, which is only slightly larger than California. U.N. inspectors are expected to have trouble unearthing them.

Even tougher to find would be mobile labs, which the Iraqis are believed to have begun operating in 1996, after U.N. weapons inspectors found and destroyed two large biological weapon production facilities. The British and German governments, and the CIA and Pentagon have all asserted the existence of the mobile labs in separate reports this year.

Iraqi defectors have told U.N. and American officials that the regime decided it was much safer to pack laboratory equipment into vehicles that could operate while parked at weapons plants but could shift location regularly to elude detection.

Defectors report that "Saddam has taken the entire Iraqi program on the road," Kenneth M. Pollack, former director of Persian Gulf affairs at the National Security Council, wrote in his recent book, "The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq."

"Baghdad has a number of BW [biological weapons] labs that can move around the country as needed, leaving no trace and having no signature that Western intelligence can detect," he wrote.

Richard Spertzel, former head of the United Nations bioweapons inspection program, said inspectors used to joke ruefully that the only way to find all the fixed labs would be to search every structure in the country.

"And the mobile labs makes it that much tougher," he said. "You'd have to check every van in Iraq."

Spertzel said that from his four years of experience in Iraq he believes most of the people in the germ weapons program were forced into their jobs and would be eager to leave them behind. But in truth, no one knows how those in the program will react -- either to inspections or to an American-led attack.

U.S. officials acknowledge that they do not know precisely how many labs there are, and what they look like, though they have pictures of what they take to be labs housed in 18-wheel tractor trailers. Some experts believe the Iraqis may use several types of vehicles to throw off the pursuers.

"We know they're there," the intelligence official said. "We don't know 100% what's in them."

Some experts speculate that the Iraqis have built functioning labs by installing fermenters, spray dryers, centrifuges and supporting gear in two or three 18-wheelers with refrigeration capacity.

Spertzel said smaller vehicles, such as Winnebagos, could produce enough germ material for terrorist attacks but probably not enough for the larger-scale military use. Officials say they do not believe these labs contain biological materials that have been "weaponized" -- loaded into bombs, warheads or aircraft spraying devices for battlefield use. But they note that that this final step might be quickly done.

"You have to assume the worst," one intelligence official said, adding that such possibilities are "one reason the Department of Defense is looking at vaccinations for all its forces."

U.S. officials say they believe their best hope of finding the labs lies in finding defectors early in a war who will point them out. Bush administration officials have tried to encourage cooperation by warning that Iraqis who take part in chemical or biological attacks would be charged with war crimes, while those who cooperate would receive humane treatment.

Yet Iraqis officials may have given limited information about the program to small groups so that few people know where all the labs are. Once the vehicles are on the road, their whereabouts may be known only to their crews.

U.S. Air Force officials say their unmanned aircraft, the Predator, can track down the suspected mobile labs because of the detailed images and 40-hour uninterrupted video surveillance it offers. Satellites and E-8C Joint STARS surveillance planes, which are used to track moving tanks and other vehicles, also might be helpful.

But their usefulness is limited if the U.S. military doesn't have additional information to distinguish these trucks from others on the road and if the vehicles are camouflaged by the heavy traffic around Baghdad, a city of 5 million. Though the Predator is good, heavy traffic in an urban setting "would be problematic," said Michael Vickers, a former Army Special Forces officer who is an analyst at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments think tank in Washington.

Vickers recalled that during the Gulf War, U.S. forces were notably unsuccessful in trying to track motor homes that they believed were carrying Hussein and his commanders around.

Some analysts suggested that the U.S. military might resort to setting up roadblocks or creating "no-drive" zones where they believe the trucks might be circulating. But Benjamin, the former NSC official, said the limits of military manpower for such tasks might become an issue.

Even if mobile labs are found, officials face the tough decision of how to destroy any dangerous material they carry. While the easiest course might be to blow it up, that could prove disastrous if it includes a biological agent in a form, such as freeze-dried particles, that could survive an explosion and be carried off by the wind, an official said. "Without knowing what's in it, you'd be ill-advised to just bomb it," the official said. "If you drop a 500-pound bomb on a truck, even if it's a 'smart' bomb, you may be releasing some real bad stuff on a community."

He said the best approach would be to intercept the vehicle and carefully destroy the materials. But the official acknowledged that there are conflicting views on how to handle such a situation.

The military typically uses powerful incendiary bombs to vaporize such material, said Jonathan Tucker, a former U.N. weapons inspector who is a senior fellow at the U.S. Institute for Peace. It is not clear whether Iraq has the sophistication to produce anthrax in a dried form, Tucker said. But if they can, a bomb attack "could be extremely dangerous."

Military planners agonized over a similar problem during the Gulf War, when they were faced with the question of whether chemical weapons sites should be attacked. The debate came to a head when satellite imagery showed a disturbing collection of pyramid-style mounds of earth in the desert surrounding Baghdad.

"We had reason to suspect they were loaded with chemical and biological agents," said a top Gulf War planner who has since left the military. "The question was: Do we blow them up or not? Some argued that if we blew them up you'd kill the whole population of Baghdad. Others said if the [explosion] is hot enough you'll burn everything and there's no problem."

Ultimately, Colin L. Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and now secretary of State, ordered strikes on the mounds with some of the largest munitions available, 1,000-pound bombs. It appeared that no one died from the bombings. But the political sensitivity of the issue became apparent in the mid-1990s, when veterans groups began to argue that release of chemicals might have caused the mysterious "Gulf War syndrome" that afflicted some who served in the conflict.

The bombing option might not be available if the mobile labs are found in populated areas. And some experts question whether the 100-pound Hellfire missiles carried on Predators could incinerate all the contents of an 18-wheel truck.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/wire/la-fg-deathvan17nov17.story>

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London Times
November 17, 2002
Pg. 1

MI5 Foils Poison-Gas Attack On The Tube

By Hala Jaber and Nicholas Rufford

A GANG of suspected Al-Qaeda terrorists plotted to kill commuters on the London Underground by releasing poison gas in a crowded carriage.

Six north African men were arrested in London eight days ago in connection with the plot, which security chiefs said would have caused chaos across the capital.

The planned rush hour attack is believed to have been the trigger that prompted Tony Blair's terror alert last week, and a Home Office warning, later withdrawn, of possible use by terrorists of poison gas.

MI5, the security service, had intelligence that the gang was planning to bring ingredients for a gas bomb into Britain. The most likely target was a crowded Tube train where the chemicals would be mixed to release toxic fumes, probably cyanide.

Blair was told of the plot at a Downing Street summit attended by David Blunkett, the home secretary, and security chiefs. He insisted police shut down the suspected terror cell and rejected a plan to delay any arrests until MI5 had established more about the gang and its Al-Qaeda links.

The alert followed the rise of "chatter" on terrorist networks.

The FBI warned this weekend of the threat of a "spectacular" Al-Qaeda attack. American authorities also revealed they were holding a senior Al-Qaeda suspect, but would not name him or say where he was being held. There was speculation that this was a reference to a suspect known as Mohsen F, who is being held in Kuwait.

The arrests in London on November 9 were by Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch. Officers raided more than half a dozen addresses in north London, some used as drops-ins by Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian immigrants, and took away items after searches.

Three men were charged last week under the Terrorism Act (2000) with possession of articles for terrorist purposes. All three were unemployed and aged in their thirties. They were remanded by Bow Street magistrates and will appear in court again tomorrow.

If the prosecutions fail, it is likely they will be held under laws introduced after September 11 allowing indefinite internment of foreigners considered a threat to national security. Three other men were released. No chemicals or bomb equipment were found.

Two days after the arrests, which were deliberately not publicised by Scotland Yard to avoid panic, Blair used a speech at the lord mayor's banquet to appeal for vigilance against suicide bombings or chemical attacks. "Whether here . . . or when travelling abroad, all of us as citizens have to be alert," he said.

MI5 believed the gang was acting on instructions from an Al-Qaeda commander in Europe, say No 10 sources.

The men are believed to belong to the North African Front, a group affiliated to Al-Qaeda.

One theory is that they planned to carry separate containers of a cyanide compound and another chemical into a train compartment where they would be mixed to generate a cloud of hydrogen cyanide. To avoid being overcome by the fumes, a gang member would throw the gas bomb through a connecting window between carriages into a compartment that was downwind.

"This is an alarming development," said one Home Office source. "It means Al-Qaeda members and sympathisers are still active in Britain despite our efforts."

The release of gas could have shut down much of London's public transport system. "It is likely there would have been very serious casualties in a crowded train as people struggled to escape," said one security expert. "For weeks afterwards transport authorities would have closed stations and Tube lines on the slightest warning."

The 1995 poison gas attack on the Tokyo subway by the Aum Shinrikyo cult left 12 dead and is estimated to have cost the Japanese economy tens of millions of pounds in disruption. Cult members released sarin, a nerve agent, in

five carriages in the morning rush hour. Most of those who died were within three feet of the containers used to release the gas.

"If cyanide gas was released in an enclosed Tube carriage it would have a devastating effect on those in the immediate vicinity," said Sally Leivesley, a Home Office expert on the effects of terrorism.

Details of the London plot coincided with a period of intense activity on terrorist networks picked up by British and US listening stations. A Home Office warning issued on November 7, two days before the arrests, of a potential poison gas or dirty bomb attack was later hastily withdrawn.

Whitehall blamed the confusion on clerical error. However, the mix-up and Blair's banquet speech point to what appears to be a growing split in Whitehall over counter-terror tactics.

The Bali bomb and criticism that warnings went unheeded are believed to have stung Jack Straw, the foreign secretary, into insisting on immediate action. Blunkett, who is responsible for MI5, is inclined towards a "longer game".

Blair pointed to the dilemma, saying in his speech: "The purpose of terrorism is not to just kill and maim. It is also to scare people, disrupt their normal lives (and) produce chaos and disorder."

The rounding up of a suspected terror cell is regarded by the Home Office as a coup for MI5, which has intensified its efforts to infiltrate radical Islamic groups. The organisation, boosted by millions of pounds in extra funding, is keeping under surveillance at least 36 Al-Qaeda-linked Islamic extremists in Britain.

The "risk management" strategy of watching them is to allow for intelligence gathering or because of lack of evidence.

Two Algerians were last month sentenced by a French court to life imprisonment for bombs on the Paris Métro in 1995 that killed eight people and wounded 200. The men were members of Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA). One bomb was on a crowded commuter train in the Paris Latin quarter. A third suspect in the bombings is still being held in Britain after unsuccessful extradition attempts. MI5 is understood to be investigating whether the three charged in connection with the Tube plot are linked to the group.

Al-Qaeda has a history of experimenting with cyanide. A haul of books and documents recovered by The Sunday Times last year from an Al-Qaeda house in Kandahar, Afghanistan, included chemistry texts showing how to make hydrogen cyanide gas.

Video tapes recovered from a training camp in Afghanistan showed dogs being poisoned with a white vapour, thought to be cyanide. In February Italian police arrested four Moroccans who had 9lb of potassium ferro-cyanide which they planned to use in a gas attack on the US embassy in Rome.

Germany's international counter-terrorist chief warned last week that an Al-Qaeda leader trained in the use of toxins could be planning an attack in Europe. Abu Musab Zarqawi, a Jordanian, is believed to be an expert in the mixing of poisons and has already carried a toxic substance disguised as an ointment into Turkey.

The British government has drawn up fresh plans to cope with a terrorist attack in London, including mobile mortuaries and disposal of contaminated rubble.

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New York Times
November 17, 2002

Nuclear Study, Given Go-Ahead, Rouses Fears About A New 'Bunker Buster' Weapon

By James Dao

WASHINGTON, Nov. 16 — Buried in the \$393 billion defense authorization bill that Congress approved this week was an obscure item that has raised concerns that the administration is gradually moving toward creating new kinds of nuclear weapons. The item authorizes the National Nuclear Security Administration, which manages the nation's nuclear stockpile, to spend \$15 million to study modifying nuclear weapons so they can be used to destroy underground factories or laboratories.

The United States produced a "bunker buster" weapon in 1997 by repackaging a hydrogen bomb into a hardened case. But Pentagon planners contend that such a weapon would not be effective against the deeply buried and fortified installations that some countries, including Iraq and North Korea, are thought to use for producing and storing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Advocates of the study contend that the administration is not yet proposing to create a new weapon and is simply looking at solutions to an increasingly significant problem.

But critics argue that the study is a first step toward producing weapons that would require a resumption of nuclear testing, which the United States suspended in 1992.

The Energy Department is also considering building a new installation for making the plutonium pits that are at the heart of nuclear bombs. The plant would cost \$2.2 billion to \$4.1 billion, the department estimates. It intends to issue a decision on construction in April 2004.

"At a time when we are trying to discourage other countries — such as North Korea — from developing nuclear weapons, it looks hypocritical for us to be preparing to introduce a whole new generation of nuclear weapons into the arsenal," said Representative Edward J. Markey, Democrat of Massachusetts.

Democrats had tried to strip the \$15 million item from the bill but instead settled for a compromise that would require the administration to issue a report explaining how the modified bomb would be used and whether conventional weapons could be just as effective.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/17/international/17NUKE.html>

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November 18, 2002

MI5 exposes threat of chemical attack on Tube

BY DANIEL MCGRORY, STEWART TENDLER AND MICHAEL EVANS

MINISTERS rushed to calm public anxiety yesterday after MI5 discovered that Islamic militants had discussed a plan to detonate a chemical bomb on the London Underground.

Three men of North African origin arrested in secret nine days ago will appear in court today charged with alleged terrorist offences. The men, in their 30s, were seized in raids in North London after MI5 infiltrated a suspected terrorist network examining many targets, including the Tube.

One senior security source told *The Times* they believed that a terrorist attack had been "nipped in the bud". Last night police sources suggested other arrests could follow. An international hunt is under way for an al-Qaeda commander directing operations from a safe house in a major European city. Security service and police commanders are trying to disrupt terrorist networks before they can gather enough cash and supplies to attack. As Tube union leaders and opposition politicians demanded more details, ministers toured television studios to dampen the fears. "There is no evidence whatsoever of bombs or gases," John Prescott said firmly, in an interview with BBC One's *Breakfast with Frost*. "It has been elaborated on by the press." Jack Straw told *Sky News*: "So far as I know, it's fully safe to use the Underground."

Oliver Letwin, the Shadow Home Secretary, said that it had been strange that it took so long for the arrests to become public. "I shall be asking for a full statement from ministers in Parliament," he said.

There is understood to have been a surge of "chatter" on terrorist networks overheard by GCHQ, which monitors mobile phones, and MI5, which conducts telephone surveillance. The terror networks came to life just before the attacks of September 11, 2001, and also in the weeks leading to the Bali massacre.

MI5 met ministers last week to brief them on arrests of six suspects. Three were later released. Tony Blair then summoned a meeting of Cobra, the emergency Whitehall committee, to decide what to tell the public. Security sources emphasise that if there had been specific intelligence about an imminent poison-gas attack on the Underground, a "public warning would have been immediately issued". Intelligence sources say that intercepted messages are "more about aspirations than specific plans".

The Cabinet is divided over the proper response. Mr Prescott and David Blunkett, the Home Secretary, are keen to issue frank warnings about latest assessments. Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, is stressing the importance of keeping specific intelligence secret.

Three men will appear before Bow Street magistrates in London today, charged under Section 57 of the Terrorism Act 2000 for possession of articles for the preparation, instigation and commission of terrorist acts. Rabah Chekat-Bais, 31, of Muswell Hill, and Karim Kadouri, 33, and Rabah Kadris, in his mid 30s, both of no fixed abode, are understood strongly to deny involvement in any such plot.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,4281-484541.00.html>

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Rumsfeld Warns Iraqi Troops to 'Stay in Barracks'

Reuters

Sunday, November 17, 2002; 7:06 PM

By Charles Aldinger

SANTIAGO (Reuters) - Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Sunday warned Iraqi troops "to stay in their barracks" and away from the triggers on chemical and biological weapons if American and allied forces invade that country.

He also charged that continued attempts on Sunday by Iraq to shoot down U.S. and British jets policing "no-fly" zones in Iraq were a violation of the new U.N. resolution ordering Baghdad to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction programs.

"It is certainly correct that people who stay in their barracks, that people who do not engage in the use of weapons of mass destruction or attack coalition forces will not have problems," Rumsfeld said as he arrived in Chile's capital. In an interview with reporters flying with him from Washington to a meeting of Latin American defense ministers, he said any Iraqi use of chemical or biological arms against invaders or other countries in a war would be dealt with harshly.

"Let there be no doubt. Anyone who is involved in the use of weapons of mass destruction will be particularly held accountable in the event it becomes necessary," Rumsfeld said.

U.S., BRITISH JETS BOMB IRAQ

He spoke as U.N. weapons inspectors prepared to enter Iraq next week to search for what Washington says are widespread programs by President Saddam Hussein to develop nuclear, chemical and biological arms. Iraq rejects that charge.

U.S. and British warplanes on Sunday attacked air defense targets in a northern "no-fly" zone of Iraq in response to what the U.S. military said were attempts to shoot down the aircraft. Rumsfeld said those continuing attempts violated the U.N. resolution, but he stopped short of suggesting the United States would carry the issue to the Security Council.

"The resolution addresses the subject and it's up to the Security Council and member states to make the conclusion on what is, or is not, in material breach. My impression is that they will look for a pattern of behavior," he added, Iraq has a military of more than 350,000 troops, although it was greatly weakened in the 1991 Gulf War. Rumsfeld said many of those soldiers along with many Iraqis were "hostages" to what he called Saddam's family and a small clique of supporters running the country.

Rumsfeld suggested, as have private defense analysts, that a core of highly-trained Republican Guardsmen surrounding Saddam could prove to be a key problem if the weapons inspectors are not given unfettered access to all sites in Iraq, possibly triggering an invasion.

SOME 'VERY ELITE' IRAQI TROOPS

"There are very elite elements that are very close to a personal guard for the (Saddam) family and the clique who are not hostages, who are benefiting from the regime and who are enabling Saddam Hussein and his family to rule that country," he said.

On another issue, Rumsfeld said in response to questions aboard his aircraft that he knew of no intention by the United States to resume nuclear testing, which it halted in 1992.

But he said the Defense Department was looking at a range of means -- including perhaps small nuclear bombs called "earth penetrators" -- to destroy or incinerate arms and facilities that have been deeply buried by terrorist networks and countries developing weapons of mass destruction.

"They have tunneled and tunneled and tunneled," he said. "How do you deal with it?"

"The Defense Department is charged with how do we defend our country. So these people ... do exactly what they are supposed to do. They screw their head into these problems and say, 'gee, there are three or four ways we can do that'. And one of them may be something that would be a deeply penetrating capability," Rumsfeld added.

But he stressed :

"If you are asking me if I am considering going to the President and recommending that we re-initiate testing, the answer is no, I'm not. Could I some day? Yes, I could."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A2755-2002Nov17.html>

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Sun Nov 17, 7:47 PM ET

Iraq can make chemical weapons that penetrate U.S. protective gear

By MATT KELLEY, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON - Iraqi scientists know how to make chemical weapons that can penetrate military protective clothing, and Iraq imported up to 25 metric tons last month of a powder that is a crucial ingredient to such "dusty" weapons.

Iraq told the United Nations ([news - web sites](#)) the powder was destined for a pharmaceutical company that a former weapons inspector says was ordered by President Saddam Hussein ([news - web sites](#)) before the 1991 Gulf War ([news - web sites](#)) to work on chemical and biological weapons.

The powder, sold under the brand name Aerosil, has particles so small that, when coated with deadly poisons, they can pass through the tiniest gaps in protective suits.

Experts inside and outside the U.S. government say they are not certain Iraq has dusty chemical weapons.

Declassified U.S. intelligence documents say Iraq produced a dusty form of the blister agent mustard in the 1980s and used it during its eight-year war with Iran.

If Iraq made and used a powdered form of its deadliest nerve agent, VX, it could kill U.S. troops dressed in full protective gear, according to a 1990 Defense Intelligence Agency assessment. Although the military's protective suits have been improved since then, experts say dusty weapons could penetrate the new suits.

Pentagon ([news - web sites](#)) officials refused to discuss the permeability of the new suits or whether Iraq has weapons that could pass through them. Such information is classified, they said.

The 1990 DIA document said soldiers could protect themselves by throwing rain ponchos over their chemical suits, which would reduce the fatality risk to near zero. One expert wrote later: "One gets the sense that this was recommended in the face of few other options."

The researcher, Eric Croddy of the private Center for Nonproliferation Studies, said dusty VX would be a serious danger to U.S. troops. VX is so toxic that, in its liquid form, a drop on the skin can kill within minutes.

"The effects of dusty VX, depending on how it gets in the body, would be somewhat faster," Croddy said. "It's certainly much more injurious and much more of a severe threat."

Dusty chemical weapons are formed by mixing a liquid chemical agent with a fine powder to coat the powder's tiny particles with the deadly poison. The particles' small size allows them to pass through the fabric of a protective suit and any tiny gaps around the seal of a gas mask.

The latest U.S. military protective suits have a layer of charcoal in the fabric to trap any poisons that might penetrate the outer covering, but particles small enough could pass through even the charcoal layer.

"The closest analogy is, no matter what happens when you go to the beach, you still get sand in your shorts," Croddy said.

The poisonous powder also would settle in the tiniest nooks and crannies of buildings and equipment, making decontamination extremely difficult. VX in its liquid form already is a decontamination challenge; the sticky poison is persistent and cannot be neutralized easily with substances such as bleach.

Even if dusty chemical weapons caused no U.S. casualties, they could force American soldiers to work in clumsy protective gear, decontaminate their equipment and avoid contaminated areas, giving Iraqi soldiers time to mount defenses.

U.S. intelligence reports before the Gulf War said Iraq was capable of making dusty VX. They said that during the 1980s, Iraq imported more than 100 metric tons of Aerosil, a brand of fumed silicon dioxide.

The reports said no evidence was found that Iraq had made dusty VX, and U.N. inspectors were unable to find any hard evidence of that.

In September, The New York Times quoted an Iraqi defector as saying Saddam's chemical weapons scientists secretly began producing dusty VX as early as 1994.

Aerosil, made by the German chemical company Degussa AG, has an exceptionally small particle size: 12 nanometers. That means more than 2,100 of the particles strung together would be as thick as a human hair.

U.N. documents show that Iraq's Samarra Drugs Industry sought 25 metric tons of Aerosil last year under the U.N.-run oil-for-food program, and at least some of that order was delivered last month.

American intelligence agencies were not overly worried about the shipment of Aerosil because the substance has many legitimate uses.

Richard Spertzel, a former chief U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq, was stunned when a reporter told him about the shipment. Saddam ordered the Samarra enterprise to work on chemical and biological weapons in 1989, and his government still controls the company, Spertzel said.

"Do you know how much (dusty agent) a kilogram of that stuff makes? A couple cubic feet," Spertzel said. "This gives me another thing to worry about."

Hasmik Egian, a spokeswoman for the U.N. oil-for-food program, confirmed that Iraq received a shipment of colloidal silicon dioxide in October. Egian would not identify the brand name, source or amount of the silicon dioxide delivered.

The sale was held up for three weeks by the U.N. commission that oversees the oil-for-food program, Egian said.

That commission, whose members include the United States, decided colloidal silicon dioxide was not a banned substance and allowed the transaction, Egian said.

A newly created U.N. body overseeing the oil-for-food program is considering Iraq's request to import more colloidal silicon dioxide, Egan said.

http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20021118/ap_wo_en_po/us_iraq_vulnerable_troops_1

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New York Times
November 18, 2002

North Korean Radio Asserts Country Has Nuclear Arms

By Howard W. French

TOKYO, Nov. 17 — North Korean state radio announced today that the country has nuclear weapons, which it said were developed to defend against attack by American imperialists.

The broadcast appeared to be the first time that North Korea has publicly acknowledged having nuclear arms. It reflected sharply rising tensions with the United States and its East Asian allies over the cutoff of fuel supplies to the North.

On Thursday, the United States, Japan, South Korea and the European Union agreed to suspend the fuel oil shipments to North Korea, starting in December, in response to the country's violation of a 1994 nuclear weapons agreement.

Under the accord, known as the "Agreed Framework," North Korea deactivated a plutonium-based nuclear power operation and placed its fuel under international supervision in order to ensure that the plutonium was not being used to build bombs. In exchange, the United States, South Korea, Japan and other allies agreed to build North Korea two light-water nuclear reactors, which are less prone to be used for weapons development. In the meantime, the United States made a commitment to provide the country with 500,000 tons of heavy oil a year.

The agreement has faced cancellation since early October, when a senior State Department official, James A. Kelly, visited Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, and confronted North Korean officials with intelligence evidence that the North was secretly building a uranium-based nuclear weapons program. The next day, North Korea reportedly confirmed Mr. Kelly's assertions.

American intelligence estimates have long held that North Korea probably has two nuclear devices. Recent Chinese estimates have reportedly put that figure as high as five.

North Korea, which faces repeated famines and severe economic shortages, relies on the fuel shipments for 2 percent to 15 percent of its energy needs, according to Western estimates. The public assertion that the North possesses nuclear weapons was the first substantive response to the fuel cutoff.

The North Korean broadcast was monitored by the South Korean news agency, Yonhap, which said the language — which appeared to go further than the North's previous claims to "be entitled to have nuclear weapons" — might have been deliberately misleading or might even have been a rare mistake by the North Korean state broadcaster.

The broadcast was similar in tone, however, to a newspaper commentary today.

"The United States is spreading a whopping lie that the D.P.R.K. violates the nuclear nonproliferation treaty and the D.P.R.K.-U.S. agreed framework," said an article in the Rodong Sinmun, carried by the state-run Korean Central News Agency. D.P.R.K. are the initials for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"The lie is aimed to tarnish the international prestige and authority of the D.P.R.K. and to isolate the D.P.R.K. on a worldwide scale," the newspaper said. "And it is a cunning plot to cover up the criminal nature of the U.S. posing nuclear threats to the D.P.R.K. and divert the public attention at home and abroad elsewhere."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/18/international/asia/18NUKE.html>

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International Herald Tribune
November 18, 2002

Bioweapons Already Hidden Abroad

Saddam's nightmare scenario

By Andy Oppenheimer

LONDON--Now that Saddam Hussein has agreed to allow United Nations inspectors back into Iraq, the immediate threat of war has receded. But his claim that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction makes a major confrontation within weeks likely. While Iraq does not yet have nuclear weapons, it almost certainly has large numbers of chemical and biological weapons.

If the inspections run into trouble, and the United States invades Iraq, what is the likelihood that Saddam will unleash them if he feels he is in mortal danger and has nothing to lose? And will this include passing chemical and biological weapons to terrorist groups? According to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and some other security experts, Iraq might threaten or even carry out a chemical or biological weapons attack in response to a U.S. military strike. The first target could be U.S. forces involved in the invasion.

In the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam authorized commanders of his missile forces to launch chemical and biological weapons at Israel if U.S.-led coalition forces marched on Baghdad. But the U.S. aim then was to free Kuwait, not change the regime in Iraq.

This time around, the United States has warned that the regime in Baghdad must go if it will not disarm. In response, Saddam has positioned his most lethal weapons at sites that are most difficult for UN weapons inspectors to find and least susceptible to American interdiction.

The nightmare scenario is that Iraq has already hidden chemical and biological weapons in vacant warehouses outside Iraq, perhaps even on U.S. or allied territory.

The scenario runs like this: Iraqi agents are deployed with their own dispersal mechanisms to release lethal substances into municipal water supplies or in aerosol form from smokestacks. To prove the threat is real, Iraq replies to a U.S. ultimatum by disclosing the location of only one of the sites where the weapons have been placed. There is no direct evidence that Iraq has weaponized smallpox. But Iraqi specialists are known to have been working with the camelpox virus, which can be used to develop the smallpox virus as a weapon. While successfully dispersing smallpox with ballistic missiles may be beyond Iraq's technical capabilities, Saddam could send operatives abroad to spread the virus via spraying systems in vehicles or small boats, or even by hand into crowded urban settings such as markets, stations or sports grounds.

Much as Israel's nuclear force is often described as a weapon of last resort, so might Iraq's chemical and biological weapons be viewed by Saddam as a terrifying threat, to be unleashed if his regime is imperiled. Even if the weapons were not used militarily because of Iraq's limited delivery capabilities, or U.S. strikes against its missile and aircraft systems, it can be assumed that some biological weapon stocks, including anthrax, will remain in the hands of the regime. Such weapons might then be passed to terrorists.

Some terrorist groups, notably Al Qaeda, have shown an interest in acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Hamas has worked with poisons and chemicals in an effort to make its suicide bomber attacks on Israel even more lethal. In Japan, the Aum Shinrikyo cult that released deadly sarin gas on the Tokyo subway in 1995 spent an estimated \$30 million on its chemical weapons program. Yet because cult agents were unable to disperse the gas successfully, they killed fewer people than the terrorists who used a speedboat packed with conventional explosives to attack the U.S. destroyer Cole off Yemen harbor in October 2000.

Saddam is unlikely to share his weapons of mass destruction with terrorists while he feels secure in power. But a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq might well increase the chances of terrorists acquiring both chemical and biological weapons from Saddam.

He could decide that helping Islamist terrorists to attack the United States, by using such weapons, would be his last opportunity for vengeance.

The writer, a specialist on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons for Jane's Information Group, contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/77242.html>

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London Sunday Telegraph
November 17, 2002

Saddam 'Hiding The Weapons In Mosques'

By Philip Sherwell and David Wastell

Saddam Hussein is hiding chemical and biological weapons supplies in mosques and hospitals in an effort to thwart the new United Nations inspection mission to Baghdad, Iraqi dissidents have revealed.

America says the Iraqi leader has also set up highly-trained "clean-up" squads at his most sensitive secret weapons sites to hide evidence and "sanitise" key facilities even as inspectors are on their way.

Saddam was completing his concealment strategy as French and Russian diplomats wrangled with their American and British counterparts at the UN in New York over the Security Council resolution backing the return of the weapons inspectors.

American intelligence has intensified its information-gathering campaign about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programme as Washington prepares to provide the inspectors with the data to counter Baghdad's concealment efforts.

In a significant breakthrough, the claims of Adnan al-Haideri, an Iraqi civil engineer who defected to America last year and revealed how Saddam was building underground vaults to hide chemical and biological weapons laboratories, have been backed up by US spy plane missions.

The aircraft are fitted with a device that detects underground voids - such as bunkers and tunnels - through variations in the earth's gravitational field. The device found a void where Mr al-Haideri said there was a subterranean nerve-agent laboratory.

Several scientists responsible for Iraq's WMD programme have been shifted out of the country on false passports already to prevent the inspectors questioning them, leading exiles have told The Telegraph.

In the past fortnight two scientists have been sent to Yemen, two elsewhere in the Middle East and one each to Romania, Malaysia and Singapore, according to the Iraqi National Accord (INA), an opposition group with good contacts within the regime.

Dr Ayad Alawi, the INA's leader, also disclosed that the regime was moving documents and materials from weapons laboratories and a ballistic-missile site into hospitals, schools and mosques in the northern cities of Mosul and Kirkuk.

The concealment operation is being co-ordinated by Brig Gen Walid al-Nasri, a trusted aide from Saddam's home region of Tikrit who reports directly to Qusay Hussein, the dictator's second son and head of his powerful State Security Organisation.

An official of the US Defence Intelligence Agency said: "They have trained large numbers of personnel in how to deal with an intrusive inspection regime."

These "clean-up" squads have developed methods for rapidly cleaning and sterilising equipment such as fermenters and centrifuges used to manufacture and store chemical and biological agents.

Iraq has also tried to "bury" small-scale weapons-making activity in larger-scale industrial sites.

British and American intelligence have developed a plan for the weapons inspectors that meets a timetable for attack early next year. They want them to look at about 1,000 sites. About 100 are considered certain to contain evidence of illegal activity.

In his first public comments since the UN resolution was passed, Saddam said yesterday that he had accepted the harsh terms to avert a US attack. After again insisting that Iraq was "devoid of weapons of mass destruction", he used typically vituperative language to denounce Israel, America and the "devils" that followed them.

The first test will come on December 8, the deadline set by UN Resolution 1441 for him to declare Iraq's stocks of biological and chemical agents, its nuclear-bomb programme and remaining ballistic missiles.

"If the Iraqis stick with a declaration of 'nil', then it's war," said Dr John Chipman, director of the International Institute of Strategic Studies, the London-based think-tank that produced a damning recent dossier on Iraq's weapons programme.

He said that Baghdad would most probably come up with a "middling" declaration.

America, backed by Britain, would argue at the Security Council that an incomplete December 8 declaration would put Baghdad in "material breach" of Resolution of 1441. France and Russia would in turn be expected to contend that the inspectors be given the chance to prove that Saddam was lying.

Despite the growing American military build-up, Pentagon planners would still prefer to launch a closely co-ordinated air and ground offensive after late December, when more than 200,000 US troops would be in the region.

The plan is that US intelligence will provide the UN inspectors with the "killer" data once America is ready for the military finale. The inspectors would then make unannounced spot checks while the US kept the sites under surveillance relayed live by unmanned spy drones.

Washington believes the Iraqis will be seen either trying to conceal weapons material or will be caught out. The UN Security Council will be allowed a short time to debate, but the Pentagon will already have launched the final, brief countdown to war.

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North Korea Gets Low-Key Brushoff Of Treaty

By Nicholas Kralev, The Washington Times

North Korea is about to lose all its benefits under a 1994 nuclear agreement with the United States, including two light-water reactors currently being built in the North. But a senior U.S. official says Washington is in no hurry to resolve its dispute with Pyongyang because it might interfere with the Iraq conflict.

The Bush administration will also refrain from "doing anything dramatic" before a new South Korean president assumes office in January, hoping that the winner of next month's election will be more supportive of the tough U.S. stance and will scrap the "sunshine policy" of outgoing President Kim Dae-jung, the official said.

"What we've been doing is trying to avoid [letting] the North Korea situation interfere with Iraq. Not that North Korea is a lower priority or that we are less concerned about it, but you can only handle so many international crises at the same time," the official said in an extensive interview on the administration's policy toward Pyongyang.

"We've had a number of different considerations we've been wrestling with, but the ultimate conclusion that the North's benefits under the Agreed Framework are about to disappear is not in dispute anymore," he said late last week.

Washington claims North Korea has in effect invalidated the nuclear accord by developing a covert uranium-enrichment program, which Pyongyang acknowledged during a visit in early October by James Kelly, assistant secretary of state for Asian and Pacific affairs. The administration has demanded complete and verifiable dismantling of the program before any dialogue can take place.

But, fundamentally, the U.S. policy based on negotiations and agreements is being replaced by one of containment and isolation, the senior official said.

"It's not all wrapped up, because we do have to deal with allies and the international community, and we've got Iraq there. We are not in a hurry to get this to a resolution quickly, but there shouldn't be any misunderstanding as to what our direction is," he said.

More specifically, he noted that after last week's decision to stop the delivery of heavy fuel oil to the North in December, the next step will be to abandon the light-water reactor project in Kumho, on North Korea's northeastern coast.

Although the reactors are funded mainly by Japan and South Korea, "everybody knows that if we are not committed to this thing, it's not going to happen," the official said. More importantly, he added, "the Japanese Diet is not going to appropriate another yen for those things given the current circumstances," and once Mr. Kim leaves office in Seoul, "support for this house of cards will collapse."

"There won't be any light-water reactors," he said. "When the chicken stops twitching I don't know, but its head has been cut off."

The fate of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), which was founded by the United States, Japan, South Korea and the European Union to implement the Agreed Framework, has yet to be decided, the official said, but "if KEDO doesn't have any funding, it's hard to see how it will continue."

The intelligence indicating that the North had a secret nuclear weapons program "came in a relatively short period of time" in midsummer, he said, but it was no reason to cancel the participation of Jack Pritchard, the States Department's special envoy for North Korea, in a subsequent concrete-pouring ceremony at the reactors' Kumho site.

What was significant about the intelligence, the official noted, was that the North "had moved from research and development in uranium enrichment to a production-size operation," which was a "major shift."

Confronted on the program by Mr. Kelly, the North Koreans said: "We are entitled to it, and you are in breach of the Agreed Framework [because you are behind schedule with the reactors]. We have even more powerful weapons, and why don't we have a summit in Pyongyang and see what we do next," the U.S. official said.

"We were absolutely amazed [by the transcript], and we speculated what it meant," the official recalled. "The generally accepted view is that the North Koreans were going to try again what they did in 1993 and 1994 — put it on the table for bargaining purposes and see what they can get out of it, which was a big miscalculation on their part."

Critics of the Bush administration's "limited" approach say it should not rule out talks entirely before the uranium program is eliminated and spell out what "completely and verifiably" means.

"We have to be specific," said a former senior U.S. official who has negotiated with the North Koreans. "They have to know what is expected of them. Someone else could deliver the message now, but at some point down the road, we have to talk."

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, said the "most effective way to halt Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program is tough but pragmatic engagement rather than confrontation and isolation."

"Instead of cutting off contact with North Korea and precipitously terminating the Agreed Framework, the Bush team, in coordination with Congress, should link future energy assistance to North Korea to visible evidence that its uranium-enrichment activities have ended," he said.

Both the former official and Mr. Kimball said the prospect of Pyongyang reopening its plutonium program, frozen in 1994, posed a much greater danger than the uranium program, which appears to be in its early stages.

But the senior official said such a move would put the North "in such variance with everybody else in the world that I think we would have nearly total support for a policy of isolation."

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New York Times
November 18, 2002

Three Are Accused Of Plan To Attack London Subways

By Warren Hoge

LONDON, Nov. 17 — Three men face terrorism charges in a London court on Monday in connection with a reported plan for a rush-hour attack on commuters in the city's subway system.

The government played down accounts in Sunday newspapers that there was a plot that involved releasing cyanide gas on crowded trains, but The Press Association, Britain's domestic news agency, citing police sources, confirmed that the London Underground mass transit network was thought to be the suspects' intended target.

The arrests come at a time when Britons are being warned to be increasingly vigilant because of intelligence indicating that Al Qaeda is focusing on a strike on their country. Britain was one of the American allies threatened by name in a tape recording thought to be made by Osama bin Laden that was broadcast last week by Al Jazeera, the Arabic satellite television network.

The men arrested, unemployed North Africans of no fixed addresses, were being held under a section of Britain's two-year-old antiterrorism law, which covers possessing articles for the preparation, instigation and commission of terrorist acts. The police identified them as Rabah Chekat-Bais, 21; Rabah Kadris, in his mid-30's, and Karim Kadouri, 33.

The Sunday Times of London reported that the three had been among six men arrested eight days ago in a raid on several North London addresses by Scotland Yard's antiterrorism branch. Three were released without charge, and three were kept in custody and ordered to appear in the Bow Street Magistrate's Court on Monday.

The Sunday Times reported that no chemical or bomb-making equipment was recovered but speculated that the plan had been to bring the ingredients of a gas bomb into the country. "So that suggests that the equipment or the materials may still be out there," Nicholas Rufford, the paper's assistant editor, said today.

John Prescott, the deputy prime minister, dismissed that idea today as a product of "the fertile imagination of the press." He told the BBC, "It doesn't appear to be that there is any evidence whatsoever there was going to be a gas attack or indeed use of bombs regarding the three people who have been arrested."

Prime Minister Tony Blair placed Britain on heightened watch last Monday in a speech in which he said that "barely a day goes by without some new piece of intelligence coming via our security services about a threat to U.K. interests." He coupled his call for vigilance with a word of caution that overreacting by shutting down services or drastically altering behavior would fulfill the terrorists' goal of trying to convulse daily life.

The prime minister's open warning sought to reverse the damage done to national confidence by a bungled terrorist alert from the Home Office days before, which said, "Maybe they will try to develop a so-called dirty bomb or some kind of poison gas; maybe they will try to use boats or trains, rather than planes."

The release was withdrawn the same day and replaced with a more general alert, but the government was widely criticized for unnecessarily spreading anxiety.

The Home Office denied today that the original document referred to the plot uncovered by the three arrests. "If the government thought it necessary to give the public specific warnings about any venue — including the underground — we would not hesitate to do so," said a spokesman for the Home Office.

On Friday, the chief government medical official, Liam Donaldson, said Britain was undertaking an education campaign using warning posters, mock-emergency drills and other devices to advise the public on how to respond in the event of a biological or chemical attack.

The London Underground carries 3.3 million passengers a day, and much of the system is watched over by surveillance cameras installed in the years when the Irish Republican Army was conducting a bombing campaign on the British mainland. "Over the past 30 years, we have been exposed, like the rest of London, to the threats of terrorism," a spokeswoman said. She appealed to passengers to be vigilant and to call officials' attention to anything they saw that seemed suspicious.

Bob Crow, general secretary of the train drivers' union, complained about not having been told of the supposed plot but insisted that the system, known to Londoners as the tube, was secure. "London Underground on a day-to-day basis is still a safe operation to use, and we will not be telling our members not to use the tube on a normal day because these attacks could have taken place at a museum or football ground or anything of that nature," he said.

A number of underground stations were closed for two days last week, and one of the system's main lines was shut down entirely, because of a firefighters' strike that drivers contended made the system too unsafe for them to report for work. The firefighters are threatening an eight-day walkout for Friday.

Subways have been the targets of attackers before, with the most famous case being the nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway by the Aum Shinrikyo cult in 1995, which killed 12 people and injured 5,000.

In Paris last month two Algerians, Boualem Bensaid, 34, and Smain Ali Belkacem, 34, were sentenced to life in prison for a series of bombings in the Metro and on regional trains, also in 1995, that killed eight people and wounded more than 200. A third suspect, Rachid Ramda, 33, is in detention in London, awaiting the outcome of legal action blocking his extradition to France.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/18/international/europe/18LOND.html>

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Baltimore Sun
November 16, 2002

Nuclear Materials Disappear In Russia

By Associated Press

MOSCOW - The head of Russia's nuclear regulatory agency says small amounts of weapons- and reactor-grade nuclear materials have disappeared from the country's atomic facilities.

"Instances of the loss of nuclear materials have been recorded, but what the quantity is is another question," Yuri Vishnevsky, head of Gosatomnadzor, said Thursday. "Of those situations that we can talk about in actuality, they involve either grams of weapons-grade or kilograms of the usual uranium used in atomic power plants.

"Most often, these instances are connected with factories preparing fuel," Vishnevsky said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency lists two known thefts of uranium from a Moscow factory. In both cases, the uranium was recovered.

A few grams of Uranium-235, the most common weapons-grade nuclear material, would not be sufficient to make a bomb. But reactor-grade uranium can be enriched to weapons-grade material through a complicated process believed to be mastered by some countries trying to develop weapons.

<http://www.sunspot.net/news/printedition/bal-te.hoot16nov16.story>

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National Journal
November 16, 2002
Pg. 3418

The Hunt For Soviet-Era Nuclear Leftovers

By Bryan Bender

KAHATIJ, Georgia--Although littered with discarded radiation suits, rusting rocket fins, and decaying aerial bombs, this abandoned Soviet military base is being held up as a model for an expanding international effort to locate and

secure radioactive materials that dot the countries of the former Soviet Union. Terrorists could use such materials to build a radiological weapon, often called a dirty bomb.

The government of the Republic of Georgia recently completed a painstaking, 10-month search of its country. Georgia, although relatively small, sits at a strategic Central Asian crossroads, where smuggling in nuclear and radiological materials is a reality rather than a possibility. The government was looking mainly for Strontium 90, Cesium 137, and other highly radioactive materials left behind by the Soviet military more than a decade ago. The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, is hoping to replicate the Georgia operation--which has netted hundreds of radioactive materials--in other countries of the former Soviet Union and elsewhere.

From abandoned military facilities such as this one--where the Soviet Union once stored nuclear weapons--to hospitals, industrial plants, and a variety of other sites engaged in common nuclear activities, the world is flush with radiological materials that national security officials worry could be stolen or purchased illicitly by terrorists seeking a dirty bomb. A dirty bomb does not involve a nuclear explosion and causes few immediate casualties, but it could spread radiation over a large patch of real estate, igniting panic, causing economic dislocation, and contaminating large geographic areas for decades. The cleanup costs alone would be enormous.

U.S. intelligence officials reported earlier this year that Al Qaeda has been seeking the materials to build a dirty bomb--knowledge that has infused new urgency into cleaning up the Soviet Union's radiological mess. It is also spurring the need for a global inventory of the radiological and other non-fissile materials that offer the greatest opportunity to terrorists.

The United States, which provided the seed money for the Georgia operation, is set to play a greater role in these efforts, and it has already set aside \$25 million for similar IAEA-sponsored activities. A new bill proposed last month in the Senate would go even further, providing for the temporary storage of radioactive sources found in other countries, authorizing funding to replace highly radioactive sources used for electricity in the countries of the former Soviet Union, and offering overseas "first responders" training to handle radiological emergencies.

"Each year, many radioactive sources worldwide--such as certain X-ray equipment and portable power generators--are abandoned, or stolen, or leak out of the existing control system," said Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., D-Del., chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and a co-sponsor of the new proposal known as the Nuclear and Radiological Terrorism Threat Reduction Act of 2002. "We must, and we can, raise significant and sensible barriers to protect against terrorists who would use dirty bombs to do us harm."

The sheer number of radioactive sources, combined with well-established smuggling routes in this part of the world, makes the countries of the former Soviet Union relatively easy targets for terrorists seeking the materials to build a dirty bomb.

In December 2001, a group of Georgian hunters stumbled upon a thermal nuclide generator left behind by the Soviets; the generator was similar to six highly radioactive power sources using Strontium 90 that were found during the Georgia search. Before authorities and health officials were alerted, the hunters suffered severe radiation burns, and they have still not fully recovered. Meanwhile, nearly 6.6 pounds of uranium was seized along the Turkish border in 1998. The seizure showed the risk of these radioactive materials being purchased on the black market and smuggled out of Georgia.

"This is a transit country, and we do not want problems for other countries," Zuran Tavartkiladze, Georgia's first deputy minister of environment, said during an interview in the capital of Tbilisi. He said that Georgia's grid-by-grid search, conducted with aircraft and mobile radiation detectors, as well as by IAEA-trained technicians carrying handheld detectors, has uncovered more than 225 sources of radiological material. And officials believe that the other former Soviet republics--which dwarf this small country of 5 million people, about the size of South Carolina--are likely to have many more orphaned radiological materials lying around for the taking.

Knowing where to look, however, has been the most challenging aspect of the project. Until very recently, Russia had been less than cooperative in informing officials of the whereabouts of nuclear generators and other radiological materials left behind. But that changed earlier this year with a Russian pledge to participate actively in the searches. Meanwhile, Washington is preparing to boost the IAEA's efforts. "The threat of radiological terrorism, and even of true nuclear terror attacks, is real," Biden said last month. "We know that most radiological attacks will kill few Americans, but we are just as certain that they will be economic crimes of the greatest consequence. We must do something to head off the nuclear and radiological terrorist threat where it will most likely first appear."

Bryan Bender is a reporter with Global Security Newswire.

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U.N. Inspectors Arrive In Baghdad

Blix Promises His Team Will Work 'Objectively . . . Professionally'

By Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, Nov. 18 -- An advance team of U.N. inspectors arrived here this afternoon to resume the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, a politically sensitive and logistically challenging mission that could determine whether the United States launches a war against President Saddam Hussein's government.

After arriving at Saddam International Airport aboard a civilian version of a C-130 Hercules cargo plane, Hans Blix, the chief U.N. inspector, said comprehensive and credible inspections are "in the interest of Iraq and the interest of the world."

Perhaps mindful of his surroundings and his desire for Iraqi cooperation, Blix struck a more conciliatory tone than he did on leaving U.N. headquarters in New York on Friday, when he warned Iraq that he would not tolerate "cat and mouse" games. In brief comments to journalists gathered at the airport here, he reiterated that his team would be fair to Iraq, adding: "We will report objectively. We will do our job professionally."

U.N. officials said Blix's comments were intended to win the confidence of Iraqi officials. But his strategy to seek cooperation over confrontation has been criticized by some officials in the Bush administration, which wants Blix to swiftly embark on intrusive inspections and impose strict reporting requirements on the Iraqi government to test Hussein's willingness to comply with a new U.N. Security Council resolution. Should Iraq fail to comply, President Bush has said, "the United States will lead a coalition and disarm him."

Before mentioning the danger of war, however, Blix emphasized that compliance would result in the lifting of economically debilitating U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. He also asserted that the cooperation of Hussein's government could help set in motion a political process to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in other Middle Eastern nations.

Although Blix did not specify Israel, it is the only nation in the region known to be equipped with nuclear weapons, a crucial strategic advantage that has long galled Iraq and other Arab countries. In addition, Egypt, Syria, Iran and perhaps Libya, in addition to Iraq, have been cited by U.S. officials as countries in the region that possess or are trying to develop chemical weapons.

Had Iraq complied with a U.N. order to disarm after the Persian Gulf War in 1991, Blix said, "then 10 years of sanctions would have been unnecessary." He added: "Now there is a new opportunity, and we hope that opportunity will be well utilized so that we can get out of the sanctions, and in the long term have a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East."

The inspectors' arrival coincided with increased activity in the northern swath of Iraq designated by the U.S. and British governments as a "no-fly" zone for Iraqi aircraft. The U.S. military said allied warplanes bombed Iraqi defense systems today after being fired on during routine patrols.

A White House spokesman, Scott McClellan, said the Iraqi anti-aircraft fire "appears to be a violation" of the new U.N. resolution. Iraq considers such patrols a violation of its sovereignty and frequently shoots at them. The Foreign Ministry issued a statement today vowing not to cease its "resistance to aggression."

The statement accused the Bush administration of "evil" and of using the new resolution "as a cover to justify their aggressive acts against Iraq."

In the south, U.S. planes bombed three sites after Iraqi air defense units fired on them. The strikes hit an air defense communications facility near Tallil and a radar and communications site near Al Kut.

The U.N. resolution, which was unanimously approved Nov. 8, calls for inspectors to be given access to any person or place in Iraq -- including mosques, military bases and Hussein's palaces -- without having to seek permission or provide advance notice. The resolution also requires Iraq to permit its scientists and their families to be interviewed abroad, and it gives Hussein's government until Dec. 8 to provide a complete account of the status of its chemical, biological and nuclear facilities.

Full-scale inspections are to resume after the Iraqi declaration. Blix has been asked to deliver a report to the Security Council within 60 days.

Although his government has condemned the resolution as a violation of Iraq's sovereignty based on concocted evidence, Hussein accepted it last week amid warnings that it was a last-ditch chance to avert a U.S. attack. The resolution states that Iraq could face "serious consequences" if it fails to cooperate.

Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of Hussein's ruling Revolutionary Command Council, was quoted by the official Iraqi News Agency as saying Iraq had acceded to the U.N. resolution to protect its people from "American arrogance," but that it was prepared to fight "if war is imposed on us."

U.N. inspectors first arrived in Iraq in 1991, shortly after the war. They have been credited with destroying large quantities of its chemical weapons stockpile and monitoring equipment that could be used in the manufacture of nuclear and biological devices. But the inspectors found themselves embroiled in frequent disputes with the government, which restricted their ability to travel and visit certain sites. Finally, in 1998, the inspectors withdrew, declaring that Iraq's defiance prevented them from carrying out their work. The United States and Britain subsequently launched four days of airstrikes against Iraq.

Blix, a 74-year-old Swedish diplomat who used to head the International Atomic Energy Agency, was accompanied by Mohamed El Baradei, the IAEA's current director, and about 25 technical personnel who will set up communications systems, arrange transportation and assemble monitoring equipment for the inspectors.

About 12 arms experts are scheduled to arrive Nov. 25 and formally begin inspections two days later, according to Ewen Buchanan, the inspectors' chief spokesman. They will be joined by another 80 inspectors in the following weeks, he said.

Iraq contends some previous inspectors worked as spies for the United States and other Western nations, which at least one former senior inspector has confirmed. In that light, Blix was peppered with questions from Iraqi and other Arab journalists about whether he would accept intelligence from the United States.

"We will receive intelligence information from all over the world," Blix said. "The more diversified, the better."

The advance team was met at the airport by a delegation led by Gen. Hussam Mohammed Amin, director general of Iraq's national monitoring directorate, which was set up as a counterpart to U.N. inspection teams. This afternoon the team traveled to its former offices in a U.N. compound here, which have been sealed since 1998. Buchanan said the team brought five industrial-strength vacuum cleaners "to clean up four years of dust."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A7626-2002Nov18.html>

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Washington Times

November 19, 2002

Pg. 1

Lugar To Pursue N. Korea Nuke Deal

By David R. Sands, The Washington Times

Some form of the 1994 deal to constrain North Korea's nuclear-missile program must be preserved, despite Pyongyang's admission last month that it has violated the accord, incoming Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard G. Lugar said yesterday.

"I know there are some who think this agreement was bad from beginning to end, but for the moment we need a construct that stops the production of more weapons by North Korea," said Mr. Lugar, the five-term Indiana Republican who will take over the committee when his party assumes control of the Senate in January.

The low-key Mr. Lugar, a confirmed multilateralist in foreign policy who has clashed with hard-liners in his own party, said he did not criticize the Bush administration's decision last week to suspend fuel oil shipments to North Korea under the 1994 Agreed Framework deal. The oil is intended to compensate the North for supposedly abandoning its quest for nuclear weapons and allowing international monitors of its nuclear programs.

"That was a judgment call, and I respect their judgment," said Mr. Lugar.

But he insisted the only long-term solution to the crisis involved "creative diplomatic solutions" that preserve a role for international inspectors in the North and hold out the prospect of better ties if the country mends its ways.

Mr. Lugar's tone differs markedly from some in the Bush administration, but Mr. Lugar plays down predictions that he may be heading for conflict with the Republican president or the more conservative incoming Republican Senate leadership.

"Those looking for fights are misunderstanding the situation," said Mr. Lugar. "I strongly support President Bush and [Secretary of State] Colin Powell and have a good working relationship with them. Our work won't be about finding fault or looking for fights."

But he also said he planned a bipartisan approach to his committee, on which Republicans will hold only a slight majority in the new Congress.

When he briefly served as Foreign Relations Committee chairman in 1985 and 1986, "I worked hard to get 15 or 16 votes" on issues in the 17-senator panel, Mr. Lugar recalled. "I know it's not easy. It takes a lot of patience, a lot of accommodation of other points of view."

An admitted foreign policy wonk and a firm supporter of the United Nations, Mr. Lugar has shown a willingness to take on his own party's president on high-profile issues.

In 1986, he helped override President Reagan's veto of a bill imposing new sanctions on the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Earlier this year, Mr. Lugar annoyed many in the White House by co-sponsoring a resolution authorizing military action against Iraq with then-committee Chairman Joseph R. Biden Jr., Delaware Democrat, that was markedly less expansive than the text submitted by President Bush.

Mr. Lugar criticized the administration for failing to build support domestically and internationally for military action against Iraq. He said in the interview that not enough attention has been paid to the postwar scenarios for Iraq, including relations with other Middle East countries and the shape of a new Iraqi regime once Saddam Hussein is eliminated.

But Mr. Lugar in the end supported a modified Iraqi war resolution, after an early September meeting where Mr. Bush pledged to seek U.N. backing for the U.S. hard line.

Mr. Lugar is best known abroad for the 1991 program he co-sponsored with former Sen. Sam Nunn, Georgia Democrat, to finance the securing and eventual destruction of the old Soviet Union's vast nuclear, chemical and biological weapons stocks.

He said one of the early priorities for his committee will be extending the Nunn-Lugar model to Iraq, in anticipation of the campaign to disarm Saddam's illicit arsenals.

The future of Iraq and Afghanistan will be two early topics for committee hearings, the Indiana senator said yesterday.

"It is vitally important that Afghanistan succeed" in the long term, he said, "and there's a concern out there that we are not committed to this."

As he did in the mid-1980s as chairman, Mr. Lugar said he plans a barrage of hearings early in his tenure on a broad range of foreign policy subjects, including economic and political instability in South America, AIDS and poverty in Africa, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The hearings in part will be designed to educate a slew of new members from both parties on a committee where some of the most distinctive voices will be missing.

Sen. Paul Wellstone, the Minnesota Democratic liberal who was killed in a plane crash last month, and retiring Sen. Jesse Helms, the North Carolina Republican who is one of the Senate's most well-known conservative voices, had been on the panel.

Mr. Helms, who chaired the committee from 1995 to 2001, made himself a foreign policy power by confronting both Democratic and Republican administrations, clashing repeatedly with the State Department and blocking ambassadorial nominations to get his points across.

Mr. Lugar said that won't be his style.

"Presidents ought to be able to nominate the people they want to serve them, and those people should get a hearing and a vote," he said. "When I was chairman, almost everyone who was nominated got a vote, no matter what I personally felt."

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20021119-2449652.htm>

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Albuquerque Journal

November 17, 2002

Pg. 1

Nuclear Testing May Be Needed

Aging Stockpile Worries Official

By John Fleck, Journal Staff Writer

A top Defense Department official questions whether the United States can continue to maintain its nuclear weapons without underground tests, according to an internal memo.

The memo, written Oct. 21 by undersecretary of defense E.C. "Pete" Aldridge Jr., calls for reassessing the risks of continuing to maintain the aging stockpile without testing.

Aldridge's memo does not recommend a resumption of testing but suggests the directors of the nation's nuclear weapons laboratories study whether limited testing would increase confidence in the stockpile. Aldridge also cites the possible need for a new generation of nuclear weapons. "We will need to refurbish several aging weapon systems," he wrote. "We must also be prepared to respond to new nuclear weapon requirements in the future."

Aldridge's memo comes in the midst of a polarized debate among senior policymakers over whether testing, outlawed by U.S. policy for a decade, is needed to maintain the nation's arsenal.

Scientists at the weapons laboratories, Sandia and Los Alamos in New Mexico and Lawrence Livermore in California, have replaced the underground test blasts with computer simulations and experiments. The stockpile stewardship program, with an annual budget of more than \$5 billion, is the bulk of the labs' workload. The government launched stockpile stewardship in 1994. Previously, test blasts conducted deep beneath the Nevada desert were used to determine whether U.S. nuclear weapons worked.

In the years since, the lab directors each year have had to certify the safety and reliability of the weapons in the stockpile based on the labs' stockpile stewardship work.

The arms control community supports a continued test ban, saying it sends an important arms control message to the rest of the world. Critics of the stockpile stewardship policy question whether we can continue to have confidence in aging weapons without testing them.

Aldridge could not be reached for comment Friday, but a senior Pentagon official said the memo should not be interpreted as evidence of Pentagon doubts in the stockpile stewardship program.

"The purpose of the memo was to ask the question, 'What is the risk associated with not testing?'" said Fred Celec, deputy assistant to the secretary of defense for nuclear matters.

A spokesman for the National Nuclear Security Administration, which oversees the labs' nuclear weapons work, would not comment on Aldridge's memo but did defend the stockpile stewardship program.

"We continue to have confidence in the stockpile and in the stockpile stewardship program," said NNSA spokesman Anson Franklin.

Officials at the three labs also would not comment on Aldridge's memo.

John Immele, head of nuclear weapons work at Los Alamos, offered an argument similar to Aldridge's. An evaluation of the stockpile stewardship program's effectiveness is in order, Immele said.

Detailed studies of aging weapons have not uncovered any problems that require a test to solve, Immele said Friday. But after 10 years without testing, Immele said, it is time for a "midterm self-assessment of stockpile stewardship" to see if it is working.

Over the next decade, he noted, Los Alamos will have to refurbish three different types of nuclear weapons to extend the weapons' useful lives far beyond what they were designed for.

"There's a lot going on in terms of recertification and stockpile life extension," Immele said.

In his memo, Aldridge called on the laboratories to look seriously at a limited return to "low-yield testing" to address concerns about aging weapons.

"During the late 1980s and 1990s," he wrote, "considerable effort, including several nuclear tests, were expended to study the possibility of maintaining the nuclear stockpile under very restricted testing conditions. How might such a program increase confidence now?"

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New York Times
November 19, 2002

North Korea Clarifies Statement On A-Bomb

By Howard W. French

TOKYO, Nov. 18 — North Korea today clarified a statement made in a weekend radio broadcast that appeared to claim publicly, for the first time, that the country possesses nuclear weapons.

The unusual move followed a flurry of statements of concern in this region over the radio commentary, which was interpreted by some as saying the country "has come to have nuclear and other strong military weapons to deal with increased nuclear threats by the U.S. imperialists."

But in a commentary broadcast on Monday by the official Korean Central Broadcasting Station, instead of saying it had come to have such weapons, the government said more clearly that it was "entitled" to have nuclear arms because of what it said were continuing threats from the United States.

"To safeguard our sovereignty and right to exist, we are entitled to have powerful military countermeasures, including nuclear weapons," the passage read in its entirety.

The difference in the language between the Sunday and Monday messages hung on as little as a single syllable in the Korean language — a nuance attributable by some to regional differences in pronunciation — which led to drastically different interpretations of the initial commentary. The first reports by foreign news organizations of Sunday's commentary came from the South Korean news agency Yonhap, which suggested that North Korea had made an affirmative statement that it possessed nuclear weapons.

Japanese and British broadcasting monitoring services, though, interpreted the Sunday commentary along much the same lines as today's clarification. With the differing interpretations of the broadcasts, experts emphasized that it was impossible to understand with any certainty the North Korean government's intentions.

"It was either a broadcaster's mistake in North Korea, a mistake in transcription or translation, or a distortion by Yonhap, which is pretty well known for propagating rumors, especially by hard-line elements in South Korea," said Peter Hayes, director of the Nautilus Institute, a California-based nonprofit research organization for international security and conflict resolution.

He noted that "in the same breath, the announcer was saying they want to continue to negotiate nuclear agreements." A possible interpretation that was widely discussed in the region is that North Korea was engaging in a bit of deliberate ambiguity to warn its neighbors Japan and South Korea as well as the United States while maintaining a scrap of deniability.

Since 1994, American intelligence estimates have said North Korea probably possesses enough plutonium to make as many as two nuclear warheads. Recent estimates from China have reportedly placed the number as high as five.

North Korea is also a producer and exporter of rudimentary but operational intermediate-range ballistic missiles, which are based on the shorter-range Scud missiles developed by the Soviet Union.

North Korea shocked Japan in 1998 when it launched an unannounced test flight of a Taepodong missile over Japanese airspace. Today North Korea threatened to resume flight tests of ballistic missiles, saying it might end a three-year-old test moratorium if Japan went ahead with developing a missile defense shield with the United States.

Tensions have risen sharply in East Asia since early October, when visiting American diplomats confronted the North Korea government with intelligence evidence showing that North Korea had a secret nuclear weapons development program in violation of a 1994 arms control agreement.

North Korean officials reportedly acknowledged the program and warned the American diplomats that they possessed a variety of other dangerous weapons.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/19/international/asia/19KORE.html>

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Los Angeles Times

November 19, 2002

Chemical Arms' Effects Linger Long After War

Iranian victims of Iraqi attacks, both soldiers and civilians, are still suffering and dying 14 years after the nations' war ended.

By Robin Wright, Times Staff Writer

KARAJ, Iran --His frail body perched on a pillow, Ali Shakiebeinejad whispered a few words at a time through a green plastic mask connected to an oxygen canister.

"I first noticed the beautiful smell. It was sweet, like garlic or roses," the former shoe repairman recalled. A deep racking cough interrupted him. "But I didn't know what it was."

Then only 19, the Iranian was too preoccupied with the rout of his military unit and his impending capture by the Iraqis. And for the next 27 months he was a prisoner of war.

Five years ago, the growing number of unusual symptoms -- a worsening cough, constant respiratory infections, gum disease that caused his teeth to fall out, pounding headaches and excessive weight loss -- were finally diagnosed. Doctors told Shakiebeinejad that he was a victim of mustard gas, the chemical weapon most used by Iraq during its eight-year war with Iran.

Fourteen years after the war's end, Shakiebeinejad represents the lingering -- and in many cases unanticipated -- impact of Iraq's use of chemical weapons. Fears that Iraq might still have such weapons of mass destruction -- from mustard gas to nerve agents such as Tabun to a nuclear weapons program -- drove the U.N. Security Council on

Nov. 8 to unanimously approve a resolution calling on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's regime to disarm or face "serious consequences."

In a declassified report, the CIA estimated in 1991 that Iran suffered more than 50,000 casualties, including untold thousands of deaths, from Iraq's use of several chemical weapons. But Iran claims the tally has since soared, as both troops and civilians have developed the telltale symptoms up to 15 years later because low-dose exposure deferred physical deterioration or collapse.

"We are beginning to understand that we may only have seen the tip of the iceberg. We may not yet have seen the majority of victims," said Dr. Farhad Hashemnezhad, a young pulmonary specialist who has reluctantly become an expert on chemical weapons.

"Many patients don't know that their complaints -- coughing, tightness in the chest, difficult respiration -- have anything to do with chemical weapons, especially after all these years," the doctor said. "At least 20% of the current patients are civilians who didn't think they were close enough to be exposed."

One of the common causes of civilian casualties was use of water contaminated by chemical weapons, he said.

Doctors became so concerned by the growing number of cases that the government two years ago started putting ads in Iranian papers calling on anyone who had been in specified areas during the war to report to one of the nation's 30 centers for the disabled and get medical checkups. What the ads didn't say, to avoid panic, was that the areas had been hit by Iraqi chemical weapons.

Shakiebeinejad, who at 33 weighs only 107 pounds, is not expected to live more than six months, doctors have told his wife. His closest army buddy during the battle at Al Shalamshah died several weeks ago.

"There are more and more like him. They're like candles, day by day they're melting," said Mohammed Aliani, deputy director of the Center for the Disabled here in Karaj, an industrial city about 25 miles northwest of Tehran. At the Sasan Hospital in Tehran, Mohsen Kompany, a former car mechanic, resembles an emaciated concentration camp survivor: yellow skin tightly covering jutting bones. He too is permanently attached to oxygen. Kompany, 34, remembers the smell of newly mown grass when the Iraqis dropped mustard gas bombs on his army unit. But he remembers little else, as he has the memory of an early Alzheimer's patient. Doctors say he will die any day.

Like most of the current cases, Kompany was targeted in the last two years of the war. Iraq first began developing its chemical-weapons capability in the early 1970s, deliberately enrolling students in foreign schools with the goal of developing "a pool of technically competent scientists," according to a second declassified CIA report.

But Iraq was often clumsy in its early usage of the weapons between 1983 and 1986, U.S. intelligence says. The Iraqi military frequently fired chemical-laden artillery shells or dropped bombs in unsuitable weather, "with wind carrying the agent toward their own troops," the CIA report says. Pilots also released bombs and rockets from altitudes too high to have much impact or too low for their fuses to function.

By late 1986, however, Iraq was boldly using chemical weapons as an "integral part" of its battlefield strategy and a "regular and recurring tactic," the CIA reported. The only constraint was availability -- a problem Iraq worked hard to remedy.

In 1988, the use of several chemical weapons became a decisive factor in the grisly war, eventually forcing Iran to agree to a U.N.-brokered cease-fire. Iran's ill-equipped medical staff couldn't cope with the numbers, and many efforts to help produced "secondary contamination" among both transporters and medical staff, the CIA said.

Esmail Khoshnevisan, who suffers from serious shakes, respiratory failure and gum disease that has taken his teeth, was an ambulance driver during the war near strategic Majnoun Island. Bedridden for a year, he is in the final phase of respiratory disease at Sasan Hospital because of exposure to mustard gas.

Khoshnevisan's son, 13 at the time, was also in Majnoun and now suffers from disabling respiratory disease.

Baghdad used both liquid and dry forms of mustard gas, a weapon first employed during World War I and later by Italy in Ethiopia and by Egypt in Yemen. It evaporates slowly and can remain dangerous for many hours, even days, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. It burns body tissue and acts as a systemic poison deadlier than cyanide, resulting in blindness, severe blistering, skin discoloration and lung damage, as the ailments among patients at Sasan demonstrate.

Midway through the war with Iran, Iraq also introduced the nerve agent Tabun for the first time in any conflict. It can immediately trigger vomiting, twitching, convulsions and paralysis.

Iranians are somewhat bitter that the world is only now beginning to pay attention to their problems caused by Iraq's chemical weapons.

"At the time, nobody spoke of the dangers. And it took a lot of time to convince the United Nations to come and verify our claims. Now it's all people want to talk about. It's a little late, but it's better than nothing," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi.

If Washington opts to confront Hussein's regime militarily, U.S. troops would be both better trained and better protected against chemical or biological agents. According to Iranian and U.S. officials, many Iranian soldiers had

no access to protective masks, while others who did weren't protected because the masks didn't fit over their beards, which were virtually required after Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution.

But in an uncanny foreshadowing of the Bush administration's own dilemma in planning, U.S. intelligence concluded during the Iran-Iraq war that "if Iran were to threaten Iraqi perceived strategic positions, we believe that Iraq might authorize massive chemical employments," according to the second declassified CIA report.

"No political or religious constraints seem to bear seriously on Hussein's decision to employ chemical weapons," the report adds. "International and regional pressure ... demarches and export controls have been ineffective in stopping the development of chemical weapons."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-chemwar19nov19.story>

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SCIENCE Notebook

Monday, November 18, 2002; Page A12

Study Backs Some Vaccination

A computer simulation indicates that it may not be necessary to vaccinate the entire U.S. population to stem an outbreak of smallpox if terrorists attack with the virus.

If people who come in close contact with those infected are vaccinated, that appears to be sufficient to keep the disease in check, according to the new analysis, which was based on a computer model simulating various scenarios for how a smallpox outbreak might spread through a community of 2,000 people.

The Bush administration is debating how widely to make the smallpox vaccine available. States have been instructed to begin making plans to vaccinate the entire population in the advent of an outbreak.

But M. Elizabeth Halloran of Emory University in Atlanta and colleagues found that may be unnecessary, assuming that Americans still had half of the "herd immunity" left over from before routine smallpox vaccination was discontinued in 1972. That could be supplemented by vaccinating police and other "first responders" and offering the vaccine on a voluntary basis, the researchers found.

"Although further research with larger-scale structured models is needed, our results suggest that increasing herd immunity, perhaps with a combination of preemptive voluntary vaccination and vaccination of first responders, could enhance the effectiveness of postattack intervention," the researchers wrote in the Nov. 15 *Science*.

Ancient Bones and Molecules

An international team of scientists for the first time has recovered two ancient biological molecules from a fossilized bone, a feat that they hope could be useful for studying evolution.

Christina Nielsen-Marsh of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in England and colleagues from the University of Oxford, Harvard, and Michigan State University examined two 55,000-year-old fossilized bison bones.

The researchers isolated from the Siberian fossil a type of genetic material known as mitochondrial DNA, as well as a protein in all bones known as osteocalcin.

If such molecules can be recovered and studied from other fossilized bones, they may offer scientists a new way to learn more about how creatures evolve.

Studying physical attributes in bones can be very subjective and open to misinterpretation, the researchers said.

"By extracting biochemical information from fossils, scientists utilize tools that avoid these difficulties and offer more objective comparisons between ancient and modern species," said Nielsen-Marsh.

"Although temporal limits for DNA and protein survival are still unknown, their combined analysis may allow future molecular paleontological investigations to extend farther back in time," the researchers wrote in the December issue of the journal *Geology*.

Unsealing Their Fate

One way that harbor seals apparently can differentiate between the sounds made by whales that would eat them and whales that are friendly is by their voices, according to new research.

Volker B. Deecke of the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Center in Canada and colleagues used underwater microphones to play various sounds to wild harbor seals in British Columbia. When the seals heard the calls of killer whales they fled. But the seals did not flee when they heard the sounds of fish-eating whales that do not pose a danger to them.

The seals also fled, however, when they heard the sounds of unfamiliar fish-eating orcas from Alaska. That suggests the animals had learned which sounds not to fear, and fled from all others.

"By selective habituation -- learning what not to fear -- harbor seals pursue the more conservative, and thus more advantageous, strategy," the researchers wrote in the Nov. 14 *Nature*.

To Jump Farther, Weight

In ancient Greece, athletes competing in the long jump held weights called halteres, which they swung back and forth as they made their jumps. It's been unclear whether the weights helped the athletes jump farther, or whether the idea was to make the feat harder. Research has found the weights helped instead of hindered the long jumpers.

Alberta E. Minetti and Luca P. Ardigo of Manchester Metropolitan University in England used a computer model to test the effect of a jumper holding such weights, and took measurements when four subjects actually made jumps.

The weights increased the power of takeoffs by about 6 percent, the researchers found.

"Halteres may therefore be the earliest passive tool that was devised to enhance human-powered locomotion," they wrote in the Nov. 14 Nature.

Synonymous Blue and Green

Many languages have no specific word for the color blue and do not distinguish between blue and green. Now, researchers think they may know why: High levels of ultraviolet B (UVB) exposure damage the eye in these countries, making many adults unable to perceive blue.

Delwin T. Lindsey and Angela M. Brown of Ohio State University reviewed 203 languages from around the world and levels of ultraviolet B, which rise closer to the equator, according to the November issue of Psychological Science. UVB can speed aging of parts of the eye to make it less able to distinguish blue from green.

In areas with low levels of UVB, languages tended to have a word for blue while areas with high levels tended not to, the researchers found. In addition, an experiment in the laboratory found that subjects tended to have difficulty recognizing blue when looking through a lens that simulated an eye that has been exposed to high levels of UVB.

-- Compiled from reports by Rob Stein

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A61812-2002Nov15.html>

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Container Security: Current Efforts to Detect Nuclear Materials, New Initiatives, and Challenges

by JayEtta Z. Hecker, director,

physical infrastructure, before the Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs, and International Relations, House Committee on Government Reform, in New York. GAO-03-297T, November 18.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-297T>

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