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CONTENTS

[Chemical Warfare Suit a Lifesaver](#)

[Equipment Missing At Iraqi Missile Development Plant](#)

[C.I.A. Hunts Iraq Tie To Soviet Smallpox](#)

[Putin And Chinese Leader Pledge Friendship And Caution North Korea On Nuclear Arms](#)

[U.S. Quietly Prepares To Negotiate With N. Korea](#)

[MDA Gets Wealth Of Data From Scud Tests, Official Says](#)

[Cooperative Threat Reduction Program Annual Report \(GAO Report\)](#)

[New WHO Fund to Probe Disease Outbreaks](#)

[Incinerating chemical weapons is safe, storage is not, new report says](#)

[Defense Dept. Seeks More Patriot Missiles](#)

[Anthrax Scare Seen At NATO, Israeli Embassy](#)

[Inspectors Rebuked By U.S. And Iraq](#)

[U.S. Set To Cite Iraq For Breach](#)

[U.S. Criticizes North Korea For Rejecting Inspections](#)

[Missouri Army base trains for chemical weapons](#)

[Bioterrorism Defense Plan Takes Shape](#)

[Smallpox Vaccine Reactions Jolt Experts](#)

Chemical Warfare Suit a Lifesaver

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Filed at 1:29 a.m. ET

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Imagine the heat of the Iraqi desert, then add the bulkiness of wearing five pairs of cotton sweat pants. For U.S. soldiers, fighting the enemy there while wearing a chemical protection suit may feel as uncomfortable.

U.S. troops wore the protective outfits during the 1991 Persian Gulf War because of concern that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein might arm Scud missiles with dangerous agents from his chemical weapons stash.

Eleven years later the concern remains as President Bush looks toward a possible new war with Iraq.

Known as a "MOPP" suit, for Mission Oriented Protective Posture, the bulky lifesavers consist of pants, a coat, rubber boots and gloves, a face mask and a hood -- all worn over regular combat fatigues. The suit has a layer of charcoal to absorb and neutralize any chemical or biological substances soldiers may be exposed to, and can be used for up to 30 days.

They can be stifling. When the Army demonstrated the suits under the heat of television lights this month, a sergeant wearing one collapsed from the platform into a row of chairs.

Just how effective they are under all circumstances is unclear. Iraq is known to possess powder needed to make "dusty" chemical weapons capable of penetrating the tiniest gaps in suits; whether it has those weapons is not known.

One old remedy for dusty weapons is to wear rain ponchos on top of the suits.

The Pentagon concluded several years ago that the suits were effective but had shortcomings, including weight and bulk that "degraded combat performance and made even simple tasks onerous." Development of new suits is under way.

The armed forces have about 4.5 million sets of protective gear, including 1.5 million of the latest version, known as the Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology, or JSLIST.

They cost about \$200 each, weigh just under six pounds and have a durable, water-repellent finish with an inner layer of carbon to absorb chemical agents, which Saddam is known to have used against Iran and Kurds in Iraq. They're no fun. Body heat buildup inside the garment can lead to heat exhaustion in warm weather. The mask and hood interfere with seeing, hearing and speaking.

Rubber gloves restrict air circulation and limit the sense of touch and the ability to do delicate tasks. Plus, the Pentagon acknowledged, wearing the suit and all its components can cause claustrophobia or similar stress.

They "did provide some warmth when it got cold, which was at night," said David Feller, of Waukesha, Wis., a Gulf War veteran from the Army's 3rd Armored Division. "Then, at day, as the temperature rose, they could become a bit uncomfortable."

Trent Barton of Woodbridge, Va., said it was like wearing five pairs of sweats.

"It's very restrictive and it's extremely hard to move around," said Barton, who served in the 82nd Airborne Division in the Gulf War.

The military is using lessons learned from the Gulf War to develop the next generation of chemical warfare suits. The bulky charcoal layer will be replaced with a "selectively permeable membrane" that is lighter and will block harmful substances, rather than absorb them. More perspiration will also be able to escape.

"It's technology in progress," said Capt. Ben Kuykendall, an Army spokesman.

The new suit, still years from battlefield deployment, is about half the weight of existing versions and is a one-piece unit with a zip front that resembles a baby's footed sleeper. A protective mask completes the ensemble. It can be used for 45 days.

Until then, soldiers are making do with suits that have had a variety of problems. About 800,000 were recalled two years ago because of holes, bad stitching and foreign objects embedded in the fabric.

On the Net:

Information paper on chemical protection suits: <http://www.gulflink.osd.mil/mopp>

Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology: <http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/sys/land/jslist.htm>

U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command:

<http://www.natick.army.mil:80/warrior/01/janfeb/onepiece.htm>

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/national/AP-Warfare-Suit.html>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

New York Times

December 3, 2002

Pg. 1

Equipment Missing At Iraqi Missile Development Plant

By John F. Burns

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Dec. 2 — The new round of United Nations weapons inspections in Iraq appeared to run into its first serious problem today when inspectors said "a number of pieces of equipment" found at a top-secret missile development plant in 1998 had disappeared, despite a requirement under United Nations resolutions that they not be moved.

A terse United Nations statement did not specify the nature of the missing equipment. Inspectors made the discovery during a six-hour visit earlier in the day at a missile plant in the Waziriyah district of northern Baghdad.

Iraqi officials told reporters immediately after the inspection that the team had found nothing amiss.

But hours later, the inspectors' statement brought a sudden turn in what, until today, had been a series of tense but largely uneventful inspections.

The statement, brusquely worded, said the missing items had been placed under surveillance by monitoring cameras in 1998 and "tagged" with numbered labels signifying that they were not to be moved.

"In 1998, the site contained a number of pieces of equipment tagged by the United Nations Special Commission," the statement said, referring to the agency that was responsible for the inspections through most of the 1990's. The commission withdrew in the last days of 1998 before intensive American missile and bomb attacks. Now, the statement said, inspectors for the new United Nations monitoring agency found that none of the tagged items remained.

"It was claimed that some of these had been destroyed by the bombing of the site; some had been transferred to other sites," the statement said.

The Waziriyah plant, run by a state-owned company called Al Karama, was described in the statement as "one of Iraq's principal missile development sites."

Other missile experts have said that one of its main tasks has been perfecting electronic guidance systems for a short-range, liquid propellant ballistic missile known as the Samoud, one of several missiles thought to have been developed to carry biological, chemical or even nuclear warheads, as well as conventional explosives.

The compound of about a dozen hangarlike concrete buildings with 20-foot-high steel doors was rebuilt after it was largely destroyed in a United States cruise missile attack in December 1998. President Clinton ordered a four-day bombing assault, joined by British planes, after United Nations officials heading inspection teams that had endured years of harassment and intransigence by Iraqi officials ran out of patience with attempts to block their access to nuclear weapons sites and withdrew the inspectors. There were no further inspections until last week.

With Iraqi officials remaining silent on the issue tonight after the statement was issued, it was not clear whether the problem could be quickly resolved by the Iraqis' finding the missing equipment, or whether the day's events were the preliminary to a more threatening showdown. Bush administration officials have said the United States might act on its warnings of military action against Iraq if it commits even a single serious breach of its obligations under the tough new weapons-inspection mandate passed by the Security Council last month.

Iraqi military officers who run the plant were in a feisty mood when reporters were admitted to the plant at midafternoon. They made a showpiece of a mound of tangled concrete and steel from the American missile attack, bulldozed into an area the size of two football fields. "See that we have rebuilt everything that the evildoers destroyed," said Brig. Gen. Muhammad Saleh Muhammad, the plant's director.

But on the issue of the weapons inspections, the 40-year-old Iraqi officer was circumspect. "It's not a normal thing, psychologically, to impose this indignity," he said. "But we will cooperate with the inspectors because they come here under a resolution of the United Nations. We want to prove to the world the falsehood of all the claims of Bush and Blair, that we have weapons of mass destruction." Of the day's inspection, he said, "They searched everything, our machinery, our computers, our documents, and they found nothing."

According to Central Intelligence Agency documents, the Samoud missile system that is the plant's main work — the Arabic term translates roughly as defiance — is not in itself a banned weapon under United Nations resolutions, since it has a declared range of less than 150 kilometers, or 94 miles. It is a scaled-down version of the Soviet-built Scud, which Iraq used extensively in its war with Iran. Some versions of the Samoud are said to have a range of as much as 590 miles.

But the main concern about the missile is its intensive development, including repeated flight tests since the Waziriyah plant was rebuilt in 1999. Experts see this development as aimed at technological improvements applicable to multistage missiles with a range of as much as 1,875 miles that Iraq is known to have at an early stage of design. C.I.A. experts have concluded that the Samoud still has major problems, including a shaky guidance system.

The developments at the missile plant today, contrasted with the outcome on Thursday, the second day of the inspections, after United Nations experts found a device known as a fermenter missing while they were examining an animal vaccine laboratory south of Baghdad that had been used to develop deadly biological toxins for military

use in the 1990's. On that occasion, the Iraqis led them immediately to a veterinary complex north of Baghdad where the missing fermenter was found.

That sequence was broadly typical of the inspections until today.

By concentrating their early inspections on sites discovered by United Nations teams in the 1990's, the new inspection teams in effect gave the Iraqis a chance to adjust to the stringent terms of the new mandate without, as inspection officials thought, much risk that the Iraqis would be caught openly subverting longstanding weapons restrictions. Senior inspection officials said last week that they expected that problems, if any, would emerge only when the inspections moved on to new sites that the Iraqis may think are unknown to the inspectors.

Those inspections are likely to move into high gear only after next Sunday, the deadline for Iraq to declare all of its banned programs. But today, while the missile inspection team was at Waziriyah, a team of nuclear inspectors broke the pattern and went to two plants that have never been searched before. The plants they chose, distilleries producing a local spirit named arak and 75-cents-a-bottle gin, were about as far as imaginable from the normal run of installations on nuclear inspectors' checklists.

The United Nations statement on the inspections at the distilleries said only that the two plants, and a third nearby that underwent a previous United Nations weapons inspection in 1998, "proved to be dedicated to the production of alcohol." This seemed to vindicate bemused officials at the plants.

"They surprised us with their visit today," said Albert Moussa Younan, director of the Al-Baraj plant at Khan Bani Saad, about 20 miles northwest of Baghdad. "They didn't find anything because our company produces only alcoholic drinks."

The inspectors arrived in vehicles carrying placards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, responsible solely for searching for banned nuclear programs.

Nuclear experts reached by telephone in the United States and Britain said they knew of no connection between brewing alcohol and the processes required to build nuclear weapons. That seemed to leave two possibilities. One was that the team included biological weapons specialists and that labeling them as nuclear experts might have been a ruse to fool the Iraqis into thinking that the day's target was a nuclear site, when the real concern was to see whether fermenting equipment at the distilleries might have been used to develop biological toxins.

Since the team leader was Jacques Baute, the French nuclear physicist who heads the atomic energy agency's team, a more probable explanation was that the inspectors suspected that equipment used in developing nuclear weapons might have been hidden at the plants.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/03/international/middleeast/03BAGH.html>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

New York Times
December 3, 2002

C.I.A. Hunts Iraq Tie To Soviet Smallpox

By Judith Miller

The C.I.A. is investigating an informant's accusation that Iraq obtained a particularly virulent strain of smallpox from a Russian scientist who worked in a smallpox lab in Moscow during Soviet times, senior American officials and foreign scientists say.

The officials said several American scientists were told in August that Iraq might have obtained the mysterious strain from Nelja N. Maltseva, a virologist who worked for more than 30 years at the Research Institute for Viral Preparations in Moscow before her death two years ago.

The information came to the American government from an informant whose identity has not been disclosed. The C.I.A. considered the information reliable enough that President Bush was briefed about its implications. The attempt to verify the information is continuing.

Dr. Maltseva is known to have visited Iraq on several occasions. Intelligence officials are trying to determine whether, as the informant told them, she traveled there as recently as 1990, officials said. The institute where she worked housed what Russia said was its entire national collection of 120 strains of smallpox, and some experts fear that she may have provided the Iraqis with a version that could be resistant to vaccines and could be more easily transmitted as a biological weapon.

The possibility that Iraq possesses this strain is one of several factors that has complicated Mr. Bush's decision, expected this week, about how many Americans should be vaccinated against smallpox, a disease that was officially eradicated in 1980.

The White House is expected to announce that despite the risk of vaccine-induced illness and death, it will authorize vaccinating those most at risk in the event of a smallpox outbreak — 500,000 members of the military who could be assigned to the Middle East for a war with Iraq and 500,000 civilian medical workers.

More broadly, the Russian government's refusal to share smallpox and other lethal germ strains for study by the United States, or to answer questions about the fate of such strains, has reinforced American concerns about whether Russia has abandoned what was once the world's most ambitious covert germ weapons program.

A year ago in Crawford, Tex., Mr. Bush and Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, issued a statement vowing to enhance cooperation against biological terrorism. But after an initial round of visits and a flurry of optimism, American officials said Russia had resisted repeated American requests for information about the Russian smallpox strains and help in the investigation into the anthrax attacks in the United States in October 2001.

"There is information we would like the Russians to share as a partner of ours," William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said in an interview. "Because if there are strains that present a unique problem with respect to vaccines and treatment, it is in the interests of all freedom-loving people to have as much information as possible."

Cooperation on biological terrorism was not discussed at the meeting last week between Mr. Bush and Mr. Putin in St. Petersburg, American officials said, mainly because administration officials are not certain just how willing Mr. Putin is to enhance cooperation in this delicate area. They wonder if he is not doing more because of the military's hostility to sharing the information.

"The record so far suggests he is either unable or unwilling to push the military on this front," an administration official said. "We think it may be a little of both, but we're not really sure at this point or what to do about it."

Administration officials said the C.I.A. was still trying to determine whether Dr. Maltseva traveled to Iraq in 1990, and whether she shared a sample of what might be a particularly virulent smallpox strain with Iraqi scientists.

World Health Organization records in Geneva and interviews with scientists who worked with her confirmed that Dr. Maltseva visited Iraq at least twice, in 1972 and 1973, as part of the global campaign to eradicate smallpox. Formerly secret Soviet records also show that in 1971, she was part of a covert mission to Aralsk, a port city in what was then the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan, north of the Aral Sea, to help stop an epidemic of smallpox. The Soviet Union did not report that outbreak to world health officials, as required by regulations.

Last June, experts from the Monterey Institute of International Studies, drawing on those Kazakh records and interviews with survivors, published a report saying the epidemic was a result of open-air tests of a particularly virulent smallpox strain on Vozrozhdeniye Island in the Aral Sea.

The island, known as Renaissance Island in English, is between Kazakhstan and another Central Asian country, Uzbekistan. The United States recently spent \$6 million to help both countries, which are now independent, to decontaminate anthrax that the Soviet military buried in pits on the island.

Alan P. Zelicoff, co-author of the Monterey report and a scientist at Sandia National Laboratories, said the Aralsk outbreak was a watershed because it demonstrated that the smallpox virus was more easily spread than previously thought and that there may be a vaccine-resistant strain.

The organism can indeed be made to travel long distances, city-size perhaps, and there may be a vaccine-resistant strain or one that is more communicable than garden-variety smallpox, he said in an interview.

The Monterey report led American officials to question whether America's smallpox vaccine would be effective against the Aralsk strain or whether new vaccines or drugs might be needed if the strain was used in an attack.

American concern increased in recent months after the White House was told that Dr. Maltseva might have shared the Aralsk strain with Iraqi scientists in 1990, administration officials said.

David Kelly, a former United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq, said there was a "resurgence of interest" in smallpox vaccine in Iraq in 1990, "but we have never known why."

A spokesman for the Russian Research Institute for Viral Preparations declined to comment on Dr. Maltseva or her work. Her daughter, a physician in Moscow, said she had no recollection of her mother's ever going to Iraq.

Svetlana Sergeevna Marennikova, Dr. Maltseva's deputy in the Moscow laboratory, said in an interview that Dr. Maltseva had never gone to Iraq as far as she knew.

"She worked, and then when she got sick, she took a sick leave when she was no longer able to work," she said. "I don't know about Iraq. I didn't know about a trip there. I don't think she was there. I would know."

Donald A. Henderson, a senior adviser to the Department of Health and Human Services and a leader of the smallpox eradication campaign, described Dr. Maltseva as an "outgoing, hard-working scientist." He said she had traveled widely for the W.H.O in the eradication campaign.

While the organization's records show that she visited Iran, Iraq and Syria, Dr. Henderson recalled that he had also sent her to Pakistan to follow up on an outbreak there. "She clearly enjoyed the international travel circuit," he said.

Scientists and American officials have speculated that Iraq may have tried to buy the Aralsk strain from Dr. Maltseva, whose institute, like so many other scientific labs in Russia, has fallen on hard times since the Soviet Union's collapse.

Dr. Henderson said he was deeply disappointed that Dr. Maltseva and other Russian scientists with whom he had worked closely had helped cover up outbreaks of infectious diseases that should have been reported to the W.H.O. The Russian government has never publicly acknowledged that Aralsk outbreak or that it tested smallpox in the open air. At a World Health Organization meeting in Lyon, France, last August, officials said, Russian virologists argued privately, in response to the Monterey report and news accounts, that there was no reason to believe that the Aralsk incident was anything other than a natural outbreak and that the strain was not particularly virulent — assertions with which some American experts concur.

American officials familiar with discussions about Aralsk said Russians scientists had confirmed that Dr. Maltseva took tissue samples from Aralsk back to her Moscow lab in 1971. But Russians have insisted that the material was destroyed when Russia quietly moved its smallpox strain collection from the Moscow lab to Vector, where the collection is now stored.

Many American scientists and officials, even those who doubt that the Aralsk strain is unusually potent, are deeply skeptical that the strain was destroyed. Former Soviet germ warfare scientists have privately told American officials that the military took control of these strains when the collection was moved.

American health and defense officials have tried without success to press Russia for help in securing a sample of the strain from the Aralsk smallpox outbreak.

The American officials have also been unable to obtain information that they believe could help federal investigators with their stalled inquiry into the anthrax attacks of October 2001, in which 5 people died and at least 17 were infected.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/03/international/middleeast/03POX.html>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

New York Times
December 3, 2002

Putin And Chinese Leader Pledge Friendship And Caution North Korea On Nuclear Arms

By Erik Eckholm

BEIJING, Dec. 2 — China and Russia called on North Korea today to abandon any attempt to acquire nuclear weapons but also called on Washington to honor previous agreements with the North.

The call came during a quick but high-profile visit by President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia that was marked by hearty pledges of mutual friendship and appeals for restraint on Iraq.

In a 13-page declaration that set out no new policies but was notable for its strong emphasis on the unsettled situation on the Korean peninsula, Russia and China said they "consider it important for the destiny of the world and security in Northeast Asia to preserve the nonnuclear status of the Korean peninsula and the regime of nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction."

"In this context," the statement continued, the two sides "stress the extreme importance of normalizing relations between the United States and the D.P.R.K. on the basis of continued observation of earlier reached agreements, including the framework agreement of 1994." D.P.R.K. are the initials for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In that agreement, North Korea promised to halt nuclear weapons development in return for energy aid, including construction of nuclear power plants. The agreement is in limbo following North Korean admissions of covert nuclear research.

China is one of North Korea's few allies and does not want to see the country collapse, but its diplomats have also been exasperated by the country's military posturing, which it fears could destabilize the region.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had menaced China, Moscow and Beijing have worked to rebuild friendly ties, in part to counterbalance the global power of the United States. The meeting today seemed intended for each to reassure the other of that commitment, even as both have drawn closer to Washington in the wake of the Sept. 11 terror attacks last year.

President Jiang Zemin, receiving Mr. Putin, said, "China and Russia will be good neighbors, friends and partners forever." Mr. Putin, who arrived this morning at 1:40 and leaves on Tuesday to continue an Asian tour, said he was "fully confident of a bright future for Russia-China relations."

Mr. Putin was the most prominent foreign visitor since the change in Communist Party leadership here last month, and after meeting Mr. Jiang he met with Hu Jintao, the newly selected party chief, and other top leaders.

China and Russia have both joined in President Bush's global crusade against terror and kept quiet as the Americans sent troops to Central Asia. Both also went along, reluctantly, with an aggressive American-sponsored United Nations resolution seeking to disarm Iraq, though they remain nervous about independent American military action. Today, both sides declared their opposition to "unilateral action" by any country and reiterated their shared faith in the United Nations Security Council, where both have veto power as permanent members. China and Russia also stressed their commitment to a "multipolar" world — code for a world less dominated by the United States. They called for a peaceful settlement of the Iraqi weapons issue and complained that some governments have a "policy of double standards" on human rights, rejecting "the use of human rights questions as a lever for pressure in international relations."

One new bond the leaders mentioned prominently today was a shared interest in stamping out Islamic separatism. Mr. Jiang praised the Russian leader for his "just antiterrorism actions," including the recent deadly raid on Chechen rebels who held hundreds of hostages in a Moscow theater. Mr. Putin pledged renewed cooperation against Islamic movements in Central Asia and in Xinjiang Province, in China.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/03/international/asia/03CHIN.html>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

USA Today
December 3, 2002
Pg. 15

U.S. Quietly Prepares To Negotiate With N. Korea *Hard line expected to soften in deal to verifiably end nuclear program*

By Barbara Slavin, USA Today

WASHINGTON — Despite North Korea's open breach of its promise to stop pursuing nuclear weapons, the Bush administration is quietly paving the way for negotiations that might give the reclusive country oil, food or other aid in exchange for verifiable shutdown of its bomb facilities.

Publicly, both countries have adopted hard-line positions since North Korea admitted to U.S. diplomats in October that it was building a uranium enrichment facility in defiance of a 1994 agreement with the United States. U.S. officials have refused negotiations and ordered a cutoff in oil aid. North Korea has refused any talks until the United States guarantees it won't use military force against it.

But behind the scenes, the Bush administration is preparing proposals for the complex means to verify any new North Korean promise to end its nuclear program, U.S. officials say. That is a signal that despite the bellicose rhetoric, both sides seem to be headed to the bargaining table.

"We can easily put together a regime of inspection and verification should one be needed, if they really are determined to come forward and tell us what they are doing and that they are going to stop," Secretary of State Colin Powell said in a recent interview.

Other State Department officials said verification schemes are already being prepared by the Verification and Compliance Bureau in the office of John Bolton, the undersecretary for arms control.

Powell said officials from the Department of Energy and the International Atomic Energy Agency are already monitoring a North Korean nuclear facility that had produced plutonium.

U.S. planning is based on confidence that North Korea will eventually succumb to economic pressure from its neighbors and a united international community.

On Monday, after a summit meeting in Beijing, the leaders of North Korea's old socialist allies, Russia and China, issued a strong statement urging North Korea to end its nuclear weapons program for the sake of "the destiny of the world and security in Northeast Asia." The statement also urged the United States to "normalize relations" North Korea.

If there are talks, it would be an admission by both sides that there is no other realistic option. The North is already believed to have one or two nuclear weapons, as well as a conventional army that could inflict terrible damage on South Korea and the 37,000 U.S. troops based there.

According to a recent CIA estimate, North Korea began a uranium enrichment program "about two years ago" that could produce "two or more nuclear weapons per year" by the middle of this decade.

A senior administration official says a gas centrifuge plant to enrich uranium could be ready as early as next year. The facility is being built with equipment acquired from Pakistan, Russia and other sources, but U.S. intelligence does not know where the plant — most likely underground — is located.

Meanwhile, the 1994 U.S. agreement with North Korea is on life support. The United States and a consortium that includes South Korea, Japan and the European Union allowed one more delivery of fuel oil to North Korea last month but suspended future shipments until the crisis is resolved.

Under a separate humanitarian program begun in 1995, the United States is still supplying food to North Korea. And some aspects of the 1994 agreement continue to be implemented. South Korea is still preparing the site for the two civilian nuclear reactors, and the North Koreans have not tampered with the plutonium at their declared nuclear site at Yongbyon.

"We have lots more economic levers" now, says Scott Snyder, South Korea representative of the Asia Foundation. "But it may take a little while for this to play out."

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Aerospace Daily
December 3, 2002

MDA Gets Wealth Of Data From Scud Tests, Official Says

Recent U.S. launch tests of actual Scud missiles have given the Missile Defense Agency a wealth of data that will aid the development of anti-missile systems, an MDA spokesman said Dec. 2.

Air Force Lt. Col. Rick Lehner, the MDA spokesman, told The DAILY that the data will be "very useful" because it provided "great detail" on all stages of a Scud missile's flight.

MDA launched two Scuds from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., in November. Ground- and aircraft-based sensors, as well as sensors on the Scuds themselves, collected data on such missile characteristics as speed, attitude, altitude and engine burn rate.

Each Scud burned fuel for about a minute before descending into the Pacific Ocean. The sensors used during the tests managed to record all the information MDA was hoping to collect.

"All the sensors worked very well," Lehner said.

MDA plans to analyze the Scud data in the coming months. The agency hopes to learn more about the performance of a missile that could threaten U.S. troops on the battlefield (DAILY, Nov. 15). Several U.S. missile defense systems under development, including the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3), are designed to shoot down Scuds.

The Scud is rarely available to the U.S., but MDA obtained the pair from unspecified foreign sources. The missile originally was developed by the Soviet Union in the 1950s, but about 25 countries now are believed to have Scuds or Scud derivatives.

Iraq is among the countries that have Scuds, but MDA has said it was planning the missile tests well before the U.S. began considering an attack on Iraq.

-- *Marc Selinger*

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Cooperative Threat Reduction Program Annual Report.

GAO-03-341R,
December 2.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-341R>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

New WHO Fund to Probe Disease Outbreaks

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Filed at 7:26 a.m. ET

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The World Health Organization has a new \$500,000 rapid response fund to investigate infectious disease outbreaks, whether caused by nature or terrorism. The money will allow the WHO to send teams to the field without first raising money to support the investigations.

“Crucial hours lost in the early days of a disease outbreak can mean the difference between a handful of cases and a major epidemic,” Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO’s director-general, said in a statement Monday.

The money comes from the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a private group founded by media magnate Ted Turner and former Georgia Sen. Sam Nunn that works to reduce threats from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. The fund will be called the WHO-NTI Emergency Outbreak Response Fund.

Upon hearing of a suspected outbreak, WHO officials often must make calls to raise money to support an investigation before sending a team to investigate, said WHO spokesman Jim Palmer. For exotic diseases like the Ebola virus, money is quickly raised, he said. But he said it’s harder to find money to investigate routine diseases like meningitis and influenza.

“Cholera happens all the time and no one cares,” he said.

Officials at NTI and WHO said the fund will need donations from others and hopes it will be replenished by “traditional humanitarian donors” and member nations.

Palmer said that WHO spends anywhere from a couple of million dollars to \$10 million per year investigating outbreaks. Each investigation can cost anywhere from \$50,000 to \$500,000.

On the Net: www.who.org and www.nti.org

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/national/AP-WHO-Outbreak-Fund.html>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Incinerating chemical weapons is safe, storage is not, new report says

ROBERT GEHRKE, Associated Press Writer

(12-03) 17:44 PST WASHINGTON (AP) --

America’s arsenal of chemical weapons can be safely incinerated at a few sites around the country, despite chemical releases and violations at the only two operational incinerators, according to a report Tuesday.

“The risk to the public and to the environment of continued storage overwhelms the potential risk of processing and destruction of stockpiled chemical agent,” said the report by the National Research Council, a branch of the National Academies of Science. “The destruction of aging chemical munitions should proceed as quickly as possible.”

The council did not weigh in on whether incineration was preferable to other methods of neutralizing the chemical agents. Critics who favor neutralization said the report ignored important incidents and glossed over the dangers of incineration.

Under an international treaty, the United States agreed to dispose of 31,500 tons of deadly nerve agents and toxic blister agents by 2007, although the Defense Department has said it will likely miss that deadline by two to three years. The project is expected to cost \$24 billion. About a quarter of the stockpile has been destroyed at weapons incinerators in Tooele, Utah, and on Johnston Atoll in the Pacific Ocean.

“The technology is capable of doing the job if it’s run correctly, and there’s no reason it cannot be run correctly if management puts its mind to it and trains its work force properly,” said Charles Kolb, chairman of the committee.

The council report identified 40 cases where chemical agents leaked into areas where it was not supposed to have been and three where it escaped from an incinerator building. But it said amounts that escaped were too small to threaten the public.

“There will be future ‘chemical events,’ and serious consequences to both plant personnel and surrounding communities cannot be ruled out,” the report said. It also said, however, “The major hazard to the surrounding communities arises from potential releases of agent from stockpile storage areas, not the demilitarization facilities.”

Many of the munitions and rockets that hold the chemical agents are aging and leaking, and the report said a deliberate detonation of the stored chemicals could spread a large amount of agent into the atmosphere.

The National Academies of Science is a private, nonprofit entity that provides scientific guidance to the government. The study was financed by the Defense Department and requested by former Rep. Bob Riley, R-Ala., the state's governor-elect.

Craig Williams, director of the Kentucky-based Chemical Weapons Working Group, which favors chemical neutralization to incineration, said the report ignored thousands of pages his group submitted to document incinerator problems and glossed over worries voiced by local officials and complaints by whistle-blowers.

"For anyone to accept this report as either accurate or objective would be a mistake," Williams said. "Unfortunately, it is the citizens living near the incinerators who will bear the consequences of its failures."

Kolb said the group considered the information submitted by Williams' group, but it was largely repetitive or undocumented hearsay.

The Johnston Atoll incinerator has completed burning the weapons and is being decommissioned. The Tooele incinerator has finished burning its stockpile of the nerve agent sarin and is preparing to burn VX, a more toxic nerve agent.

Incinerators in Anniston, Ala.; Pine Bluff, Ark.; and Umatilla, Ore., are scheduled to begin operations in the coming months. Chemical agents in Newport, Ind.; Aberdeen, Md.; Pueblo, Colo.; and Bluegrass, Ky., are to be neutralized using chemicals.

On the Net: National Academies: www.nationalacademies.org

Chemical Weapons Working Group: www.cwwg.org

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/news/archive/2002/12/03/national1746EST0717.DTL>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

New York Times
December 4, 2002

Defense Dept. Seeks More Patriot Missiles

By Reuters

WASHINGTON, Dec. 3 — The Defense Department, preparing for a possible war with Iraq, said today that it would increase production of an improved version of the Patriot missile by 16 percent. Experts say the original Patriot largely failed to hit Iraqi missiles fired at Israel and Saudi Arabia in 1991.

Edward Aldridge, defense undersecretary for acquisition, logistics and technology, signed a memorandum on Monday ordering increased production of the PAC-3, or Patriot Advanced Capability-3, said Cheryl Irwin, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

The memo calls for production of 208 PAC-3 missiles, manufactured by the Lockheed Martin Corporation, in fiscal years 2003 and 2004, Ms. Irwin said, or 100 in 2003 and 108 in 2004. The planned output in 2003 had been 79, with 100 for 2004, according to defense and industry officials. The fiscal year ends Sept. 30.

Lockheed has received PAC-3 missile production orders totaling \$850 million to date. No data were immediately available on the cost of the proposed production increase.

Unlike the PAC-2 missiles, which Israeli experts say failed to intercept 39 short-range Iraqi Scud missiles fired at Israel during the gulf war, the PAC-3 missile is a "hit to kill" missile, said Craig Vanbebber, a spokesman for Lockheed.

PAC-2 missiles are designed to destroy aircraft by exploding near their sides, but PAC-3 missiles are intended to smash into an incoming ballistic missile high in the Earth's atmosphere and destroy it, as well as any weapons of mass destruction it may be carrying.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/04/politics/04PATR.html>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Washington Times
December 4, 2002
Pg. 15

Anthrax Scare Seen At NATO, Israeli Embassy

BRUSSELS — Fears of an anthrax attack hit Belgium yesterday with the discovery of suspicious letters at four sites including NATO headquarters and the Israeli Embassy in Brussels. Letters were also intercepted at the Belgian federal parliament and the Palais de Justice, a major complex of courts and prosecution services in central Brussels, according to officials.
<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20021204-85229627.htm>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Washington Post
December 5, 2002
Pg. 1

Inspectors Rebuked By U.S. And Iraq

U.N. Officials Defend First Week's Efforts

By Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Dec. 4 -- A week after arriving to assess whether Iraq is hiding weapons of mass destruction, the small team of U.N. inspectors came under harsh criticism today from both Baghdad and Washington, with officials in each capital questioning the mission's motives, impartiality and determination.

Caught in the middle, a senior field inspector broke with protocol and launched into an impassioned defense of his team's progress, insisting that U.N. experts have been "getting results" in their first week on the job. "The Iraq side would have liked us to be very light and the U.S. side . . . would like us to be extremely severe," said Demetrius Perricos, who is responsible for uncovering chemical and biological weapons. "I think what we're doing is proper, proper work. We're still doing a good job."

The impatience in Washington and Baghdad over the pace and character of the inspections did not appear serious enough for the Bush administration or the government of President Saddam Hussein to walk away from the process. But it dramatized the intense political pressure facing the U.N. inspectors, whose work has become what amounts to a tripwire for possible U.S. military action to destroy Hussein's three-decade rule.

President Bush dismissed assessments that the inspections have started off well, including one from U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan on Tuesday. Bush told reporters at the White House that Hussein "is not somebody who looks like he's interested in complying" with the Nov. 8 Security Council resolution that calls for Iraq to relinquish any nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and authorizes unannounced searches of any site in the country.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer urged the United Nations to conduct even more inspections. "Not just the United States, but the international community wants to make sure that they have a sufficient number [of inspectors], that they are able to do multiple inspections at the same time, that they can have a vigorous inspection regime," he said.

Fleischer said U.S. officials also are concerned whether the inspectors will be "aggressive enough to be able to ascertain the facts in the face of an adversary who in the past did everything in his power to hide the facts."

At the same time, Iraq's Foreign Ministry and a top presidential aide lashed out against an inspection Tuesday in one of Hussein's presidential palaces, saying it was carried out under U.S. and Israeli pressure to goad Iraq into a confrontation. He said that if the inspectors, who were dressed in ordinary clothes, were expecting to find banned weapons, they would have worn protective gear.

Gen. Hussam Mohammed Amin, Iraq's chief liaison with the inspectors, called the visit "unjustified and unnecessary." He added: "Their objective was only to do harm to Iraq's sovereignty and dignity. Their objective was political."

Amin's statements marked the first time Iraq has directly criticized the inspectors since they began their work last week. The government did, however, heap contempt on previous inspection teams, calling them spies, political hacks and ill-trained opportunists.

Despite the display of official displeasure, Amin said Iraq plans to cooperate with the inspectors. "We are satisfied with the inspections and we hope that they will continue their professional work regardless of the pressures placed on them," he said.

Seventeen inspectors -- including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons specialists as well as missile experts -- began the U.N.-mandated inspections on Nov. 27 after a nearly four-year hiatus, and they have visited 16 sites, often searching two locations simultaneously.

The inspectors today visited two sprawling facilities near Baghdad that have long been associated with Iraq's efforts to build weapons of mass destruction. One group examined what used to be Iraq's primary nuclear complex while

another scoured a government factory that played a key role in producing biological and chemical weapons, including mustard gas and the nerve agents sarin and VX.

A senior U.N. official said inspectors accounted for several artillery shells containing mustard gas that previous inspectors had uncovered but never destroyed.

Speaking to reporters, Perricos bristled at suggestions that the inspectors have not been sufficiently forceful. He said he would not alter the searches because of political pressure. "We're not serving the U.S. We're not serving the U.K. We're not serving any individual nation," he said. "We're here for the implementation of the resolution."

He suggested that if the U.S. government wants him to focus on other sites, it should provide him more detailed intelligence reports. "What we're getting and what President Bush may be getting is very different, to put it mildly," he said.

Although the inspectors have not provided the Iraqi government with advance warning, they have started by visiting places already searched by U.N. experts in the 1990s to determine whether any new weapons-related activities have occurred there since the previous inspectors left in 1998. U.N. officials said they will not be able to conduct more than two or three simultaneous inspections until next week, when 35 additional inspectors are scheduled to arrive in Iraq.

The special U.N. commission that is coordinating the inspections with the International Atomic Energy Agency plans to have about 100 experts in Iraq by the end of the year. The inspectors, drawn from governments and industry around the world, cannot arrive sooner, U.N. officials said, because they received word they would be dispatched to Iraq only after the Security Council resolution was passed, and they needed several weeks to prepare.

Under the U.N. resolution, Iraq must submit to the Security Council by Sunday a declaration detailing all its nuclear, biological and chemicals weapons, programs to develop them and civilian facilities with the capacity to build them. Amin said Iraq will submit its report Saturday, but he did not explain how or where the report would be delivered. U.N. officials said one copy may be given to inspectors here on Saturday and one copy flown to U.N. headquarters in New York for delivery Sunday afternoon.

"It will be a huge declaration," Amin said. He said it would include "new elements with regards to new sites and new activities which have been conducted during the absence of the inspectors."

In today's inspections, a team from the IAEA went to the vast Tuwaita nuclear complex about 15 miles southeast of Baghdad. The site, regarded for years as Iraq's preeminent nuclear facility, has long been a subject of international concern.

Israeli warplanes bombed a reactor on the site in 1981. Airstrikes during the 1991 Persian Gulf War destroyed much of the rest of the complex. But in recent months, U.S. and British officials have voiced concern about construction of new buildings there.

U.N. chemical and biological weapons specialists went to the Muthanna State Establishment, a research plant about 50 miles northwest of Baghdad. In the late 1990s, inspectors demolished much of the facility after concluding that it played a central role in Iraq's biological and chemical arms programs.

Perricos called Muthanna "a very important place for the chemical warfare program they were building in the past." He said inspectors wanted to ensure damaged equipment had not been repaired and that the mustard gas artillery shells that had not been destroyed before the inspectors left in 1998 still were there.

They were, he said, "well stored." He said the inspectors hoped to "proceed with the destruction" of the shells soon.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A11132-2002Dec4.html>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Washington Times

December 5, 2002

Pg. 1

U.S. Set To Cite Iraq For Breach

Will compare weapons list to own data

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

The Bush administration is set to declare Iraq in violation of the U.N. resolution requiring Baghdad to give up weapons of mass destruction, The Washington Times has learned.

"It is going to be 'material breach,' not as a casus belli [cause for war] but as a basis to begin hammering Unmovic to do more," said an administration official familiar with the internal debate. Unmovic, or the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, is the arms-inspection group for Iraq.

Administration officials said a material-breach declaration will depend on whether Iraq fails to mention in its U.N. report some banned weapons programs identified in U.S. intelligence reports.

Iraq's report detailing everything it possesses related to weapons of mass destruction, which is due by Sunday, is required under a U.N. Security Council resolution passed Nov. 8.

A meeting of the White House National Security Council (NSC) is scheduled for today, and the Iraqi arms declaration will be the key topic. The president will not attend the gathering of senior officials of national security agencies, known as the principals committee.

U.S. officials said the administration has been withholding detailed intelligence on hidden Iraqi arms programs from U.N. inspectors. The information deals mostly with Iraq's covert chemical and biological arms.

"We do not want to tip our hand," the official said.

One piece of intelligence includes details on a cache of more than 1,800 gallons of anthrax spores, the officials said. Even tiny amounts of anthrax can be lethal. Less detailed intelligence has been gathered on Iraq's efforts to build nuclear weapons, the officials said.

The intelligence on the hidden weapons is said to be reliable and will be used to verify whether information presented by Iraq in its declaration is accurate.

An Iraqi general told the Associated Press yesterday that Baghdad will hand over the list of chemical, biological and nuclear programs Saturday, a day ahead of the U.N. deadline.

Gen. Hossam Mohammed Amin said the report will not disclose any banned weapons, "because, really, we have no weapons of mass destruction."

The U.S. position on how to respond to the Iraqi weapons list is being debated because of Baghdad's history of using deception to hide its arms programs, the officials said.

A U.S. policy of material breach, however, will be a key step toward the use of military force to oust the regime of Saddam Hussein, said officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The issue of declaring a material breach was discussed earlier this week at the NSC principals committee meeting, which, one official said, ended in "chaos" over disagreements on how to respond to the Iraqi declaration.

The administration expects Baghdad to turn over documents related to civilian programs that could be used to make chemical or biological arms, but nothing about covert weapons programs, the officials said.

President Bush said Tuesday that "any act of delay, deception or defiance will prove that Saddam Hussein has not adopted the path of compliance and has rejected the path of peace."

State Department and Pentagon spokesmen had no comment on the internal debate. A White House National Security Council spokesman also declined to comment.

Today's principals meeting will include Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, who missed the first meeting because he was in South America.

U.N. weapons inspectors so far have not uncovered any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons programs or any illegal missile-development work.

Those in the administration who want to oust Saddam favor issuing a material-breach declaration soon after Iraq presents the list.

These officials include representatives of the Defense Department, including Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, along with Vice President Richard B. Cheney and his key national security aides.

Officials from the State Department, including Mr. Powell and Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage, oppose that view and favor slowing the timetable for military action.

These officials want to study the documents provided by Iraq and then continue U.N. arms inspections as a way to hold off military action.

Officials said Mr. Powell and Mr. Armitage are the leading opponents of using military force to oust Saddam. Both favor using the threat of force to compel Iraq to disarm, however.

According to the officials, Mr. Powell disagrees with administration officials who view Iraq, as Mr. Bush put it in an October speech, as a unique and "grave threat" to the United States.

Mr. Powell also does not share the view of Mr. Bush's senior advisers who say Saddam is likely to use weapons of mass destruction or share them with terrorists, the officials said.

"Powell favors endless inspections," one official said.

Mr. Powell is the main advocate of the argument that if Iraq gives up all its chemical, biological and nuclear arms programs it would be tantamount to "regime change," even if Saddam remains in power.

Other officials say the secretary of state's position undermines efforts within the administration and among American allies for removing Saddam and setting up a democratic government in Baghdad.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20021205-94437619.htm>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

New York Times
December 5, 2002

U.S. Criticizes North Korea For Rejecting Inspections

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4 — The White House issued a muted criticism of North Korea today, saying it was "disappointing" that North Korea had rejected a demand for inspections of its newly revealed program to develop nuclear weapons from highly enriched uranium.

The demand came from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the nuclear inspection and regulatory organization linked to the United Nations.

The White House comments appeared to be part of a strategy to defuse any sense of imminent confrontation with North Korea, which the Central Intelligence Agency believes is still a few years away from producing a nuclear weapon from its uranium program.

President Bush issued a statement last month assuring North Korea that the United States had no intention of invading it, and saying he was seeking a "diplomatic solution" to the situation caused by its nuclear revelations. Nonetheless, the White House statement today was in sharp contrast to its responses about the inspection of Iraq's suspected weapons sites. At a briefing with reporters, Ari Fleischer, the president's press secretary, insisted that the United States did not employ a double standard in dealing with countries developing weapons of mass destruction. "Not every policy needs to be put into a photocopier," Mr. Fleischer said today. He argued that Iraq had repeatedly defied United Nations Security Council resolutions, and said "that is not the case in North Korea."

In 1994, North Korea engaged in a lengthy struggle with the Security Council over a previous nuclear project, and the Council threatened to impose penalties on it. But the Council never formally voted on a resolution because the confrontation, which led President Bill Clinton to reinforce American troops in South Korea, was averted with an agreement that North Korea would freeze its nuclear activity.

North Korea's statement today was in response to a resolution passed last month by the atomic energy agency, urging the country to "give up any nuclear weapons programs expeditiously" and open "all relevant facilities to I.A.E.A. inspection and safeguards." American intelligence officials say they are still uncertain where those facilities are.

In a response today, North Korea's foreign minister, Paek Nam Sun, called the resolution "extremely unilateral," and added, that "the government cannot accept" it, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

A spokesman for the atomic energy agency said agency officials felt "deep concern" about the North Korean refusal, which appeared to follow the script of the 1994 crisis, when North Korea declined to allow inspectors in until it had won some concessions from the West.

But the White House did not condemn the action, and issued no warnings of the consequences of refusing inspections. "Their rejection of the I.A.E.A. resolution to open its facilities," Mr. Fleischer said, "is another disappointing example of North Korea's isolationism, which will only hurt the people of North Korea."

When asked what steps the United States would take, he said "we are working with our regional partners to try to find a peaceful solution to this issue."

American officials, when speaking with the promise of anonymity, say they have little choice but to pursue a strategy markedly different from the one used with Iraq.

Iraq has little power to strike back at neighboring countries, they point out, while North Korea could cause great damage to Seoul, the capital of South Korea. Moreover, the White House appears convinced that North Korea's economic condition has weakened so much that it is vulnerable to economic pressures to a degree that Iraq is not.

Mr. Fleischer offered another reason today. "Iraq, of course, does have a history that North Korea does not have of engaging in war against its neighbors," he said, "in resorting to the deadly use of massive force, including weapons of mass destruction against its neighbors, including the invasion of sovereign nations."

Mr. Fleischer was presumably speaking about North Korea's history in recent decades; it invaded South Korea in 1950.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/05/international/asia/05KORE.html>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Missouri Army base trains for chemical weapons

By Harry Levins Post-Dispatch Senior Writer

12/04/2002 12:00 AM

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. - If weapons of mass destruction greet any invasion of Iraq, the Americans who must cope with them will rely on the know-how they picked up at this Army post in Missouri's Ozarks. That makes **Fort Leonard Wood** the armed forces' first line of defense against chemical, biological and radiological attacks.

Since 1999, the post has housed the Army Chemical School. **Fort Leonard Wood** teaches soldiers how to sniff out such weapons and how to deal with the messes those weapons make.

Since the buzz about a war with Iraq grew, a sense of urgency has taken hold. For instance:

This year's basic-training load of chemical specialists is up by a third. Overall, the student load has grown by 25 percent. "We're getting close to maximum capacity," says Col. Thomas Spoehr, who is, in effect, the dean of the chemical school.

While other branches of the Army struggle to maintain their strength, the Chemical Corps is growing. "We're adding 4 or 5 percent a year," says Spoehr.

The rest of the Army is showing a new appreciation for the Chemical Corps. "In the '80s, the attitude was reluctant acceptance," Spoehr says. "Now I get a lot **more** interest from people in the field. They ask, 'When am I going to get my chemical officer?'"

The headlines about war have made trainees sit up straight. Capt. Michael Standish says, "Our young students ask a lot **more** questions." And Spoehr, the colonel, says that even the green lieutenants have shed their traditionally lackadaisical ways. "We're not having to fight to get their attention," Spoehr says. "You can't tell them enough."

As it is, the Army tells them a lot, and in just a few **months**. **Fingerprints on file**

In addition to Army soldiers and officers, the Chemical School has been training batches of Special Forces soldiers and foreign soldiers from places such as Canada and Germany. The Air Force, Navy and Marines also send their chemical specialists to **Fort Leonard Wood**.

"At any given time, we have 1,600 to 1,700 students," says Spoehr. This year, the Army will send through **more** than 4,000 students. Next year's level is expected to be 6,000, as the Army National Guard switches **more** units to chemical soldiers.

Some of the training is the highest of high-tech. Take the Biological Integrated Defense System - BIDS, in the inevitable Army acronym.

On the outside, it's a Humvee with a high-rise rear end that spouts four chimney-like tubes. On the inside, it's a \$1.5 million laboratory crammed with devices that can sniff out bad news such as anthrax or smallpox.

Sgt. Troy Widgren uses an indoor simulator to train operators in the fine points of analyzing the air that those four tubes sample.

"This spectrometer will tell us whether it's a cell, a spore, a toxin, biomatter or ionic activity - or whether nothing was detected," says Widgren, 27.

The soldiers who operate biological detectors won't get a readout that says "smallpox" or "anthrax." Instead, they get a code designation, which they pass along to higher headquarters.

The reason? "So it doesn't cause any undue panic," says one of the instructors.

The Army has only two units equipped with BIDS vehicles, a company apiece in the Regular Army and the Army Reserve. But in the coming year, the Army plans to add two **more** BIDS companies - one of them an Army Reserve unit in St. Louis, the 375th Chemical Company.

Sniffing out chemicals

Soldiers who tend to chemical detectors can use their equipment to pin down exactly what sort of toxic brew the enemy is using against them - nerve agents, mustard gas or whatever. They use one of the Army's 113 Foxes, German-designed vehicles that look like armored cars and house high-tech labs inside.

"Every chemical, like every person, has a specific fingerprint," says Capt. Carlos E. Gonzalez, an instructor. Pinning down that chemical fingerprint is the job of a Fox's **mobile** mass spectrometer. He says, "It compares the atomic weight of bionic activity with what it has in its library."

Two indoor simulators allow crews to train while other students watch from stadium seating. Flashed across a wide screen in front of the simulator's cab is an animated computerized display of desert terrain, complete with sound effects of enemy fire.

The Fox crews train to detect "persistent agents" - liquids such as mustard gas, which hang around like a chemical minefield. The Fox's cross-country tires let the crew find ways around the obstacle.

The sticker price for this high-tech marvel runs to \$2 million. But much of the training at the Chemical School is of the old-fashioned, low-tech sort, especially for the privates.

In a garage-like bay, a platoon of recruits stands in two ranks, paired off in buddy fashion. The uniform of the day is **MOPP** gear - Mission-Oriented Protective Posture, the Army's way of saying "protective mask, boots and gloves and charcoal-lined outer suit."

The recruits are learning how to decontaminate themselves, using packets of activated charcoal. A sergeant is teaching them in the time-honored Army way: by the numbers, sheer rote and repetition.

He barks: "You *will* pull the packet out with your nonwriting hand. Your *nonwriting* hand. Pull. Now you will decontaminate your buddy. You *will* rub with the packet. You will *not* pat with the packet. Rub, don't pat."

Still, the humdrum of training like this builds toward a climax that trainees await with a blend of fear and excitement: their day in the nerve gas chamber. "**A little bit, sir**"

Tucked away in one corner of **Fort Leonard Wood** is a \$28 million complex of two buildings ringed by a barbed-wire fence and staffed by its own corps of security guards.

The proper name is the Chemical Defense Training Facility. Inside are bays stocked with the hulks of helicopters, jeeps and other military gear - and real nerve gas, potent chemicals that can kill in seconds.

Every student going through the Chemical School must undergo exposure to nerve gas. The staff of the school goes through, too. Next year, about 6,000 people will trek through - an increase of 50 percent over the last two years, says John F. **Morrissey**, the deputy director.

The students learn how to detect nerve gas and how to clean it off the helicopters and jeeps. **Mostly**, they learn how to overcome the natural terror of being anywhere near the stuff.

"It's a confidence course," **Morrissey** says. "When they first go in, they're afraid to **move**. But after a while, they learn that they can do it."

Waiting on this day to go in is Pvt. Jacob Niccum, 21, of Belleville. The tension level among his batch of trainees suggests a team of athletes about to take the field for the Super Bowl. Niccum says, "I've been hearing about this day since Day One."

Is he nervous? "A little bit, sir."

Morrissey briefs visitors at length about the safety features. He says that the center has never had a gas casualty, although the occasional trainee gives way to nervous overload or heat stress from their bulky **MOPP** outfits.

Through windows, visitors can watch the trainees as they **move** from bay to bay, gaining confidence with each step. All look forward to day's end, when they'll peel off the clothing specially issued to them for that day. "From the underwear out, we provide it," says **Morrissey**.

The clothing goes through decontamination, and so do the trainees. Within the complex, they shower down. "They're sweaty," says **Morrissey**, "and covered with charcoal. It's been a long day, and they're glad to be in the shower."

They come out clean - and primed to carry the gospel of chemical defense into the field to the rest of the Army.

"Other soldiers have to believe that this Chemical Corps guy knows what he's talking about," **Morrissey** says. "He can say to them, 'I've used this mask in a toxic environment. I *know* that it works.'"

Reporter Harry Levins: E-mail: hlevins@post-dispatch.com Phone: 314-340-8144

<http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/news/32F24EDB9C32CE0F86256C86006709AC?OpenDocument&highlight=2%2CFORT%2CLEONARD%2CWOOD%2CMo&headline=Missouri+Army+base+trains+for+chemical+weapons>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Washington Post
December 5, 2002
Pg. VA3

Bioterrorism Defense Plan Takes Shape

Progress Made In Preparations

By Chris L. Jenkins, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Alexandria Health Department has hired an epidemiologist and a staff member to oversee anti-bioterrorism programs. In Loudoun, health workers have developed a plan for communicating with neighboring counties and cities in case of a smallpox outbreak, and the county is waiting for more experts to come on board this month.

In Arlington County, public health officials have developed a detailed plan for responding to a bioterrorism threat, with specific responsibilities for staff members.

Across Northern Virginia, cities and counties have beefed up their health departments in preparing for a possible biological weapon attack that could infect residents with anything from smallpox to dangerous influenza. Under state supervision, some health departments have developed ways to identify pathogens more quickly. Others have written action plans.

Everything has been financed by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, which allotted Virginia \$22 million last month to continue planning and preparation.

In Arlington, officials are going a step further and participating in a federal test of how quickly hundreds of civilians could be vaccinated in case of attack.

Next month, the county plans to host a Department of Health and Human Services mock vaccination exercise with 500 people at Washington-Lee High School. Each will be given an orange to be injected with water as everyone moves through a line. Then, to approximate a crowd of 1,000, the group will repeat the process.

Officials said it's a way to see how the federal government responds to a large crowd that may need to be immunized quickly.

Arlington officials were quick to note, however, that the county was not singled out because it faces a special risk but only because it volunteered to participate in the federal exercise.

Overall, state officials cite progress in preparing for possible attack.

"I think we have made great strides in improving our ability to respond quickly," said Lisa Kaplowitz, Virginia's deputy commissioner for emergency preparedness and response. "What we're trying to do is develop an infrastructure, so that staff is in place, trained and equipped with a tested system."

Some of the most significant progress has been in hiring specialists. In recent months, each Northern Virginia health department has hired an epidemiologist or bioterrorism event coordinator. Statewide, all 138 new positions are expected to be filled by next month.

In addition, health departments have sent smallpox response plans to the CDC. Because funding comes from Uncle Sam, the state's budget troubles are not affecting local health departments' ability to hire and train extra staff. Some have found better ways to communicate with state labs. Others have developed procedures to cooperate with nearby military bases.

"One of the most important things we've been able to do is get our epidemiologist and bioterrorism director hired," said Charles Konigsberg, director of the Alexandria Department of Public Health. "Once we are able to hire staff, we're better able to complete our preparedness plans."

In Fairfax County, officials of 25 government departments, including schools, hospitals and the water authority, meet monthly for updates on how to respond to bioterrorism.

In addition, the county's hazardous materials team is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week -- a procedure that started Sept. 11, 2001 -- and emergency procedures for all county staff members have been updated. The county has improved its communications system to contact county employees via e-mail immediately in an emergency, and it has reassigned personnel to focus exclusively on informing the public if bioterrorism occurs.

"We heard from the public that they wanted to make sure they were properly informed at all times," said Merni Fitzgerald, Fairfax's director of public information.

Throughout the region, plans have been developed to respond to potential diseases. Guidelines have been established for anthrax, plagues and viral fevers. Preparations include development of fact sheets for doctors, diagnoses for health care providers and directions on how to treat and control infection quickly.

For instance, in its report to the CDC on smallpox preparation, Virginia has recommended that several locations be available as inoculation sites if the federal government decides to vaccinate Americans in anticipation of an attack. President Bush has not decided whether to offer a smallpox vaccine, given concerns about potential side effects. State officials have also identified sites that might be used after a smallpox attack and how public health staff members would relay information to doctors, emergency workers and the public.

Several local officials also said that recent public health scares, including anthrax-related incidents, have helped them develop better-coordinated and detailed plans.

"I think we've learned a lot from last year and our recent cases of malaria," said David Goodfriend, director of public health for Loudoun.

Last year, a 59-year-old contract worker at a State Department mail facility in Sterling contracted inhalation anthrax. Goodfriend said such events forced the county to communicate across jurisdictions, even across state lines with Maryland in the case of the malaria outbreak, to attack a public health problem jointly.

"We've been able to learn from those experiences and develop some good strategies," he said.

Regional and state officials acknowledge that preparing for bioterrorism means constantly retooling procedures to keep up with new information.

"It continues to be a work in progress," said Mark Penn, deputy coordinator for emergency services in Arlington, who said the county is constantly reviewing its plans to ensure that they are timely. "When you think you're done, you're really not done."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A8496-2002Dec4.html>

[\(Return to Contents\)](#)

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Pg. 1

Smallpox Vaccine Reactions Jolt Experts

From Rashes to Fevers, Array of Side Effects Is Uncommon Today

By Ceci Connolly, Washington Post Staff Writer

As physical specimens, the Baylor University students were fit and healthy, the "crème de la crème," in the words of researcher Kathy Edwards. Yet when she inoculated them with smallpox vaccine, arms swelled, temperatures spiked and panic spread.

It was the same at clinics in Iowa, Tennessee and California. Of 200 young adults who received the vaccine as part of a recent government study, one-third missed at least one day of work or school, 75 had high fevers, and several were put on antibiotics because physicians worried that their blisters signaled a bacterial infection.

Even for experts such as Edwards, the Vanderbilt University physician overseeing the study, the side effects were startling. "I can read all day about it, but seeing it is quite impressive," she said. "The reactions we saw were really quite remarkable."

President Bush is poised to announce plans, perhaps as early as this week, to resume vaccinating Americans against smallpox as part of a massive push to protect the nation from a biological assault. As he weighs the decision, researchers are becoming reacquainted with the unpleasant -- often severe -- complications of the vaccine.

The experiences in a half-dozen clinical trials offer an early look at what military personnel, hospital workers and other emergency workers will likely encounter if Bush adopts the recommendations of his top health advisers to vaccinate as many as 11 million people in the coming months. What is disconcerting, say the people participating in the clinical trials, is that when it comes to smallpox vaccination, what had once been considered ordinary is rather extraordinary by today's standards.

"I just wanted to go to bed for a day or two there," said Alison Francis, a New York University graduate student who received the vaccine. Francis, 24, said she felt tired and achy after getting her shot. Her arm was heavy, warm to the touch and terribly itchy. "I thought, 'Can you just chop off my arm?'"

Participating in the study was part patriotism and part selfishness, she said. "Now I'm protected."

Once among the deadliest scourges on earth, smallpox was declared eradicated worldwide in 1981. But growing hostilities with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden and others have renewed fears that the virus could be used as a potent, stealthy weapon. Vaccination is surefire protection against the disease, but it is risky. For every 1 million vaccinated, between 15 and 52 people will suffer life-threatening consequences such as brain inflammation, and one or two will die, according to historical data. Pregnant women, babies, people with eczema or weakened immune systems should not receive the vaccine.

Federal health officials have proposed resuming vaccination in stages, beginning with as many as 500,000 hospital workers most likely to see an initial case. Later, as many as 10 million police, fire and medical personnel would be offered the vaccine. The Pentagon hopes to vaccinate 500,000 soldiers.

Over the past year, federal researchers have been testing the 40-year-old vaccine for its safety and potency. None of the 1,500 volunteers has died or been seriously injured by the vaccine. But even the most mundane cases can be disturbing to doctors and patients unaccustomed to the live virus used in the vaccine and its side effects.

Unlike most modern vaccines, the smallpox vaccine is administered by 15 quick pricks that "establish an infection in your skin," said Julie Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. "There is the immediate discomfort of getting poked in the arm and a range of annoying reactions."

Within three to four days, a red itchy bump develops, followed by a larger blister filled with pus. In the second week, the blister dries and turns into a scab that usually falls off in the third week. During the three weeks, many people experience flu-like symptoms -- aches, fever, lethargy -- and terrible itchiness.

"You can't scratch it; it's all bandaged up; all I could do was smack it," said Meg Gifford, a University of Maryland junior who participated in one study. For a weekend, she was "pretty miserable," suffering from a slight fever, an arm that was hot to the touch and swollen lymph nodes in her armpit.

At the University of Rochester Medical Center, researcher John Treanor saw a wide range of reactions, from a small rash to swelling the size of a grapefruit. About 5 percent of the 170 participants had rashes that spread to other parts of the body. It took time and experience, he said, for the team to get comfortable with the natural course of the vaccine.

"The reactions we are seeing are totally out of line with today's vaccine experience and absolutely in line with historical experience," said Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. "In the 30 years since we had routine vaccination, the public's tolerance level has gone way down."

Maryland researchers have begun a second trial revaccinating older adults to see how much immunity stays in the system. Early indications are that people who have been previously inoculated do not suffer as many severe side effects. "I had a small red mark and that was about it," said Edward Dudley, 33.

Very few of today's physicians have administered the vaccine or treated its side effects. Even at the CDC, where health experts work with an array of germs, smallpox vaccinations were briefly halted when 10 people had serious enough reactions to begin antibiotics, said Walter Orenstein, director of the CDC's National Immunization Program. "The clinic physician couldn't decide if this was a normal, primary exuberant take or a bacterial infection," he said. He added that, in fact, the swollen, itchy, red arms were routine.

As a first-year medical student 33 years ago, Orenstein was so alarmed by the fever, swollen glands and red streak up his arm after he was vaccinated that he went to the emergency room for antibiotics. "I respect this vaccine," he said.

If Bush moves forward with vaccination, Edwards warns doctors to expect the array of unsightly, unfamiliar complications that will come.

"You are going to have to be prepared to see these individuals and to see really bad takes," she told state health officers. "You'll wonder if they are bacterial infections; in some cases the rash will move up the arm and onto the chest. The vaccinee requires a lot of TLC."

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[\(Return to Contents\)](#)