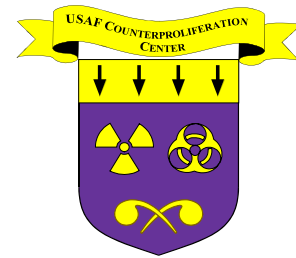


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U.S. Officials Question Link Between 9/11 And Iraq

By Peter Eisler, USA Today

WASHINGTON — Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network has ties to Iraqi intelligence that date to the mid-1990s, when they came together in Sudan to support Islamic insurgencies in Algeria and across the Middle East. The CIA had convincing evidence at the time that Saddam Hussein's regime was funneling money through bin Laden to the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria and other terrorist organizations, according to current and former U.S. officials who reviewed intelligence at the time. The scheme was seen as an effort to mask Iraq's support for the groups.

It's unclear whether the pass-through was directed by bin Laden, then living in Sudan, or by his circle of associates, at least one of whom was identified by 1994 as having close ties to Iraq's intelligence service, officials say.

The previously unreported arrangement appears to be the earliest in a series of murky connections between Iraq and bin Laden. It raises new questions in the fiery debate over whether Saddam's regime — and its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs — should be the next target in the war on terrorism.

If U.S. officials can establish a firm Iraq-al-Qaeda link, particularly with respect to the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, it will give leverage to those in the Bush administration who want to take the war on terrorism to Iraq. So far President Bush has been non-committal, partly because key Gulf allies warn that any military action against Iraq without proof of an al-Qaeda link would shatter the coalition behind the anti-terror campaign.

Bin Laden was relatively unknown when the Sudan connection surfaced in 1994. He had been expelled from Saudi Arabia, but his fortune, business ventures and budding ideas of Holy War had made him a welcome guest of the radical National Islamic Front, the party that held power in Khartoum, Sudan's capital.

Saddam, under intense international scrutiny after the Gulf War, also had strong ties to Khartoum, and Iraqi intelligence was well represented in the stew of Islamic radicals, insurrectionists and foreign agents pouring through the city.

"We were convinced that money from Iraq was going to bin Laden, who was then sending it to places that Iraq wanted it to go," says Stanley Bedlington, a senior analyst in the CIA's counterterrorism center from 1986 until his retirement in 1994.

"There certainly is no doubt that Saddam Hussein had pretty strong ties to bin Laden while he was in Sudan, whether it was directly or through (Sudanese) intermediaries. We traced considerable sums of money going from bin Laden to the GIA in Algeria. We believed some of the money came from Iraq."

At the time, bin Laden was just emerging in U.S. intelligence reports on Sudan's sponsorship of terrorist groups and the role Iraq, Iran and other Arab states played in those arrangements.

Federal officials now are reviewing those old reports, looking not only for evidence of overt contacts between Saddam and al-Qaeda, such as Iraqi money passing through bin Laden, but for more covert ties, including the possibility that Iraqi intelligence had penetrated al-Qaeda.

Interpreting the evidence

Most current and former officials who have tracked Saddam's regime and bin Laden's organization believe there has been regular contact between the two. Many suspect that Iraqi operatives have helped al-Qaeda, perhaps with bomb-making materials and expertise, forged identity papers and safe houses — the sort of assistance Iraq has provided to any number of terrorist groups. But relatively few believe Iraq is directly involved in the planning and execution of al-Qaeda attacks.

The debate is based mainly on a handful of known contacts:

Mohamed Atta, the ringleader in the Sept. 11 attacks, met in Prague last April with Ahmed al-Ani, a suspected Iraqi intelligence chief posted at Iraq's Czech embassy. Czech Prime Minister Milos Zeman, whose agents monitored the meeting, says Atta and the Iraqi discussed a plot to bomb the Prague offices of Radio Free Europe, which broadcasts U.S.-backed programs into Iraq.

The meeting, according to Czech intelligence, focused only on the radio station, an alleged target of Iraqi agents at least once before, in 1998. But many suspect the Sept. 11 attacks were a topic, too. Atta, who'd made at least one

previous trip to Prague, traveled 72 straight hours from Florida and back to see al-Ani. Upon returning, he used money wired from the Middle East to finance the attacks.

Farouk Hijazi, Iraq's ambassador to Turkey and reputedly a top official in Saddam's intelligence service, went to Afghanistan in 1998, after bin Laden was implicated in the U.S. embassy bombings in East Africa, and offered the accused terrorist sanctuary in Iraq.

Iraqi officials deny any such invitation. But Vincent Cannistraro, former counterterrorism chief at the CIA, says the agency has evidence to the contrary: "Hijazi wanted bin Laden to relocate to Iraq, but bin Laden turned it down. He knew Saddam wanted to make him a tool of Iraqi policy."

The meeting was first made public by the Iraqi National Congress, an exiled opposition group that contends that Saddam's regime has helped train, equip and plan al-Qaeda attacks.

Two Iraqi defectors this month provided details on a terrorist training camp south of Baghdad in Salman Pak, first identified by United Nations weapons inspectors in the early 1990s.

The defectors, in accounts provided by Iraqi opposition leaders, described a separate, secret compound where non-Iraqi Arabs, most of whom appeared to be Islamic radicals, were drilled in terrorist acts. Among other things, the trainees practiced hijackings in small groups, armed only with knives, on a Boeing 707.

"We always just called them the terrorist camps," says Charles Duelfer, former deputy chairman of the U.N. weapons inspection program in Iraq. "We reported them at the time, but they've obviously taken on new significance."

Other links between al-Qaeda and Iraq continue to crop up, including reports that at least two other people involved in the Sept. 11 attacks met with Iraqi agents beforehand. But most remain unconfirmed.

Cash and spies in Sudan

Whatever Iraq's relationship to al-Qaeda, its roots seem to be in Sudan. Bin Laden lived there from 1991 to 1996 after leaving his native Saudi Arabia, where his calls for a strict Islamic government had angered the monarchy. By 1994, U.S. officials were concerned that bin Laden was supporting Islamic insurgencies across the region.

The nexus of those efforts, according to U.S. and foreign officials, was Hassan Turabi, who headed Sudan's ruling National Islamic Front. Turabi, credited with bringing bin Laden to Sudan, opened the country to Islamic fundamentalists, providing training grounds and safe haven for terrorist operations, the officials say. Money for those efforts flowed in from several Middle Eastern states — including Iraq — and bin Laden was believed to be helping with its distribution.

"The years when bin Laden was establishing himself in Sudan also happened to be a time when there was a lot of Iraqi-Sudanese activity," says Steven Simon, a counterterrorism advisor for Clinton.

Many people associated with al-Qaeda came from a loose network of operatives who served a variety of states and terrorist organizations, and there were a lot of "tactical and shifting contacts," adds Simon, now at London's International Institute for Strategic Studies. He notes, for example, that it is rumored in London that some of the people Saddam employed to assassinate Iraqi dissidents "were affiliated with al-Qaeda."

U.S. officials worried at the time that Saddam was sponsoring development of chemical weapons in Sudan, and U.N. inspectors documented visits to Khartoum by officials in Iraq's chemical weapons program. Some believe bin Laden and his associates were helping to finance the weapons work.

The recent wave of anthrax-tainted letters to U.S. officials and media outlets has spurred speculation that bin Laden may also have gotten Iraqi help in building his own arsenal. Newly discovered camps in Afghanistan where al-Qaeda operatives appear to have experimented with chemical weapons may yield new information on any connections.

"There's a lot of (intelligence) collection going on in those caves and mountains," says Duelfer, the former UN official. "We're going to hear about more ties between al-Qaeda and Iraq, particularly when it comes to al-Qaeda's efforts to get chemical and biological weapons."

It was also during bin Laden's time in Sudan that U.S. intelligence officials began suspecting that Iraq's foreign intelligence service was trying to penetrate the then-fledgling al-Qaeda organization. And the question of whether Iraqi agents are operating secretly within al-Qaeda's ranks is one that the CIA continues to investigate.

"There was a guy in bin Laden's entourage in Khartoum — he was not what you would call 'active duty,' but he had very close connections to Iraqi intelligence," recalls one former CIA operative who declined to be identified. "He was close to bin Laden and dealt with him a lot in his incarnation as factory builder and road builder."

Most officials doubt that anyone in the upper ranks of al-Qaeda is an Iraqi spy. And there's great debate about the extent to which Iraqi agents may have been able to get inside bin Laden's organization, which vets recruits extensively.

Even so, virtually no one doubts that Saddam would try to place someone inside al-Qaeda.

"That's the way he works," says Tim McCarthy, a scholar at the Monterey Institute of International Studies who did U.N. inspections in Iraq — an operation that itself was penetrated by Iraqi agents. "Saddam believes in getting inside these sorts of organizations."

Wafiq al Samarrai, who headed Iraq's military intelligence operation before defecting in 1994, also believes Saddam has agents inside al-Qaeda, though he doubts they're in the upper ranks. The agents "most likely would be from other countries, Egyptians or Jordanians or Yemenis," he says. "It wouldn't be Iraqis — the Iraqis in al-Qaeda are few."

A question of proof

Despite the contacts between Iraq and bin Laden's organization, there's still much debate over the precise nature of the relationship.

"In that part of the universe, the part occupied by Muslims who hate Americans, there are bound to be some (al-Qaeda) contacts with Iraqi agents, even some who are known as such," says Daniel Benjamin, a former National Security Council advisor on terrorism during the Clinton administration.

But Benjamin, now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, sides with many who doubt that Iraq has any meaningful role in steering al-Qaeda's operations. "We were never aware of any substantial cooperation," he says.

Those who doubt any sort of substantive relationship are quick to note that there are deep philosophical differences between Saddam and bin Laden. The most obvious is that Saddam, a secular autocrat who has repressed Islamic fundamentalists in his own country, seems to be the type of Arab leader that the deeply religious bin Laden often rails against.

Yet there's a vocal and powerful group of officials in the U.S. military and intelligence communities who believe Iraq and al-Qaeda work hand-in-hand. They point to what they see as clear evidence of state sponsorship in al-Qaeda strikes, such as the use of large amounts of C-4, a hard-to-get military explosive, in the October 2000 attack on the USS Cole, a Navy frigate rammed at a Yemen port by a suicide bomber on a small boat.

"People put aside ideological differences to work towards common goals — in this case, driving America out of the Middle East," says Laurie Mylroie, author of *Study of Revenge*, which makes a case that Iraq helped plot the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Bin Laden "is not capable of carrying out the kind of major assaults we've seen Iraqi intelligence provides the expertise and direction. Proving it is difficult, but many things that are true can't be proven."

Many who are pushing to turn the U.S. war on terrorism against Saddam believe there never will be absolute proof of Iraqi involvement in al-Qaeda attacks. But they say no more evidence is necessary, given Iraq's history of sponsoring terrorism, including a foiled 1993 plot to assassinate former President Bush, and Saddam's blocking of U.N. weapons inspections.

"I don't know what the (Iraq-al-Qaeda) relationship is, whether it's a 90-10 joint venture or a 10-90 joint venture, and it doesn't matter," says former CIA director James Woolsey. Some al-Qaeda attacks "look like a foreign intelligence service was involved, and we have a long history of contacts between Iraqi intelligence and al-Qaeda," Woolsey adds. "All of that, plus the (blocking) of the U.N. inspections, is enough."

Contributing: Barbara Slavin

New York Times
December 3, 2001
Pg. 1

Terror Anthrax Linked To Type Made By U.S.

By William J. Broad

The dry powder used in the anthrax attacks is virtually indistinguishable in critical technical respects from that produced by the United States military before it shut down its biowarfare program, according to federal scientists and a report prepared for a military contractor.

The preliminary analysis of the powder shows that it has the same extraordinarily high concentration of deadly spores as the anthrax produced in the American weapons program. While it is still possible that the anthrax could have a foreign source, the concentration is higher than any stock publicly known to be produced by other governments.

The similarity to the levels achieved by the United States military lends support to the idea that someone with ties to the old program may be behind the attacks that have killed five people. The Federal Bureau of Investigation recently expanded its investigation of anthrax suspects to include government and contractor laboratories as a possible source of the deadly powder itself, or of knowledge of how to make it.

Its high concentration is surprising, weapon experts said, and far beyond what military analysts once judged as the likely abilities of terrorists. Still, experts caution that the emerging evidence is tentative and that it is too early to rule out other possible suspects, be they domestic lone wolves or hostile foreign states like Iraq.

A yardstick for measuring the quality of anthrax emerged almost three years ago when William C. Patrick III, a longtime federal consultant and one of the nation's top experts on biological weapons, wrote a report assessing the possible risks if terrorists were to send anthrax through the mail. Based on the difficulty of developing advanced anthrax, he predicted that the terrorist germs would be one-twentieth as concentrated as what the government developed and what has recently turned letters into munitions.

"The quality of the spores is very good," said a federal science adviser who shared the Patrick report with The New York Times. "This is very high-quality stuff" — equal, he said, in concentration to that produced by the United States military before it abandoned germ weapons.

The high quality, the adviser said, lends credence to the idea that someone with links to military laboratories or their contractors might be behind the attacks. "It's frightening to think that one of our own scientists could have done something like this," he said. "But it's definitely possible."

He said the anthrax sent to the Senate contained as many as one trillion spores per gram, a figure confirmed by an administration official.

A gram is just one-twenty-eighth of an ounce. Yet in comprising up to one trillion spores, a gram of anthrax powder has vast potential to kill. If a lethal dose is estimated conservatively at 10,000 microscopic spores, then a gram in theory could cause about 100 million deaths.

The letter sent to Tom Daschle, the Senate Democratic leader, is said to have held two grams of anthrax — enough, in other words, to make about 200 million lethal doses, assuming it could be distributed to victims with perfect efficiency.

Analysis of the Daschle powder has been hampered by the small amount recovered after an aide opened the letter, and by technical missteps as the investigation got under way, making some conclusions iffy. That is why investigators are taking great care in opening the anthrax-contaminated letter sent to Patrick J. Leahy, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The aim is to scrutinize the evidence as closely as possible.

Spore concentration is just one factor experts will examine in the Leahy letter, and their findings could significantly alter their picture of the powder. Other factors that reflect the quality of anthrax production include whether the powder has been ground to a size that easily lodges in the lungs and whether it has been treated to make it static free and free-floating. Investigators will look for antistatic additives that might be a possible hallmark of a particular government's weapons program.

Mr. Patrick, in his risk assessment, sketched out both what the American military achieved and what a terrorist might do. His 28-page report, dated February 1999, was written for a federal contractor advising the government on how to handle the growing number of anthrax hoaxes and what to expect if real anthrax were to be sent through the mail.

"When these hoaxes first came up, we assumed none of the bad guys" could achieve high-grade anthrax, said a contractor official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

It is unknown publicly exactly how makers of anthrax weapons achieve high spore concentrations, but the black art is said to involve precise drying, sifting, milling and removal of impurities.

In his assessment, Mr. Patrick drew on personal knowledge acquired while working in the nation's offensive biological weapons program from 1951 to 1969, when it was dismantled, at which time he was chief of the division of product development. He won five patents with his colleagues for ways to make biological weapons.

His 1999 report focused on what kinds of contamination terrorist anthrax would cause when a letter was opened and what the requirements for decontamination were.

Mr. Patrick postulated that the concentration of anthrax would be 50 billion spores per gram. "This assumes a dried powder of moderate ability to generate into an aerosol when the envelope is opened," he wrote.

He predicted that an envelope would hold 2.5 grams of anthrax — an amount strikingly close to what is thought to have been mailed to Senator Daschle.

In his report, Mr. Patrick said the American program had achieved a concentration of one trillion spores per gram — what scientists today say is near the theoretical limit of how many of the microscopic spheres can be packed into a tiny space.

Today, no terrorist or scientific maverick is known to have published anything that comes close to describing how to make concentrated anthrax powders. Timothy W. Tobiason, a habitué of gun shows who sells a self-published cookbook on how to make germ weapons, including "mail delivered" anthrax, sketches out only the most rudimentary steps.

Experts judge Mr. Tobiason's recipes as flawed in spots and at best capable of producing only low-quality anthrax. His book deals mostly with the production of wet anthrax, though it does suggest a way to grind clusters of dried anthrax into microscopic pieces, which can settle into the lungs.

It is unclear if any foreign nation has achieved high anthrax concentrations. The United States suspects that more than a dozen countries are clandestinely studying biological weapons, with anthrax among the top agents.

Ken Alibek, a former top official in the Soviet germ weapons program who is now president of Advanced Biosystems, a consulting company in Manassas, Va., said that it was routinely possible to create dry anthrax that contained 100 billion spores per gram and that, with some effort, 500 billion was possible.

"The infectious dose," Dr. Alibek said, "can be quite large."

Still, the 500 billion figure is half the concentration that the American government and whoever sent the letters are said to have achieved.

"I don't think they're manufacturing this in caves," Dr. Alibek said of the terror anthrax. "It's coming from another source."

Washington Post
December 3, 2001
Pg. 19

In The Loop

How Now, Brown Chow?

By Al Kamen

At a press briefing in late October, Maj. Gen. John Parker, the commanding general of the Army's medical research for infectious diseases program, said the scientist who first examined a letter to the New York Post observed that the anthrax spores inside "looked like Purina Dog Chow," brown and clumpy, which made analysis difficult.

Speculation was the letter may have gotten wet.

Since then, a Nexis search reveals at least 50 references in major media outlets tying the estimable and, according to our pooch, most delicious dog food, to the deadly bacteria. The folks at Ralston Purina were not amused.

So when our colleague, Rick Weiss, repeated the reference in an article last week and later told Army folks he might return to the topic this week, he got this e-mail from a Pentagon spokesman.

"Col. Erik A. Henchal forwarded your note to me regarding possibly running another version of your story on Monday. Is there any chance you could leave out the Purina Dog Chow reference? Gen. Parker wrote a letter of apology to Ralston Purina after he inadvertently used that comparison in a White House press briefing. Ralston Purina was very sensitive about having their product named in this comparison. Gen. Parker has very carefully avoided saying it again."

Weiss said no prob.

Washington Post
December 2, 2001
Pg. 6

Missile Defense Test's Value Questioned

Stormy Calif. Weather Delays Fifth Trial

By Bradley Graham, Washington Post Staff Writer

Cloud cover, lightning and high winds over California forced the postponement last night of a fifth test of a prototype national missile defense system amid fresh argument over the value of the tightly scripted experiment in determining the weapon's feasibility.

A Pentagon official said a range safety rule requiring continued visual tracking of a missile in flight, as well as concern about static interference arising from the stormy weather, prevented the launch of a target missile. The test was rescheduled for tonight, but with more poor weather expected, the official said that a further delay was likely. The test is due to follow the same scenario used in the past four trials. The target missile will be launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base northwest of Los Angeles and will arc across the Pacific, releasing both a mock warhead and a single balloon decoy. Twenty minutes later, an interceptor missile is supposed to blast off from Kwajalein Atoll in the central Pacific about 4,500 miles away. Once in space, a "kill vehicle" -- a 120-pound, 5-foot-tall device resembling a telescope with a jet pack -- is to separate from its booster and home in on the imitation 5 1/2-foot-tall warhead.

If all goes according to plan, the kill vehicle will ram into the warhead about 140 miles over the Pacific, demonstrating a concept that defense officials have dubbed "hit to kill."

With a record of two hits and two misses in four previous intercept attempts, the Pentagon is avoiding any major changes in the target, interceptor or test course that might add risk this time. A new critique by the Union of Concerned Scientists released on Friday called attention to the lack of operational realism in the test, citing a continued heavy reliance on surrogates and artificial elements. But Pentagon officials defended the simplified measures as part of a step-by-step approach that is normal in the early development of a complex weapons system. Lt. Gen. Ronald Kadish, director of the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO), told reporters on Friday that a hit would give him confidence enough to move on to more complicated and realistic test scenarios, including the use of more and different decoys. A miss, depending on the cause, could stir renewed questions about the Bush administration's ambitious development plan, which many Democratic lawmakers, scientists and arms control advocates regard as unworkable, unaffordable and unnecessary.

The land-based interceptor system is only one of several technological approaches that the Bush administration is pursuing in a broadened program of experimentation. Others involve sea-based interceptors, airborne lasers and space-based weapons. But the land-based interceptor design has received the most funding and attention, having been accelerated by the Clinton administration in 1999.

In its 28-page critique, the Union of Concerned Scientists said artificial test conditions such as the use of a single decoy mean that the results will reveal little about the proposed system's ability to operate under real combat conditions.

The report noted that the booster used to launch the kill vehicle travels at only a third of the speed intended for the actual weapon, whose new and faster booster is more than a year behind schedule.

Additionally, it said that each of the mock warheads used in the tests has carried a transponder and that the transponder data have been designed to provide the initial guidance to the interceptor for when to launch and where to fly. Pentagon officials have said that the transponder is necessary to compensate for the lack of a high-precision X-band radar in the proper location in the testing range. And they have said that data from the transponder have not factored in the final homing of the kill vehicle. But the report of the scientists' group said the transponder has served to get the kill vehicle to a location in space that has minimized the amount of maneuvering it has had to do.

The report also observed that all the tests -- including the planned fifth one -- essentially have been the same, with no change in the trajectories of the missiles, the target complex, the time of day of the launches and the intended intercept point.

"We find that the current test program is still in its infancy, and that the United States remains years away from having enough information to make an informed decision on the deployment of even a limited nationwide missile defense system," the report concluded. "Hit-to-kill has been demonstrated, but not under conditions that are operationally relevant."

Kadish himself emphasized several times on Friday that the purpose of these initial tests was not to prove the system's ability to operate under real-life conditions but to identify weaknesses and acquire confidence in the approach. "We are testing to learn; we are not testing as pass-fail for some operational reason," he said. "There seems to be confusion on this every time I discuss these types of tests."

Kadish said that artificialities are inherent in much developmental testing but that the plan is to eliminate them in the missile defense program over time. To this end, the administration has proposed such changes as launching interceptors from Alaska and using ship-based tracking radars.

But some of these moves, as well as plans to test other kinds of antimissile technologies, threaten to bring the United States into conflict with the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which bans some kinds of experimentation as well as the deployment of a nationwide missile defense. President Bush has declared his desire to set the treaty aside, but he and Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is intent on preserving the treaty in some form, were unable to work out their differences during meetings last month.

To avoid a confrontation over the treaty, the administration decided to forgo the use of a ship-based Aegis radar and a land-based radar planned for the latest test.

New York Times on the Web
December 3, 2001

Missile Defense Test Postponed

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Bad weather on the California coast frustrated Pentagon efforts to carry out the fifth test of a missile defense system over the weekend.

The test, scrubbed both Saturday and Sunday primarily because of high winds at the Vandenberg Air Force Base launch site, was rescheduled for Monday night.

The Pentagon is counting on one more successful test of its missile defense system before adding new technical challenges to the testing program. It was not clear what would happen if the launch could not take place Monday night.

The plan calls for a modified intercontinental ballistic missile carrying a mock warhead to head over the central Pacific Ocean. Twenty minutes later, an interceptor rocket would roar into the night sky from Kwajalein Atoll, hone in on the mock warhead with the help of a radar in Hawaii, and ram into the warhead 144 miles into space.

The device that actually hits the warhead is known as a "kill vehicle," a 120-pound, 55-inch long device that separates from the rocket booster and seeks out the target using its on-board infrared sensor.

Of the first four attempts to intercept a mock warhead in space, two succeeded and two failed.

After the most recent test, in July, scored a direct hit, the Pentagon decided the fifth would repeat the same scenario rather than add complexities or remove any of the test's artificial elements.

Some say the program is too simplistic to reveal much about how well the system would work in an actual missile attack on the United States.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Ronald Kadish, head of the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, told reporters last week that a successful intercept would allow him to increase the realism of the sixth test, now scheduled for February.

One new element for the next test would be additional "countermeasures" -- such as balloon decoys meant to confuse the interceptor.

A single, large balloon decoy was to be used in Sunday's test.

The Bush administration has set no target date for fielding a missile defense system that could be used in actual combat. President Bush considers this project an urgent priority and is committing billions of dollars to it.

Each intercept test costs about \$100 million.

Insight Magazine
December 24, 2001

Cover Story

Defense First

By J. Michael Waller

President George W. Bush is on the brink of a stunning new accomplishment in defense of the nation. Bit by bit, senior administration figures tell Insight, he is dismantling what they say he regards as a failed and discredited system of treaties, arms-control processes and official cover-ups that have hog-tied the United States for decades while allowing adversaries and rogue regimes to develop, proliferate and deploy weapons of mass destruction. Presidential insiders say Bush believes a decade of morally corrupt winks and nods at proliferators and state sponsors of terrorism helped make possible the carnage of Sept. 11.

Never again, Bush says. No more slaps on the wrist. No more looking the other way. No more haggling over endless negotiations or cramming for artificial deadlines, knowing all the while that the bad guys will lie and cheat and that the State Department will help conceal their embarrassment.

Even before Sept. 11, members of Bush's national-security team blamed the antique arms-control process for preventing the United States from defending itself against emerging missile threats, while rewarding Russia and

China as they sold biological-, chemical- and nuclear-weapons technology —and the missiles to deliver them — to terrorist regimes.

Incredibly, Bush's lieutenants are finding what one source calls "rank insubordination" within the State Department and elsewhere. Insight has learned that some U.S. officials opposed to the new policy have collaborated with foreign governments to embarrass, discredit and undermine the president's own representatives and thereby prevent his policies from being implemented, even after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

In a meeting with two American Christian missionaries freed from Taliban imprisonment in Afghanistan, Bush equated terrorists and proliferators: "If anybody harbors a terrorist, they're a terrorist. If they fund a terrorist, they're a terrorist. If they house terrorists, they're terrorists. I mean, I can't make it any more clear to other nations around the world. If they develop weapons of mass destruction that will be used to terrorize nations, they will be held accountable."

The president was echoing the words of his senior adviser for arms control and nonproliferation, Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton. In a Nov. 19 speech to an international Biological Weapons Convention meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, Bolton said the United States is "concerned about the potential use of biological weapons by terrorist groups and states that support them." He told amazed delegates, "I plan to name names. Prior to Sept. 11, some would have avoided this approach. The world has changed, however, and so must our business-as-usual approach." Bolton rattled off the list: Iraq, North Korea, Iran, Libya, Syria and the Sudan. "There are other states I could have named which the United States will be contacting privately concerning our belief that they are pursuing an offensive BW [biological-weapons] program," he said in a frank pronouncement. Administration sources tell Insight that those countries include Russia and China, which are a "central element" to the supply of rogue and terrorist regimes. Because of the complex and far-reaching relationships the United States has with Moscow and Beijing, officials say, the administration is not ready to single them out. At least, not yet.

That was too much for some of the assembled international diplomats and for U.S. government officials. Insight has learned that a fourth-echelon arms-control doyenne has leaked internal policy material to foreign governments in the hope that they would protest and thus force Secretary of State Colin Powell pre-emptively to kill the president's new, assertive policies. That is how easily Clinton holdovers and other arms-control apostles feel Powell can be manipulated.

Bush now has assembled a national-security team devoted to overturning the establishment idea that the nation's safety is best ensured by pieces of paper, endless diplomatic talks, artificial deadlines and multilateral hand-holding. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice tutored Bush on defense and foreign policy during the 2000 campaign. Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld also were trusted Bush advisers along the campaign trail. Even Bolton, a Yale-trained lawyer who had served in foreign-policy and Justice Department posts in the Reagan and first Bush administrations, played a crucial role during and immediately after the campaign, when he personally monitored the repeated ballot-counting in Florida to ensure against voter fraud.

On the other hand, Powell barely lifted a finger to help elect Bush, and even indicated that he would be willing to serve under Al Gore. His only memorable campaign activity was to chide Republicans at their Philadelphia convention for being insensitive to the needs of minorities. Opponents of Bush's America-first policies have placed their hopes in Powell to moderate the president's enthusiasms and water down his directives.

Powell assembled a State Department team that pointedly excluded conservatives from most senior positions.

"Powell has filled many of his key assistant-secretary jobs — the people who oversee the six regions of the globe — with career Foreign Service officers, to whom he has delegated the kind of authority a general gives to his division commanders," notes the New York Times Magazine's Bill Keller in a recent Powell profile. "Whether by design or not (Powell's people insist not), this has had the additional effect of assuring that those jobs would not go to White House political appointees whose views were to the right of his own."

The problem, staunch Bush supporters say, is that almost everyone in the Bush administration is to the right of Powell. The secretary's son, Michael, sums up their views: "What we both are is moderates." Cheerleader Keller artfully concedes, "He is a problem-solver, not a visionary."

In the Pentagon's new top echelons, there's no shortage of the "vision thing." Rumsfeld has assembled a team of some of Washington's stellar conservative and neoconservative defense thinkers and doers to shake up the Pentagon's moribund, often drifting, uniformed and civilian bureaucracies. The team includes Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and a creative and visionary policy shop headed by Undersecretary Douglas Feith. It features international-security policy chieftains J.D. Crouch and Peter Rodman, and operates under the guiding hand of Defense Policy Board Director Richard Perle. The Rice and Rumsfeld camps identify more with one another and with Vice President Cheney than with the more-cautious Powell.

Operating out of the White House, Rice brokers the personal and institutional rivalries of the national-security team for the president. Initially, many realists were skeptical of Rice's mettle, emerging as she did as a protégé of former

national-security adviser Brent Scowcroft. Little skepticism now remains. "Condi Rice has given all the right signals," says Uri Ra'anana, director of Boston University's Institute for the Study of Conflict, Ideology and Policy. "She's got guts. Every time I see her I'm impressed."

"You can find many within the administration and outside it who believe that the Powell view is naïve or amoral in a dangerous world," Keller notes in his glowing New York Times Magazine profile. Yet no insider would criticize Powell for the record either to Keller or Insight. Even so, the concerns focus on what is seen as Powell's excessive cautiousness and instinctive multilateralism despite the president's more-pronounced and self-confident unilateralism; a softness toward China and big-business interests; and a socially liberal worldview that clashes with the president's profoundly Christian outlook.

Unlike President Bush, insiders tell this magazine, Powell sneers at the legacy of his benefactor, Ronald Reagan, on whose National Security Council he served. He is particularly dismissive of Bush's main national-security initiative to scrap the Cold War-era Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and deploy defenses against incoming enemy missiles. In the New York Times Magazine profile, Keller reports, "Powell's suspicion of missile defense was nourished at its genesis, President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, which the young Pentagon aide [Powell] watched with a kind of amused horror.

"Reagan, God bless him, was forever talking about this shield and, you know, 'We're just going to make all offensive weapons useless,'" Powell recalled, rolling his eyes."

That attitude, Bush supporters say, puts at risk the president's evolving policies to take the American people's fate out of the hands of paper treaties and to go full-bore to secure and defend the homeland against enemy attack. The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks strengthened the president on the one hand but weakened him on the other.

On the plus side, it gave the realists the diplomatic cover to slap the world awake. "Just as we can no longer rely solely on traditional means to fight a war against terrorism, we need to look beyond traditional arms-control measures to deal with the complex and dangerous threats posed by biological weapons," Bolton told the Geneva germ-warfare conference. "The time for 'better-than-nothing' protocols is over. It is time for us to consider serious measures to address the BW threat. It is time to set aside years of diplomatic inertia. We will not be protected by a 'Maginot treaty' approach to the BW threat."

A senior administration official tells Insight, "There is one major difference in U.S. policy now: not to place reliance on thin hopes that other countries won't violate them."

Paradoxically, Sept. 11 also gave the arms-controllers an extra lease on life. Powell immediately seized on the need to solicit Russia's cooperation in the war against terrorism as an excuse not to scrap the ABM Treaty, and plans to break out of the treaty were put on hold. Powell believes the United States and Russia must formalize limits to U.S. missile-defense capabilities. Without such formal limits, Powell told Keller, "It goes from being a limited defense to: POW! Reagan's back. How do you persuade us that's not going to happen?"

A senior administration official insists, "The September shift [on the ABM Treaty] was more tactical than a reversal to the old way of doing things." If the United States can't get Russia to agree, "we'll exercise our right to withdraw." Even so, Bush loyalists are worried that State Department officials who view Russia and China as their private "game preserves," to be protected from truth-tellers, may sabotage the president's missile-defense policies piecemeal from the inside.

While Powell builds his fragile coalitions around the world and rolls his eyes at thoughts of Reagan, say insiders at Defense, Rumsfeld connects the president's policies directly with the American people. The defense secretary's near-daily news briefings — a potpourri of gritty tough talk about "killing the enemy" peppered with put-downs of ignorant reporters who ask foolish questions — have become so popular in real-town America that citizens actually call the Pentagon and their local TV stations to ask what time his briefings will be aired. Rumsfeld's grass-roots following is so huge that his briefings, nicknamed "The Rummy Show," have earned top Nielsen ratings, edging out MSNBC's Hardball with Chris Matthews and Fox and Friends in viewer popularity. (Readers can check the times of the live Rummy Show briefings by visiting the Pentagon Website at www.defenselink.mil/today.)

Even so, the administration has a long way to go before breaking with many of the objectionable aspects of the Clinton national-security legacy, say experts. "Of course it is covering up the Russian biochem issue," says Ra'anana. The American Foreign Policy Council's Ilan Berman agrees: "I think there is a predisposition to prefer personalities over policy. We are notoriously single-tracked when we set our minds to it. Things like missile defense and proliferation fall by the wayside and are pushed off as second-tier issues when we find common cause with the Russians."

"The Russians are doing the unforgivable on many points, and we're letting them pass. First, Russia is breaking the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement on Iran," Ra'anana notes, referring to the 1997 accord signed by Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to deny missile and nuclear-weapons technology to the

Iranian regime. "The Russians blatantly disregard it. They didn't just sidestep the agreement. They publicly announced that they're breaking it, and we have issued no sanctions at all."

A senior Bush administration official agrees, saying flatly: "They have repudiated the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement on nuclear exports." Russia, the official notes, continues selling nuclear-weapons technology to Iran "under the mask of assistance to a civilian nuclear reactor." Russian and Chinese missile and nuclear-weapons technology exports clearly have the approval of presidents Vladimir Putin and Jiang Zemin: "You couldn't account for this activity and sophistication of what's being shipped if it weren't state sanctioned."

The president has many tools at his disposal to discourage such proliferation, which "Clinton rarely imposed." Bush has just begun to use them, imposing sanctions Sept. 1 on China for continued sales of missile components to Pakistan.

"If Iran is fully armed and enabled to have delivery systems with weapons of mass destruction then we're wasting our time," Ra'anan says. "On this issue alone, we ought to come down on the Russians like a ton of bricks." But we aren't. One high-level official tells Insight that there are no plans to link support for Russia's economic recovery to its nuclear-missile proliferation. And that worries some of the country's dwindling core of realistic geostrategists. "We should make Iran a touchstone," Ra'anan counsels. "I would say to the Russians, 'We don't have a starting point until and unless this is stopped immediately.' We have not more than a year or two until Iran becomes a nuclear power, with half-a-dozen warheads and a delivery system. If we can't do something now, that's it. It's finished."

The secretary of state seems to be fighting a losing battle to paper over this. His desire to engage the Iranian mullahs finds few takers in the administration, while officials closer to the president's views plan ways to help the Iranian people overthrow the regime. (See "Iran Cosponsors Al-Qaeda Terrorism," Dec. 3.)

Bush, with his blunt warnings to Iraq and his repeated vows that "Afghanistan is still just the beginning," clearly identifies with Rice and Rumsfeld. Powell seems to recognize that he can't force his views on the president. Unlike Rumsfeld's magnetic connection to the American public, Powell doesn't have his own Nielsen ratings as he searches for his legacy.

J. Michael Waller is a senior writer at Insight magazine.

(Editor's Note: Hyperlink for referenced GAO Report follows article.)

Army Times

December 10, 2001

Pg. 12

GAO: Health-Care Workers Ill-Prepared To Treat Chem, Bio Casualties

By Deborah Funk, Times staff writer

Despite Pentagon concerns that U.S. troops are likely to face chemical and biological-warfare agents in combat, the military's medical programs don't ensure that health-care personnel are prepared to handle those types of casualties, a new General Accounting Office report says.

For one thing, the report states, military casualty-management planning doesn't address biological-warfare scenarios.

In addition, specialized medical training for handling chemical and biological casualties largely is voluntary, and few military health-care workers are proficient in that area.

Less than one-fifth of health workers in the Defense Department completed any specialized training for chemical and biological casualties, and less than 3 percent of medical officers completed a seven-day "gold-standard" course on managing such casualties. Moreover, those who are trained can't be identified quickly in an emergency because of poor tracking systems.

"Although we found efforts to plan and train for these threats, there is a wide and longstanding gap between DoD's appraisal of chemical and biological threats and DoD's medical preparedness to meet them," GAO analysts said.

"This suggests a lack of consensus about the threat, a failure of high-level leadership, or the acceptance of a potentially high level of risk."

Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn., who requested the report, noted the services' "inability or unwillingness" to agree on a common plan to address the situation. Instead, they use different estimates of casualties and evacuation requirements, resulting in conflicting views of the medical staffing needed to respond, he said.

"The war against terrorism is being fought against an unconventional enemy with no compunction about using unconventional weapons," said Shays, chairman of the House Government and Reform Committee's national security panel. "Those being sent to fight that war deserve to know medical support will be available whether they're facing tanks or toxins, mines or microbes."

According to the GAO, training is a significant problem. The services don't seem to agree on which medical providers should be trained. The services rarely include chemical and biological scenarios in their medical exercises "because of conflicting priorities ... and because it is very difficult and expensive," said the report released Nov. 7. "DoD and the services had not fully addressed weaknesses in modeling, planning, training, tracking or proficiency testing for the treatment of chemical and biological casualties," the GAO said. "Medical readiness for chemical and biological scenarios cannot be ensured."

The report offered several recommendations:

- ** Clarify expectations and integrate chemical and biological medical response in the planning guidance.
- ** Require the services to agree on evacuation capability and which medical workers are qualified to provide specific care.
- ** Develop joint planning models and training requirements, and test them.
- ** Have more realistic exercises on medical support in chemical and biological scenarios.

Investigators noted that officials in charge of war-fighting operations control most exercises. That means military operational commanders will have to be brought into the planning if "medical participation is to be included in combat exercises and not the first thing cut when it gets in the way of other goals or becomes 'too hard,'" the GAO said.

Chemical and Biological Defense: DOD Should Clarify Expectations for Medical Readiness.

November 7, 2001

[GAO-02-219T](#)

Defense News
December 3-9, 2001
Pg. 8

U.S. Roadmap For New Office Set For Next Spring

By Bridgette Blair, Washington

The U.S. government plans to issue a long-term plan for homeland security next spring that could include the merger of several government units and a multiyear budget.

The long-term plan could clarify the role of Tom Ridge, director of the Office of Homeland Security, and describe his purview over budget issues.

Ridge will have a direct impact on the homeland security-related budgets of agencies, Office of Management and Budget chief Mitchell Daniels told reporters Nov. 28.

"It will quickly become clear that he has the authority to make decisions and make them stick," Daniels said.

Some members of Congress have complained that Ridge is a presidential adviser with no budget authority, a factor they say diminishes his ability to allocate resources and consolidate federal bureaus and departments with homeland-security functions.

Led by Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, lawmakers have discussed for months the feasibility of merging federal organizations with similar or overlapping security tasks. These would include, for example, the Coast Guard, a unit of the Transportation Department, and the Justice Department's Border Patrol. The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the formation of Ridge's office in October led to increased demands from Congress for new resources and government structures to improve performance on homeland security tasks.

One of the key functions of a homeland security office is strategic planning, which can be bolstered by the merger of homeland security agencies, Thornberry told Defense News.

Long-Range Planning Key

"Long-range planning has been a key element that has been missing" from federal contingency plans, he said. Ridge recently broke the administration's silence on the issue of combining federal units with homeland security functions.

"We intend to enhance cooperation across the federal government," Ridge said Nov. 27 at a homeland security and defense conference here. "We're even considering merging some of our agencies."

The basic elements of the long-term homeland security plan will include biodefense efforts, support for first responders to emergencies, an increase in intelligence sharing and enhanced border security, said Susan Neely, a spokeswoman for Ridge's office. Recommendations derived from the plan will be sent to Congress in two steps, Neely said. Initial recommendations will be reviewed by President George W. Bush and incorporated in his 2003 budget. The president generally submits his budget plan for the upcoming fiscal year to Congress in February. Other recommendations will be folded into a four- or five-year budget plan, similar to the five-year Defense Department budget, Neely said.

Ridge's office is coordinating the preparation of the long-term plan for homeland security.

Policy coordinating committees, chaired by Ridge's staff, are evaluating whether, for example, border-patrol functions should be merged, Neely said. The 11 committees include panels on detection, surveillance and intelligence, and law enforcement and investigation, according to the Oct. 29 presidential directive defining the Homeland Security Council.

The committees meet regularly to develop the long-term plan, she said. All committee recommendations will be reviewed by the White House Homeland Security Council, comprised of the president, vice president, Ridge and agency secretaries or directors.

Ridge's Influence 'A Positive Step'

Michael Scardaville, a policy analyst with Heritage Foundation here, said Ridge's apparent influence in the budget-writing process is a positive step. Ridge needs some sort of budgetary role in overseeing federal agencies' homeland security functions.

Budgetary clout could enable Ridge to solve some coordination problems without consolidating federal organizations, Scardaville said.

"The thing we have to do is make sure these agencies are paying enough attention to [homeland security]," Scardaville said.

However, the Commission on National Security/21st Century, chaired by former Sens. Warren Rudman, R-N.H., and Gary Hart, D-Colo., advocated in a report released in January the merger of the Customs Service, Border Patrol and the Coast Guard under the umbrella of a National Homeland Security Agency.

"Their individual capabilities will be molded into a stronger and more effective system, and this realignment will help ensure that sufficient resources are devoted to tasks crucial to both public safety and U.S. trade and economic interests," the report states.

Thornberry introduced a bill on March 21, HR 1158, that would create an agency similar to that recommended by the Hart-Rudman commission.

His legislation would combine the Coast Guard, Border Patrol, Customs, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Commerce Department's Critical Infrastructure Assurance Office, and the FBI's National Infrastructure Protection Center and National Domestic Preparedness Office. The House has not acted on it.

Sens. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., and Arlen Specter, R-Pa., introduced on Oct. 11 a bill, S. 1534, that would create a Department of Homeland Security, which would bring the same agencies under one umbrella. The bill remains in the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, which Lieberman chairs.

Lieberman believes that Ridge's discussion of possibly merging agencies is encouraging and that the merger might actually be completed, said Leslie Phillips, Democratic spokeswoman for the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee.

Lieberman "thinks that's just a better, more efficient way to attack the [communication] problem," Phillips said.

Karen Robb contributed to this report.

Jane's Defence Weekly
December 5, 2001

National Guard Applying Lessons Of WMD Teams

By Michael Sirak, JDW Staff Reporter, Washington DC

The US National Guard is reviewing the lessons learned by its Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams (WMD CSTs) in supporting municipal and state authorities in more than 160 missions since the 11 September terrorist attacks in the USA.

It intends to apply these lessons to refine and improve the doctrine, organisation, training, leadership development and equipment of the units.

In particular, the National Guard Bureau is assessing the experiences of the 2nd WMD CST of Scotia, New York, which guard officials say played a significant role in "bringing order to the chaos" at the World Trade Center complex in New York City. This unit, said its commander, army Lt Col Bob Domenici, proved itself to be more versatile than originally envisioned, allowing it to assume a more proactive role in assisting New York City civil authorities.

National Guard Bureau Vice Chief army Maj Gen Raymond Rees said the guard is in discussions with the army's Center for Army Lessons Learned on reviewing the teams' performance. He added that the guard is also conducting a Department of the Army-level review of the units.

The teams were established in 1999 to deploy quickly and support local and regional terrorism response capabilities in known or suspected incidents involving biological, chemical, nuclear or radiological agents. They assess a scene to identify the type of WMD agents involved, advise the civilian responders of appropriate actions and facilitate the co-ordination between state and federal authorities.

The US Department of Defense (DoD) has certified 10 teams, each of which consists of 22 full-time Air National Guard and Army National Guard personnel.

By the end of the year, 17 additional units are expected to be operational, and five more units are planned. On 15 November, the DoD announced that these five units would be based in Alabama, Kansas, Michigan, Tennessee and West Virginia.

Gen Rees told Jane's Defence Weekly that the teams have been performing "exceptionally well". Most of the missions, he noted, have involved investigating suspicious substances believed to be hazardous.

The 2nd WMD CST, he said, was "extremely effective in assisting the civil authorities in organising response operations during the hours and days immediately following the attack [on the World Trade Center]". The key to the unit's success, he noted, was in bridging the civil and military responses, assisting in the transition from crisis- to consequence-management operations, and in connecting local and state organisations to federal agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Together, these missions have shown the need for communications enhancements like a video capability and advanced echelon links, and the guard is providing these to the units, said Gen Rees. Further, they have reinforced the "critical importance of airlift" in enabling the teams to cover large areas of the country, he added.

The guard has also already identified the need to focus the units' training on the mission of civil-military operations, while de-emphasising the mission of site survey operations. "The 2nd CST found that surveying a site was a less complicated task than assisting civilian authorities in managing response operations," said Gen Rees.

New York Times

December 2, 2001

Pg. 1

Inquiry Includes Possibility Of Killer From A U.S. Lab

By William J. Broad and Judith Miller

The F.B.I. has expanded its investigation of the deadly anthrax attacks to include the laboratories of the government and its contractors as a possible source of the anthrax itself or the knowledge to make it, scientists and law enforcement officials say.

While theories about the attacker have focused mainly on domestic loners and foreign states or terrorists, law enforcement officials are now also examining the possibility that the criminal may be a knowledgeable insider. Asked if the Federal Bureau of Investigation was investigating American military and nonmilitary laboratories that have had the powdery anthrax strain used in the attacks and individuals associated with such centers, a law enforcement official replied, "Certainly." The official said, "We are aggressively investigating every possible lead and every possible avenue," adding it was logical.

Few details of the insider investigation are known. But federal agents are already interrogating people in the military establishment that replaced the old program for making biological weapons. The facilities for that effort, in western Maryland, are major repositories of the Ames strain of anthrax, the particularly virulent form that federal officials have identified as the type used in the attacks that killed five people.

Col. Arthur M. Friedlander, the senior research scientist at the Army's biodefense laboratory at Fort Detrick, Md., said in an interview on Friday that officials there were cooperating with federal investigators.

"They've asked us about personnel who had access," he said, speaking reluctantly.

"They didn't talk to me about my personal experience," said Colonel Friedlander, a physician and leading anthrax expert. "They asked me about other personnel."

He went on to dismiss the insider idea as improbable. Whoever made the killer anthrax, he said, "clearly knew what they were doing."

"But to make the leap that this came out of a government lab is somewhat large," he added.

He emphasized that no one in his organization, the Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, a leader in developing germ defenses, even knew how to make dry anthrax, as was found in the letters used in the attacks. Instead, he said, scientists there used wet anthrax, which is far easier to make. It is used in developing vaccines and testing their effectiveness.

"We haven't had an offensive program for a long time," Colonel Friedlander said. Nobody at the Army's laboratory, he added, "has that kind of expertise."

A dozen or two American laboratories are said to have the Ames strain, though no one knows for sure because researchers over the decades have informally shared pathogens like anthrax. Military laboratories like the one at Fort Detrick, as well as military contractors, are central to the Ames network, as they have often pioneered the nation's research on vaccines and other defenses against germ weapons.

The United States began its military program to make germ weapons during World War II and over the decades developed many ways to spread many diseases. A top agent was anthrax, a gallon of which was strong enough to kill eight billion people. President Richard M. Nixon, after renouncing germ weapons in 1969, championed a global treaty that, starting in 1975, banned such arms.

Since the start of the anthrax attacks, federal officials, scientists and amateur sleuths have scrambled to identify the source. Some see the attacker as home-grown -- perhaps a disaffected scientist or a militia group -- while others discern a conspiracy by a state like Iraq or a foreign terrorist group. In the United States, there are probably scores of laboratories and contractors and hundreds of people who have access to essential anthrax ingredients and recipes. The insider avenue of inquiry is consistent with the official profile of the suspect, released on Nov. 9 by the F.B.I. The profile describes a man with a strong interest in science who is comfortable working with hazardous material and has "access to a source of anthrax and possesses knowledge and expertise to refine it."

Separately, a private expert in biological weapons, Barbara Hatch Rosenberg, has recently published a paper contending that a government insider, or someone in contact with an insider, is behind the attacks.

Though not an expert on criminal profiling, Dr. Rosenberg, a molecular biologist at the State University of New York, has testified on biological weapons before Congress, advised Bill Clinton when he was president and made addresses to international arms control meetings, including one a few days ago in Geneva.

Law enforcement officials said Dr. Rosenberg's assertion might turn out to be well founded, though they emphasized that the investigation was still broadly based. One official close to the federal investigation called the Rosenberg theory "the most likely hypothesis."

Referring to her paper, the official said, "I might not have put it so strongly, but it's definitely reasonable."

Other analysts, including some scientists and experts in germ weapons, expressed more skepticism of the theory that it had to be an insider, contending that the skills and knowledge needed to produce the type of anthrax in this attack were widely available.

The paper laying out Dr. Rosenberg's thesis was distributed on Thursday by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, an arms control group. Dr. Rosenberg, who is chairwoman of an arms control panel at the Federation of American Scientists, a private group in Washington, has argued repeatedly that states, not individuals, tend to have the wherewithal to make advanced biological weapons. International treaties that prohibit that work, she believes, are thus critical.

Dr. Rosenberg contends that the Ames strain probably did not originate in 1980 or 1981, as is often asserted, but arose decades earlier and was used in the secret American program to make biological weapons.

She agrees with a conclusion, reached by some experts knowledgeable about the investigation, that the anthrax powder distributed in the attacks by letter was treated in a sophisticated manner so it floated easily, as was done in the old American offensive weapons program, unlike Colonel Friedlander's defensive program, which uses the wet anthrax.

"All the available information," she said, "is consistent with a U.S. government lab as the source, either of the anthrax itself or of the recipe for the U.S. weaponization process." Dr. Rosenberg contended that the anthrax used in the attacks either originated in the weapons program itself or was made by someone who had learned the recipe. The killer, Dr. Rosenberg concludes, is "an American microbiologist who had, or once had, access to weaponized anthrax in a U.S. government lab, or had been taught by a U.S. defense expert how to make it. Perhaps he had a vial or two in his basement as a keepsake."

The paper, "A Compilation of Evidence and Comments on the Source of the Mailed Anthrax," dated Nov. 29, is based on interviews with federal and private experts, published reports and scientific articles.

Richard H. Ebright, a microbiologist at Rutgers University who has followed the anthrax case and has read the Rosenberg paper, said he found it provocative but unconvincing.

"This is one extreme in the theorizing," Dr. Ebright said. "There are elements that are reasonable, but elements that are not. I'm confident that she started with the insider conclusion and then selected the facts." Even so, he said, American foes seem likely to seize on the paper and amplify the provocative thesis.

"Every state that's hostile to the United States is going to pick up on this," Dr. Ebright said. "They'll say it was an orchestrated government attack, which I don't believe for a second. But you can see people believing it."

Dr. Rosenberg's theory is getting attention in Europe, where the environmental group Greenpeace Germany is citing it as credible.

An American official sympathetic to her thesis said the Ames strain might have come from a place other than a military laboratory.

"There are other government and contractor facilities that do classified work with access to dangerous strains," the official said. "But it's highly likely that the material in the anthrax letters came from a person or persons who really had great expertise. We haven't seen any other artifacts that point us elsewhere."

New York Times
December 1, 2001

Germ Weapon Plans Found At A Scientist's House In Kabul

By David Rohde

KABUL, Afghanistan, Nov. 30 — A group of armed men, reportedly Americans, dressed in gas masks, rubber gloves and boots, removed powdered chemicals this week from the home of a retired Pakistani nuclear scientist here, Afghan security guards at the house said today.

The guards, posted by the Northern Alliance, said the men had warned them to stay away from the house because the chemicals could be dangerous.

Diagrams and documents found there suggest that the scientist, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood, may have been working on a plan to drop cyanide or anthrax spores from high-altitude balloons. Copies of American military documents found there described anthrax vaccines and how the spores could be used as a weapon.

Mr. Mahmood and another Pakistani scientist, Chaudry Abdul Majeed, are under detention in Pakistan in connection with the discoveries in Kabul. Mr. Mahmood's family has insisted that he is innocent.

A workroom that had been littered with papers was empty today and appeared to have been swept or vacuumed.

Mahmad Ajan, a security official from the Northern Alliance who is guarding the house, said four men he believed were Americans had cleaned out the house three days ago.

"They had masks and they had rubber gloves and boots," he said. "They spoke English and had pistols."

Pentagon officials have said unspecified Americans have removed chemicals from 40 suspected Al Qaeda sites in Afghanistan for testing.

Mr. Ajan said a first group of strangers visited the house eight days ago. They did not wear protective gear and did not remove chemicals, he said. After the second group removed the chemicals three days ago, the guards were told to hire local people to finish cleaning the house, he said.

Several bags of chemicals remained in the yard this afternoon. On the ground next to the door leading to the street were two small plastic bags. Each appeared to hold two to three pounds of brown powder.

The outside of one of the bags said "Mahlobjan," a man's name; the number 436; and "second." A second bag had the numbers 999 — or 666 — printed on it, followed by a crescent moon, the symbol of Islam. There was also a small seal stamped on the corner of the bag, with an eagle in its center.

Mr. Mahmood and two other retired Pakistani nuclear scientists were detained for questioning in Pakistan in September and released after American intelligence officials questioned whether they were giving Al Qaeda nuclear secrets.

Pakistani officials said they rearrested Mr. Mahmood and Mr. Abdul Majeed this week after questions arose about the activity of a charity that Mr. Mahmood had established in Afghanistan.

Mr. Mahmood used the Kabul house as the office of the private relief organization, Ummah Tameer- e-Nau. He and Mr. Abdul Majeed worked for the organization, which Mr. Mahmood set up after he retired from the Pakistan Atomic Agency in 1998. Both men's families insist that they were involved only in aid work in Afghanistan.

The house offers evidence of both claims.

In the workroom, the only scraps of paper left behind after the cleaning were charts estimating the number of people who would be treated in one of the charity's new health centers. But in the yard was what appeared to be a three-foot-long experimental rocket.

The Northern Alliance security officials said they had never seen that type of rocket before. The words "Abu Omar special" were written on it, but Omar is a common Muslim name and it is not clear what the message referred to.

Residents of the neighborhood said Mr. Mahmood lived quietly with his family in his house and rarely mixed with people. His organizations gave food out to local residents on Muslim holidays, they said.

But several neighbors said they noticed armed men going in and out of Mr. Mahmood's charity office. A group of Arab volunteers who came to Afghanistan to fight alongside the Taliban lived next door, but residents said they were not sure how much contact there was between the two groups.

After the American airstrikes began on Oct. 7, Mr. Mahmood's family left for Pakistan and other men moved into the house with the scientist, according to neighbors. One resident said they were Afghan Taliban supporters.

Another said they were Pakistanis.

"I don't know definitely who they were," said Rulah, a driver who works for the British charity Save the Children, which has an office next to the scientist's home. "It is very difficult to know whether they were aid workers."

The alliance security officials who have been living in the house said they were nervous after seeing the strangers enter the house with so much protective gear. The two men said they had been told by their superiors to stay away from the chemicals, but they have received no medical treatment.

"I have lived here nine days," Mr. Ajan said, shrugging. "I guess I would be sick by now if there were anthrax."

Korea Times

December 3, 2001

NK Allows IAEA Inspection Of Key Nuclear Institute

By Shim Jae-yun, Staff Reporter

North Korea has allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect an isotope production laboratory in Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang.

"The North agreed to allow the inspection of the institute during the 17th working level meeting with the IAEA in Vienna in early November," said an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) yesterday.

Seoul officials said that the North's allowance of the inspections was progress for the IAEA's efforts to impose safety measures on the North's related facilities.

"As the research facilities have not yet been the target of the IAEA's nuclear inspections, the North's recent move draws particular attention," said the official.

Despite worsening relations with the United States, the North has been showing friendly gestures in hopes of improving bilateral ties, signing, for instance, two international anti-terror treaties meant to block the flow of money to terror-sponsoring organizations.

The North's allowance of the inspections was also seen as an expression of willingness to honor the spirit of the 1994 Agreed Framework between Pyongyang and Washington.

In a related move, IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei praised North Korea for not only attending three seminars on nuclear safeguards and nuclear liability, but also for allowing the IAEA's inspection of the laboratory in Yongbyon.

"I should note that North Korea did agree to a visit by the agency's inspection of the isotope production laboratory, which has not been inspected before by the IAEA," said ElBaradei during the IAEA's general conference in Vienna on Nov. 29-30.

He went on to say that the North's move was a step in the right direction toward the normalization of the North's relations with the IAEA.

North Korea earlier refused to accept the IAEA's request for a prompt resumption of nuclear facility inspections during the 16th Pyongyang-IAEA meeting held in Pyongyang.

The IAEA has been demanding the immediate beginning of inspections as it would take three to four years to complete the entire verification process.

The North maintains that an ultimate solution to the nuclear issue would be possible only by faithfully carrying out the 1994 agreement.

It has been criticizing the United States for having failed to abide by the Geneva basic agreement, delaying, for instance, the construction of light water reactors.

Korea Herald

December 3, 2001

N. K. Hints At Continuing Missile Program

North Korea on Saturday hinted it would continue developing missiles unless the United States ends its attempt to "stifle" the communist country.

"The DPRK's missile development is one of the reliable self-defensive measures to smash the imperialists' moves to stifle the DPRK (North Korea) by force of arms and defend socialism," Rodong Sinmun, an official daily of the ruling Korean Workers Party, said in a signed commentary.

It accused the United States of stepping up its "hardline" policy toward North Korea, escalating tension and increasing the danger of war on the Korean peninsula.

The U.S. scheduled deployment of anti-missile radars in South Korea is aimed at mounting missile attacks on the DPRK any time, it said.

The daily repeated Pyongyang's rejection of Washington's demand that North Korea allow a foreign inspection of its suspected weapons of mass destruction and reduce its conventional forces.

"This is a gangster-like logic intended to totally disarm the DPRK and swallow it up with ease," it said.

"The DPRK is fully ready to cope with any crisis on its own initiative and will deal merciless blows to the enemies coming in attack on it," the daily said.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said separately that U.S. "imperialist warmongers" carried out 160 espionage flights over the North in November alone and staged aerial war exercises against it.

At least 500 fighter bombers and assault planes were involved in the war exercises held in the sky above the eastern cities of Wonju and Pyeongchang and the southern city of Gunsan from Monday through to Wednesday.

"All this fully reveals the heinous attempt of the U.S. imperialists to render the situation on the Korean Peninsula extremely tense and ignite a new war of aggression," the news agency said.

U.S. officials said Washington was still hopeful of a resumption of dialogue with North Korea, despite a Washington-Pyongyang stalemate and a deterioration in ties between the two Koreas.

--AFP

Armed Forces Journal International

December 2001

Pg. 2

WMD Preparedness

Are We Ready, Now, To Listen To The Pros?

By John G. Roos

It wasn't a matter of if, but when, the specter of bio-terrorism would manifest itself in America, a very small, dedicated group of professionals consistently warned. Few of the people with responsibility for preparing for that inevitability heeded those warnings. But they're listening now.

Along with their potentially deadly direct effects, anthrax spores—particularly those that manage to make their way to Capitol Hill and the Executive Office's mail-sorting facility—have a heretofore unrecognized side effect: they're

one of the few naturally occurring organisms capable of opening the eyes and ears of US legislators and government bureaucrats. And what those folks are seeing and hearing leads them to conclude that anthrax-by-mail portends far deadlier challenges in the months and years ahead.

As long-time AFJI readers realize, this publication has consistently pointed out shortcomings in the nation's ability to conduct military operations on chemically- or biologically-contaminated battlefields, not to mention countering the effects of those deadly agents within America's borders. In fact, our concern about shortcomings in chem/bio preparedness on the domestic front prompted us to launch a series of conference-exhibitions aimed at improving the nation's capability to respond to a chemical, biological, or radiological terrorist attack on American soil. In this conference series, we bring together senior government and military officials who have key roles in domestic response-preparedness planning with State and local law-enforcement, fire-fighting, emergency medical technicians, and other professionals who are now serving on the front lines of the nation's new domestic defense team.

During our Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) III conference, held last April, Army Maj. Gen. Bruce Lawlor, then serving as the commander of the Pentagon's Joint Task Force-Civil Support (JTF-CS), was among the featured speakers. In late October, Lawlor was selected as the Pentagon's representative to the new US Office of Homeland Security, headed by former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge. With his new duty, Lawlor will have direct access to Ridge during discussions about what the military can contribute in the broad realm of domestic preparedness. During the coming months, Lawlor will have his hands full grappling with the myriad shortcomings in the Pentagon's ability to support national WMD preparedness contingency planning. Not least among the problems sure to confront him are two that weighed heavily on the industry and military delegates who attended AFJI's WMD IV conference, which was held last month.

The first concerns the small- to mid-level commercial firms that develop and manufacture the specialized equipment on which emergency responders stake their lives every time they're called to an incident scene. For too long this sector has languished, unable to attract more than a pittance in government research and development funding to improve both the speed and the manner in which their products can locate, test, isolate, and eliminate potentially deadly chemical or biological agents while protecting the men and women who volunteer for that onerous task. Most of the available funds for research in these areas are either funneled to, or through, government research agencies, which can hardly be described as hotbeds of innovation.

The other major issue of concern at last month's gathering is one that has long troubled the military but has gone virtually unnoticed outside its ranks. This one, too, has surfaced previously in the pages of AFJI. But it's so very basic to addressing the new threats posed by domestic WMD terrorism that it bears repeating.

The Army, both its active-duty and National Guard components, controls the bulk of the assets that will be called on in the wake of the next WMD attack. Medical Corps, Chemical Corps, and Military Police assets will be among the specialties most in demand. Unlike the Medical Corps, however, neither the Chemical Corps nor the Military Police (MP) Corps has general officer-level representation on the Army staff to coordinate the day-to-day activities—training, coordination, modernization—that are the essential precursors to effective response.

Long before the first anthrax-laced letter was deposited in a mailbox or the first National Guard MP unit was called up for airport-security duty, the US Army needed general officers at the head of its Chemical Corps and Military Police Corps. Unfortunately, a succession of Army secretaries and chiefs of staff failed to acknowledge these obvious shortcomings. Now, however, it's the nation that needs those positions filled. And now's the time to fill them.

Armed Forces Journal International

December 2001

Pg. 6

Challenges To US National Security

A Wary Eye On North Korea

By General Barry R. McCaffrey, USA-Ret.

Twenty-two million humans are locked in bondage and misery to a brutal dictatorship that has witnessed a million of its helpless people die during the last decade through starvation, murder, and concentration camps. Any hint of disobedience or dissent is violently suppressed. Male life expectancy has plummeted to 49 years. The country's economy has been shattered through incompetence, a paranoid policy of self-reliance, and the burden of a giant armed forces (the 4th largest in the world) that keeps in uniform 20 percent of the nation's entire male population between the ages of 17 and 54. This military machine devours 25 percent of the entire Gross National Product. The

two political leaders who, in succession, created this disaster have been wrapped in a state cult of ego and self-glorification rarely seen in modern history since Hitler.

North Korea's leadership is not just different—it is dangerous and often bizarre. After 50 years of carefully watching these leaders' behavior, we know little about the internal dynamics that have created such desperation and isolation for its citizens. We do know that they have been historically unpredictable and lethal to their regional neighbors by carrying out assassinations and commando attacks in South Korea and elsewhere, abducting Japanese citizens and, on occasion, directly attacking US military elements. They have postured their ground forces for offensive combat against South Korea, with more than 700,000 troops massed along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Fifty-five thousand special operations troops are poised to infiltrate the South by means of a sizable submarine force, parachute drop, and rapid ingress through tunnels under the DMZ.

Finally, in total disregard of the international community, the North Koreans have committed themselves to a massive national campaign to develop a ballistic missile capability armed with nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. We should assume the North Koreans have already completed between two and five nuclear weapons, and also have developed a significant chemical warfare capability. They may have created biological warfare weapons. We are sure they have manufactured and fielded more than a hundred mid-range No Dong missiles capable of hitting civilian targets in Japan as well as allied military and civilian locations throughout South Korea. They have begun development and tested, in a dramatic 1998 shot over Japan, the Taepo Dong 1 three-stage missile. The next generation of this missile, the Taepo Dong 2, will be capable of striking the US.

A rational US policy for dealing with this extraordinarily tragic and complex political, military, economic, and humanitarian mess must be a central focus of the Bush presidency. Secretary of State Colin Powell will find no easy solutions. We face a 20-year challenge to US leadership to create and maintain a strategy based on: a trilateral partnership with the South Koreans and Japanese; an unshakable determination to sustain a capable military deterrence; and a willingness to patiently and continuously engage the North Korea's leadership at the highest levels. We must put together a policy of political and economic inducements that are tied firmly to reciprocal changes of North Korea's dangerous practices. There are only two red-line behaviors by the North Koreans which we cannot accept. The least likely threat is a conventional military attack on South Korea with the huge infantry, artillery, and armored force poised on the DMZ, only 25 miles from Seoul. Millions of South Koreans work and sleep inside the range fan of thousands of NKPA artillery weapons. This is a serious and continuing danger.

Close To War

We have been close to war before. In 1994, we narrowly avoided a military conflict with North Korea, triggered by their nuclear weapons-development program. We came within one day of imposing severe sanctions, which the North Koreans told us they would consider as an act of war.

The globally deployed US armed forces began active preparation for sizable reinforcements to our US military forces, both in South Korea and the region. More than 300,000 US Pacific Command forces began final readiness measures to respond if North Korea attacked.

It was my personal judgment during this extremely dangerous crisis that the ensuing bloody battle would have totally destroyed the obsolete and poorly trained North Korean armed forces in a US-ROK campaign of less than six months. The courage and physical hardness of the North Korean forces would have counted for little against the air-land-sea blitzkrieg they would have encountered as they tried to attack out of their fortified assembly areas. They would have faced overwhelming violence unleashed by greatly superior US and ROK technology, training, and tactical leadership.

It was also our collective judgment at the time that the 1994 war we avoided would have been a human tragedy of enormous proportions. The war would have generated millions of refugees and hundreds of thousands of US and South Korean military and civilian casualties. We can't get that close again. Good diplomacy and sound engagement can prevent the miscalculations by either side that could lead to a war that would end the North Korean state and devastate the South.

The second red line that regional partners must not tolerate would be North Korean re-initiation of their nuclear weapons-development program at the Yonbyon facility, and the end of the North Korean moratorium on the development of the Taepo Dong missile-delivery system. Our deterrence policy must be based on credible communication from the US to North Korea's senior leadership that we have both the political and military will to take decisive action with a broad range of direct measures to preempt the creation of such a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) threat. We simply cannot tolerate the existence of a North Korean WMD and missile threat to the US, Japan, and South Korea.

Framework Holds

On a positive note, the Geneva Agreed Framework of 1994 still holds, with an apparent North Korean cessation of active plutonium production. In addition, in an August visit to Moscow, Kim Jong-il reaffirmed his intention of

continuing to observe the moratorium placed on missile tests until 2003. Perhaps of greatest importance, the once-mysterious Kim Jong-il has normalized relations with two dozen nations in Asia and Europe. In addition to his recent meeting with Russian President Putin, he has hosted the former US Secretary of State, sent a senior NKPA general to open direct contact with the new administration and, in a visit to China's Shanghai special economic zone, he called for "a new way of thinking."

In the period between 1989 and 1999, direct trade between North and South Korea increased from \$18.8 million to \$333.4 million. On a final note of emerging optimism, the North Koreans have allegedly told their South Korean counterparts that "the continued presence of US forces on the Korean Peninsula serves the interests of the Korean people."

Notwithstanding all this, some tough years undoubtedly lie ahead. The North Koreans are adept at engineering crises and exploiting differences between the US and our allies. Their strategy will be to address their economic problems with blackmail and reparations extortion of South Korea and Japan, and the use of "food and oil for meetings" with the United States. All the while, they will maintain despotic control of their people while attempting to conduct clandestine development of an offensive nuclear-chemical-biological missile threat to the region and the US. It is not clear that China will continue to support North Korean reform. There is probably little stomach in the PRC to see a unified Korean state, which would strip away a buffer to feared future Japanese military power.

New Direction

Fortunately, while the policy dilemma facing the United States is bleak, it is not without possible solutions. The brilliant former Secretary of Defense William Perry (assisted by two able public servants--Dr. Ash Carter from Harvard University and Ambassador Wendy Sherman of the Department of State) spent the years 1998 and 1999 patiently unraveling the problem. The Perry Report to the President and Congress on 12 October 1999 offered a thoughtful blueprint for creating a new reality through a twin-path approach of building active cooperation with the North while preparing serious military responses to North Korean provocations.

First, Dr. Perry suggested that we must build systematic reciprocal measures that would eliminate the nuclear and missile threats in return for normalized political relations and relaxed economic sanctions. Second, he created the high-level Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) for the US, South Korea, and Japan to take economic, political, and military measures to contain or deter threats if engagement failed. The Bush Administration policy review on North Korea should take into account and build upon the wisdom and clarity of the "Perry Process."

Further, although there has been much debate over reviving the missile deal discussed between Pyongyang and the former administration, policy-makers should be wary of rushing to failure. While the deal was seemingly comprehensive in addressing aspects of missile development, testing, and export, it would prove extremely difficult to verify. Instead, we should take a step-by-step approach, negotiating increased cooperation on verification measures in exchange for economic aid.

Of course, at the end of the day, only South Korea can create the conditions and provide the leadership to slowly defuse the madness facing it from the North. The two Koreas must be the primary actors in the peace process. The Kim Dae Jung Administration has creatively devoted itself to a "Sunshine Policy" of increased US-ROK deterrence combined with aggressive and politically risky openings to the North. Unfortunately, these peace initiatives have gone largely unreciprocated. President Kim's approval rating has plummeted to 30 percent as the South Korean people begin to suspect that engagement has not lessened the threat despite hundreds of millions of dollars in direct aid and investment from a South Korea straining under an economic slowdown. His presidency expires next year, with the gaping hole in inter-Korean engagement being the failure of Kim Jong-il to return the historic South Korean president's visit.

One reason for Northern intransigence is that the allies have yet to fully provide promised energy assistance to the North. Providing this assistance may be the key to reviving the prospect of a genuinely productive second summit. Furthermore, given desultory efforts by an international consortium on the \$5-billion construction of two light waters reactors to replace North Korea's plutonium-producing graphic-moderated reactors, it is considered unlikely that these LWR's could supply energy to North Korea before 2009 or 2010. The US should consider the merits of providing temporary direct energy assistance in exchange for a verifiable moratorium on missile and missile-technology export.

Clear Goals

Unquestionably, US and regional expectations for change in North Korea far outstrip the reality on the ground. South Korea must take the lead in engagement with the North, and we must parry any attempts by the North to deal solely with the US. Our economic aid programs to the North must always be in-kind (never cash) and tied to specific positive reciprocal behavior.

In return for continued and verifiable restraint by the North on missile and nuclear development, the US should support ROK and Japanese facilitation of DPRK membership in the IMF and World Bank. In addition, we should offer mutual exchange diplomatic missions to both Washington and Pyongyang without any preconditions. Finally, US and international food aid should continue without any linkage to other political objectives. Twenty years from now, when the North Koreans have escaped this madness, we will reap the rewards of our compassion. The United States will have to set aside our optimism and short-term, goal-oriented behavior when dealing with the North Korean challenge. These people are going to be an unpredictable and quirky threat for years to come. Clear goals, firm responses, quiet economic and political engagement, and a bit of detachment will produce long-term results that can end the endless war on the Korean peninsula. From satellite night photography of the region, one can see a blaze of lights from South Korea, Japan, and China; however, the area of North Korea is shrouded in total darkness save a faint glow marking the capital of Pyongyang. It is time to open some windows and let in the light.

Scientist Battles Biological Warfare

The Associated Press, Mon 3 Dec 2001

MANASSAS, Va. (AP) — Dr. Ken Alibek has a radical theory about anthrax: What finally kills victims is bacteria-caused cellular sewage clogging the bloodstream, not the anthrax toxin typically blamed.

While other researchers hunt antitoxins, Alibek is building filters to scrub anthrax patients' blood clean.

The dialysis-like theory challenges scientific dogma. But the government and some top researchers are listening — because no one in the nation is believed to have more experience handling anthrax than Alibek, once the Soviet Union's second-in-command of developing germ weapons.

The kindly demeanor of this soft-spoken scientist, wearing a rumpled suit and weary smile, belies his past as a Red Army colonel who by his own count helped create enough anthrax-armed missiles to have killed millions.

But ask what prompts his filter theory and Alibek casually makes a startling claim: A similar approach once saved a Soviet colleague from certain death from Marburg virus, a hemorrhagic fever similar to the dreaded Ebola.

It is such untapped knowledge that persuaded the U.S. government to give this biowarrior-turned-biodefender \$12 million in grants to hunt antidotes for anthrax and other killers.

“This work is sort of, I would say, remorse,” Alibek, a physician by training, said in a recent interview. “I need to find solutions which would make biological weapons ineffective.”

Alibek hunts solutions with 35 scientists at the small biotechnology company he heads, Hadron Advanced Biosystems, in this Washington suburb. It is a subsidiary of defense contractor Hadron Inc.

Germ-warfare specialists say no other lab claims a scientist with such day-to-day expertise in bioterror agents.

In one project, the lab is trying to create a nasal spray that might rev up the immune system to fend off numerous agents if used after an attack. Triggering this “nonspecific immunity” is a controversial idea, but one that several other laboratories also are exploring.

For anthrax specifically, Hadron is doing “very careful” research into ways to block the bacterium at the molecular level, said Dr. C.J. Peters, former chief of special pathogens at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Right now you take your antibiotic and take your chances,” said Peters, a microbiologist now at the University of Texas, Galveston. If such experiments ultimately work, “you could take antibiotics later and later and still survive.”

Alibek, a Kazakh by birth once known as Kanatjan Alibekov, spent 15 years with Biopreparat, the vast Soviet germ weapons program. He defected in 1992, convincing U.S. intelligence that the Soviet program was larger and more sophisticated than previously known.

In his 1999 book “Biohazard,” Alibek wrote that Soviet scientists bioengineered germ weapons because they thought Americans were. He described a 1991 Soviet inspection of Fort Detrick, Md., that persuaded him that was not true. The Army program, which actually hunted for vaccines, had two anthrax specialists, compared with Biopreparat's 2,000.

Now instead of brewing ever more potent anthrax, Alibek is studying just how the bacterium acts inside the body, and how to thwart it.

First, immune cells called macrophages gobble up anthrax. But the bacteria then paralyze those cells, buying time to multiply, Alibek said. Delaying that process would give antibiotics more time to work. Hadron is beginning animal studies in the hunt for drugs to do that.

Once people are sick, the common theory is that anthrax-produced toxin actually kills them. Antibiotics taken early enough can kill the germs before too much toxin is produced, but they have little effect later.

Alibek's research concludes that late-stage anthrax is not toxin-induced, but a complex form of sepsis: an overwhelming bloodstream infection complicated by biological sewage — dead cells and cell parts that in turn trigger production in inflammation — and shock-causing proteins.

Alibek created a prototype filter to cleanse blood of this mess, using a chemical absorption method called chromatography. So far, lab testing shows it can filter out one major inflammatory source; the challenge now is to figure out which additional ones need catching.

“It's not simple,” Alibek cautioned. “There are too many mediators of sepsis. ... But we think we can do it.”

<http://www.worldnews.com/?action=display&article=10791761&template=worldnews/search.txt&index=full>

December 2, 2001

COMMENTARY

North Korea{mdash}Friend or Foe?

Helping the U.S. fight terrorism would go a long way toward mending fences.

By NINA HACHIGIAN and BRUCE W. BENNETT

The United States' list of countries that sponsor terrorism is only seven states long--Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria. Although most of these countries are unlikely to shake this designation in the near future, North Korea has a historic opportunity to rejoin the community of nations and recast its relationship with the U.S. The window of opportunity for this rapprochement, however, is rapidly closing.

Although North Korea expressed public sympathy after the Sept. 11 attacks, last week Pyongyang threatened "countermeasures" in response to U.S. criticism of the North's biological and chemical weapons program. Even before the September attacks, the Bush administration had been impatient with North Korea's lack of responsiveness to concerns about its weapons.

Further obstructing the relationship was Pyongyang's irritation over U.S. identification of North Korea as a "rogue state," which the White House uses to justify its national missile defense program. North Korea also is concerned about the inconsistencies in U.S. efforts to deliver oil and replacement nuclear reactors, which Washington agreed to do under a framework that terminated North Korean activities at its Yongbyon nuclear facility. Recent history, though, provides some reason for hope. There have been signs that leader Kim Jong Il wants to improve North Korea's relationship with the U.S.

Motivated largely by a desire to feed its people and revive its moribund economy, North Korea has negotiated with the U.S. over limiting its missile program and recasting its nuclear program away from weapons and toward power generation.

At this moment, U.S. officials are unlikely to have the patience to coax North Korea to the table. Yet the administration has made clear that it will judge all relationships with other countries on their policies toward terrorism. So if North Korea takes the correct next steps, Washington will surely listen.

Pyongyang should look beyond the current squabble, seize the moment and officially renounce terrorism.

The last major terrorist act definitively traced to North Korea occurred in 1987, when North Korean agents planted a bomb on a Korean Air Lines flight, killing 115 people. Its terrorist program since then has been largely inactive, so it should not be difficult for North Korea to build on its statement made with the U.S. in 2000 in which Pyongyang declared its opposition to terrorism.

North Korea also should cease supporting and harboring outside terrorist groups. Not only is such support morally repugnant and contrary to international norms, but it is not economically or politically lucrative for the regime.

Finally, North Korea could be useful in providing intelligence on the groups with whom it communicates.

While the level of mistrust between the U.S. and North Korea is too high for very close cooperation now, North Korea has apparently offered to provide terrorist-related information to Washington. The U.S. should pursue such discussions.

From these unilateral acts, North Korea could earn the goodwill of the U.S. and prevent the possibility of being drawn in on the wrong side of the war against terrorism. In return, the U.S. would probably be inclined to pursue efforts to provide North Korea with electrical power and other needed economic assistance.

The U.S., meanwhile, would gain additional assistance in the war against terrorism, as well as reengaging with a country whose potential for developing weapons of mass destruction would suggest that more communication is probably better than less.

While it is North Korea's move to make, progress is more likely to come with reconciliation than confrontation.

The U.S. government should urge North Korea to act constructively at this critical juncture.

Nina Hachigian is the director of the Center for Asia Pacific Policy at Rand. Bruce W. Bennett is a senior policy analyst at Rand.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-000095717dec02..story?coll=la%2Dnews%2Dcomment%2Dopinions>

Washington Post
December 4, 2001
Pg. 1

U.S. Fears Bin Laden Gain In Nuclear Effort

Concern Over 'Dirty Bomb' Affects Security

By Bob Woodward, Robert G. Kaiser and David B. Ottaway, Washington Post Staff Writers

U.S. intelligence agencies have recently concluded that Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda terrorist network may have made greater strides than previously thought toward obtaining plans or materials to make a crude radiological weapon that would use conventional explosives to spread radioactivity over a wide area, according to U.S. and foreign sources.

Some of the conclusions come from interrogations of captured al Qaeda members or associates. Some come from evidence gathered in the last month on the ground in Afghanistan by CIA officers and U.S. Special Forces from former al Qaeda facilities.

In addition, recent U.S. intelligence reports describe a meeting within the last year in which bin Laden was present when one of his associates produced a canister that allegedly contained radioactive material. The associate waved the canister in the air as proof of al Qaeda's progress and seriousness in trying to build a nuclear device.

The U.S. government last month urgently asked a few key allied governments to assist in determining whether the associate, identified only with a common name, may have entered their countries, perhaps with radioactive material. The concern is sufficiently deep that some countries have adopted extreme security procedures at their borders, including the increased use of devices that measure radioactivity, the sources said.

There is no conclusive evidence that bin Laden or his associates have built a radiological bomb or even have the capability to do so, these sources emphasized. But for years bin Laden has said publicly he was working to obtain a nuclear capability.

U.S. officials are very concerned that any nuclear detonation by al Qaeda would be a calamitous psychological setback to the war on terrorism, and a maximum effort has been launched to detect and prevent the possibility, remote as it might be, several sources said. The worry about al Qaeda's efforts to obtain a nuclear capability was a factor in the decision yesterday to issue another national alert about possible terrorist attacks, a senior source said. On at least one occasion, the White House cited the increased concern that al Qaeda might have a radiological bomb as a key reason that Vice President Cheney was not available for a face-to-face meeting with visiting senior foreign officials. The meeting usually would have allowed for informal personal contact, but took place via secure video conference because Cheney was at a secure location outside Washington.

U.S. intelligence agencies are looking not only for evidence that terrorists could be assembling a radiological bomb but also for any sign that al Qaeda could be trying to make a very crude and small atomic or fission bomb. A radiological bomb, also known as a "dirty bomb," could be made by taking highly radioactive material, such as spent reactor fuel rods, and wrapping it around readily available conventional high explosives. The device is designed to kill or injure not through its explosive force but by creating a zone of intense radiation that could extend several city blocks. A large, highly radioactive bomb could affect a much larger area.

There is no public record that any country or terrorist group has detonated a radiological bomb.

A diagram of a dirty bomb has been found in a Taliban or al Qaeda installation in Afghanistan in recent weeks, according to a source. In addition, numerous other documents about nuclear weapons in general were recovered. But a well-placed U.S. source said such diagrams and documents could be found in public sources, including the Internet. The source said some designs were so inadequate and primitive that they most likely would not work.

Al Qaeda's longstanding interest in acquiring a nuclear capability is well-documented. In February, a Sudanese man who worked for bin Laden for nine years, Jamal Ahmed Fadl, testified that al Qaeda was trying to acquire nuclear material in the early 1990s. Fadl said that a bin Laden lieutenant ordered him to buy uranium from a former Sudanese army officer, who offered to sell ore from South Africa for \$1.5 million.

Though he did not have personal knowledge that the deal was consummated, Fadl testified, he was paid a \$10,000 bonus for arranging the deal. Fadl was a government witness at the New York trial of four participants in the al Qaeda bombing of two American embassies in Africa in August 1998.

Last month, bin Laden told a Pakistani journalist that his movement already had chemical and nuclear weapons.

"I wish to declare that if America used chemical or nuclear weapons against us, then we may retort with chemical and nuclear weapons," bin Laden was quoted as saying. "We have the weapons as a deterrent."

In 1998, bin Laden called it "a religious duty" to acquire weapons of mass destruction, adding: "If I have indeed acquired these weapons, then I thank God for enabling me to do so."

One Taliban official in Afghanistan has denied that al Qaeda has a nuclear capability.

"We do not even have modern weaponry, not to mention weapons of mass destruction," Abdul Salam Zaef, former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, said recently after widespread reports of bin Laden's deterrent comment.

Pakistan has detained two nuclear scientists, both veterans of the secret program that has given Pakistan about a dozen nuclear warheads, and is interrogating them about their contacts with Taliban and al Qaeda members. The two, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Abdul Majid, worked in Afghanistan in recent years but have said they were only providing charitable assistance to Afghans.

Mahmood is an expert in plutonium, the highly fissionable material used in the heart of most nuclear weapons. He was given a desk job in 1999 after he publicly said that Pakistan should help other Islamic nations build nuclear weapons. He also spoke publicly in support of the Taliban movement.

Russia and Pakistan are considered the two most likely sources of radioactive material for al Qaeda. Russian officials have reported dozens of attempts to steal enriched uranium or plutonium since 1990. Last month, a Russian general said unidentified terrorists recently had twice tried and failed to penetrate Russian top-secret fortified nuclear storage facilities known as "S-shelters."

Mohamed El Baradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said in a Nov. 1 statement that after the Sept. 11 hijackings, the agency had been alerted to the possibility that terrorists might use "radioactive sources to incite panic, contaminate property and even cause injury or death among civilian populations."

On Nov. 9, President Bush said of al Qaeda, "They're seeking chemical, biological and nuclear weapons."

Bin Laden is a fugitive from Saudi Arabia, which along with the United States is considered a top target for another attack. Border inspection and surveillance have been increased substantially in Saudi Arabia; authorities there are on the lookout not only for radioactive material but also for any related equipment, parts or technology that might be used in a nuclear device.

In Saudi Arabia, a source said, border guards are searching any package or truck that might be used by smugglers.

Particular emphasis has been given to the Saudi border with Yemen, which has had an active al Qaeda presence.

Operatives connected to bin Laden in Yemen are believed to be responsible for the attack on the American destroyer USS Cole in October 2000, when a small boat loaded with explosives rammed the ship and killed 17 U.S. sailors in the port of Aden.

Researcher Jeff Himmelman contributed to this report.

Ridge Issues 3rd Alert Of New Attack Threat

Intelligence, Past Ramadan Strikes Cited

By Eric Pianin and Bill Miller, Washington Post Staff Writers

The Bush administration yesterday issued its third terrorism alert in nearly two months, renewing warnings that terrorists may carry out attacks against the United States during the holy month of Ramadan and reminding law enforcement officials and the public not to let down their guard.

Without specifying where or when attacks might occur, Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge said that in the last several days, U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies have reported an increased volume of credible evidence that another assault could be imminent. According to an aide to Ridge, an attack might come in the "next several weeks."

"The information we have does not point to any specific target either in America or abroad, and it does not outline any specific type of attack," Ridge said at a news conference in the White House briefing room. "However, our analysts who review this information believe the quantity and level of threats are above the norm, and have reached a threshold where we should once again place the public on general alert."

According to law enforcement and intelligence sources, officials are concerned that Osama bin Laden and his associates may be planning to strike as the U.S. military accelerates its manhunt for bin Laden in Afghanistan. There is also increased worry that bin Laden may have made greater strides than previously thought in obtaining plans or materials to make a crude explosive weapon containing radioactive materials.

In the past, al Qaeda terrorists have tried to launch attacks during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, which this year began Nov. 16. The first bombings of the World Trade Center, which killed six people and injured more than 1,000, came on Feb. 26, 1993, three days after Ramadan began that year. During the Ramadan observance from Dec. 9, 1999, to Jan. 7, 2000, the United States and other nations stopped a series of attacks that were keyed to the millennium celebration.

"We do know that the next several weeks, which bring the final weeks of Ramadan and important religious observations in other faiths, have been times when terrorists have planned attacks in the past," Ridge said.

A police source in the Washington suburbs said authorities have received "nonspecific" information from a "source deemed credible" about a threat to the Washington area on "Dec. 4 or sometime thereafter." Another police source said that law enforcement agencies are on heightened alert for suspicious vehicles that might contain a bomb.

Lt. Col. Mike Humm, a Pentagon spokesman, said the Pentagon remains at the force protection "Charlie" state of alert -- the second-highest level of security -- as it has for the past month. No special steps are being taken to search vehicles at or near the Pentagon, he said.

Virginia transportation officials closed Route 110 near the Pentagon to trucks, tractor-trailers and charter buses last week, a security precaution requested by the Department of Defense. The restriction will remain in effect indefinitely.

The two previous, and equally vague, threat warnings issued by Attorney General John D. Ashcroft on Oct. 11 and 29 prompted complaints from state and local officials and police, who said they weren't particularly useful in deploying personnel and unnecessarily provoked apprehension among citizens. Using intelligence uncorroborated by the FBI, California Gov. Gray Davis (D) issued his own warning Nov. 1 that terrorists might be targeting four large suspension bridges in the state.

President Bush subsequently defended the government's policy, saying that federal officials would issue additional alerts whenever there was credible evidence of another strike after the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon that killed more than 3,400 people.

Ashcroft said on Nov. 8 that "two periods of extremely high threat have passed." No other general warnings had been issued by the Justice Department or other federal law enforcement agencies since then.

Yesterday, Ridge defended the latest announcement and the administration's use of national alerts. He also reminded many of the nation's governors to guard against complacency during a conference call that preceded the White House announcement and the issuance of a new FBI terrorist threat advisory update to 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country.

Ridge, the former Pennsylvania governor, said he told the governors that "now is not the time to back off."

"We are a nation at war," he added. "We are the targets of enemies who have demonstrated they have no remorse about killing thousands of innocent civilians."

Colorado Gov. Bill Owens (R) said Ridge provided no additional information to the governors but urged them to reevaluate their states' preparations in light of the new intelligence.

"He was giving us a heads-up and an explanation, really nothing different than he said publicly," Owens said. "I think the public will accept it. . . . I think it's better to treat people as partners than subjects, and that's what Governor Ridge is doing."

Scott L. King, the mayor of Gary, Ind., said the warning was "not particularly useful," but added that he understood why Ridge provided it. Without details about potential targets or locations, King said, "I don't know how much more heightened on alert we can be."

King, who co-chairs a law enforcement task force for the U.S. Conference of Mayors, said Ridge is "caught between a rock and a hard place" in deciding when to issue such general warnings and that he wouldn't second-guess him.

In Philadelphia, Police Commissioner John F. Timoney said he was bolstering protection of the downtown area and major transportation hubs in addition to asking officers throughout the city to watch for suspicious activity. Many Philadelphia officers already have been working 12-hour shifts, he said, and will continue to do so.

"I'd rather err on the side of caution than anything else," Timoney said. "It just behooves everybody to take it up another notch."

The announcement was made by Ridge in part because of the general and unspecified nature of the threat, an FBI official said. If the information were more specific and suggested a particular target, the FBI and other law enforcement agencies probably would have made the announcement, the official said.

But Ridge's office said Bush had decided that it was more appropriate to have Ridge issue this and all future national alerts than either Ashcroft or FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III.

"There was a conscious decision made that it should be Governor Ridge, in his position as director of homeland security, making the announcement and any future announcements," said Susan Neely, Ridge's press secretary.

Staff writers Dan Eggen and Bob Woodward contributed to this report.

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Pg. 4

Missile Test Interceptor Scores Hit Over Pacific

By Bradley Graham, Washington Post Staff Writer

A prototype interceptor for an experimental system to defend the United States against missile attack scored a hit last night against a mock warhead shot from California over the Pacific Ocean, defense officials said.

The event marked the third intercept in five attempts over the past two years and was sure to boost the Bush administration's controversial pursuit of a national missile defense. But the testing program is still in its infancy, with many artificial conditions included in these early trials – a fact cited by missile defense critics in discounting what the tests prove about the weapon's feasibility.

In last night's test, a target missile took off from Vandenberg Air Force Base northwest of Los Angeles at 10 p.m. EST and soared across the Pacific, releasing both a mock warhead and a single balloon decoy. About 22 minutes later, the interceptor missile blasted off from Kwajalein Atoll in the central Pacific 4,800 miles away.

After climbing into space, the interceptor shed its booster, leaving a 120-pound, 55-inch-long "kill vehicle" equipped with sensors, thrusters and on-board computers searching for and then ramming into the target about 140 miles over the Pacific. A large telescopic camera on the ground captured the bright flash of the collision, which defense officials said appeared picture-perfect, although they added that analyzing all the test data would take some days.

Watching the test on a video feed at the Pentagon's Navy Annex, Lt. Gen. Ronald Kadish, director of the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO), said the hit would give him confidence enough to move on to more complicated and realistic test scenarios, including use of more and different decoys.

"This was an important achievement," he said. "It means we can take the next step and make the tests more complex."

In the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, missile defense critics have pressed their argument that the real threat to homeland security comes less from long-range missile attack than from such low-tech dangers as commercial airline hijackings, truck bombs, anthrax-dispensing devices and suicidal human couriers.

But the Bush administration has made clear its continued determination to pursue an anti-missile system capable of shielding all 50 states from limited attack. If terrorists could do the amount of damage they did by hijacking a few airliners, missile defense proponents say, imagine the consequences if they or a hostile Third World country such as North Korea or Iraq ever got their hands on a long-range missile tipped with a nuclear device or germ warfare agent. Yesterday's test followed the same course and involved the same kind of target set as the previous four tests. Even with an intercept in the last test in July, Pentagon officials wanted to avoid introducing changes, preferring instead to build up confidence in this experimental stage.

"The bottom line is, they've once again demonstrated hit-to-kill," said David Wright, a missile defense critic with the Union of Concerned Scientists. "But people have to keep in mind it hasn't been under realistic conditions."

BMDO officials said preparations for yesterday's test had generally gone more smoothly than for the previous four, although delays of one sort or another kept cropping up until shortly before launch. Last summer, finding and fixing an aging capacitor in a software evaluation station caused the test to slip a month and a half. A further two-day delay occurred last week when adhesive in the interior lining of the kill vehicle's shroud was found to be wearing thin and needed reinforcing.

Clouds and high winds over the Vandenberg launch site forced postponement of the test on both Saturday and Sunday nights.

USA Today
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Pg. 3

Ridge Wants Permanent Threat-Alert System

By Judy Keen, USA Today

WASHINGTON — Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge put the nation on a new terrorism alert Monday and told USA TODAY that he's developing a permanent system to warn Americans of the varying levels of threats. Ridge said the new warning is "a call to be vigilant," not "a signal to stop your life." He said the threats are generic and "warn of more attacks, but are not specific about where or what type."

A senior law enforcement official said authorities believe that the sources of the threats are linked to the al-Qaeda terrorist network. All of the threat information was intercepted overseas.

In an interview, Ridge said he wants to create a system early next year that's based on the U.S. military "Threatcon," or threat condition, structure. The Defense Department has five levels of terrorism alert. The highest level, "Threatcon Delta," means a terrorist attack has occurred or is likely against a specific target. The levels are posted at all military facilities.

The new system, still in the planning stages, would hinge on better coordination among intelligence agencies. Combined data would be assessed so "more and better" information could be shared with local authorities and the public.

Local officials complain that federal authorities have not provided detailed information during two previous alerts issued by Attorney General John Ashcroft. The FBI has just begun to allow local authorities to see secret intelligence so they can help decide whether to alert the public.

Ridge said he's satisfied with security upgrades at U.S. nuclear facilities, ports and public water systems. Airports are much safer, he said. But he added, "We still have a way to go to get to a system that is not entirely risk-free but is as buttoned up and secure as we can humanly make it."

Ridge said Americans must remain on the highest possible alert for the foreseeable future. He expressed concern that the public's vigilance might have waned since the Sept. 11 attacks.

"It's very predictable, absent a crisis," he said. But he warned, "I don't think we can ever afford to think it's over, ever again."

This weekend's suicide bombings in Israel should remind Americans that they can't let their guard down, Ridge said. "The tragic lesson from this weekend is that you can't design an absolutely perfect, 100% fail-safe system," he said.

President Bush announced Sept. 20 that Ridge would "lead, oversee and coordinate a comprehensive national strategy" to prevent terrorism. Ridge said he and the rest of the administration are "well on our way" toward accomplishing that mission. "The president has given me all the authority I need to get the job done," he said.

But some members of Congress and local officials worry that Ridge will never reach his goals while he's just a member of Bush's White House staff, even though he has Cabinet rank. To wrestle the federal bureaucracy into

making domestic security a top priority, they argue, Ridge must be given a Cabinet department to head and control of federal agencies' budgets.

Without that clout, said Scott King, the Democratic mayor of Gary, Ind., Ridge is "Ward Cleaver in a cardigan sweater and a pipe, offering fatherly advice, which isn't going to make it happen."

Ridge has been on the job since Oct. 8, working from a small office a few steps from the Oval Office. He left a job he loved, governor of Pennsylvania, at the request of the president, a friend for 2 decades. Ridge, 56, a former Marine and decorated Vietnam veteran, has a hearty optimism about his new job.

"There are hundreds of thousands of people who want to help me do my job," he said. "And there are hundreds of thousands of smart, intelligent, dedicated people with good ideas and ... plans to help us enhance our security." There have been a couple of rough patches, though. Ridge has declined invitations to testify before congressional committees. That has led some Capitol Hill Democrats to grumble that he didn't have enough confidence to appear. Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer said in October that Ridge would brief reporters often. But until Monday's announcement, Ridge had not held a briefing since Nov. 9. Sometimes, he had little news to report; on Nov. 7, he opened his briefing with a list of groups he had met with, including the National Organization on Disability, the Business Roundtable and NASCAR.

Ridge can claim successes. He helped persuade Ashcroft to share intelligence with local law-enforcement officials. He enabled the U.S. Postal Service to buy equipment for irradiating mail to kill anthrax. New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial, whose city will host the Super Bowl on Feb. 3, said Ridge helped him get Secret Service protection for the game.

Most criticism of Ridge is about his lack of power. "He needs to be a Cabinet-level player. The model here should be secretary of Defense, not drug czar," said Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, a Democrat. Without control of budgets, Ridge "is hamstrung," said Reno, Nev., Mayor Jeff Griffin, a Republican.

But Charlotte Mayor Patrick McCrory, a Republican, said Ridge's value is in just being there. "It gives us one place to turn when we have an issue," McCrory said. "He has the ear of the president, and that's what's most important."

Contributing: Kevin Johnson

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Pg. 1

U.S. Says Thousands Of Letters Might Be Tinged With Anthrax

By Eric Lipton

Senior officials of the Department of Health and Human Services said yesterday that some tens of thousands of letters processed weeks ago might have been contaminated with trace amounts of anthrax spores merely by coming into contact with intentionally poisoned mail.

Such incidental contamination might have been the source of the bacteria that killed two women in Connecticut and New York, the officials said.

During a telephone news conference late yesterday afternoon, Tommy G. Thompson, the secretary of health and human services, and his top scientific advisers repeatedly said that there was no evidence of a widespread threat to public health. But the officials said that people with compromised immune systems who were uneasy about the risk might feel more comfortable having someone else open their mail, washing their hands after opening letters or taking other protective steps.

"There seems to be the potential for not just hundreds and not just thousands, but tens of thousands and maybe more letters to be potentially at risk for some level of cross-contamination," said Dr. Jeffrey P. Koplan, the director of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The agency is investigating the deaths of five people from inhalation anthrax, including Ottilie W. Lundgren, 94, of Oxford, Conn., and Kathy T. Nguyen, 61, of the Bronx. Mr. Thompson said that there was still no "definite scientific or medical link between cross-contamination of mail and the death of Mrs. Lundgren." But his top advisers said this was the theory being explored most closely. Dr. Koplan said the possibility that thousands of letters with a low level of spores may have been widely distributed was "an uncomfortable situation."

Officials cautioned that the risk associated with cross-contaminated mail appeared to be extremely small.

Perhaps most important, they said, is that it has been nearly two months since letters known to have anthrax bacteria passed through the mail system and only Mrs. Lundgren and Ms. Nguyen are thought to have possibly contracted inhalation anthrax in this way.

"The risk to any one individual is very low," Dr. Koplan said, echoing earlier assessments by other top health officials who said there was only a one-in-several-million chance of someone falling ill.

But the disclosure was the latest in a series that suggested how even small amounts of anthrax can be widely dispersed through mechanisms like the mail service. It also reflects the continuing revision of the assessment of the threat caused by anthrax bacteria in the mail.

Initially, federal health officials said that only a person who opened a letter with anthrax spores could get enough of a dose to cause a fatal case of the disease.

Then they said that even people who just handled a sealed letter could be fatally infected. Now it appears that someone who received a letter that came into contact with a poisoned letter might be at risk of getting a fatal dose. The latest shift in the assessment came over the weekend, after investigators found trace amounts of anthrax spores at a postal distribution center that serves Ms. Lundgren's neighborhood, and a single spore on a letter that was received by a family in Seymour, a mile from Ms. Lundgren's home in Oxford.

They are also raising the possibility that cross-contamination might have caused the death of Ms. Nguyen. The theory is bolstered by the fact that postal authorities have determined that a letter mailed to the Bronx neighborhood where Ms. Nguyen lived — like the letter to the Seymour family — passed through a New Jersey mail sorting center at almost exactly the same time on Oct. 9 as anthrax-laced letters sent from Trenton to two United States senators. They had earlier confirmed that this kind of transfer of spores from one letter to another had caused a cutaneous anthrax infection in an office worker at an accounting firm in New Jersey. But they did not think cross-contamination could cause inhalation anthrax.

Federal officials said yesterday that anthrax spores had also most likely been dispersed not only by mail-sorting machines, but also by the equipment that stamps letters. In stamping such letters, Dr. Koplan said, there is "a physical ramming of the letter by the stamping device that in itself may cause some dispersion through the envelope in some way."

If one canceling machine was contaminated, he added, spores could also possibly have spread to canceling machines alongside it.

Postal officials have found traces of anthrax bacteria in about 20 sorting centers and post offices in several states. Yesterday, as part of an intensified effort to determine how many letters may have been contaminated and where those letters were ultimately delivered, federal officials said that an epidemiologist was being assigned to the Washington headquarters of the United States Postal Service.

Dr. Neal L. Cohen, New York City's Health Commissioner, said in a separate news conference in New York yesterday that while he agreed that cross-contamination might have been the source of the anthrax bacteria that infected Ms. Nguyen, the risk to the public at large was limited.

"Obviously there's not a zero risk, but the risk is quite, quite small," Dr. Cohen said.

City health officials have visited two Bronx addresses to see if they could find a possibly contaminated letter that passed through a postal distribution center near Trenton at the same time as the letters sent to Senators Tom Daschle of South Dakota and Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont. But no letter was found, nor was any sign that anyone in the area had fallen ill.

Dr. Koplan said he could not rule out that other people might have been infected with anthrax, but that the cases had not come to light because the disease had not been properly diagnosed.

"We've had very intensive case surveillance going on throughout the country and not turned up other cases," he said.

"May we find more? Yes, we might. Could we have missed some? Yes, we might have. But nevertheless, we're getting lots of reports of cases that don't turn out to be anthrax."

Dr. Koplan added that people whose immunity was compromised, like the elderly or those with AIDS, "might be more comfortable" having someone else open their mail, or washing their hands after they have done so, and, in particular, not bringing mail close to their faces.

"We don't have all of the answers and people would like to have some reassurance that we know exactly what's going on and we don't," Dr. Koplan said.