

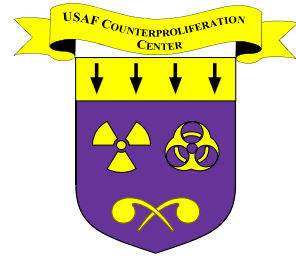
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News, 21-20 Sep 2001

Washington Times
September 21, 2001
Pg. 1

Iraq Suspected Of Sponsoring Terrorist Attacks

Bin Laden prepares flight to Somalia

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

Osama bin Laden was in contact with Iraqi government agents from his base in Afghanistan in the days leading up to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, according to U.S. intelligence officials.

Officials also told The Washington Times there are indications bin Laden, the leading suspect in the deadly attacks, is preparing to flee Afghanistan and set up operations in the African nation of Somalia.

Bin Laden's contacts with the Iraqi government were detected before the attacks, said officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity

"This is the basis for signs of state sponsorship," said one official.

Attorney General John Ashcroft said Wednesday that foreign governments likely provided safe haven and support for the 19 terrorists who hijacked four U.S. airliners. Three of the airliners were flown into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon; another crashed in Pennsylvania after passengers apparently fought their captors.

Mr. Ashcroft did not identify what foreign governments are believed to be behind the attacks.

Officials said the intelligence of direct Iraqi government contacts with bin Laden is one of several pieces pointing to Baghdad's involvement in the attacks.

U.S. warplanes attacked air defense sites in Iraq yesterday, but the Pentagon said the attacks are unrelated to U.S. anti-terrorism operations.

President Bush and other U.S. officials have said bin Laden is the key suspect in masterminding last week's kamikaze attacks that killed more than 6,000 Americans.

Mr. Bush told a joint session of Congress last night that all governments are on notice that "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."

David Ivry, Israel's ambassador to the United States, said yesterday it was too soon to make conclusions about an Iraqi role in the attacks.

"My opinion is the investigation is being done by the United States by professionals," Mr. Ivry told editors and reporters in a meeting at The Washington Times. "They are going to come to conclusions. We are going to try to assist as much as we are going to be asked. But I think it's too early to come up with a kind of fingering of somebody."

Mr. Ivry said Iraq has been supporting Palestinian terrorists in Israel by giving financial aid to the families of suicide bombers who have launched attacks.

Earlier this week, intelligence officials said one of the hijackers, Mohamed Atta, met with an Iraqi intelligence agent in the months before the attack.

The Bush administration is considering whether to target Iraq as part of an international campaign to destroy terrorists and their networks.

Some Bush administration officials, especially within the Pentagon, favor attacking Iraq when operations against Afghanistan are begun, possibly within the next few weeks. Other administration officials are said to favor limiting the first strikes to Afghanistan.

Asked about public calls for going after state sponsors of terrorism like Iraq, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said President Bush "has a clear idea in his mind and has given us our instructions as to how we will begin this campaign and what the focus of our efforts will be initially."

"We welcome the views from everybody as to how we might go about this campaign," Mr. Powell said.

Regarding bin Laden's future in Afghanistan, officials said the indications of his flight to Somalia were received in the past few days.

"There are indications he is heading to Somalia," said one official.

The indications are said to include plans for bin Laden to relocate himself and his wives and other family members from locations in Afghanistan to an undisclosed location in Somalia, the official said.

Disclosure of the relocation comes as the ruling Taliban militia announced yesterday in Kabul that bin Laden would be asked to leave the country.

A statement issued by the shura, or council of some 1,000 Taliban clerics, was not an order for bin Laden to leave. Afghan officials quoted by U.S. wire services stated that bin Laden would be given time to leave "whenever possible."

Asked about the Taliban statement, Mr. Powell said the announcement was not enough.

"Voluntarily or involuntarily, we believe that Osama bin Laden has to be put under control and turned over to authorities who can bring him to justice, and it should be done rather quickly," Mr. Powell said. "We want action, not just statements."

Mr. Powell said bin Laden was responsible for "tragedies around the world."

The Taliban must turn over bin Laden and "all of the other lieutenants and the infrastructure that exists within Afghanistan," Mr. Powell said.

"This isn't a campaign against one individual, but also the network that he is the leader of," Mr. Powell said. "And when we have dealt with al Qaeda, the network, Osama bin Laden, the individual, we will then broaden our campaign to go after other terrorist organizations and forms of terrorism around the world. It is a long-term campaign. It will be done in a deliberate way. It will be done in a decisive way."

A military source said bin Laden's relocation to Somalia would put that nation on the Pentagon's list of targets of planned military operations against international terrorists. Moving to Somalia would have symbolic value for bin Laden, who has called on his followers to kill Americans. The U.S. military withdrew from Somalia in 1993 following a deadly battle in Mogadishu that left 18 U.S. Army Rangers dead. The operation was part of a U.S. military humanitarian operation to help feed starving Somalis that degenerated into an effort to hunt down Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid.

Washington Post
September 21, 2001
Pg. 28

Pakistani Majority May Accept Alliance With U.S.

By Pamela Constable, Washington Post Foreign Service

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, Sept. 20 -- Religious minority groups in Pakistan are loudly protesting the country's support for a possible U.S. attack on Afghanistan, but a quieter majority of Pakistanis have accepted the government's decision as the lesser of two evils, according to a variety of observers here.

Siding against the United States could have made Pakistan an international pariah, a number of influential Pakistanis say, and possibly endangered its nuclear weapons facilities. Helping the Americans, they argue, provides a welcome excuse to jettison Afghanistan's Taliban regime, which has only brought trouble to its Pakistani ally. It means swallowing national pride but could bring desperately needed economic aid.

The question in the minds of those who support the course decided by President Pervez Musharraf is whether it will unleash uncontrollable religious violence in Pakistan by the Taliban's friends here and bring a new wave of Afghan refugees into Pakistan.

Over the past several days, Musharraf, an army general, has met with a cross section of prominent Pakistanis, including retired generals and civilian politicians, to explain his decision and solicit advice. On Wednesday he went on national television to ask his people for support, saying that in order to protect Pakistan's security and future, he had no choice but to side with the United States.

The Taliban, a rigid Islamic militia that until now counted Pakistan as one of its few friends in the world, harbors Osama bin Laden, the Saudi fugitive U.S. officials have called the top suspect in planning the Sept. 11 suicide attacks on New York and Washington. The Bush administration and the United Nations Security Council have demanded bin Laden's extradition; the United States is now threatening military action against targets in Afghanistan.

One public opinion poll by a religious institute said up to 60 percent of Pakistanis disapproved of the president's decision to support the Americans, but other independent analysts contend the figure is closer to 25 percent, still a large number.

"Musharraf's new policy is not acceptable to much of public opinion, but it is in the nation's best interest, so we must try to help," said Hamid Mir, editor of Ausaf, an influential daily newspaper that often criticizes the Pakistani president.

Some opinion makers said the president's quick decision had prevented India, Pakistan's traditional rival, from taking advantage of the crisis. In this view, it preserved Pakistan's nuclear facilities from potential U.S. attack and salvaged its ability to continue supporting the Muslim guerrilla conflict in Indian Kashmir, a popular mainstay of Pakistan's foreign policy.

India and Pakistan have both tested nuclear weapons, and both claim Kashmir, a mountainous border region, as their territory.

Other political and academic figures said they hoped the new U.S.-Pakistan alliance could result in a new economic lease on life for the beleaguered country. An impoverished country of 140 million, Pakistan is mired in foreign debt and desperately seeking new Western loans and investment.

"We had an overwhelming consensus that before trying to save Afghanistan, Musharraf had to save Pakistan," said Aitzaz Ahsan, a lawyer and former Senate majority leader who took part in one of the meetings with the president.

"Musharraf has chosen the lesser evil, and it will lead to some domestic unrest, but he has avoided the greater damage that would come from continuing to support the Taliban."

Some observers said Musharraf had done the right thing but gone about it the wrong way. They criticized him for pledging support for U.S. military action before he consulted public opinion, and said they were not convinced he

had exacted enough payment from Washington. Pakistan is currently under U.S. economic sanctions because of its 1998 nuclear tests and 1999 military coup.

But several sources said Musharraf had deliberated for 18 straight hours with his top military advisers before agreeing to support Washington.

"I'm sure they calculated that a lot of goodies will come if they ride the storm together" with the world community, said Rifaat Hussain, a professor of strategic and defense studies at Quaid-I-Azam University here, who met with Musharraf Wednesday.

Several other people who met with Musharraf, including retired generals whose army was once allied with the United States and radical Islamic Mujaheddin fighters against Soviet occupation in Afghanistan, said they wished the government had long ago distanced itself from the ruling Taliban regime.

Still, Musharraf's haste to comply with U.S. demands for cooperation in a military attack grated on many Pakistanis' sense of national pride.

A number of observers described the United States as an unreliable partner, pointing out that it quickly abandoned the Afghan cause once the Soviets withdrew in 1989, leaving a void in which violence and religious extremism soon spilled into Pakistan.

Indeed, it is the threat of radical Islam and the potential for full-scale extremist violence inside Pakistan that has left many Pakistanis confused and alarmed about the current crisis and their government's ability to defuse it.

"Musharraf has the latent support of Pakistan's silent majority, but it may not be enough," said Hussain. "Those who oppose him may not be large in numbers, but they are willing to shed blood."

Wall Street Journal
September 21, 2001

Central Asian Nations Dangle Offer To Aid U.S. If Attacks Launched

Leaders of 3 Nations Show Interest In Role if U.S. Launches Attack

By Steve Levine, Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

ALMATY, Kazakstan -- Three nations in predominantly Muslim Central Asia are dangling the prospect of a jumping-off point for a U.S. attack on Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden.

The suggestion of openness by Kazakstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to a U.S. military presence, conveyed in official statements, reflects the former Soviet region's relative religious moderation, eagerness to strengthen strategic links with the U.S. and its own concerns with Islamic terrorism.

In recent years, parts of the region have suffered attacks by an Afghanistan-based rebel group that local and U.S. officials link to Mr. bin Laden, a Saudi radical whom the U.S. says was behind last week's terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

In addition, the leaders of the three republics -- criticized in recent years for political repression and, in one case, alleged personal enrichment -- may have a wish-list, experts say. "They are shopping for an economic and military security package," says Martha Olcott, a Central Asia specialist at Washington's Carnegie Endowment.

If the U.S. does launch a strike against Afghan targets, jets could take off from carriers in the Arabian Sea. For a ground assault, some experts say U.S. officials favor a strike from Pakistan, situated less than a day's drive from both the Afghan capital of Kabul and the Taliban's southern stronghold of Kandahar. However, Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf faces fierce domestic opposition to a U.S. military assault from Pakistani soil.

Conversely, no public protests have erupted in Central Asia -- an autocratic region where religious activism is strongly discouraged and sometimes harshly punished -- since the U.S. began speaking of a wide-ranging assault on terrorism.

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, both bordering Afghanistan, are potential bases for air and land forces. The Taliban's armed opposition, for example, maintains a rear supply base in the southern Tajikistan city of Kulyab, and the Uzbekistan capital of Tashkent has a well-developed military infrastructure as the Soviet Union's former regional military headquarters. In addition, the Pentagon may try to work out deployment rights in Central Asia simply to diversify its routes into Afghanistan.

Officials in Kazakstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan all have said in recent days that they are open to discussion of any U.S. anti-terrorism proposals. "Kazakstan is ready to support the measures the United States will carry out against

terrorists. Kazakhstan can be relied on," Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev told the Russian agency Interfax last week.

However, officials of all three states say the U.S. has made no explicit requests.

President George W. Bush spoke by telephone with Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov on Wednesday, mostly about security issues, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

A key issue, particularly for Tajikistan, will be whether the U.S. can reassure Russia, which regards Central Asia as part of its sphere of influence. Russia has more than 20,000 soldiers based in Tajikistan, many of them guarding the Afghan border, and Tajik authorities will likely go along with Moscow. Boris Malakhov, an official in Russia's Foreign Affairs Ministry, said Moscow wouldn't yet express an official position because the U.S. hadn't raised the issue.

Such a deployment would bolster an already-strong U.S. strategic presence in the region, which is situated on the eastern shore of the energy-rich Caspian Sea. Indeed, the U.S. has heavily courted the region because of its abundant oil fields.

As part of the policy, the U.S. has carried out joint military maneuvers with the region's republics, most of which belong to NATO's partnership for peace program. In addition, the Clinton administration granted a \$10 million security package to battle the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, an Afghan-based group seeking to topple Mr. Karimov. Uzbek and U.S. officials say the IMU receives support from Mr. bin Laden.

Central Asian officials have declined to comment on any specifics of a U.S. deployment unless they receive an official U.S. request. But Washington may be asked to provide military and economic assistance, experts say. Barnett Rubin, a Central Asia authority at New York University, says Uzbekistan may ask that the U.S., while going after Mr. bin Laden, also crush the IMU.

Moscow Times

September 21, 2001

Pg. 1

Central Asia Is Crux Of Dilemma

By Ana Uzelac, Staff Writer

In a flurry of diplomatic activity by Russian leaders trying to find their place in the emerging U.S.-led coalition against terrorism, Moscow has focused largely on the volatile states of Central Asia -- whose neighbor Afghanistan is the most likely target of a U.S. military strike.

Despite Russia's stated support for a joint anti-terrorist operation, Moscow is apprehensive about hints from the region's former Soviet republics that they are willing to let Washington use their bases and airspace without seeking Russian approval. Moscow fears that the region's direct involvement in a U.S. military operation could both undermine its already waning influence there and destabilize the region, leading to conflagrations on Russia's southern border.

Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan -- impoverished nations ruled by heavy-handed secular regimes -- have all faced the threat of militant Islamic groups suspected of links with the Taliban, which controls much of Afghanistan and has been playing host to suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden. And while the downfall of the Taliban regime could defuse tensions by depriving local radicals of their nearby support base, experts warn that a hasty and short-sighted operation could plunge the region into crisis and further radicalization.

The Players

The only country in the region where Russia still maintains a military presence is Tajikistan -- a pauperized nation of less than 6.5 million people emerging from a devastating five-year civil war between a pro-Moscow secular government and an Islamic opposition. The country is so weak that its 1,200-kilometer border with Afghanistan is guarded by 10,000 Russian troops, with 15,000 more scattered throughout the country.

The border they guard is a tough zone to patrol. According to Reuters, Tajikistan is the transit route for 65 percent to 85 percent of heroin smuggled out of Afghanistan, the world's largest producer.

The border also serves as a bulwark against thousands of Afghan refugees, some of them armed, whom the Tajik government has refused to accept. The refugees live in a no-man's land on the islands of the Pyandzh River, which separates Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Dushanbe, whose government includes former Islamic opposition leaders, fears some of the refugees might be affiliated with radical Islamic groups and could bolster the warlords who still control parts of the country.

Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov reiterated Thursday that his country would not take in refugees should the United States launch strikes against Afghanistan. "We cannot allow the penetration of a single refugee from Afghanistan into Tajikistan because there could be emissaries of different international terrorist organizations among them," Rakhmonov told Reuters during an inspection of the Tajik-Afghan border together with Russia's Security Council chief, Vladimir Rushailo.

Tajikistan's other problem is neighboring Uzbekistan, which does not conceal its animosity toward its smaller eastern neighbor. Uzbekistan, a country of 23 million, accuses Tajikistan of housing training camps and allowing the free passage of members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, or IMU, the region's largest armed extremist group.

The IMU is suspected of having strong links with the Taliban, which allows it to operate through bases in Afghanistan. The movement staged an attack on Uzbek President Islam Karimov in 1999 and conducted a major raid in Uzbekistan's Ferghana Valley in 2000.

The Uzbek government has responded to the threat with repressions against all practicing Moslems. In the last four years, hundreds of mosques have been closed and thousands of devout Moslems have been imprisoned. Many among them, according to human rights groups, have been tortured.

But Uzbekistan's border with Afghanistan is the shortest and best guarded of all -- its 137 kilometers are reportedly fortified by 20,000 troops, some of which are U.S.-trained. Neighboring Turkmenistan is in a far less enviable position: Its 744-kilometer border with Afghanistan is virtually unguarded. Aware of his weakness, the country's megalomaniac ruler, Saparmurat Niyazov -- whose 40-meter gold-covered rotating statue adorns the capital, Ashgabat -- has opted for neutrality in dealing with the Taliban.

Turkmenistan's Foreign Ministry reiterated its stance Wednesday, saying it had no plans to allow the United States and its allies to use its territory or air space for retaliatory strikes against Afghanistan.

Fragile Balance

The caution with which the Central Asian countries have reacted to the possibility of joining the U.S.-led military operation is justified, and the risks of destabilization are real, according to Martha Brill Olcott, a senior associate and Central Asia expert with the Washington-based Carnegie Endowment.

"The war in Afghanistan has the capacity to destabilize the region," Brill Olcott said in a telephone interview from Washington on Wednesday.

Experts agreed that Central Asia could face two dangers in the event of a U.S. attack: a wave of refugees and the fueling of radical sentiment.

"For any of these states, a new refugee burden is not a welcome gift," Brill Olcott said. "They simply do not have the resources to deal with it unassisted." According to Alexander Golts, a military correspondent for Itogi magazine, the flood of refugees is "unavoidable" if Afghanistan is invaded, so it should not deter the Central Asian nations or Russia from participating in a military operation. "It will happen whether we participate in the operation or not," he said in a telephone interview. "The only difference is that if we are partners, we could count on some form of aid. And if we're not, we'll be left to cope with it alone."

Perhaps a greater danger is potential retaliation by the Taliban.

Days after Washington threatened the Taliban with strikes, Kabul warned that it would fight back. The only means at its disposal other than terrorist attacks, observers say, are measures to destabilize neighboring countries -- first and foremost, Pakistan, followed by Central Asia.

According to Rustam Shukurov, an associate professor of history at Moscow State University, the Taliban has had "very serious plans for Central Asia."

"Ever since they came to power, they've been supporting the Islamic movements in those countries, financing them and helping them build networks throughout Central Asia," he said in a telephone interview Thursday. "It was obvious they were planning serious operations there in the coming years."

However, observers also believe that an attack against the Taliban might actually bring the region some stability, or at least buy it some time to solve its internal problems. An attack on Afghanistan could deplete the Taliban's resources to such an extent that the movement might find itself unable to help anybody anymore, according to Mark Galeotti, a Russia expert with the Jane's Intelligence group in London.

"They are not that rich, they will be busy fighting the U.S. and a civil war in their own country, with the Northern Alliance. They might try to pour some more arms to their affiliates in the region, but not more than that," Galeotti said.

As if confirming this, the Indian government announced Thursday that some of the Taliban forces that fought alongside rebels in the province of Jammu and Kashmir have started withdrawing to Afghanistan.

"The danger of the Taliban destabilizing the region exists, but I find it a bit exaggerated," Alexei Malashenko, an expert with the Moscow Carnegie Center, said in a telephone interview Wednesday.

"The Taliban is going to fall eventually," Galeotti said. "It is fragmented and lacks a real power base. And if it's going to collapse, it's better for its neighbors to have it collapse under American pressure. That would make the U.S. feel responsible for the consequences and invest in the region's recovery."

Carnegie's Brill Olcott agreed.

"An invasion that has broad international support and is accompanied by some sense of responsibility for rebuilding Afghanistan ... might not be destabilizing at all," she said.

But Professor Shukurov cautioned that eliminating the Taliban -- "a black hole that does not recognize any international rules of the game" -- while a necessary step, is "just the first one."

The future of the Central Asian states is determined first and foremost at home, Shukurov said, and there the prospects are grim. Both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan -- countries with majority Moslem populations -- are ruled by "virulently anti-Moslem regimes" that could use the global fight against terrorism as an excuse to step up repression at home.

"These regimes with their indiscriminate persecution of all Moslems are breeding radicalism," Shukurov said.

Russia's Game

Here, Shukurov believes, is where Russia can help -- first by participating in efforts to neutralize the Taliban, then by helping the democratization of Central Asia. But, thus far, there is little sign of either and Russia's political and military leadership appear to have conflicting ideas on how to handle the situation.

Reuters cited a senior U.S. State Department official as saying that Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, during his visit to Washington, had made it clear that Russia would not stand in the way of U.S. cooperation with former Soviet states in Central Asia.

Ivanov said Wednesday that Russia and the United States should "give up the stereotypes of the Cold War" and that in fighting terrorism "no means can be excluded, including the use of force."

At the same time, Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov was adamant that there was no "basis for even the hypothetical possibility" of a NATO military presence in Central Asia.

Dushanbe and Tashkent have been careful not to rile their northern neighbor. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which is home to two air bases that were used to launch attacks against Afghanistan during the Soviet military campaign there, initially said they would consider all means of cooperation with the United States, including the use of air bases. But a day later they back-pedaled, saying they had not received any concrete requests from Washington. Washington has seemed sensitive to Russia's touchiness in the region as well, and has been conspicuously low-key in dealing with the Central Asian regimes.

Jane's Galeotti said Russia's military top brass was lobbying very hard against U.S. use of air bases in Uzbekistan or Tajikistan.

"Their arguments were, among others, that the U.S. planes might spy on Russian military facilities," he said.

"[Russia's] help will most likely be limited to intelligence," Galeotti said. "Russia can offer the help of officers who fought in Afghanistan and remember the terrain there. It's easy, it can make a difference and it costs nothing."

Russian Chief of General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin has been touring the region, making sure none of the countries extends too helping a hand to Washington. "Russia has not considered and is not planning to consider participation in a military operation against Afghanistan," Kvashnin told reporters during his visit to Tajikistan on Wednesday. As far as the "territorial integrity" of the Central Asian nations, he said, "there are relevant bilateral and other obligations."

"The problem is, Russian policy in the region is not conducted by politicians, but by military people," Shukurov said. "And they unfortunately lack vision: They still see America as the main enemy and the repressive governments as their main allies."

New York Times
September 21, 2001

Iran Softens Tone Against The United States

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN, Sept. 20 — Iran is not normally given to sympathizing with the United States, but last week's terror attacks have drawn rare public condolences and a pledge to join an international effort to root out terrorism.

Both the reformist camp around President Mohammad Khatami and the more conservative clerics behind the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, have softened their tone toward the United States while warning against Western overreaction.

Last week, for the first time since the 1979 Islamic revolution, there were no chants of "death to America" at weekly Friday prayers around the country, which are controlled by the conservatives.

In a telephone conversation today with Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain — the second in two days, and just before Mr. Blair traveled to the United States — President Khatami stressed that regional concerns and realities must be understood.

"A tragedy must not be answered with another tragedy and innocent people in Afghanistan, or any other place, must not be attacked or hurt," Iranian news media quoted Mr. Khatami as telling Mr. Blair. According to Iranian news media, the British prime minister wrote to Mr. Khatami earlier this week seeking Iran's cooperation in preventing a clash between the West and the Muslim world.

[The United States has sent Iran a message responding to what officials viewed as Tehran's "positive statements" since last week's attacks, American officials quoted by Reuters news agency said.]

The United States and Iran severed relations in 1979 when Iranians took American diplomats hostage in their embassy in Tehran. Britain resumed full diplomatic ties in 1998.

On Tuesday, Ayatollah Khamenei, in his first public remarks on last week's attacks, markedly failed to brand the United States an enemy.

"Islam condemns the massacre of defenseless people, whether Muslim or Christian or others, anywhere and by any means," he said, adding pointedly: "And so Iran condemns any attack on Afghanistan that may lead to another human tragedy."

Despite the bitter enmity Iran's Islamic rulers feel for the Taliban mullahs who rule Afghanistan, there is no question of volunteering territory or facilities to the United States for an attack, said Hamidreza Assefi, spokesman of the foreign ministry.

"We are worried about and are against a military strike," Mr. Assefi said. "It will cause instability in the region, and more refugees come toward our borders."

Iran almost went to war with Afghanistan three years ago after the Taliban killed 10 Iranian diplomats and a journalist when fighters seized the Iranian consulate in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif. Iran sent extra troops to the border but did not invade and is still waiting for the Taliban to meet its demands to hand over those suspected of killing the Iranians.

Now, increasing numbers of refugees pouring out of Afghanistan, which is parched by drought and has experienced 22 years of war, have strained the economy of a country which already faces high unemployment and the restiveness of an overwhelmingly young population.

Iran has 1.4 million Afghan refugees, most of them in the far east of the country, and announced last Friday — three days after the terror attacks on the United States and talk of retaliation against the Taliban who harbor Osama bin Laden — that it was sealing its 560-mile border. Particularly in southern areas, however, that border is hard to control.

On Tuesday, more than 3,000 mostly young people held a candlelight vigil in Tehran for the victims of the terror attacks, closely watched by security forces.

One reformist member of Parliament, Ahmad Borghani, even went to the United States interest section at the Swiss Embassy on Tuesday with a wreath of white flowers to sign the memorial book in sympathy with the family's of the victims.

"This tragedy has brought the two countries closer," he said. "But the United States must not expect Iran to cooperate in a military attack — considering our past relations."

Bloomberg.com
September 20, 2001

Iran Won't Allow U.S. Use Of Airspace, Refuge For Bin Laden

By Todd Zeranski

Tehran -- Iran won't allow the U.S. to use its airspace to attack neighboring Afghanistan, yet would also bar suspected terrorist leader Osama bin Laden from entering the country, Reuters and Agence France-Presse reported, citing a foreign ministry spokesman.

"We will never allow American airplanes to use Iranian airspace to attack Afghanistan," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told Reuters.

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami spoke with British Prime Minister Tony Blair today and urged restraint by the Bush administration to avoid civilian casualties in Afghanistan through anticipated military strikes. Iran shares a 582-mile border with Afghanistan and has expressed concern about a surge of Afghan refugees.

An official from Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia said today bin Laden, the accused mastermind behind attacks last week on the U.S., was free to remain in the country.

"A catastrophe shouldn't be answered by another catastrophe, and innocent people in Afghanistan or anywhere else shouldn't be attacked and hurt," Khatami said on Iran's state television, Reuters reported.

The U.S. has no direct diplomatic relations with Iran, the result of the American embassy takeover in Tehran two decades ago by student militants. Iran remains on a U.S. list of countries it accuses of sponsoring terrorism. Yet Iran has backed forces fighting the Taliban for control of Afghanistan and has condemned the attacks on the U.S.

Iran said this week that a show of international consensus should be made at the United Nations before any U.S. assaults against terrorist targets take place.

On Tuesday, Khatami sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan calling for a "prudent, coordinated and rule-based international endeavor" against terrorist acts. The UN is "the appropriate framework to organize this struggle," Khatami wrote.

While Iran's international political influence has suffered because of its lack of relations with the U.S., the country wields economic power as the No. 2 oil producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Washington Post
September 21, 2001
Pg. 15

Apparent Role Of Saudis Draws Scrutiny To Kingdom's Tensions

By Dan Morgan and David B. Ottaway, Washington Post Staff Writers

A deepening and increasingly visible relationship between the Saudi royal family and the U.S. military since the 1991 Persian Gulf War has inflamed anti-American passions within the country's influential Islamic establishment, particularly its radical anti-government fringe. According to Saudi and U.S. sources, the friction over this relationship may have led to unprecedented involvement by Saudi individuals in the Sept. 11 suicide attacks in New York and Washington.

While some of the hijackers were non-Saudis who apparently used stolen Saudi identity papers, at least four of the 19 suspects appear to be real Saudis, according to a Saudi source who has been in contact with officials in Riyadh, the Saudi capital. The families of a number of suspects using Saudi names and documents have been unable to contact them since the attacks, he said.

Although Saudis have been involved in terrorist bombings against U.S. targets before in Saudi Arabia -- notably in 1995 and 1996 -- the attacks of Sept. 11 appear to mark the first Saudi participation in such attacks outside the kingdom or in the suicide tactics that have been a hallmark of terrorism in Lebanon and Israel.

Five of the suspects used the names Alghamdi or Alshehri, which are common among two tribes in southwestern Saudi Arabia where Islamic militants are particularly strong. A dissident Islamic cleric, Safar Hawali, who was released from house arrest in June 1999 with two other radical clerics, has family roots and many followers in that region.

Saudi officials emphasized that they have yet to establish or receive conclusive proof that nationals from their country were involved in the Sept. 11 attacks. The chief information official of the Saudi Embassy in Washington said Wednesday that most, if not all, the suspects used stolen identities.

But U.S. officials have identified as their chief suspect Osama bin Laden, the Saudi-born fugitive who has consistently railed against the same American military presence in Saudi Arabia that so upsets many other Muslim

activists in the kingdom. U.S. law enforcement officials have said they are questioning a number of Saudi pilots as part of an investigation into the attacks and are holding a Saudi doctor as a material witness. These developments have refocused attention on internal problems in America's closest Persian Gulf ally after a period in which anti-government and anti-U.S. agitation seemed to have subsided. "This is going to begin an international scrutiny of the domestic situation in Saudi Arabia," said Nawaf Obaid, a Saudi oil and security analyst. Saudi authorities in the past have resisted such scrutiny, drawing criticism from the FBI, for instance, for refusing to allow U.S. agents to interview suspects in the bombing of an American military installation. Saudi and U.S. analysts said the United States is poorly prepared to assess on its own the strength of the radical Islamic movement within the Saudi power structure, having failed to develop a relationship with the religious community commensurate with its interlocking connections to the Saudi military, government and royal family. According to a non-classified version of a study done by Obaid for the State Department in May 1998, "U.S. intelligence on Saudi Arabia suffers from misunderstanding the radical nature and underestimating the power of the religious establishment."

Several scholars and analysts credited Crown Prince Abdullah, who has taken over day-to-day government from the ailing King Fahd, for defusing religious discontent that swept the kingdom in the mid-1990s. Among other things, the unrest led to a bombing in Riyadh in November 1995 that killed five Americans and two Indians and the truck-bombing of the Khobar Towers apartments in Dhahran that killed 19 U.S. servicemen. But in the last several years, the violence seemed to have dissipated and Islamic-based anti-government tension to have subsided. "Abdullah has been a key factor in relieving fundamentalist pressure on the Saudi government because his own personal piety and behavior are beyond question," said Chas W. Freeman Jr., a former U.S. ambassador to the kingdom who now is president of the Middle East Policy Council. But he added that the government "has a major security problem and it understands this."

Internal stability in Saudi Arabia is crucial for long-term U.S. security interests. The kingdom serves as a military bulwark against Iraq, a counterweight to Iran and the key piece in a loose U.S.-backed military alliance of Arab states along the Persian Gulf. Since the 1970s, Saudi Arabia has gone from being mainly a large supplier of oil to the principal U.S. ally and economic partner in the region. In the 1970s and 1980s, it helped recycle oil income into the international banking system. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the Iranian revolution the same year caused it to turn to the United States for modern weapons, including F-15s, AWACS command planes, helicopters, transport planes, tanks and air defense weapons such as Patriot and Hawk missiles. It was the main staging ground for U.S. forces that drove Iraq from Kuwait in 1991.

Since 1981, U.S. construction companies and arms suppliers have made more than \$50 billion in Saudi Arabia, according to the Congressional Research Service. More than 30,000 Americans are employed by Saudi companies or joint U.S.-Saudi ventures and U.S. investments in the country reached \$4.8 billion in 2000, according to the Commerce Department. The U.S. oil giant Exxon Mobil Corp. recently was chosen by the Saudi government to lead two of three consortiums developing gas projects worth \$20 billion to \$26 billion.

"What started as a military pillar to resist Soviet incursion into the region has become an uncomfortable commitment to the interests of a royal family that has become increasingly unpopular with younger Islamic clerics and Saudi nationalists," said Scott Armstrong, a Washington journalist who is preparing a book on the U.S.-Saudi security relationship.

Scholars say these developments -- in particular the continued stationing of an estimated 5,000 U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia after the Gulf War and the use of Prince Sultan Air Base at Al Kharj to patrol and bomb southern Iraq -- upset a delicate balance within the Saudi power structure. While the royal family continued to view U.S. forces as essential for security, bin Laden's charges that American "crusader forces" were occupying the homeland of Islam's holiest shrines at Mecca and Medina found a receptive audience in some Saudi religious circles. Simultaneously, a downturn in the Saudi economy starting in the late 1980s resulted in fewer Saudis studying abroad and more attending religious schools at home, according to Daniel Brumberg, associate professor of government at Georgetown University. "The result has been a young, disgruntled generation of Saudis with little exposures to the West, who imbibed the fundamentalist rhetoric and worldview," he said. "There was a constituency for the rhetoric of resentment."

Wahabism -- the main Saudi school of Islam based on a strict, austere interpretation of the Koran -- has been the "glue" holding Saudi Arabia together since its founding, scholars note. While secular authority has been vested in a family dynasty founded by the Al-Saud clan, the royal family and the religious leaders have been "joined at the hip," according to Mamoun Fandy, a resident lecturer at the National Defense University.

Members of the key religious organizations, such as the Council of the Assembly of Senior Ulama and the Committee for the Prevention of Vice and Propagation of Virtue, are appointed by the king. But below them is a

Muslim establishment in which younger, militant clerics have become increasingly emboldened to criticize the presence of "foreign infidels" after 1991. Sheik Salman Audah, one of the dissident clerics, distributed tapes of sermons comparing members of the royal family to the last sultans of the Ottoman Empire.

Bin Laden, say scholars, developed a close relationship with a number of these clerics after returning from the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan. Several have at least condoned, if not outright advocated, violence on behalf of the cause of purifying Islam in Saudi Arabia.

There are an estimated 12,000 to 25,000 Saudi Islamic militants known as "Afghanis" because they also fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan, according to Anthony Cordesman, a military specialist on the Persian Gulf at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Christian Science Monitor
September 21, 2001

Lebanon Fears US Will Settle Old Scores In Its New War

The US ambassador's remarks may signal that Hizbullah will be targeted.

By Nicholas Blanford, Special to The Christian Science Monitor

BEIRUT, LEBANON - As President George W. Bush mobilizes his global campaign against international terrorism, Lebanon's violent past may be catching up with it.

For Lebanon to join a proposed international coalition, it would likely have to hand over groups and individuals it considers its liberators from Israel.

Chief among these organizations is Hizbullah, a Shiite Muslim group backed by Iran, which stands accused by Washington of a wave of suicide bombings against US targets, and kidnappings of American citizens, in war-torn 1980s Lebanon.

But the organization has changed radically since Lebanon's lawless years of civil war. For the past decade, members have won parliamentary seats and championed much-needed social services for the impoverished Shiite community, building schools, clinics, and hospitals. Moreover, its professional guerrilla fighters turned the tables against the occupying Israeli army in south Lebanon, forcing Israel to withdraw its troops unconditionally last year.

Still, Lebanon needs all the friends it can get in helping to reduce a national debt nudging \$26 billion. Beirut cannot afford to be at the receiving end of a campaign against terrorism by the US.

A source close to the Lebanese government says the US has not asked Beirut to hand over persons wanted for past anti-American attacks. The matter was discussed in "general terms" with "no one being mentioned specifically," the source said. But the US ambassador to Beirut, Vincent Battle, said this week that Lebanon continues to shelter "terrorist organizations."

"As you know, we have in the United States a list of terrorist organizations that is updated every year. That is likely to be a subject of dialogue in the near term."

Lebanon has seized upon the comments as proof that the US intends to settle old scores by demanding the curbing of Hizbullah's activities and the extradition of those believed to have been involved in anti-American attacks.

Hizbullah's alleged involvement in anti-American terror is long and bloody. On April 18, 1983, the US embassy on Beirut's seafront was destroyed by a suicide truck bomber, killing 63 people, including the Middle East chiefs of the Central Intelligence Agency who were holding a meeting in the building at the time.

Six months later, a truck carrying 1,200 pounds of dynamite exploded in the entrance of a US Marines barracks, killing 241 US servicemen. Less than two years later, militants hijacked TWA Flight 847 and kidnapped its American passengers for 17 days. More than a dozen American citizens were kidnapped in Beirut in the mid-to-late 1980s, in some cases, held for years.

On Sunday, Hizbullah released a statement describing the attacks last week as "tragic events," but warning against an over-reaction by a vengeful US. "We call for caution and not falling prey to a state of fear and panic that was intended to be spread throughout the world to give the US administration free rein to practice all types of aggression and terrorism under the pretext of fighting aggression and terrorism," the statement said.

Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, a senior Shiite Muslim cleric who has been described as Hizbullah's spiritual guide, described the attacks as a "human massacre unacceptable to mankind and all religions, especially Islam."

Yet, the CIA believes Mr. Fadlallah personally blessed the two suicide bombers that blew up the US Embassy and the Marine barracks in 1983. A CIA-trained Lebanese hit squad tried to kill him in May 1985 with a car bomb. The explosion killed 80 bystanders, but he escaped.

The relationship between Fadlallah and Hizbullah has since grown icy, but he remains on Washington's list of specially designated terrorists. Also on the list are Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Hizbullah's charismatic secretary-general; and Sheikh Sobhi Toufeili, Hizbullah's first secretary-general and leader during the turbulent 1980s. A supplemental list is believed to exist with 27 names of Lebanese wanted by the American authorities. Topping the list is Imad Moughnieh - the Osama bin Laden of the 1980s. Reporting directly to Iranian intelligence, Mr. Moughnieh is thought to have been responsible for planning the anti-American suicide bombings and Lebanon's kidnapping crisis. He is under US indictment for the murder of a Navy diver during the 1985 TWA hijacking, and has a \$2 million bounty on his head.

Mughnieh reportedly met Mr. bin Laden in 1994 in Sudan, a connection which has raised the possibility that he may have been involved in last week's suicide bombings. "I think the Americans' main concern is finding out about groups in Lebanon connected to Osama bin Laden. That's their top priority," says a European diplomat. "They need Lebanon on board the coalition. It's not the time to go after all those old cases."

Not all Western countries view Hizbullah as a terrorist organization. Britain, America's closest ally, makes the distinction between Hizbullah's political party, and its External Security Organization, a name the British have given the group's "terrorist" wing.

The News (Lahore, Pakistan)
September 21, 2001

Osama Has Already Left Afghanistan

By Behroz Khan

PESHAWAR: The most wanted man in the US, Osama bin Laden has silently left Afghanistan for an undisclosed destination and has moved out of the Afghan territory at least 4 days before the religious Shura of the clerics issued its recommendation to leave the country.

Sources in Pakistan, known for their close contacts with Taliban as well as some officials of the students' militia confided to The News that Osama bin Laden was no longer on the Afghan soil since Monday. Taliban sources said that a reluctant Mullah Omar accepted the request of Osama to leave Afghanistan ahead of the Shura in Kabul, which called on the Taliban government to persuade the Saudi dissident to take refuge outside Afghanistan. "Osama has left Afghanistan four days ago and is no longer in the country", a source closed to Taliban said during a chat with this correspondent. "I believe the news is not wrong. He must be out of the Afghan soil", endorsed a Taliban official, who asked not to be named. "Osama bin Laden decided on his own to leave Afghanistan, given the threats of the US government to attack the country.

Taliban supreme leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar had turned down an earlier request by Osama after the last US cruise missiles attack on Khost in Afghanistan. Sources close to religious parties believe that Lebanon or the remote mountainous region of Chechnya could be the possible places, where Osama might have opted to make his new hideout. An Afghan national, known for his close links with Osama bin Laden because of his time tested loyalty told The News that "Shiekh", a reference to Osama, was in good health and surrounded by the Arab youngsters, who had given the pledge to Osama to sacrifice their lives in pursuit of his defense.

These educated and committed Arabs know about biology, chemistry and nuclear sciences and are ready to make use of their knowledge to defend Muslims all over the world", he said in a written statement available with The News. Another indication came from a former Interior minister of Pakistan in the PPP Government, Naseerullah Babar, who said in Nowshera that Osama had left Afghanistan four days ago.

Talking to reporters on Thursday, he said the Supreme commander of ruling Taliban, Mullah Mohammad Omar had to give the required endorsement to the Shura edict and that was why he took four days so that Osama could get some time to leave Afghanistan. Several attempts by The News to obtain official confirmation from top Taliban leadership proved abortive, but informed sources among the Taliban ranks did not deny his departure along with his trusted lieutenants, mostly Arabs volunteers and few Afghans as well.

"We do not know, which country Osama was heading for, but the reports carry weight that he is no longer in Afghanistan", said the Taliban sources. "I am sure Mullah Omar will endorse the resolution passed at the meeting of religious clerics in Kabul within days. That means Osama has already left", said the source in Pakistan. The recommendations made through resolutions and the fatwa calling for jihad if Afghanistan is attacked in pursuit of Osama bin Laden, will be presented to Mullah Omar for final approval.

Wall Street Journal
September 21, 2001

Retaliation Isn't Enough

By Loren B. Thompson

It is now 20 years since President Ronald Reagan provoked controversy in his first year in office by proposing that the U.S. acquire the capacity to fight and win a nuclear war. Mr. Reagan's reasoning, widely misunderstood at the time, was that retaliatory capability by itself wasn't enough. Only when America possessed a capacity to fight and win would we strengthen deterrence in peacetime and mitigate suffering in wartime.

He therefore proposed changes that would enhance the flexibility of offensive forces, maintain the continuity of political authority in nuclear attacks, and bolster civilian preparedness. For the first time in a generation, the U.S. sought to build an integrated strategic warfighting posture.

Long-Term Strategy

Today, we could learn from Mr. Reagan's actions. The scale of danger we face now is also one of mass destruction. It goes beyond our belated recognition that a fully loaded airliner carries the explosive power of a kiloton-range warhead. It is about our growing awareness that technology has placed in the hands of extremists many methods of mass killing.

To take one example, 100 kilograms of anthrax optimally dispersed in a straight line from an aircraft over a major metropolitan area has the potential to kill over a million people. We know that several countries in the region from which the recent terrorist attacks originated are actively developing such biological weapons, not to mention chemical and radiological weapons of similar destructive potential.

Last night, George W. Bush again summoned the nation to a war against terrorism. But the administration must understand that, when faced with a threat, it isn't enough to respond in kind. What the U.S. needs is a long-term, integrated warfighting posture, with a full spectrum of offensive and defensive capabilities. These should include:
*Civil preparedness: The place to begin is not overseas, but at home. American popular culture today does not place a high value on the kind of behavior that contributes to vigilance against danger. Citizens are socialized to be passive and accepting of ambiguity, without giving much thought to the monsters that may lurk among us. Hundreds of people came into contact with the perpetrators of the recent attacks, and some of them heard or saw things that should have provoked concern.

We must abandon our reticence to express such concern. To a limited degree, American society needs to follow the example of Israel in encouraging skepticism about strangers. Wiretaps, intrusive searches and other tools of aggressive law enforcement will be indispensable, but the most valuable tool of domestic counterterrorism is a mistrustful citizenry. We know from past experience with illegal immigrants and drug smugglers that we cannot control our borders, so instead we must search for threats already in our midst.

There is another way in which public behavior needs to change. The average American today has no idea what to do if his water supply is poisoned, his air contaminated, or his electricity interrupted. He not only doesn't know how to obtain an antidote for chemical or biological agents, he doesn't even know what symptoms to look for. Government at all levels needs to launch a crash program to educate citizens in preparedness for various types of terrorism. Here, too, informed vigilance is the most basic requirement of survival.

As to who should support all this, there is only one suitable choice: the National Guard. This organization should take the lead in domestic preparedness, assisted by federal law-enforcement and emergency-management agencies. Only the Guard has an articulated military structure firmly rooted in all 50 states and organized to cope with emergencies. From physical protection of critical assets to counterterror response to chem-bio defense, the Guard is clearly the organization best suited to working with civilians on these issues.

*Continuity of government. Most of the federal government's decision-making authority, including that of the military, is concentrated in a few vulnerable locations. For example, aside from a handful of four-star officers heading unified and specified commands, all of the military's senior uniformed and civilian leaders are located in one building -- the Pentagon. That makes no sense when weapons of mass destruction can easily be moved on the various transportation arteries that pass within yards of the building.

One facet of the Reagan administration's strategic posture was a secret program to facilitate the dispersal of federal authority in wartime. Political and military authorities were to be scattered among underground bunkers, airborne

command posts, and specially equipped tractor trailers constantly moving on the interstate highway system. Many of the features of the Internet were originally developed in part to facilitate continuity of government in wartime.

We need to revisit such ideas, because it is clear terrorists may seek to launch what nuclear strategists call a "decapitation" strike against the federal government. The military for some time has been exploring the concept of network-centric warfare to enhance its resilience and flexibility. The same concepts and technology now have obvious relevance for reorganizing domestic decision-making authority, and perhaps other parts of society.

*External military action. As it secures its base, the nation must launch a comprehensive military campaign to systematically destroy the overseas sources of aggression. Much has already been said about the need to build a broad coalition of supporters for military action among allies and regional powers. That effort seems to be progressing very well. But in the process of constructing a diverse coalition, there will be a tendency to start compromising on which targets are to be attacked, and that could undercut the prospects for real victory.

One of the warfighting innovations President Reagan backed 20 years ago was to start breaking out the various categories of nuclear targets, rather than treating the Soviet target base as an undifferentiated mass suitable only for large-scale retaliation. Some targets, he and his advisors reasoned, were of greater importance if we were to achieve an acceptable conclusion to hostilities.

The same is true in today's very different circumstances. Among the discernible categories of targets, none is more important than the weapons of mass destruction residing in Iraq and other regional states. While it is imperative to target and kill terrorist operatives as soon as possible -- presumably relying for the most part on unconventional formations such as the U.S. Special Forces and Britain's Special Air Services -- it is at least as essential to begin the process of definitively destroying all chemical, biological and radiological weapons in potentially hostile hands.

That does not mean cruise-missile strikes. It means American boots on the ground, moving site to site, eliminating all relevant weapons and facilities.

That may prove to be the hardest decision for the Bush administration, because few regional states will visibly support the invasion of countries such as Iraq and Sudan by American forces. But if that step is not taken, it is likely that some of the weapons in question will eventually find their way to the heart of American cities, with consequences that dwarf the suffering of Sept. 11. If America really is at war, as the president says, then it must do what is necessary to protect its people.

Scale of Danger

In the end, the U.S. will probably prevail. But without an integrated strategy and warfighting posture that addresses all of the key domestic vulnerabilities and all of the critical overseas objectives, victory may be won at a very high cost. The senior members of the Bush administration and their Democratic counterparts need to open their minds to the scale of danger America faces, and to show the courage to take steps their predecessors didn't even contemplate. This isn't just about success, it's about survival.

Mr. Thompson, a consultant to the military, is chief operating officer of the Lexington Institute and teaches in Georgetown University's Security Studies Program.

Aerospace Daily
September 21, 2001

Defense Department Should Be Lead Agency For Homeland Security, Says DOD Official

The Defense Department is the only agency that has the resources and ability to serve as the lead for homeland defense, according to William Schneider, chairman of DOD's Defense Science Board.

The Defense Science Board - DOD's standing task force on research and development - recently completed a multi-volume study on homeland defense. While the study did not specify the role of DOD in an overall homeland security strategy, it did recommend a fundamental reallocation of DOD's investment priorities to focus more on homeland defense.

Current homeland defense capabilities span several agencies, including the departments of Justice and State, but DOD is the most able to respond to the entire scope of these threats, Schneider told a group of defense writers Sept. 20.

Schneider's position differs substantially from the recommendation of several other major homeland defense studies, which called for appointing a cabinet level position to manage homeland security affairs (DAILY, Sept. 17). "I'd prefer a model that reinforces the agency that is most able to execute a particular function," Schneider said, "and not try to manage this through the White House."

Among the agencies that execute various homeland defense functions, DOD is the most capable, he added. "If you look at nature of this problem, DOD is ultimately going to be the 911 for this," he said. "At the end of the day, when the heavy lifting is required, it's going to be done by the Department of Defense, and the Department of Defense has the resources and depth to deal with a problem of this scope."

Law enforcement is still an important priority, Schneider said, but there are a number of other important missions that only DOD can fulfill.

"[I]t is better for us to face the fact that homeland security is a problem that is upon us and you should refocus the problem on strengthening the ability of the Department of Defense to be the lead agency on this, and get on with it," he said.

DOD needs unified homeland defense command

One step that DOD should take to strengthen its role in homeland defense is to create a unified command structure for dealing with these threats, according to retired Army Maj. Gen. Donald Edwards, currently a vice president at SAIC, a northern Virginia defense contractor.

SAIC recently completed a study on homeland defense for the Joint Staff, said Edwards, and one of the most striking observations was the lack of military support for involvement in homeland security. "Before last Tuesday, military services were not eagerly embracing homeland security," Edwards told The DAILY during a Sept. 20 interview.

This situation is changing rapidly, however. Joint forces already have been given some new and additional responsibility in homeland defense following the Sept. 11 attacks, Edwards said.

"That's a huge responsibility," he said.

But there are still significant coordination problems, and if DOD is really serious about a joint command for homeland defense, then it needs to provide the responsibilities necessary to carry it out, he added.

While SAIC's homeland defense study only recommended a sub-unified command for consequence management, Edwards said it may now be possible to extend consideration to a unified command structure.

The problem now is that the command structure for homeland defense is fragmented, Edwards said, and "there is no support in the military community for a four star command for homeland defense."

Interest in a unified command will probably increase now, said Edwards, but DOD could take a "simple first step" by creating a sub-unified command.

DOD was subject to criticism in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks for its slow air defense response. According to an official release issued Sept. 17 by the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), there were no fighters airborne at the time the first airplane hit the World Trade Center and deployed fighters were between 71 and 105 miles away from the other hijacked planes at their time of impact.

DOD will have to go beyond studies and commissions and must provide funding and leadership if it wants to move forward, Edwards said. "One of the huge problems is in terms of leadership. [Homeland defense] doesn't have the resource train," he said. "The resource stream for homeland defense is a secondary stream. It's a secondary mission."

-- Sharon Weinberger

InsideDefense.com

September 19, 2001

Newly Certified WMD-Civil Support Team Aids In New York Terrorism Response

The National Guard's weapons of mass destruction civil-support teams endured more than a year's worth of delays before the first units were certified to respond to possible WMD attacks in July. But the teams were ready for action when needed most -- after last week's deadly terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

The first-ever deployment of a Guard emergency response team took place Sept. 11, when the 2nd WMD-Civil Support Team, based in Scotia, NY, was called to Manhattan in the aftermath of the collapse of the trade center's twin towers. According to Guard officials, the team was in place to assess the situation in New York by 8:30 p.m.

Rather than assist in crowd control or the search for survivors, a Guard spokeswoman explained that the teams are called in to "perform the more technical aspects of the mission."

For the first 18 hours on-site, the team investigated and ensured there were no chemical or biological agents unleashed in the attack that could have compounded the devastation in New York. This mission was requested by the New York Environmental Protection Agency.

Once it was confirmed there were no chem/bio threats, the team lent secure radio and communications support to the FBI and helped coordinate the arrival of additional response teams, Guard spokeswoman Maj. Ellen Krenke told InsideDefense.com today.

Each emergency response team consists of 22 full-time Air and Army National Guard officers with specialties such as communications, medical and survey skills, according to a Pentagon fact sheet on the teams. "Team members acquire approximately 600 hours of initial training above their military skill qualification," it reads.

The team departed Manhattan Sept. 13, once the Federal Emergency Management Agency presence at the site had ramped up, but remains on alert at its home station.

No response team was dispatched to the Pentagon. The team closest to the Pentagon is the 3rd WMD-CST, based in Annville, PA, and all the active teams remain on alert.

The team's actions in New York were consistent with its written mission and utilized its unique emergency response capabilities. According to a March 2000 commentary by then-Pentagon reserve affairs chief Charles Cragin, "Each team has two large pieces of equipment: a mobile analytical laboratory for field analysis of chemical or biological agents and a unified command suite that has the ability to provide communications interoperability among the various responders who may be on the scene."

The fact sheet added that the team "is equipped with high-end detection, analytical, and protective equipment. The unit possesses satellite, secure and cellular telephone communications to provide connectivity with both civil and military forces within the operational conditions."

The team's rapid exit from the attack area was not unexpected, given that one of the WMD-CST responsibilities is to coordinate the arrival of follow-on emergency response assets. These state and federal assets are expected to assume the long-term emergency response mission.

Former President Clinton announced the creation of the emergency response teams in May 1998, to better protect the United States from the threat of chem/bio attacks. The first 10 teams were scheduled to have been certified in spring 2000, but the first nine certifications did not take place until this July and August.

The 10th team, based at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, GA, is fully equipped and trained, but has not completed its formal certification process, according to Defense Department spokesman Maj. Dan Stoneking.

Krenke confirmed that the New York deployment was the first for a civil support team. The other active civil support teams, also on alert, are based in California, Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Texas and Washington State. Cragin wrote that the sites were chosen to provide "optimum response coverage for the entire population of the United States."

Congress subsequently stepped in, and has directed the Defense Department to enlarge the number of available teams from 10 to 32. According to the fact sheet, prepared shortly before last week's deadly attacks, the first teams were authorized in fiscal year 1999, 17 additional teams were authorized in FY-00 and the final five teams in FY-01.

-- *Adam J. Hebert*

Defense Daily
September 21, 2001
Pg. 7

New House Subcommittee On Terrorism And Homeland Defense Formed

By Kerry Gildea

Responding to last week's terrorist attacks on the United States, the House has elevated the status of a task force on terrorism and homeland defense to a full subcommittee of the House Intelligence Committee, House leaders said yesterday.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) and House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), with other members of the House Intelligence Committee, said at a press conference that raising the status of the task force, formed at the beginning of this congressional session, to a subcommittee would give the members more means to identify and address the needs of the intelligence community to combat terrorism.

"This is an area we have to take a very broad approach on," Hastert said, explaining it will focus on the vulnerability of the United States, the ability to respond and all other facets of the problem.

Gephardt said the subcommittee represents a very coordinated and focused approach to stamp out terrorism.

"We must not allow terrorists to rule our country--we will take our country back," Gephardt said.

The new Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security will be given power to issue subpoenas and hold formal hearings, the first of which is scheduled for Sept. 26, said Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.), who will serve as ranking member on the new subcommittee. Rep. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) will be the chairman.

"We must and will be thorough--not only because the world expects us to be fair--but because such thoroughness is necessary to restore our nation's own sense of security," Harman told reporters. "We must get it right. We will get it right."

Meanwhile, House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Ike Skelton (D-Mo.) released a new report from the General Accounting Office (GAO) on the federal government's progress in its effort to combat terrorism. The report, *Combating Terrorism: Progress Made, but Executive Direction Needed to Address Evolving Challenges*, recommends establishment of a single focal point for overall coordination and leadership (GAO-01-822). The report calls on the president to appoint a person to be responsible for threat assessments, strategy, budgeting and oversight. The report also suggests a need for greater consolidation of federal programs designed to assist state and local governments, such as those managed by the Justice Dept. and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"The terrorist threat on American soil is real and demands a supreme effort by all parts of the federal government," Skelton said. "We need a strong, no-nonsense, coordinated and unified effort to prevent and neutralize the terrorist threat."

St. Louis Post-Dispatch
September 20, 2001

Planning For Bioterrorism Attack Takes On A New Urgency For U.S.

By Bill Lambrecht, Post-Dispatch Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - Two weeks before the attacks on New York and Washington, Pentagon officials took part in a drill featuring yet another frightening brand of terrorism: biological warfare.

In a simulation exercise at Syracuse University, military and civilian planners confronted a budding disaster that began to unfold when thousands of people turned up at hospitals in Westchester County, N.Y., with mysterious illnesses.

The symptoms pointed to a seemingly unthinkable diagnosis - smallpox, a disease eradicated 20 years ago.

Hospitals and emergency response capabilities were swiftly overwhelmed in the mock drill. Participants cast in the roles of decision-makers ordered bridges blockaded and quarantined the area in hopes of containing the disease.

A stealthy enemy

Bioterrorism - the culprit in the training exercise - probably wouldn't arrive with a spectacular explosion like the attacks last week.

Some experts warn that terrorists could drop biological agents nonchalantly in an airport or a subway. A single person infected with smallpox could spread the deadly virus to thousands of others.

The ebola virus and anthrax - an infectious disease caused by spores of bacteria - could be released through air ducts. It might take days or even weeks to realize what had happened, by which time the disease already would have spread.

Others who have studied terrorism say biowarfare is unlikely to be an immediate threat.

Indeed, while the worry about bioterrorism has been around for some time, it hasn't been taken seriously by most communities, which remain ill-equipped to deal with an attack.

But within the last few months, government agencies have stepped up attempts to prepare through a series of drills. And in the aftermath of the attacks on New York and Washington, the planning has taken on new urgency. In Missouri and Illinois, hospitals were alerted last week by the Centers for Disease Control to watch for a rash of symptoms, such as flu-like illnesses or respiratory problems, that would suggest an attack. Missouri state officials say their planning has gone further.

In Congress, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., met Wednesday with other senators in his drive to devote \$1 billion of the \$40 billion approved by Congress to cope with the tragedy to defending against bioweapons.

Threat is debated

Thomas Inglesby, a senior fellow at Johns Hopkins University's Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies, said the hijackings last week crumbled myths about tools of mass destruction.

One of the myths, he said, was that terrorists are unable to carry out complicated operations using modern, sophisticated technology. Another is that planners can safely rely on the nature of past attacks, such as car bombs, to predict what might happen in the future.

Still another myth, in Inglesby's view, was the belief in some quarters that terrorists would not cross a line of morality.

"The terrorists in New York wanted to kill even more people than they did," Inglesby said. "That is why we must re-evaluate what the government is doing when it comes to bioterrorism."

Some experts dispute the threat.

Stephen Prior, of the Potomac Institute of Policy Studies, a Washington think tank, is among the experts who sees little immediate chance of a bioweapons attack. Prior, who has studied terrorism for 15 years, said a stealth assault involving biological agents would not be consistent with the quick-kill and heavily symbolic attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and earlier on U.S. embassies.

But Prior added that the chances of becoming victimized by biological weapons might increase if the United States wages a massive attack on foreign soil.

Biological weapons once fell into a category similar to nuclear arms: instruments of war closely held by nations who recognized their destructive capabilities.

Biologicals were part of the arsenals of both the former Soviet Union and the United States. At one point, the Soviet Union was believed to have more than 20 separate strains of anthrax, according to a former Pentagon official who asked not to be named.

Realizing the grave threats, the United States publicly abandoned biological weapons more than 30 years ago and ordered stockpiles destroyed.

Advances in biology have made these weapons more easily reproducible in labs not just by governments but by militant groups with a destructive bent.

A CIA report presented to Congress four days before the attack warned that Iraq might be manufacturing biological warfare agents. That prospect, long suspected by intelligence officials, has heightened concerns because of Saddam Hussein's professed hatred for the United States and his suspected alliances with terrorists.

Moreover, Osama bin Laden, whose network is suspected in the attacks last week, has said publicly that enemies of the United States in Islamic countries need to develop the capability of mass destruction.

Even before the attacks, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declared publicly that there was a strong potential of Americans being attacked by biological weapons.

The government had also increased the frequency of preparedness exercises. Three weeks ago, the Centers for Disease Control conducted a drill in Louisville, Ky., that tested that city's capacity to distribute drugs for what was suspected as an attack that infected people with the plague.

Dr. James W. Snyder, a professor of pathology at the University of Louisville and a nationally recognized expert who took part in the exercise, afterward stressed the need for labs to increase their vigilance in recognizing unusual symptoms.

"Communication in the community is very important," he said.

Planning in Missouri, Illinois

A bioterrorism attack would create problems much different from those in New York and Washington last week. An attack with deadly bacteria or spores would begin invisibly, after which the crisis could expand over days and weeks. Rather than dealing with the injured in a defined area, state and local health networks would have to determine who had fallen ill and then treat people over a broad geographical area.

Tom Schafer, a spokesman for the Illinois Department of Public Health, said that the state began enhancing its capacity to reach local hospitals after a salmonella outbreak in the 1980s and has since installed a satellite network.

In Missouri, a response plan that was scheduled for completion in December now will be finished in a matter of days, Dr. Maureen Dempsey, director of the Missouri Health Department, said Tuesday.

Starting next week, the Missouri Department of Health intends to begin a new surveillance system aimed at spotting clusters of infections or trends in symptoms before firm diagnoses have been rendered.

The warning signs of three potential biological threats

Anthrax

Infection and symptoms: Anthrax is a livestock disease caused by *Bacillus anthracis* bacteria. The bacteria form spores that can live in the soil for decades. In a biological weapons attack, anthrax would most likely be spread as a cloud of spores. Such a cloud inhaled by a city's residents would create widespread flulike symptoms, killing 80 percent of those infected within one or two days after their symptoms appear.

Incubation period: Once spores enter the lungs, anthrax produces symptoms usually within one to 10 days but may incubate up to 43 days. It is not spread from person to person. Anthrax has not been seen in humans in the United States in 20 years, so even one case could indicate an attack.

Vaccines and treatment: Treatment with antibiotics must begin before anthrax's flu-like symptoms begin. An anthrax vaccine is currently available only to the military in extremely limited supply.

Smallpox

Infection and symptoms: The world has been free of smallpox cases since 1978, but some strains are maintained in laboratories. The former Soviet Union reportedly stockpiled large amounts of the virus for use in weapons. The virus is easily spread from person to person. An aerosol release of smallpox infecting only 50 people could unleash an epidemic killing 30 percent of those infected with the painful, disfiguring disease.

Incubation period: Smallpox may take up to two weeks to appear in infected people. The disease starts as a rash resembling chicken pox, but other complications may occur. Most patients die of severe inflammation.

Vaccines and treatment: There is no known treatment for smallpox. Vaccinations in the United States ceased almost 30 years ago. People vaccinated then may no longer be immune to the virus. The United States has limited stores of the vaccine, and efforts are under way to develop new vaccines.

Plague

Infection and symptoms: The plague, caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, caused the Black Death epidemics that killed large populations of Europeans in the 14th century. Widespread outbreaks are now rare, but a few cases of bubonic plague still show up in the southwestern United States every year. A biological terror attack would probably involve the pneumonic form of plague and could kill up to 60 percent of those infected. If 100 pounds of Black Death bacteria was released over a city of 5 million, about 150,000 people would contract the disease. More than 35,000 of those would probably die. The Soviet Union produced massive quantities of the bacteria for weapons use.

Incubation period: One to 10 days after exposure, victims begin to show symptoms of severe respiratory and gastrointestinal problems. The disease can spread from person to person.

Vaccines and treatment: Treatment with antibiotics would be effective during early stages of the infection. No vaccines are available to protect against plague.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

September 20, 2001

Emergency Experts Say Region Is Prepared For Some Biological Attacks

By Tina Hesman Of The Post-Dispatch and Deborah L. Shelton Of The Post-Dispatch Contributed To This Report. As frightening and potentially devastating as an attack with biological weapons may be, local health and emergency management officials say the region is somewhat ready to handle some threats.

One of the most difficult parts of dealing with biological weapons is detecting an attack.

That's something regional health officials have been practicing for some time now.

"We got our feet wet when the pope came to town," said Mike Williams, communicable disease expert with the St. Louis County Health Department. Officials called emergency rooms for a month surrounding the papal visit looking for signs of unusual illnesses that could mean terrorists had struck.

Every year the health department monitors heat-related illnesses and flu and looks for signs of West Nile virus, Williams said.

After last week's attacks in New York and Washington, the agency also began active surveillance to detect biological terrorist attacks. It's a manual system that involves calling hospitals and schools each day. The process takes patience and manpower and can be hard to sustain over the long-term, Williams said.

"It's labor-intensive to the point of being almost painful," he said.

The agency hopes to get funding to institute an electronic surveillance system that would monitor ambulance calls, emergency-room visits, school attendance and even sales of drugs at local pharmacies. Such a system would give a picture of the normal state of health in the region so investigators might have a better chance of recognizing unusual events, Williams said.

Once a terrorist attack has been discovered, emergency response teams would swing into action to contain any outbreak. The response would vary depending upon the type of biological agent used, officials said.

In the event of an anthrax attack, doctors must move quickly to treat victims. Up to 80 percent of those infected could die from inhaled anthrax if not given antibiotics before symptoms appear.

The good news is that the region has a large enough supply of antibiotics to make it self-sufficient for at least 72 hours - time enough to mobilize a national drug stockpile, said Debbie Mays, the safety manager for Barnes-Jewish and St. Louis Children's hospitals.

"We truly do have plenty of medication here in the St. Louis area," Mays said.

While there is little individuals can do to protect themselves from biological terrorism, experts say such an attack is still unlikely and could be handled under emergency-response plans developed for such an event.

Growing large quantities of biological weapons agents and finding a way to deploy them would take a well-funded and coordinated effort, said Greg Evans, the director of the Center for the Study of Bioterrorism and Emerging Infections at St. Louis University.

"It's not something someone's going to do in their kitchen," Evans said.

Millions of dollars in equipment alone would be required to produce a biological weapon for a mass attack, he said.

Even a suicide mission in which an infected person would walk around to deliberately spread a communicable disease such as smallpox or plague through a city would not be as easy to carry out as it might appear, said Mark Buller, a microbiologist at St. Louis University.

Smallpox is transmissible only during a very short period just before and after a rash appears, and infected people would be easy to identify by the lesions on their skin, Buller said. Buller is involved in a project to evaluate a new smallpox vaccine.

Although no local stores of smallpox vaccine are available to use in case of an attack, federal stockpiles would quickly be shipped to the area. If the vaccine is administered within three to four days of exposure, it can lessen the severity of the disease considerably, Buller said.

The smallpox vaccines don't prevent the disease but keep it in check and could keep people from dying, Buller said.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

September 20, 2001

Army Tests Conducted Here In The 1950s Showed How Biological Agent Might Spread

By William Allen Of The Post-Dispatch

Tests done by the Army in St. Louis and elsewhere in the Midwest in the 1950s proved how easily biological weapons can spread across large areas.

But the way they spread is far more complex than what was known at that time, local scientists said Wednesday.

"There are so many variables that play an enormous role in how a biological weapon is delivered," said Bruce Clements, associate director of the Center for the Study of Bioterrorism & Emerging Infections at St. Louis University.

Clements and other experts listed more than a score of factors that can influence where a biological agent can go and whether it can be dangerous when it gets there. Among the variables are a range of weather conditions, the type of agent, how much is released and exposure to sunlight.

The Army secretly sprayed particles on the ground and in the air as part of a Cold War-era biological weapons research program. Details of the experiments were revealed in documents declassified in the mid-1990s.

The aim was to track the ways biological weapons disperse. No organisms were released in any of the tests here.

The researchers used zinc cadmium sulfide particles, partly because they are about the same size and weight as biological agents. They are fluorescent and easily traced.

In one round of tests, the Army in 1953 sprayed 35 clouds of zinc cadmium sulfide particles from street corners in St. Louis. They tracked the clouds over two 25-square-block areas - one downtown and one just east of Grand Boulevard and north of Olive Street.

Army officials concocted a "cover story" to win city approval of the tests, according to the Army documents. They claimed the tests were intended to see if smoke screens could protect the city from Soviet bomber attacks.

Similar tests were conducted in Minneapolis; Corpus Christi, Texas; and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

In another round of tests, in 1957 and 1958, the Army released the particles from an airplane flying across the Midwest.

Collecting instruments on the ground at 175 weather stations in 39 states helped them trace where the particles landed.

In some cases, the particles were detected more than 1,000 miles from the release point - including at several locations in Missouri and Illinois.

Among the discoveries provided by the tests: random flights over a target area would disperse small particles widely.

The Army says the particles were harmless. But some scientists warned that they presented a potential health hazard.

Christian Science Monitor

September 20, 2001

Pg. 1

Cities Gird For 'Bio' Attacks

Experts Say Terrorists Are Increasingly Likely To Try Using Weapons Of Mass Destruction.

By Brad Knickerbocker, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Terrorists proved they can hit multiple American targets simultaneously with what amounts to conventional weapons: fuel-heavy airliners used as giant napalm bombs.

The questions that now worry officials and private defense specialists, after last week's attacks in New York and Washington: Could terrorists carry out other attacks, using terrible weapons of mass destruction? Could a few attackers, for instance, deliver chemical or biological agents -deadly in small amounts - to US cities, via a car or light aircraft? Could they hit one of America's 103 nuclear reactors, turning it into a pile of radioactive rubble that endangers a wide swath of the country, perhaps by flying a hijacked aircraft into it?

Officials are not warning of any imminent threat, but many experts say the United States is increasingly vulnerable to such an attack, particularly given the sophistication shown by terrorists last week.

Osama bin Laden, the suspected terrorist-mastermind and financier, is known to have sought weapons of mass destruction. And there is some evidence (dead animals seen by satellite) that his group may have tested biological weapons at training camps in Afghanistan.

The day after the destructive events of Sept. 11, the Congressional Research Service warned that "the world is increasingly moving into an era in which terrorists may gain access to nuclear, chemical, or biological weaponry." And for the first time, the National Guard dispatched nine germ-warfare units to different locations.

Less than a week before the attacks, Frank Cilluffo of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that while "the scientific sophistication needed to sustain and deliver BW [biological warfare] agents, if not insurmountable, is substantial, nonetheless, the fabrication of a crude BW device and means of delivery ... is very realistic and difficult to detect or preempt at any time."

The fact that Mr. bin Laden may not be tied to any one country could make the current situation even more dangerous. "Unlike their state-sponsored counterparts, non-state actors are much freer from the constraints of retaliation" says Mr. Cilluffo.

Policymakers and strategists have been working to understand the complexity of the threat, as well as the current ability to respond. Earlier this summer, CSIS sponsored a bioterrorism exercise called "Dark Winter." Former Sen.

Sam Nunn (D) of Georgia took the role of the president, and other present and former officials assumed high-level federal and state posts.

Among the war-game participants' findings: The government "currently lacks adequate strategies, plans, and information systems to manage a crisis of this type or magnitude."

An attack with biological weapons, they warned, could lead to "massive civilian casualties, breakdowns in essential institutions, disruption of democratic processes, civil disorder, loss of confidence in government, and reduced US strategic flexibility."

How likely is such an attack? Most experts put it in the "low probability, high risk" category. This means it could be harder to pull off than the hijacking of the four airliners, but that the consequences could be far more extreme. It also means the US needs to be all the better prepared -particularly because many of the dozen or so countries known to possess such weapons (or the means to make them) are considered to be "rogue states" that are potentially supportive of terrorist groups.

The most devastating example of chemical and biological weapons in the 20th century is Germany's use of mustard gas during World War I. Since then, other countries (including the US) have stockpiled such weapons, many of which are deteriorating and need to be safely disposed of.

The best-known case of a recent terrorist attack involving chemical weapons was carried out by the Aum Shinrikyo cult in the Tokyo subway system in 1995. Sarin, the nerve gas released there, killed 12 commuters and made another 6,000 ill.

After that attack, the US government increased support for those on the front lines of responding -police, firefighters, public-health officials, and other emergency teams.

"US cities are making headway in preparedness," says Amy Smithson, head of the chemical and biological weapons nonproliferation project at the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington.

But there still is much to do. As with the threat of terrorism generally, the best way to thwart a chemical, biological, or radiological attack, say experts, is to improve intelligence capabilities and nonproliferation efforts so that such attacks can be prevented in the first place.

London Times
September 20, 2001

Pakistan Could Lose Control Of Its Arsenal

West's worst scenario

By Nigel Hawkes

A LEADING authority on Pakistan's nuclear programme has given warning of a "nightmare scenario" in which a destabilised Pakistan lost control of its nuclear weapons to supporters of the Taliban.

Any military action against Muslim terrorists within Afghanistan will have to take account of that, said George Perkovich, a nuclear weapons expert at the W. Alton Jones Foundation in Charlottesville, Virginia, who has specialised in the nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan.

He dismissed any prospect that the present Government of Pakistan would use its nuclear armoury, but said that questions about the security of the weapons should be high on the agenda of the military planners.

"My guess would be that the US and the UK are thinking about that now," Mr Perkovich said. "If things go wrong, what do we do? Do we send commandos in to get the weapons and take them out in helicopters, like the last days in Saigon? Has this even been discussed with the Pakistanis?" Militarily, Pakistan's nuclear weapons are its "crown jewels", but valuable as they may be for asserting national pride in the rivalry with India, they are of little use in the awkward diplomatic situation the Pakistani Government now faces.

Mr Perkovich said that Pakistan has about two to three dozen potential nuclear weapons, all based on highly enriched uranium. Tests carried out in 1998 demonstrated that they work. Pakistan also has medium-range missiles capable of reaching targets in India, if no farther afield.

"In normal times, they keep the warheads separate from the missiles," he said, "and the fissile uranium — the core of the weapon — is not kept in the warhead, which consists of electronics and high explosives, but doesn't have the fissile core in it. It's all dressed up and nowhere to go."

Assuming this is still true, it would make it much harder for those unfamiliar with the system to assemble the weapon and make it work.

The fissile core, about the size of a melon and weighing up to 66lb, can be sub-divided into segments that can be stored separately. So the entire weapon can be split into components that in themselves are innocuous.

"So what we have are a range of different components, with different groups controlling them," he said. "Each part is well guarded and they have taken great care to assess the reliability and security of the storage."

In addition to having the weapons disassembled and safely stored, he said that the Pakistanis will have given thought to how they would be evacuated in an emergency.

"The most worrisome thing is the fissile core. That's easily moveable, which is both good and bad. It's bad because Saddam Hussein could make a bid for it, good because it means it could be put on a helicopter and taken out of harm's way."

He believes that changes in organisation this year make it clear that "grown-ups" in Pakistan are trying to make the whole system orderly and under control. The integration of two competing teams, "both run by egomaniacs", into a single organisation, he says, is a good sign.

Until then, both and missile development were split between the A. Q. Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) — named after Abdul Qadeer Khan, self-proclaimed father of the Pakistani bomb — and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Organisation (PAEC), led by Asfad Ahmad Khan.

When both were retired in March, the move was attacked by Nawaz Sharif, the former Prime Minister, as a hideous conspiracy designed to roll back the nuclear programme and weaken the country. He called on people to rise up and thwart the conspiracy. In fact, there was little public reaction.

On Tuesday Dr Khan went out of his way to reassure people about the weapons' security. "Thousands of people are involved in the supervision who discharge their duty as a sacred mission and the masses should not worry about the security of the nuclear installation," he told reporters after assuming the duties of "patron-in-chief" of his old laboratory.

While rivalry existed between the two men and their respective laboratories, Pakistan had an internal "arms race", which accelerated its acquisition of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, though at enormous cost.

By retiring both men, President Musharraf demonstrated his intention to control nuclear development more tightly, but there are others in the Pakistani military who are closer to the fundamentalists, and the danger of overstretching Pakistani goodwill is that it will hand the initiative to them.

For General Musharraf, the opportunity to help the Americans carries opportunities as well as dangers. He may be able to use it to reduce or remove the sanctions Washington imposed after the nuclear tests.

"The United States is going to have to show the people in Pakistan that it's good to be in a good relationship with the United States," Senator Sam Brownback, a Republican member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said.

The last time that was true was in the 1980s, when Pakistani help was vital in helping the Afghans to evict the Russians from their country. Now the wheel has turned and American aid could start flowing towards Islamabad again.

Long Island Newsday
September 19, 2001

Nuclear Aspirations?

Sources: Bin Laden tried to obtain enriched uranium

By Earl Lane and Knut Royce *Earl Lane is a reporter for Newsday's Washington Bureau. Knut Royce, a former Washington correspondent for Newsday, reports for The Center for Public Integrity.*

Washington - Long before last week's suicide airliner attacks, security specialists had seen evidence that Saudi exile Osama bin Laden has been trying to acquire material for even more disastrous weapons, including enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb.

There have been several efforts by bin Laden operatives to acquire nuclear materials in recent years, according to intelligence sources, official testimony and news accounts. There is no evidence that bin Laden ever actually has obtained such materials.

Still, there seems little doubt about bin Laden's intentions. "Bin Laden has been trying to get his hands on enriched uranium for seven or eight years," R. James Woolsey, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, said yesterday.

Russian intelligence sources also confirm bin Laden's interest in nuclear materials. A former Russian intelligence official, in a memorandum to a U.S. counterpart provided to Newsday, said Russian security forces halted an attempt in 1998 to sell an unspecified amount of Soviet-origin, bomb-grade uranium to a Pakistani company controlled by bin Laden. A U.S. intelligence source declined to comment on the incident or to say whether American intelligence agencies have any verification. "There is evidence that bin Laden has been shopping around" for nuclear materials, the source said, as well as components for chemical and biological weapons.

During testimony earlier this year in New York at the trial of four men accused of participating in the 1998 embassy bombings in East Africa, a defector from bin Laden's network said he had served as a go-between in a 1993 effort to acquire a cylinder containing uranium (described by several sources as enriched uranium-235.)

The defector, Jamal Ahmed al Fadl, said he had been ordered by one of bin Laden's lieutenants to buy the uranium from former Sudanese military officer Salah Abdel Mobruk for \$1.5 million. But Fadl said he was removed from the negotiations and never learned whether the deal went through.

That material was allegedly of South African origin, but much of the concern during the past decade - particularly in the early 1990s after the breakup of the Soviet Union - has been the possible trafficking of nuclear materials from Russian facilities with insufficient controls and safeguards over them. There were reports bin Laden's organization was the victim of a German sting operation when it tried to buy highly enriched uranium on the Soviet black market in 1993 and again a year later. In neither case was any nuclear material transferred.

But analysts say it is likely bin Laden's network is continuing to seek nuclear materials. A U.S. intelligence official said there remains concern bin Laden is interested in obtaining radioactive material for a "dirty bomb." Rather than being used in an atomic weapon, the material would be dispersed in a way that would seriously contaminate a small area.

While non-government specialists caution that bin Laden may have had little success in acquiring nuclear materials, they say it is impossible to say for sure. "We've seen no confirmed or reliable reports of significant quantities [of nuclear materials] going to bin Laden," said Jon Wolfsthal of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"Osama bin Laden's agents seem to be operating by stealth," said David Albright of the nonprofit Institute for Science and International Security. "Will they succeed? We'll never know ... The more serious offers are the ones you are not going to hear about. They are going to try to find insiders who have more direct access to the materials." Matthew Bunn, a nuclear expert at Harvard University, said last week's terrorist attacks, for which bin Laden has been called a prime suspect by U.S. authorities, suggest bin Laden's network is very well organized and capable of pursuing nuclear materials.

"These events call for dramatically increased political leadership and funding for efforts to secure nuclear materials worldwide," Bunn said. He noted that the Bush administration had proposed cutting the funding for a program to help safeguard nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union. He said the Bush budget for 2002 would cut funding for the program from \$170 million to \$140 million, although there have been efforts in Congress to restore some of the money.

Washington Post
September 22, 2001
Pg. C1

Rueful Prophets Of The Unimaginable

High-Level Studies Warned of Threat

By Richard Leiby, Washington Post Staff Writer

In the chaos of Sept. 11, as she fled from her Pentagon office, Patti Benner Antsen's mind kept locking on two words: "Unanticipated asymmetries."

Defense planners use such parlance to describe concepts of modern warfare, but according to Antsen, it comes down to something quite simple: "They would attack us in non-polite ways." We would not see the attack coming. And it would be horribly different from anything the nation had ever witnessed.

Antsen, 45, was among those who predicted years ago that terrorist incidents like those of Sept. 11 would eventually happen. "It all clicked. It absolutely made perfect sense to me," recalled the civilian defense employee, who worked one corridor away from where hijackers smashed a jetliner into the Pentagon. "This was it."

Unanticipated asymmetries: The words were emphasized in italic for readers of a 1997 report that Antsen helped prepare, "Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century." The study by the National Defense Panel was one of several efforts to warn about a likely attack within our borders by terrorists, and the need to beef up homeland security.

Fighting war symmetrically means lining up our armies against their armies, tanks against tanks. That era, the seers said, is over.

Back then, people like Antsen were considered doomsayers, a chorus of bleak voices prophesying a strange war to come, against an ambiguous enemy. No one knew the hour or day, they said, but it was inevitable. It wasn't a matter of if, but when.

"Americans will become increasingly vulnerable to hostile attack on our homeland," warned another major report on national security. "Americans will likely die on American soil, possibly in large numbers."

In a crowded Senate hearing room yesterday, former senator Gary Hart of Colorado quoted those sentences to great effect. "That conclusion was delivered on Sept. 15, 1999, almost exactly two years to the day before our prediction came true," he said.

Hart co-chaired, with former senator Warren Rudman of New Hampshire, a bipartisan commission that worked more than three years, spent \$10 million and produced a three-part report called "New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century." That commission, initiated by then-President Clinton and House Speaker Newt Gingrich in a rare bipartisan truce, also urged the creation of a homeland security agency -- a sweeping sort of interior ministry whose very name might have unsettled many Americans before Sept. 11.

Back in December 1997, the National Defense Panel report said: "Coastal and border defense of the homeland is a challenge that again deserves serious thought." But the idea wasn't high on anyone's to-do list. After all, the report was looking way ahead, "to meet the challenges of 2020."

As Rudman said in an interview, "We Americans have an ability to procrastinate until we get hit on the head by a 2-by-4."

"There were people who would say, 'Homeland security? What are you, nuts?' " recalled Antsen. "Now the thinking has changed. Now it's an agreed-to assumption."

"You've been voices in the wilderness, for the most part," Sen. Fred Thompson (R-Tenn.) said at yesterday's hearing by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs. "You were ahead of your time," added Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), the committee's chairman.

Despite their prescience, soothsayers such as Antsen (who also worked on the Hart-Rudman report) are not chiding, "We told you so." They're heartened that their research provided a blueprint that could be quickly implemented. And by most accounts, senior Bush administration officials paid serious attention to the recommendations.

"The president put it at the top of his agenda," said Virginia Gov. James S. Gilmore, who chaired an advisory panel established in 1999 to assess preparedness in the event of a terrorist attack involving weapons of mass destruction. "This president acted within days after his inauguration to begin to go to work on the issue and to coordinate with us."

Gilmore's report included this now eerie statement: "We have been fortunate as a nation." It added, "We are impelled by the stark realization that a terrorist attack on some level inside our borders is inevitable and the United States must be ready."

But none of the recent major studies on terrorist threats specifically envisioned an attack by hijackers who would turn jetliners into bombs. "We concluded that the real weapon is not the device or the material involved, but the terrorist delivery capacity and capability," Gilmore noted in his testimony at yesterday's hearing. "Unfortunately, I am afraid that this point has been borne out by the events of Sept. 11."

The governor added in an interview, "It's not been the goal of our commission to try to dream up every possible conventional attack possible. We understand that they are limited only by the imagination of the evil mind, so it's purposeless, really, to try to analyze those things."

Though he wasn't at the hearing yesterday, Gingrich was hailed by Rudman as the "father" of the homeland security concept. Later, the former Republican congressman spoke modestly about his contributions. "Maybe the uncle," said Gingrich, giving credit to Clinton, too.

"I wouldn't say we were prescient. I would say this [Sept. 11] event is not the event we warned about, this event is the harbinger . . ."

One morning in October 1998, Antsen and another staffer were briefing Gingrich on asymmetric theories when he urged them to read screenplays and spy novels to get ideas about what terrorists were capable of doing. Get creative,

he said, since our enemies will certainly be. As Antsen noted, "The most important thing about an asymmetric attack is that you cannot identify it ahead of time."

It is designed to be unthinkable, unimaginable.

But on Sept. 11, there were those who could comprehend what had happened. That morning, Warren Rudman was heading to his Washington law office by cab, listening to National Public Radio reports. "I thought, 'Oh God, we predicted this.' I'm so sorry we were right. I felt awful. I take no satisfaction in our prediction."

Washington Post
September 22, 2001
Pg. 7

Direct Authority Called Key In Homeland Agency

Analysts Say Ridge Needs Budget, Coordination Powers

By Ellen Nakashima and Bradley Graham, Washington Post Staff Writers

President Bush's new White House anti-terrorism office will succeed only if given enough direct authority to coordinate the myriad government agencies involved in protecting the public from attacks on U.S. soil, experts said yesterday.

The director of the Office of Homeland Security, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge (R), must be more than an anti-terrorism czar, analysts said. He must have clear power over other agencies and their budgets, have control on the ground when a disaster hits and have a direct line to other members of the Cabinet.

"To be effective, he has to be able to pick up the phone and say, 'Don, do this.' Not 'Mr. Secretary, could you please do this?'" said Jeffrey Smith, former CIA general counsel and chairman of the Journal Security Commission in the Clinton administration, referring to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Bush on Thursday announced plans to create the Cabinet-level office to "lead, oversee and coordinate a comprehensive national strategy" to safeguard the country against terrorism. He named Ridge to direct it. Ridge will have his own budget and "significant" staff, officials said. He will coordinate the activities of about 40 federal agencies and departments and their interaction with state and local governments. He will, a senior administration official said, be "sitting at the president's right hand."

But most of the details, including the size of his budget and number of employees, are to be determined, White House officials said. It will be up to Ridge to recommend the parameters. "He'll have carte blanche," said Mary Matalin, Vice President Cheney's adviser.

Officials will have a better idea of the office's structure and its budget early next week, an administration official said. For instance, Ridge will play a role in deciding how to allocate the \$40 billion in emergency money Congress authorized, the official said.

The lead responsibility for investigating the terrorist hijackings of Sept. 11 will remain with the Justice Department, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said yesterday. But as investigators develop information that can help prevent a future attack, they will be expected to turn that over to Ridge, Fleischer said.

Ridge planned to spend the weekend at his home in Harrisburg, Pa., reading documents provided by the White House. "They're doing a significant paper dump on him right now," said his press secretary, Tim Reeves. Ridge said he intended to talk to White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card Jr. at some point, Reeves said. "I wouldn't be surprised if there are more phone conversations over the weekend."

At a news conference in Harrisburg on Thursday night, Ridge acknowledged that different federal agencies have their own plans for responding to a terrorist attack. He said he envisioned his role as overseeing efforts to prevent and respond to an attack. "It is offense and defense," he said.

Former national security adviser Anthony Lake warned that if Ridge is to be effective, he will have to "take powers away from various different agencies that now have them. There is nothing harder in the federal government than doing that."

Otherwise, Lake said, the job becomes "like the drug czar, which is essentially policy coordinating and trying to follow budgets -- talking about budgets, but not being able to control them."

Former senator Gary Hart (D-Colo.), who co-chaired a bipartisan commission that released a report earlier this year on homeland security, also expressed wariness toward the czar approach. "No homeland czar can possibly hope to coordinate the almost hopeless dispersal of authority that currently characterizes the 40 or 50 agencies or elements of agencies with some piece of responsibility for protecting our homeland," Hart said at a Senate hearing yesterday.

To succeed, Ridge also must have the power to oversee a disaster once it strikes, to adjudicate among competing priorities and bailiwicks, Lake said. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, for instance, cares about victims. The FBI is focused on the crime scene.

If a smallpox epidemic breaks out in a biological attack, how does the government allocate scarce vaccines? Smith asked. "Health care workers? The military?" An objective third party needs to take control, Lake said. "If Ridge has those capacities, it is a great step forward," he said.

Lawmakers yesterday praised the selection of Ridge, a Vietnam combat veteran, but expressed differing views on how the office should be run. Former senator Warren Rudman (R-N.H.), Hart's commission co-chairman, welcomed Bush's initiative but urged him to create a separate entity that would consolidate three organizations on the front lines of border security: the Coast Guard, the Customs Service and the Border Patrol.

New York Times
September 22, 2001

Debating Whether New Agency Can Command, Or Just Link Commanders

By Elizabeth Becker

WASHINGTON, Sept. 21 — The new Homeland Security Agency will be charged with figuring out how more than 40 disparate agencies — from the Coast Guard to the Treasury Department — can police American borders, protect against terrorists and respond immediately to any terrorist attack.

At the heart of the debate in Washington today is whether Tom Ridge, the Pennsylvania governor named to head the cabinet-level agency, will simply coordinate the efforts of these agencies or actually command them.

"Will the general have troops?" asked Gary Hart, co-chairman of the United States Commission on National Security, a panel appointed by Congress that recommended establishing such an agency in a report in January. He and the other chairman, former Senator Warren B. Rudman, contend that Mr. Ridge should have authority and resources for the nation's domestic security just as the defense secretary has the resources to defend the nation overseas.

"He should not be merely a homeland czar," Mr. Hart said. "No homeland czar can possibly hope to coordinate the almost hopeless dispersal of authority that currently characterizes the 40 or more agencies or elements of agencies with some piece of responsibility for protecting the homeland."

The administration has not yet defined the structure or authority of the office. Officials said it has not been decided whether Mr. Ridge will be able to direct law enforcement officers, for example, or commandeer equipment or personnel from the dozens of agencies he is to oversee.

The president intends to create the executive agency under his own authority without Congressional approval, White House officials said. He does not intend to seek Senate confirmation for Mr. Ridge.

"We're moving forward to do it by presidential action and we will consult closely with Congress," said Scott McClellan, a White House spokesman.

Mr. Ridge will become what a senior administration official described as the focal point for all efforts of the government to prepare and defend the homeland. He will coordinate not only all federal agencies but state and local agencies as well. The National Guard will play the role of the militia in such a system and it will remain under civilian command.

The president also plans to appoint an officer at the National Security Council to coordinate the intelligence and military responses to terrorism. He will also create an Office of Cybersecurity in the council to work on the protection of the Internet and the telecommunications infrastructure.

On Capitol Hill, lawmakers offered their own ideas.

The chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Senator Bob Graham, Democrat of Florida, and other committee members introduced legislation today to make Mr. Ridge's position permanent, and to provide it with its own budget authority, which only Congress can do.

"We want to build on what the president has done," Mr. Graham said in announcing the bill, which also creates the National Office for Combatting Terrorism, with Mr. Ridge as its director. "It was important that this office be a permanent, statutory office," he said.

Among other ideas under consideration are the creation of an assistant secretary of defense for homeland security; making the Federal Emergency Management Agency the core of the new homeland agency; putting the Coast Guard, Border Patrol and Customs Service under its command; and centralizing intelligence for federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

But while some lawmakers today were championing far-reaching changes like those accomplished by President Harry S. Truman in 1947 when he created the Department of Defense, the administration decided against creating a federal department, choosing instead to put a homeland agency within the White House.

The roadblocks to putting that concept into a plan are formidable. The Constitution has prohibitions against the American military operating on American soil. Any military employment has to be under civilian authority, which could be Mr. Ridge.

Moreover, Washington bureaucracies are loath to give up resources or authority. Indeed, Vice President Dick Cheney was tapped last spring to come up with a plan for homeland defense by this fall. He was briefed by Gov. James S. Gilmore III of Virginia, who led another panel that recommended a counterterrorist or homeland defense agency.

But administration officials said that study barely got off the ground — it was more a review of existing reports — rendered moot by the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11.

"Like everything else they said they would give it to Vice President Cheney and we would have a report in October," said Senator Pat Roberts, a Kansas Republican on the Intelligence Committee who has been promoting such an office for years.

Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman, said the National Security Council was a good example of what the Homeland Security Agency could become.

"The National Security Council provides a real coordinating capacity involving State, involving Defense, involving C.I.A., and it does so in the position of security," he said at a briefing.

New York Times
September 22, 2001

Fear And Vigilance As Security Plans

By Anthony Depalma

In a weekend that could have been the splendid start of autumn, Americans are dealing with continued threats — some real, others just perceived — and slowly recognizing that the worst-case scenarios that many government agencies had planned for have suddenly gotten worse.

Nuclear regulators acknowledged yesterday that they could not be sure that the nation's 103 plants could withstand the same kind of impact that leveled the World Trade Center because their worst-case planning never included anything of the magnitude of fully loaded jumbo jets.

As experts warned that stepped-up security measures that have been in place since the Sept. 11 attacks may be inadequate to protect the thousands of individual water supply systems in the nation from terrorist attacks, one system in Columbus, Ohio, was warned to be on watch for some kind of terrorist attack.

In what some saw as a show of vigilance, and some overzealousness, the F.B.I. has issued several alerts about terrorist threats that have frightened communities on both coasts. On Thursday the agency warned Hollywood studios that they could be the target of terrorists this weekend, causing studio tours to be canceled. Then the bureau also had to back down from an alert about a terrorist threat in the Boston area that Attorney General John Ashcroft revealed on television.

Despite the nervousness caused by the threats, Americans tried to turn to traditional fall activities, though now with a new spirit of nervousness. College football is returning, but with new restrictions. Texas A&M, for instance, is banning ice chests and backpacks. Diaper bags will be permitted, although university officials warn that the bags will be searched.

The Bureau of Reclamation, which oversees hundreds of dams and reservoirs in the West, has closed some campgrounds but left others open. In Colorado, some reservoirs have been closed entirely since Sept. 11, while others that allow boating have prohibited boaters from coming within 100 feet of the dams.

The Metropolitan Water District, which provides water to 17 million people throughout Southern California, has stepped up patrols both on the ground and in the air.

The heightened security at public utilities reflects the wariness of the nation as a whole. "I know as far as emergency response statewide goes, there's increased readiness and a level of alert that's gone up," said Scott Adcock, a spokesman for the Alabama Emergency Management Agency. "That coincides with feelings of Americans, watching over your shoulder."

For many people, the thought of an attack on a nuclear power plant is frightening, even though experts agree that there is almost no way that an attack could cause a nuclear explosion like those associated with atomic weapons. But the Nuclear Regulatory Commission concedes that an attack could cause a release of radioactive material, which would endanger surrounding areas.

All the nation's nuclear plants have been on highest alert since 10 a.m. on Sept. 11, which means that plant operators have increased security patrols, added security posts and limited access to the sites.

But yesterday, the agency acknowledged in a statement that it had begun a complete review of all security regulations and procedures in light of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

"We never anticipated that a plant might need to defend itself from an act of war," said Victor Dricks, a spokesman for the agency. He said the reactors' containment buildings were made of steel and concrete several feet thick, designed to withstand hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes and "the impact of a fairly large plane, but not a 767." Representative Edward J. Markey, Democrat of Massachusetts, has accused the regulatory commission of making "unrealistic assumptions" about the security risks at the nation's nuclear plants and is pressing for extra precautions to be taken.

"The N.R.C. has been given the gift of time to better prepare the nuclear industry," Mr. Markey said. "They need to act as soon as possible."

Paul L. Leventhal, president of the Nuclear Control Institute, a nonproliferation research group in Washington, said the commission should be considering extraordinary precautions like stationing National Guard troops around nuclear plants and installing anti-aircraft guns to shoot down or deflect suicide attacks.

"Even with a heightened state of alert," Mr. Leventhal said, "their plan has too many flaws."

Water managers, responsible for reservoirs that are often large and remote, typically have limited security staffs and only vague plans for responding to threats. The Associated Press reported that an administrator in Columbus, Ohio, received an e-mail message from the F.B.I. warning water departments of a possible terrorist attack on Saturday.

An F.B.I. official said he could not confirm the report, but said the agency had "taken a number of steps in reaction to every bit of information and threat received during the course of this investigation."

In Boston, the F.B.I. and state and city officials said that rumors mentioned by Mr. Ashcroft about the city being threatened by terrorists this weekend were "not credible," and urged residents to forget about them and live their lives.

"I'm not God. I can't predict tomorrow," said Paul Evans, Boston's police commissioner. "These threats are not based on specific credible information."

Officials said they grew concerned after reading e-mail messages, sent to several people in Boston, claiming that a bartender had overheard five Middle Eastern men talking about bloodshed in the city on Sept. 22.

"What you're hearing here is that all of America obviously should be concerned," said Thomas Reilly, attorney general of Massachusetts. "But that's a far cry from saying people should disrupt their lives."

Washington Post
September 22, 2001
Pg. 4

Biological Attack Concerns Spur Warnings

Restoration of Broken Public Health System is Best Preparation, Experts Say

By Rick Weiss and Ellen Nakashima, Washington Post Staff Writers

Soon after last week's terrorist attacks, federal health authorities told public health agencies to be on the alert for "unusual disease patterns associated with today's events," a bureaucratically phrased but nonetheless chilling hint of fear that the nation might be under biological attack.

In the Washington area, police surrounded local reservoirs in an effort to stop, or at least notice, any effort to contaminate the local water supply.

In Virginia, the world's largest archive and distribution center for frozen, living microbes -- which ships bacteria and viruses to scientists around the world -- beefed up security at its Manassas facility.

And this week, the FBI asked operators of the nation's 3,500 crop-duster planes to be on the lookout for suspicious behavior around their hangars as the fleet resumed its seasonal schedule of low-altitude spraying. So far, there is no evidence that the nation has suffered a bioterrorist attack, which could leave thousands of citizens infected and sickened within days after a clandestine microbial release. But given the nation's vulnerability to a biological assault -- well documented in a number of recent federal and independent studies -- experts in bioterrorism say they are concerned that the array of responses in the past 10 days has been scattered and uncoordinated. Such a haphazard response would not suffice, these experts say, if the country were to face an actual biological attack.

President Bush in his national address Thursday night announced the creation of an Office of Homeland Security to help fulfill that need for coordination. The aim is to combat in an integrated fashion a wide range of threats, including chemical, nuclear and biological.

But biological attacks present unique challenges not posed by other forms of terrorism, experts said yesterday. Unlike, for example, an explosion, a cloud of microbes released from a small plane won't trigger alarms. Yet it's crucial that officials respond quickly while a disease is still treatable and before the first wave of infections spreads widely through the population.

That reality has prompted scientists to start developing high-tech microbe detectors that may someday provide early warning of a biological attack. But meanwhile, experts said, the best preparation is perhaps the least obvious: Reassemble the nation's broken public health system.

For decades before bioterrorism was on anyone's mind, that publicly supported system -- built around community hospitals and closely linked public health laboratories -- offered a sensitive mechanism for detecting emerging epidemics. Local public health departments, hospitals and clinics were the listening posts of disease detection and the headquarters where specialists designed and implemented vaccination programs.

But a dramatic economic shift to privatized medicine and managed care -- and a mistaken impression among policymakers that infectious diseases had been beaten by antibiotics -- have together decimated that world-class early warning system, leaving the public vulnerable to naturally emerging problems such as West Nile fever and those perpetrated by terrorists.

"Our public health infrastructure has decayed to an alarming extent," said Richard Levinson, associate executive director of the American Public Health Association.

Until recently, for example, publicly supported hospitals and labs gathered large amounts of data beyond those needed for patient care, allowing them to track disease trends and keep one step ahead of epidemics. But with increased privatization, cost-consciousness and the shift from inpatient to outpatient care, most laboratories today conduct only those tests that health insurance will pay for -- just those necessary to decide how to treat a person.

"The pressures of managed care led to laboratory cutbacks and less diagnostics," said Peggy Hamburg, a former New York City health commissioner who is now with the Washington-based Nuclear Threat Initiative.

The old system was also a victim of political shortsightedness as tuberculosis, syphilis and other infectious scourges went into decline in the 1970s. Federal and state legislators repeatedly cut spending on public health or shifted that support to flexible "block grants" that states chose to spend on more politically visible priorities.

"Public health programs are absolutely necessary, but good public health isn't noticed until it's failed," said Lee B. Reichman of the New Jersey Medical School in Newark.

But even as public health budgets shrank, the threat of disease was growing. Tuberculosis, which in the 1970s was well on its way to being vanquished, has returned with a vengeance -- and this time it is resistant to standard medicines. Centralized food sourcing has led to widely dispersed and sometimes fatal outbreaks of food-borne diseases. And ailments never before seen in this hemisphere, such as West Nile fever, are appearing and seem to be settling in for good.

Those realities alone are reason enough to reinvigorate the nation's public health system, Hamburg and others said. But quick and accurate disease detection is especially important because some of the deadly diseases most likely to be used by terrorists, such as anthrax and smallpox, would at first be mistaken for ordinary colds or flu.

"Many people in the political and military hierarchy don't understand how different a biological attack is from explosives or a nuclear or chemical attack," said George Poste, who heads the bioterrorism task force of the Defense Science Board, an independent advisory panel that assists Pentagon leaders. "Most physicians, delightfully, have not had to think about bioterrorism," Poste said, "so the first thing they think about is a conventional infection. By the time you realize you've got a problem on your hands, people are in the health care system and potentially infecting others."

The United States is not completely unprepared. In 1998, President Bill Clinton ordered the stockpiling of enough vaccines and antibiotics to treat massive numbers of civilians in the wake of a bioterrorist attack. The administration also stepped up spending for training of medical personnel and improved laboratory testing.

Last week, some of that planning got its first test. In New York, a National Guard unit with special training in bioterrorism was mobilized, as was a team with similar expertise from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

But public health experts say the country is still tens of millions of vaccine doses short; medicine stockpiles remain inadequate and would be unavailable to much of the country if air traffic were again curtailed; and hospitals -- which have greatly reduced their inpatient capacities in recent years -- are unprepared to handle large numbers of critically ill patients.

A survey of 186 emergency rooms in the Northwest, published in May, found that less than 20 percent had plans in place for a biological weapons incident and less than two-thirds had enough drugs in stock to treat 50 cases of anthrax.

It will take years to increase those capacities, but it would not necessarily take much effort to jumpstart the process by reinstating the communications network that once formed the backbone of the nation's public health system, said Tara O'Toole, deputy director of the Center for Civilian Biodefense Strategy at Johns Hopkins University.

"Doctors have to know who to call, and they have to be reachable 24 hours a day, and there has to be somebody who can respond responsibly," O'Toole said. "We can do that immediately."

Staff writers Caroline Mayer, Carol Leonnig, Steve Twomey and Justin Gillis contributed to this report.

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Pg. 23

Reinstitute Iraq Weapons Inspections

By Leonard S. Spector and Jonathan B. Tucker

IN THE AFTERMATH of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the United States has an unprecedented opportunity for international cooperation to address global security threats. As part of the US strategy, the Bush administration should seize the moment to restore the United Nations weapons inspections in Iraq. This move would help to contain the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and also reduce the risk of future mass-casualty terrorism.

Although some administration officials have called for military strikes against Iraq, such a step would risk alienating key Arab states whose cooperation is needed. A better approach to keeping Saddam Hussein in check would be to restore the UN inspections and reserve the threat of military action to enforce the regime.

After the 1991 Gulf War, the UN Security Council sought to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction - nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and missiles with a range of more than 150 kilometers - by establishing the UN Special Commission on Iraq to uncover and dismantle these capabilities. UNSCOM also established a system of ongoing monitoring and verification to prevent Iraq from reacquiring the banned weapons.

By the time Saddam Hussein expelled the inspectors in November 1998, they had largely destroyed Iraq's nuclear program and its vast stockpile of chemical arms, including mustard and nerve agents. UNSCOM also exposed an extensive biological weapons program, but because of the dual-use nature of many relevant production facilities, such as vaccine plants, the UN inspectors were unable to eliminate this threat.

Since 1998, the Security Council, locked in a dispute over the continued imposition of economic sanctions on Iraq, has lacked the unity needed to demand that the inspectors return and to back up this position with the threat of force. When the administration took office, it sought to restore inspections under the auspices of a new UN body, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

But this US initiative foundered on Russia's insistence that Iraq be able to import certain dual-use items that the United States feared would be diverted for military purposes. In recent days, however, Moscow's apparent readiness to work with Washington to bring terrorists to justice, reportedly even to the point of supporting US military staging areas in Central Asia, may mean that it is prepared to break the logjam within the Security Council over weapons monitoring.

Why is restoring the UN weapons inspection regime in Iraq an important component of the response to the events of last week?

First, Iraq is a supporter of international terrorism and has been accused of succoring such groups as the Abu Nidal Organization, the Palestine Liberation Front, and the Arab Liberation Front. All three groups have offices in Baghdad and receive training, logistical assistance, and financial aid from the Iraqi leadership.

Iraq is also believed to retain a biological weapons program and, most likely, a stock of chemical weapons that it hid from inspectors. In the two and a half years since the inspectors were expelled, Baghdad has undoubtedly enhanced these capabilities.

Although there is no evidence that Iraq has supplied chemical or biological weapons to terrorists in the past, this potential remains. Unless UN monitoring can be restored as a means to restrict Iraq's acquisition of weapons of mass destruction, these potent armaments could find their way into the hands of operatives prepared to match or exceed the horrors of Sept. 11.

Iraq has a legitimate need for vaccine, pharmaceutical, and pesticide plants to meet the needs of its population. Yet without close monitoring on the ground, such dual-use facilities could easily be diverted to the production of chemical or biological weapons. A UN regime that includes ongoing monitoring of these plants with video cameras and routine visits, augmented by no-notice inspections, would not be foolproof, but it could do much to constrain Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs.

A second reason why monitoring and inspections would help the US response to the attacks is that it would facilitate a US rapprochement with Iran. The United States is seeking the assistance of Iran in pressuring Afghanistan to hand over Osama bin Laden and end support for his followers. Given the history of US-Iranian tensions, Washington has little that it can offer Tehran as an incentive. Because Iraq's chemical and biological warfare capabilities pose a grave threat to Iran, however, one incentive is a pledge to keep Iraq in check through the restoration of UN monitoring.

Iraq will not accept a new monitoring and inspection regime willingly. But Saddam Hussein fears US military action and is already taking defensive measures such as dispersing his forces. If the United States can obtain the backing of the UN Security Council to reintroduce the inspectors, Saddam can be expected to back down.

A failure to act now to restore the monitoring would leave Iraq armed with biological and chemical weapons, giving it the potential to provide terrorist clients the means for unprecedented mayhem.

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