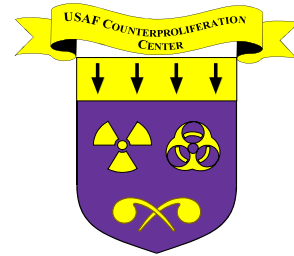


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New York Times
October 10, 2001

U.S. Missions Are Stocking Antibiotics

WASHINGTON, Oct. 10 — The State Department has ordered its diplomatic missions around the world to stock up on antibiotics to counter any attack by terrorists using anthrax, the spokesman, Richard Boucher, said today.

"We don't have any information to indicate that there's an imminent threat from the use of anthrax or other biological agents at an overseas mission," Mr. Boucher said. "But as a precaution we've encouraged our missions to stock a three-day supply of the antibiotic ciprofloxacin."

Under the department's instructions, which were issued Tuesday, American embassies are to buy and store enough ciprofloxacin to cover American employees and their families as well as locally hired workers, contractors and others who frequent the missions.

He said the move was part of a three-year-old effort to protect State Department personnel in certain overseas posts against the threat of chemical and biological attacks.

But now, he said, the precautions have been expanded to all American missions.

"It's all our missions that we're asking to stock this stuff, just in case," Mr. Boucher said.

Federal investigators are trying to determine whether the exposure of two Florida men to anthrax in recent days was the result of a terrorist action.

Los Angeles Times
October 10, 2001

States Rush To Plug Their Security Holes

Terror: Officials find their public health and safety systems aren't up to the task and scramble for costly improvements.

By Stephanie Simon, Times Staff Writer

ST. LOUIS -- Two years ago, the Justice Department set aside \$150 million to help states purchase response gear for civil emergencies. Before Sept. 11, one state applied for a share of the money.

Now, the rush is on. State after state is pushing for the money as local and regional officials realize how unprepared they are in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

"We're just, frankly, not ready," said Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, who is especially concerned about biological threats.

The fixes are expensive, and as budgets slide from surplus into deficit in state after state, a few critics argue that the money would be better spent addressing dangers that clearly plague public health now--drug abuse, say, or smoking--rather than looking ahead to an amorphous terrorist threat. Others caution that anti-terror shopping lists are premature: The first order of business, they contend, is for the federal government to deliver a realistic assessment of what type of attacks are most likely.

"You can't protect against every fanciful, conceivable, unlikely scenario. You can't," Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating said.

But with Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft warning of "a clear and present danger to Americans," many state and local officials feel compelled to move as quickly as they can--in as many directions as they can.

Most have taken the obvious precautions to bolster security, from installing metal detectors in high-profile buildings to fencing off drinking water supplies. In St. Louis, law enforcement officers have started conducting random searches of trucks on the interstate. In Illinois, state police have been ordered to carry enough food and water to sustain them for three days in case they can't get back home in a crisis.

Arizona has launched a 24-hour hotline for tips about potential terrorists; it has logged more than 600 calls.

California has set up a central database to track all threats and hoaxes statewide. In Georgia, the directors of 60 state agencies met behind barbed wire recently to assess state readiness. In Missouri, Gov. Bob Holden created a new Cabinet post for homeland security.

Those are quick and inexpensive measures. Experts say they are not enough.

Stockpiling of Vaccines Urged

To gird for attack--and especially for chemical or biological strikes--every state, they say, must fortify its health care infrastructure, stockpile more vaccines and antidotes and load up on supplies for emergency response crews. Among the most pressing problems experts cite:

Many hospitals have, at most, one decontamination shower--capable of processing just a couple of chemical-attack victims per hour. Some fire departments also have mobile decontamination units to help out. The alternative: herding victims to a staging area, stripping them and spraying them with fire hoses. "If you want to know what the short pole on the tent is, that's where it is in most cities," said Larry Gispert, emergency management director for Hillsborough County in Florida.

Medical authorities often have no rapid way to communicate the health alerts critical for an effective response to a germ attack.

Experts say 25% of public health departments don't have e-mail; fewer than half have high-speed Internet access. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta reported two years ago that only 45% of local health departments had the capacity for "broadcast faxing," which would allow them to transmit alerts to all labs and physicians in their areas.

Only five public health labs in the country can test human specimens for exposure to the types of chemicals that most likely would be used in a terrorist attack. Most hospital labs are unable to diagnose exposure to biological weapons, such as anthrax or smallpox. And only 37 states have CDC experts assigned to help them spot unusual patterns of infection.

Many communities have no workable surveillance system to detect unexpected surges in illness that could signal an outbreak of diseases, such as smallpox. In Boston, a computer program automatically records admissions to every emergency room daily--and follows up on any spike within hours. But many cities still rely on physicians to fill out paperwork for every flu-like illness they treat, a cumbersome system that often ends up being ignored.

"The most neglected aspect of our defense is the whole public health infrastructure," said Greg Evans, director of the Center for the Study of Bioterrorism in St. Louis.

In an appearance before the Senate Committee on Health, Education and Labor on Tuesday, Dr. Michael T.

Osterholm--director of the center for infectious disease research at the University of Minnesota--reiterated that most hospitals and other facilities are unprepared for a large-scale bioterrorism attack. A major assault "would overwhelm most existing state and local systems within a few days," Osterholm said.

In Houston alone, officials assessing public health needs came up with a \$4-million shopping list--and that was before Sept. 11. They expect to add more items soon, from protective gear for doctors to decontamination units for major hospitals. If the federal government doesn't cover the tab, city officials are considering asking the local business community for donations.

"At this point, we're looking at any and all options," said Craig McDowell, the city's emergency services manager. "I don't know that you're ever totally prepared. But we want to be as prepared as we can be."

Authorities across the country emphasize that they are not starting from scratch.

The federal government has been prodding communities to gird for weapons of mass destruction at least since 1995, when a Japanese cult released sarin nerve gas in a Tokyo subway, killing 12 people and injuring hundreds.

More than 270,000 firefighters, police and paramedics have been trained to respond to such threats. Special National Guard teams in 27 states also have been formed to handle chemical or biological attacks--some of them working on virtual reality simulators to practice evacuating a city in crisis.

The Justice Department has even organized drills in 120 cities, laying out a disaster scenario and asking officials to run through their responses.

Utah, which will host the 2002 Winter Olympics, was the only state to complete the lengthy application to tap into the Justice Department's \$150-million fund to purchase emergency equipment, such as protective suits and respirators. Yet other federal grants have been available over the years for such purchases.

And some agencies have moved aggressively to stock up. The Los Angeles County Fire Department, for example, has spent \$1 million from its own budget and at least \$400,000 in grant money on training and equipment over the last few years. As a result, every firefighter now carries an "escape mask" to flee a chemical cloud, along with an injectable nerve gas antidote. But Chief P. Michael Freeman recognizes that such preparation is not the norm. "It's been kind of hit or miss around the nation," he said.

Missouri Behind in 'First Responders'

In Missouri, for instance, only 5% to 10% of "first responders"--the emergency personnel who would be first to a scene--have the equipment to withstand chemical or biological exposure. "Right now, we're not ready," said Robb Pilkington, a terrorism specialist who trains the state's rescue workers.

Florida's wish list includes 1,400 pairs of chemical-resistant boots for rescue workers. Arizona is buying 900 protective biocontainment suits, one for each state police officer. In Alabama, emergency coordinator Woody Odom needs equipment to detect chemical or biological agents.

California needs more high-tech equipment too, and also more training for first responders. But Emergency Services Director Dallas Jones hopes to avoid a frenzy of panic buying. "We want to do this with a comprehensive regional plan," he said. "Every hospital in the state doesn't necessarily need a 900-person-per-hour decontamination unit." Even before the Sept. 11 attacks, the Bush administration had asked Congress to appropriate \$104 million for local purchases of emergency response gear. More recently, Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) have proposed spending \$1.6 billion to counter bioterrorism.

"I really believe that the majority of funding items will be handled by the federal government," said retired Army Col. Timothy Daniels, Missouri's new homeland security chief.

But experts caution that spending is only one way to prepare.

John Thomasian, who directs the think-tank branch of the National Governors Assn., recommends legislation that would give health officials the authority to seize property or to mandate medical exams so that they could identify and contain any infectious epidemic.

Fire chiefs call for better efforts to establish common radio frequencies, so all emergency personnel can communicate.

In some cases, better preparation would be as simple as freeing up staff to draft an emergency response plan. Fewer than 25% of county and city health departments have such a plan. Of those that do, fewer than half have tested it with drills, according to the departments' professional association.

One final prong of the preparation effort is public outreach: getting the word out to citizens not to panic. Some local officials fear that the drumbeat of warnings on bioterrorism will prompt a run on hospitals as people see every sniffle as a sign of anthrax poisoning. "We're very concerned that, with the winter flu season coming on, if we don't tone down the rhetoric we could very easily find ourselves overwhelmed," said Chuck Lanza, emergency director for Miami-Dade County in Florida.

With so many disparate needs identified--and so many urgent holes to fill--state and local anti-terrorism efforts have been somewhat scattered in the weeks since Sept. 11. As Freeman put it: "It has not yet coalesced into a national strategy."

That doesn't trouble Brad Roberts, an anti-terrorism expert at the private Institute for Defense Analyses, a think tank that advises the Pentagon. In fact, Roberts suggested, a diffuse approach may well be the best national strategy of all.

"The problem we face is so fuzzy . . . we cannot precisely tailor a response," Roberts said. "We have to strengthen [our defenses] across a broad range of issues--and hope that, when a crisis comes, we've done enough of the right things to make a difference."

Times staff writers Aaron Zitner and Robert L. Jackson in Washington contributed to this report.

USA Today
October 10, 2001
Pg. 1D

How Ready Are We For Bioterrorism?

Agencies try to anticipate a virulent and invisible invader

By Robert Davis, USA Today

Lingering fear can lead to odd behavior, aggression As crime and health investigators try to determine what is behind an anthrax death in South Florida, the nation's medical system is getting a life-and-death test. Is it ready for bioterrorism?

From the front lines, the nation's emergency rooms and county health departments, the answer is a strong yes -- and a realistic no.

"We're never ready," says Mark Smith, chairman of emergency medicine at Washington Hospital Center in D.C., where burn victims were taken after the Pentagon attack on Sept. 11. "There will always be events that overwhelm the current system."

How many people die from a bioterrorism attack and how many live could hinge on the decisions that are made on this front. The Florida case shows how the medical system should react when a terrorism agent is detected.

Hundreds are being tested and treated with antibiotics as their sealed office building is pored over for clues.

So far, the reaction appears swift and effective.

But officials say that other parts of the nation may not be as well prepared. One known weakness: the ability of already overcrowded emergency rooms and understaffed hospitals, clinics and health departments to pick victims of a silent terrorist attack out of a sea of patients who appear to have the flu.

For doctors like Smith, the urgency to get ready for the unexpected makes a hard job tougher. As Smith spoke, his medical director called for an urgent meeting to review the hospital's readiness for a biological attack. It was a meeting that was taking place in countless hospitals, health departments and emergency medical offices across the nation.

Like the Washington hospital, other hospitals across the nation are more prepared than ever. Since Sept. 11, response plans have been checked and rechecked. Labs have reviewed the latest testing procedures from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And medical teams have looked closely at several patients as possible victims of a biological attack.

So far, only two have been found.

But surprises keep coming.

Panic in the nation's capital

Adding to this challenge is an increasing amount of fear, which on Tuesday led to panic in Washington D.C. Rescue workers in Temple Hills, Md., a nearby D.C. suburb, were trying to sort out whether an armed man with a jar of stinky stuff on the subway had exposed commuters to something deadly.

Several hours later it was determined that the man had not spread anything deadly.

But that incident -- and the response by the medical system -- was another test.

The first responders found about 35 people complaining of nausea, dry throat and headaches after being exposed first to a liquid the man carried on the train and then to pepper spray police used to subdue him. By protocol, the people were isolated at the scene instead of being whisked away to a hospital, which could have spread any dangerous substance.

It was almost routine. Big cities are well trained and well equipped to deal with mysterious substances.

But these days, almost nothing is routine. The emergency response was monitored by the Health and Human Services bioterrorism situation room. To end fears that swept the city, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson announced that the substance appeared to be harmless and the incident was not a terrorist attack. Such episodes are likely to be repeated across the nation in coming days, emergency room doctors say, as fear fuels both odd behavior and unusually aggressive reactions.

"One of the biggest things we have to manage now is fear and anxiety," Smith says. "People are jumpy, and they have a right to be jumpy. But it's time for a coordinated health response."

That coordinated health response is where the true test of the nation's preparedness is underway.

In the big cities, the first responders, emergency rooms and the county health departments have been practicing for today's biological threat for years.

The dress rehearsal began after last month's attacks.

Hospitals have tapped into the CDC's Web site and downloaded information for lab technicians. They've looked for anthrax and other possible terrorist agents in samples of bodily fluids.

While hospitals have been on high alert, so have health departments. In some big cities, health officials have been looking for trends in emergency room cases.

"Are we more ready than we were two months ago? Yes," Smith says. "Do we have a long way to go? Yes."

One place where doctors fear they may be caught off guard is in spotting the first victims.

In New York, doctors have swamped emergency medical training sessions since the attack on the World Trade Center, seeking to hone their ability to pick the victim of a biological attack out of a crowded emergency room.

Neill Oster, of Mount Sinai's emergency room in New York, heads the American College of Emergency Physicians' disaster team and teaches other doctors the early warning signs of biological and chemical attacks.

He has seen more than twice as many doctors show up since the attacks with renewed interest.

"They're saying we were here before, but we're back again," says Oster, exhausted from working a busy overnight shift in the battered city. "Let's go over it again."

Spotting biological attack victims isn't easy, because they look at first like any other flu patient.

Bob Stevens, the Florida man who died Friday of anthrax, was diagnosed too late to be saved -- a common problem with anthrax.

By the time anthrax is blamed for an illness, it is usually because the disease has progressed beyond the point where medicine can help. Doctors know that if they can find those first victims fast, their diagnosis can mean life or death for others who could have quietly been exposed.

Ernesto Blanco, one of Stevens' co-workers, was found to have anthrax in his body after his friend died. Since then, hundreds have been tested, and their office building has been sealed.

The response in Florida has gone by the book written largely by health officials who have paid more attention to biological terrorism threats in recent years.

A critical issue in Florida was getting information out to the public in a county of 1.1 million people.

"We were able to react immediately and get valid and accurate information to the public while mounting a massive investigation with state, federal and local officials," says Frank Penela, a spokesman with the Florida Department of Health.

When federal officials swarmed into Florida, the coordinated health response put into action a plan that has been years in the making. But more is being done.

Thompson told Congress last week that his agency has sent \$10 million to 25 cities to boost their emergency response teams.

Vaccines in short supply

He says he also is considering creating stockpiles of medical supplies specifically for biological and chemical attacks.

Those supplies are meant to prevent a disaster from overwhelming a community's medical system. But there are shortages of needed vaccines for anthrax. Routine smallpox vaccinations stopped in 1972, and the stockpile of vaccine is limited.

Some cities are more prepared than others, he says.

"There is a lot of variability," says Joseph Ornato, chairman of emergency medicine at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. Salt Lake City, gearing up for the Olympics, is in the lead, for instance. He won't say which towns are lagging: "Telling the bad guys where we are vulnerable would just be dumb."

But overall, there has been progress. "A lot is in place now that didn't exist before," Ornato says. Oster agrees that the emergency system is largely ready.

His prescription: "Stay calm and listen to instructions from health officials in each locale."

(Editor's Note: [Hyperlink](#) for referenced GAO report follows article.)

GAO: Food Supply Vulnerable To Attack

By Philip Brasher

AP Farm Writer

Thursday, Oct. 11, 2001; 3:12 a.m. EDT

WASHINGTON — The nation's food supply is vulnerable to terrorist attack because of the government's fragmented inspection system, congressional investigators say.

"We believe there is reason to doubt our ability to detect and fully respond to an organized bioterrorist attack," said Robert Robinson of the General Accounting Office, an investigative arm of Congress.

Food inspection programs are divided between the Agriculture Department and the Food and Drug Administration. FDA, which is responsible for safeguarding nearly all foods other than meat and poultry, has 750 inspectors to check 55,000 food plants. USDA has 10 times as many inspectors for 6,000 facilities.

GAO has pressed Congress for years to consolidate inspection programs into one agency, and the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11 make it more imperative, Robinson told the Senate Governmental Affairs subcommittee on Wednesday.

"Maybe the events of Sept. 11 will give us some impetus to change," said Sen. Richard Durbin, an Illinois Democrat who has long advocated the creation of a single food agency, an idea studied but dropped by the Clinton administration.

Thousands of food processors nationwide lack proper security, and few test their finished products for contaminants, said Peter Chalk, a policy analyst with the RAND think tank.

Robinson said the Agriculture Department has been left out of the administration's bioterrorism planning.

USDA and FDA officials said that they are coordinating their efforts to prevent or deal with an attack.

"We're in a new day. We're facing threats we never thought we would have to be facing," said Elsa Murano, USDA's new undersecretary for food safety.

She said she would be willing to discuss reorganizing food safety programs. But neither Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman nor Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, who oversees the FDA, support the idea.

Food could be used to spread a biological agent, said Bernard Schwetz, FDA's acting principal deputy commissioner. Such an attack would "reach a large number of people relatively quickly through a means they wouldn't expect to be a problem," he said.

The food industry says it is prepared to deal with a terrorist attack.

"We've got a history of working in the areas of product tampering and prevention," said Gene Grabowski, a spokesman for the Grocery Manufacturers of America. "We know what the critical control points are."

The group opposes consolidation of food safety programs but said FDA needs more money to expand its staff.

There has been only one recorded terrorist attack on the U.S. food supply, in the 1980s when a religious sect contaminated salad bars in Oregon with salmonella bacteria.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/20011011/aponline031256_000.htm

Food Safety and Security: Fundamental Changes Needed to Ensure Safe Food

by Robert A. Robinson, managing director, natural resources and environment issues, before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring, and the District of Columbia, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

GAO-02-47T, October 10.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-02-47T>

Avant OKs Anthrax Vaccine License

The Associated Press

Thursday, Oct. 11, 2001; 8:28 a.m. EDT

NEEDHAM, Mass. — Avant Immunotherapeutics Inc., a Needham biotechnology company, announced an agreement Wednesday to license vaccine technology that a scientific adviser said could be useful against anthrax.

The company announced a licensing deal that will give DynPort Vaccine Company LLC access to Avant's advanced vaccine patents.

A company spokeswoman said the Defense Department had asked Avant not to discuss possible uses related to anthrax, but Dr. Mark Davis, a Stanford University Medical School professor and a member of Avant's scientific advisory board, told The Boston Globe it could be useful against the disease.

"They're going great guns with travelers' vaccines such as cholera and typhoid," he said. "Anthrax would just be another bug."

The company's Web site says the company has conducted preclinical work in vaccines for anthrax among other diseases.

Details of the agreement were not disclosed.

In 1997, the Defense Department signed a contract with DynPort, a subsidiary of Reston, Va.-based defense contractor DynCorp, to develop vaccines.

"Bioterrorism is a worldwide concern," said Michael W. Henry, Avant's vice president for business development. "... Effective vaccines are an important medical countermeasure against biological warfare to protect U.S. military forces and others at risk around the world, and we believe that our vaccine technology can contribute significantly to this effort."

The current anthrax vaccine requires six shots over many months, and the plant where Lansing, Mich.-based BioPort Corp. makes the vaccine was shut down by the government three years ago.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/20011011/aponline082831_001.htm

Metro Officials Review Actions In Terror Scare

Communication Problem Cited in Spraying Incident

By Lyndsey Layton

Washington Post Staff Writer

Thursday, October 11, 2001; Page B03

Top rail, police and safety officials at Metro planned to meet today to dissect Tuesday's terrorism scare on the Green Line, looking for ways to improve the system's response to such scenarios.

They will focus on their decision to allow the rail car involved in the incident to continue on its way after Kenneth Ranger Jr. sprayed a clear liquid in the last car of the four-car train at the Southern Avenue Station, Metro officials said.

Seeking to preserve possible criminal evidence, rail workers closed and locked that car but sent Train 509 onward. It picked up passengers at five additional stations before Metro officials realized that it was involved in a possible biological or chemical attack.

When they realized the error, they stopped the train at the Archives-Navy Memorial Station, emptied it and sent it to the Greenbelt rail yard. But rail officials also are questioning that decision, because the train passed through 11 stations on its way to the yard.

Experts say that in the event of a chemical attack on a train, one of the first goals is to keep the train in place; otherwise it could spread toxins as it moves.

Lem Proctor, Metro's chief operating officer for rail service, said a better decision would probably have been to hold the train at the Southern Avenue Station, where it could have been decontaminated and would not have posed a danger of contamination to the rest of the system. In addition, Southern Avenue is an outdoor station, where air currents could have helped dissipate toxins, he said.

But Proctor said he wants advice from area fire chiefs in evaluating Metro's response.

"We could find out that we did exactly the right thing," Proctor said. "The chiefs are the experts, and I want to hear what they have to say."

In the minutes after the incident at the Southern Avenue Station, information about the train's position was not clear to police officials monitoring the situation from a command center in Metro's downtown headquarters, said Metro Police Chief Barry McDevitt.

Metro officers at the scene were distracted by their struggle with Ranger, who pulled a handgun and fired a shot moments after spraying a clear liquid from a pump bottle, McDevitt said. The liquid turned out to be cleaning solution.

McDevitt said it took Officer Larry Lowe, who was fighting with Ranger, a few minutes to alert officials that a liquid had been sprayed inside the car and on the platform. By that time, the train was on its way downtown.

At times during Tuesday's six-hour ordeal, communication lapsed between rescuers, police and rail officials, McDevitt said.

"What we did was pretty well-scripted in what we're trained to do," said McDevitt, whose 320-member police force receives annual terrorism training. "We need to work on getting more accurate and timely information."

He said one problem was the fact that hazardous materials workers and police at the scene were wearing special gear and gas masks, which made it difficult for them to be heard over radios by police who were monitoring the situation from a command post set up near the Southern Avenue Station.

"We're going to have to figure out a better way, even if that means having them write notes or something," McDevitt said.

Ranger, 23, who has lived in various communities in Prince George's County but whose last address was in the District, remained at Greater Southeast Community Hospital for most of yesterday, according to Metro police. He was expected to be released and brought before a Prince George's District Court commissioner for an arraignment last night on charges of attempted murder of a police officer, two counts of carrying a concealed weapon, two counts of assault and one count of resisting arrest.

Staff writer Jamie Stockwell contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A40095-2001Oct10.html>

Europe Has Plans for Bioterrorism

By Jill Lawless

Associated Press Writer

Friday, Oct. 12, 2001; 5:22 a.m. EDT

LONDON — Horrified by the Florida anthrax infections, Europeans are showing new concern about their own vulnerability to spores used as terror weapons.

European governments say they are prepared to deal with the threat of biological or chemical attack. But medical experts warn that varying national standards of surveillance leave the continent exposed to the stealthy spread of infection.

"All governments will be sitting down and reviewing their plans," in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States," said John Eldridge, a biological and chemical weapons analyst with Jane's, the defense information group. European governments insist they have no specific evidence of a chemical or biological threat. Still, they've instructed doctors to be alert for unusual symptoms and have increased security around sensitive sites, including water supplies and pharmaceutical plants.

Beyond that, details of their plans are scarce.

In Britain, "procedures are in place" to vaccinate the general public against anthrax and other diseases, a Home Office spokeswoman said. The government won't say how many doses Britain has, or where they are stored. France has unveiled a \$57 million plan, dubbed "Biotox," that includes making a military-run decontamination center available for civilian use. Health Minister Bernard Kouchner said last week that more "means of individual protection," such as gas masks or jumpsuits, would be made available in case of a crisis.

The German government announced it was establishing a biological warfare center in Berlin to collect information on the threat and prevention of attacks. Italy said it was assembling a rapid-response group and had designated a secure laboratory and isolation facilities.

In Belgium, the government has embarked on an awareness-raising campaign among health institutions.

Since Sept. 11, NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson has acknowledged "real and substantial dangers" of biological attacks.

"I don't think we do enough at the moment," he said. "We'll have to do more in the future.

Still, military surplus stores have reported brisk sales of gas masks and protective coveralls. Some medical experts are calling for more information.

"We have too much secrecy and too few people knowing our contingency plans," said Vivienne Nathanson, head of science and ethics at the British Medical Association.

Experts in the spread of infection stress the response must cross national borders. On Sept. 24, the World Health Organization warned that a bioterrorist attack could easily overwhelm the resources of a single nation.

European Union nations routinely share information on disease outbreaks, but a study by British and German scientists published Friday in the British Medical Journal found "inadequacies in detection, coordination, funding and reporting" across the continent.

Rates of detecting illness vary widely among European nations, researchers said.

"If people are dropping dead in the street, you don't need sophisticated surveillance, but the chances of that happening are remote," said Julius Weinberg of London's City University, one of the paper's authors. "Instead you might just get an increase in the background rates of infection, and that can only be detected through good, basic surveillance."

The authors advocated better reporting, stronger international links – including common databases – more straightforward funding and quicker responses by public-health officials. Some moves are under way to improve international coordination. On Wednesday, British Health Secretary Alan Milburn and his American counterpart, Tommy Thompson, agreed to share information to create an "early-warning system" against biological and chemical attack.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/20011012/aponline052218_000.htm

Aum used anthrax from U.S. in 1993

Makiko Tatebayashi

WASHINGTON--The anthrax bacteria that was spread in the Aum Supreme Truth cult's general headquarters in Koto Ward, Tokyo, in July 1993 for unknown reasons was a harmless strain imported from the United States and designed to be used as vaccine for cattle, a Northern Arizona University research group said Tuesday.

Although no one contracted the disease in the Aum case, the research group members said there was a possibility the bacteria could have been turned into a biological weapon.

Prof. Paul Keim of the university, along with Japan's National Institute of Infectious Diseases, obtained a sample of the anthrax bacteria after it had been used by the cult.

After analyzing its DNA, the research group concluded the bacteria was not cultivated by Aum, but was imported from the United States as a vaccine.

Keim said cult members may have dispersed the nonpoisonous bacteria either because they were ignorant of its effects or because they were rehearsing for a terrorist attack using biological weapons.

The research group revealed the cult's usage of anthrax as concerns over such attacks have been mounting in the United States since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Cult members cultivated anthrax

According to the public prosecutor's concluding speech during an Aum Supreme Truth trial, followers of the cult in 1993 spread the anthrax germ in Tokyo after cultivating it in their buildings.

Chizuo Matsumoto, 46, the Aum founder who is also known as Shoko Asahara, reportedly gave the order.

It had been learned from Aum's former senior members that the bacteria was obtained through one of the cult's followers, but this is the first time light was shed on the bacteria's origin.

<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20011011wo22.htm>

Syrian up for toxic smuggling

Ankara - Turkish authorities had detained a Syrian truck driver who tried to smuggle 500kg of sodium cyanide - a highly poisonous chemical substance - into Syria, the government said on Thursday.

The chemicals were found in secret caches in the truck of Mohammed Janbia as authorities searched the vehicle at the Cilvegozu border gate between Turkey and Syria on September 27, a government statement said.

Both scientists and the police criminal laboratory have established that the substance was sodium cyanide, a fast acting poison capable of causing death by preventing body tissues from using oxygen.

Following last month's terrorist attacks in the United States, border controls had been tightened against the possibility of the smuggling of materials useable in the making of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, State Minister Mehmet Kececiler told reporters.

He said all necessary measures had been taken against the trafficking of illicit substances at the border posts, which had also been equipped with radioactivity detectors.

Border authorities in Turkey's southeast regions, which neighbour Iran, Iraq and Syria, had been put on high alert, the minister added.

Police continued to question the detained Syrian man on Thursday as part of a broad investigation to establish how the chemicals, produced and sold by a Turkish company, ended up in his hands.

Sodium cyanide is used in the metal and mining industry, particularly in the extraction of gold. - Sapa/AFP

http://news.24.com/News24/World/Middle_East/0,1113,2-10-35_1093087,00.html

Homeland Security: Key Elements of a Risk Management Approach

by Raymond J. Decker, director, defense capabilities and management, before the Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans' Affairs, and International Relations, House Committee on Government Reform. GAO-02-150T, October 12.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?gao-02-150t>

Washington Post
October 12, 2001
Pg. 27

Ordering Germs? There Are Hurdles First *Controls Tightened After Student Fraudulently Obtained Plague Bacterium in 1995*

By Rick Weiss, Washington Post Staff Writer

Deadly microbes, including the bacterium that causes anthrax, are not especially difficult to obtain in today's global microbiological marketplace. Some can be ordered by phone, fax or e-mail and arrive in the mail a few days later. But anyone seeking such bugs inside the United States faces hurdles that didn't exist five years ago, thanks largely to the antics of former Ohio State University student Larry Wayne Harris.

On May 4, 1995, Harris sent a letter with a fake laboratory letterhead to the American Type Culture Collection, the world's largest distributor of frozen germs, then located in Rockville. The collection, now in Manassas and known to scientists as ATCC, keeps a frozen menagerie of bacteria, viruses and DNA snippets for distribution to researchers. Harris, who turned out to be affiliated with the white supremacist group Aryan Nations, ordered three vials of *Yersinia pestis*, the bacterium that causes plague.

A week later, police officers, acting on a tip and armed with a search warrant, found the vials in the glove box of Harris's Subaru.

A judge was unmoved by the amateur biologist's claim that he needed the bacteria to thwart an Iraqi biological terrorism attack. Harris was convicted of wire fraud.

Congress, concerned that luck had played too big a role in the government's discovery of Harris's purchase (and hearing testimony that Iraq had obtained starter cultures for its biowarfare arsenal from ATCC) demanded that the Department of Health and Human Services tighten its regulation of culture collections such as ATCC.

Today, federal law significantly limits U.S. culture collections in their ability to distribute any of the 24 infectious microbes and 12 toxins that have been designated by federal officials as possible bioterrorism agents, including *Bacillus anthracis*, the bacterium that causes anthrax.

Anyone wishing to receive such agents must register with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Registrants must prove they have a legitimate use for the agents, provide signatures with every order and open their labs to inspections. Individual violators can be fined \$250,000 or sent to jail for one year.

Experts said the system is working well. After the Harris incident, "ATCC got religion," said Amy E. Smithson, director of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Project at the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington.

However, Smithson warned, "there are more than 500 culture collections around the world, and the regulations on shipments of dangerous human pathogens have not been tightened everywhere. That's something that has to be dealt with right away."

The World Federation for Culture Collections has a registry of 473 collections of microbes in 62 countries. As of yesterday, 46 of them listed *B. anthracis* as being available to scientists for sale, exchange or for free. The regulations or procedures governing who can get a dangerous microbe differ from country to country. But collections are not the only way to obtain lethal microbes. *B. anthracis*, for example, can be found in the soil and on livestock.

Harris claimed to have grown large amounts of the anthrax bacterium from a starter culture he made from soil from a site in Ohio where anthrax-infected cattle had been buried decades earlier.

However, strains found in nature vary considerably in their capacity to cause disease and in their ability to persevere in the presence of antibiotics. A terrorist would almost certainly have to make many isolation efforts before finding a strain that was as potent as desired, and perhaps many more to find a drug-resistant strain.

Beyond official collections and Mother Nature, there is a third source of microbes that is relatively accessible and offers some assurance of virulence: the countless government and university labs where these bugs are studied and, in many cases, shared among researchers. Hundreds of such strains exist and security is typically lax in academic environments.

One such strain of *b. anthracis*, known as the Ames strain because it was first isolated decades ago from an animal at Iowa State University in Ames, has been theorized by some as a likely player in the Florida cases, based on preliminary genetic testing. Like many other strains, including the still-unidentified strain that killed photo editor Robert Stevens in Florida last Friday, it is virulent but easily killed with standard antibiotics.

As of late yesterday, the CDC had not released any word about ongoing DNA tests being done in Arizona that the agency hopes will identify the Florida microbe's provenance.

Scientists at Northern Arizona University have the molecular fingerprints of more than 1,000 strains of *b. anthracis* for comparison. But if the Florida bug is indeed a member of the Ames strain, it will not add much to the investigation. So many labs use it, it would be impossible to tell from which corner of the globe the deadly bug had been obtained.

Staff writer David Brown contributed to this report.

Wall Street Journal

October 15, 2001

Pg. 1

Soviet Germ Program Is A Renewed Worry, Since Its Expertise May Have Later Spread

By David S. Cloud, Marilyn Chase and John J. Fialka, Staff Reporters of The Wall Street Journal

The appearance of anthrax in three states has sent the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation scrambling to determine whether the U.S. has entered a new, and chilling, era of bioterrorism.

As many as 13 people may have been exposed to anthrax bacteria. One has died. Administration officials took to the airwaves Sunday to assure a jittery public that there was no evidence the anthrax was part of an attack led by Osama bin Laden. But even as they made those public statements, investigators and intelligence officials were busily reconsidering the evidence.

FBI investigators say the incidents so far don't bear the hallmarks of bin Laden-planned terror, and instead look more like a copycat attack. The anthrax bacteria were apparently sent to the three locations in small quantities by normal mail. One U.S. official, calling it a "junior varsity" outbreak, says that if a group like Mr. bin Laden's al Qaeda network were behind it, you'd be more likely to see the bacteria "put into the [ventilation] system at NBC." However, the CIA circulated an assessment earlier this year saying that al Qaeda itself had only a "crude" chemical- and biological-weapons capability, at best. The agency thought Mr. bin Laden's organization was probably less adept with germ agents than with chemical poisons, which officials believe have been tested at al Qaeda's Darunta training camp outside the Afghan city of Jalalabad. The U.S. now has bombed that camp, U.S. officials say.

The appearance of anthrax raises a red flag for intelligence officials, who know that biological weapons have been developed and manufactured for more than a quarter century in the Caspian Sea region. The city of Stepnogorsk in Kazakstan, in the former Soviet Union, was home to a now-defunct factory thought capable of producing two tons of anthrax a day in the final years of the Cold War. Expertise developed at Stepnogorsk is believed to have since spread to Iraq, Iran and maybe as far as the Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan.

United Nations inspectors found in the 1990s that Iraq had put enormous money and effort into developing a large stock of liquid anthrax. Uncovered records suggested that Iraq once had as much as 400,000 liters of liquid anthrax, some of which had been put into warheads in the late 1980s. Iraq, giving U.N. inspectors the runaround, insisted it had dumped its anthrax stock into the ground soon after the Gulf War. But inspectors couldn't determine how much of the supply had actually been destroyed.

Given that history, Vice President Dick Cheney said in an interview on public television Friday night that he was "a skeptic" when it came to the argument that there was no tie between the anthrax attacks and Mr. bin Laden. "Are they related? We don't know," the vice president said. "We don't have enough evidence to be able to pin down that kind of connection. But, on the other hand, these kinds of activities that we saw in Florida, now perhaps in New York, we have to be suspicious."

If the investigators do determine that the anthrax originated with Islamic militants, the war against terrorism could see a major escalation. During the Gulf War a decade ago, President Bush's father and his aides held lengthy debates over whether they would use nuclear weapons against Iraq in response to a biological attack, ultimately deciding they wouldn't. In this case, nobody is seriously talking about nuclear retaliation, in part because terrorists reside in numerous countries and may even be in the U.S. But if the anthrax strains were traced back to Iraq, that would strengthen the hand of those in the Bush administration -- most notably Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz -- who want to expand the war on terrorism to include Iraq as a target.

The modern history of biological weapons began in 1972. The U.S. and about 100 other nations signed a treaty swearing off biological weapons, which had been in development since World War II (but already banned in the U.S.) Even as the Soviet Union was approving the 1972 treaty, it decided to cheat on a massive scale. It launched a secret program to make such weapons even more deadly, recruiting top scientists and focusing them on developing bacteria and viruses immune to most vaccines and antibiotics.

Parts of that program, which was employing at least 30,000 people when it was dismantled in 1992, may still be operating. From it leads a trail of proliferation: of weapons secrets and the scientists who know how to use them. According to Western and Russian experts, the trail extends to programs running in Iran, Iraq and North Korea. A crucial question the U.S. faces now is whether it also extends to al Qaeda.

The Russian agency was called Biopreparat. The Soviets said it was making pharmaceuticals. But according to Kenneth Alibek, its former deputy director, it had at least 7,000 scientists who could make at least one type of deadly weapon. Twenty to 50 of its officials were privy to most of its grisly secrets. As he puts it in an interview: "No one knows where all these people went."

In the interview and in testimony last week before a House subcommittee, Dr. Alibek, 50 years old, described his experience working in and running the sprawling manufacturing complex made up of about 40 facilities. Among its products was an especially deadly form of anthrax, which Dr. Alibek says he developed himself. Other product lines included smallpox, plague (the Black Death), botulinum toxin, tularemia and a family of rare viruses designed to cause massive deaths and to frustrate attempts at medical treatment.

One of Biopreparat's biggest challenges was "weaponizing" the germs: making them stable, drying them and milling them into tiny particles that could be easily spread by explosions, sprayers or atomizers. Some of the resulting products were to be loaded into warheads of ballistic or cruise missiles that were aimed at U.S. and other Western cities, he said.

Dr. Alibek, a soft-spoken Kazak born Kanatjan Alibekov, started off as a young medical student in Tomsk in 1975. He planned to be an army doctor and was studying ways to protect soldiers against germ weapons. A Biopreparat recruiter invited him to join a secret program, saying it had "something to do with biological defense."

'Battle Strain'

Dr. Alibek soon learned that its main mission was offensive. One of his first jobs was to develop a potent "battle strain" of anthrax that could kill with fewer spores. He later watched the Soviet military test it, using bombers equipped with sprayers to kill monkeys tied to posts on a barren island in the Aral Sea. "It was very effective," he says. He says he later ran the factory at Stepnogorsk that produced two tons of anthrax a day.

Dr. Alibek says Biopreparat, which acquired equipment and germs from U.S. companies, was larger than any other Soviet military program except the one that developed the H bomb. It had some mishaps, including a 1979 leak in a drying plant in Sverdlovsk that may have killed more than 100. Soviet officials attributed the deaths to anthrax from eating tainted meat.

Michael Moody, president of Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute, a Washington think tank, was a senior official at the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency during the late 1980s. Despite Biopreparat's size and the Sverdlovsk accident, U.S. officials "knew almost nothing" about it, he says, until a top Soviet biologist, Vladimir Pasechnik, defected to the West in October 1989. Soon, U.S. and British officials began pressuring the Soviet government to reveal the program.

Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to let teams of U.S. and British officials visit some Biopreparat facilities. Dr. Alibek showed them around. In a book called "Biohazard," he relates his attempts to convince the inspectors that the labs worked only on defensive measures. He recalls an American inspector telling him over dinner, "I have to tell you we don't believe a word any of you are saying. We know everything."

But Dr. Alibek knew there were still a lot of gaps in the West's knowledge. As the Soviet Union began to crumble, Dr. Alibek, harassed by the KGB for having opposed a 1991 attempted coup against Mr. Gorbachev, became Biopreparat's second defector. He left Moscow on a business trip in 1992 and wound up in Washington for months of debriefings.

He was surprised at how little curiosity American officials expressed about the biological weapons he had made. Their belief was that Biopreparat and its nasty arsenal were quickly fading into history. He argued that they were wrong. "There are pieces of Biopreparat that are still running, some with a very high level of secrecy," Dr. Alibek asserted in an interview last week. Russian officials deny that any bioweapons program currently exists anywhere inside Russia.

Dr. Alibek now runs a small business, Advanced Biosystems, in Manassas, Va., where he and four other former Soviet scientists consult with U.S. agencies on biological defenses. He says that some of his former Russian colleagues have been lured abroad to work in biological weapons programs in Iraq and Iran. He believes that while some of the exotic weapons of Biopreparat may never be used, others are accessible to terrorists.

A group with "no sophisticated knowledge" could use rudimentary anthrax to great effect, Dr. Alibek says, and create "dozens to hundreds of casualties." The most threatening consequences of the anthrax, he warns, wouldn't be the casualties but mass panic: "If it was used in New York, you would have people leaving, companies leaving." Whoever sent the anthrax found in Florida, New York and Nevada has added significantly to the climate of unease in the U.S., disrupting mail delivery, spawning spasms of fright over spilled talcum powder and causing a run on antibiotics. The events suggest that even without a fancy bioweapon delivery system capable of infecting thousands, a terrorist can create a climate of fear.

In addition to whatever remains of Biopreparat, a civilian program, experts say there is a military biologics program in Russia that remains largely closed to Western observers. It includes four weapons facilities, at Pokrov, Sergiev, Kirov and Strizhi, says Amy E. Smithson, a bioweapons expert at a Washington think tank called the Henry L. Stimson Center. No one knows whether it still makes bioweapons because it has never admitted observers.

David Kelly, a bioweapons adviser to the British Ministry of Defense, says: "Until Russia chooses to disclose its military program, we'll worry about its extent. It has the capability, expertise and weapons. It could be turned on tomorrow."

Anne Harrington, an official of the State Department's Office of Proliferation Threat Reduction, says the U.S. remains concerned about Russia's military program because Russia won't open it to outsiders.

Dr. Smithson says that once Soviet control of the civilian program ended, a steady stream of leaks began, to the Middle East and possibly elsewhere. In a report called "Toxic Archipelago," she cites numerous opportunities for exported expertise.

Her report says that in 1994 Gen. Anatolii Kuntsevich, who had been accused of making a deal for sale of equipment and chemicals to Syria, was fired by Russian President Boris Yeltsin for "numerous and gross violations" of duty. The U.S. State Department lists Syria as a suspected state sponsor of terrorist groups.

Dr. Smithson also says that Iran began aggressively recruiting jobless Biopreparat scientists, promising them \$50,000 a year if they would work with infectious diseases, and that in 1994 some scientists from Moscow's Gamalaya Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology spent a year working in Iran. In 1999, Iran signed a number of Russian bioweapons specialists to contracts and a separate scientific delegation traveled to Tehran to share expertise on bioweapons that could be used against crops and herds, Dr. Smithson says. She adds that to her knowledge, Iran has neither confirmed nor denied doing any work on bioweapons.

Weapons shoppers weren't limited to the Middle East, Dr. Smithson says. Aum Shinrikyo, the Japanese religious cult, "knock[ed] at the door of the Russian weapons institutes early in the 1990s in search of chemical and biological materials," she says. Later it tried unsuccessfully to spray anthrax from the roof of a Tokyo building. The group had more success with a release of sarin nerve gas in the Tokyo subways in 1995, killing 10 people and sickening thousands.

Following the Gulf War, the United Nations Special Commission, or UNSCOM, went to Baghdad to oversee the dismantling of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. It took almost six years to uncover and destroy Iraq's biological-weapons program, including major plants at Al Hakam and Salman Pak Peninsula. For Britain's Dr. Kelly, the eureka moment came when he discovered a huge shipment of nutrients to culture and grow disease microbes.

"They lied and deceived and finally were forced to acknowledge that it was part of a military weapons program," Dr. Kelly says. He adds that when confronted, the chief of the Iraqi biological weapons program just "shrugged."

Al Hakam, hidden in an animal-feed plant, was destroyed under the direction of UNscom Inspector Terry Taylor, a retired British colonel who now heads the U.S. office of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a global security organization with members from 16 nations.

"We had to destroy the cultures of organisms safely by chemical means" -- using formaldehyde and potassium permanganate -- "and then by burying the containers," well away from civilian populations, he says. "We dismantled the buildings and blew them up. Any vital equipment like flow meters and fermenters we destroyed by crushing, putting them in holes and covering them up with cement. Even the furniture in the office was destroyed." Mr. Taylor says.

Animal cages, high-security bunkers and filling equipment used to fill bombs were also on site. The Iraqis tried to dispose of the munitions in a nearby canal, but Mr. Taylor says UNscom found them and fished them out.

Ample Opportunity

Where did the germ expertise go? "That's the \$64 million question," Mr. Taylor says. "I don't know whether we've disposed of everything." Since UNscom became unable to continue its Iraqi mission a couple of years ago, the Iraqis have had ample opportunity to renew bioweapons lab work, he says. "They could easily fire it up again."

Another former UNscom inspector, Raymond Zilinskas, says the Salman Pak Peninsula germ facility was less than a mile from what the Iraqis called an "anti-terrorist training camp." That was, "in fact, a terrorist training camp," he says. "But UNscom never found out whether there was a connection between terrorist groups and the Iraqi government."

The Iraqis also acquired seven to nine strains of anthrax from the U.S. and France, say UNscom inspectors. One acquired from the U.S. was a virulent one known as the Vollum strain, first isolated by Britons from a cow in the 1930s and later refined for weapons use by both Britain and the U.S. Such strains have crossed the Atlantic several times over the decades. Their names have resurfaced as scientists scramble to identify the strains now showing up in the U.S.

Inside the former Soviet Union, Dr. Zilinskas remains concerned about possible leaks of material from buried containers of germs. On Friday, U.S. officials said U.S. inspectors found spores in piping at an old Soviet plant in Kazakstan during a routine visit. Previously, Russia's Interfax news agency said a dozen people were treated for anthrax in Kazakstan last summer.

The best hope for closing the Pandora's box opened by state bioweapons programs, experts believe, is through two routes. One way is to expand assistance to former Soviet weapons scientists still in Russia through grants by groups like the International Science and Technology Center, or ISTC. It funnels millions a year to help former Soviet weaponeers do peaceful pharmaceutical and veterinary research. The other would be to work to re-open inspections in both Russia and Iraq through the Trilateral Commission and the successor to UNscom, called the United Nations Monitoring Inspections and Verification Commission.

One Western official working to redirect Soviet-era germ warriors into peaceful endeavors questions the widespread belief that Soviet scientists are emigrating to rogue states. "The danger of this is not overstated, but there aren't any examples that I'm aware of," says Randall Beatty, deputy executive director of ISTC. "A good chunk of these guys are selling vodka or driving cabs."

-- Neil King Jr. and Jeanne Whalen contributed to this article.

Los Angeles Times
October 15, 2001

Defense Of The Homeland Comes With Hefty Price Tag ***Security: Congress is daunted by the sheer size of the task of protecting potential targets.***

By Richard Simon, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON -- First came nuclear power plants.

Then, Congress turned its attention to dams, the electricity grid, oil pipelines, transit lines, drinking water systems and sewage treatment plants.

In the coming weeks, the spotlight shifts to national monuments and sports venues.

For Congress in the post-Sept. 11 era, anything and everything that could be a target of a terrorist attack is grist for public hand-wringing and private worry.

But lawmakers concede that the sheer size of the task leaves them awe-struck. More monumental than the effort to prevent a Y2K computer meltdown at the turn of the 21st century, the new danger could pose shearing dilemmas for lawmakers, particularly local officials who may find themselves having to choose between school textbooks and firefighter gas masks.

"Every department and agency is coming to us telling us that they need a lot more money because of the extra security precautions they have to take," Rep. John J. Duncan Jr. (R-Tenn.), chairman of the House subcommittee on water resources and environment, said during a hearing last week on the safety of water supplies.

Defense of the homeland could cost \$1.5 trillion over the next five years, according to one estimate circulating on Capitol Hill.

In one proposal alone, lawmakers are looking at more than \$1 billion to protect government computers from cyber-attack and \$30 million to safeguard the national monuments in Washington.

Almost every day, new measures are introduced to safeguard the nation. On Friday, a bipartisan group of lawmakers urged President Bush to provide funding for assessing the vulnerability of water supplies. And Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) proposed spending more than \$1 billion next year to guard against agro-terrorism, an effort to protect the nation's food supply. This week, Republican leaders on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will introduce a bill that seeks to beef up aviation security but also deals with other modes of transportation.

Bills moving through Congress also would increase the penalties for attempted sabotage at nuclear power plants. Now, saboteurs could get a maximum \$10,000 fine and 10 years in prison. Under the new bills, the fine would go to a maximum of \$1 million and a life sentence without parole.

Government agencies and industry groups are seeking money for a wide range of security measures, from high-tech biometric systems that would identify port workers with access to secure areas using such techniques as retinal scans, to the decidedly low-tech, such as more bomb-sniffing dogs at Amtrak stations.

There are proposals for everything from hand-held explosive detection devices to truck-size X-ray machines that scan cargo containers. Transit agencies want to install chemical-biological-radiological detection systems. Utilities want the government to be an "insurance backstop" in terrorist attacks. Operators of power plants, refineries and oil pipelines want U.S. authorities to conduct background checks of applicants for sensitive jobs.

The highway lobby is pushing for \$5 billion in spending for roads and bridges, largely intended as an economic stimulus. But the lobbyists also point out that more and better roads would provide the added benefit of improved escape and emergency routes in case of further attacks.

"Whenever you look at any kind of military campaign, one of the first things that are attacked are the infrastructure of the enemy," said William D. Fay, president and chief executive of the American Highway Users Alliance. "We've got to be pretty vigilant about our entire infrastructure, whether it's water mains, subways, highways or bridges."

Not all of the proposals cost money. Industry-sought legislation moving through Congress would limit public access to certain information, such as the location of pipelines. "I can't imagine that the public needs to know the exact longitude and latitude of the location of our nuclear plants," Sen. Frank H. Murkowski (R-Alaska) said.

But money will be needed for most of the proposals. And still to be determined is who will pay.

"Industry has an obligation to provide security, but there's sufficient evidence that the federal government should make additional and significant contributions to this effort, not only for the people's safety in communities, but also for the safety of our economy, which . . . has its foundation on a reliable, steady source of energy for this nation," Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) said during a hearing last week.

Some costs might be passed on to customers.

A Senate-approved air security bill, which would create a force of more than 18,000 federal workers to screen passengers and baggage, provides for a passenger surcharge of \$2.50 to fund the improvements.

Murkowski cautioned against expecting too much from the federal government.

"The FBI and our intelligence agencies will play key roles, but we can't station federal troops along every mile of pipeline or in front of every refinery," he said. "State and local police will remain the front-line law enforcement agency, and the industries will have primary responsibility for security at these facilities."

The public may be expecting more.

"Sept. 11 changed everybody's thinking," said Wallace Renfro, spokesman for the National Collegiate Athletic Assn., expected to testify soon at a House hearing on security at sports venues.

Times staff writer Marlene Cimons contributed to this report.

Los Angeles Times
October 15, 2001

U.S. Now Calls Anthrax Incidents Bioterrorism

Health: Bush team says the blame is unclear. Three more New York exposure cases reported.

By Elizabeth Shogren, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON -- Three more cases of exposure to anthrax were reported in New York on Sunday, as the Bush administration took to the airwaves to calm Americans in what it is now calling a clear case of bioterrorism.

"There's no question that it's bioterrorism," Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson said. "But whether or not it's connected to Al Qaeda, we can't say that conclusively."

The latest reports bring to 12 the number of people known to have been exposed to anthrax in two states, New York and Florida. Pornographic material mailed from Malaysia to a Microsoft office in Nevada was confirmed Saturday to contain anthrax, but none of the six people tested there has yet tested positive for exposure.

Two people have been infected with anthrax, a rare disease that is usually fatal if it gets into a person's respiratory system. Robert Stevens, an employee of American Media Inc. in Boca Raton, Fla., died Oct. 5 after inhaling anthrax. NBC News employee Erin O'Connor contracted anthrax through a cut in her skin when she handled a contaminated letter addressed to her boss, NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw. The letter, postmarked Sept. 18 in Trenton, N.J., tested positive for anthrax Saturday. Another letter, postmarked in St. Petersburg, Fla., was first suspected as the source, but it tested negative. O'Connor is expected to recover.

Other employees at American Media Inc. and NBC News who have been exposed to anthrax are now taking antibiotics and have little chance of developing infections, experts said.

With the number of anthrax exposures increasing, Thompson and other officials Sunday answered questions at length on several television news shows, trying to reassure nervous Americans.

Thompson said there is no proof that there will be an "extensive bioterrorism attack" on America, and even if there is one, the government has enough medicine to treat the exposure of up to 2 million people for six months. He said he planned to appeal to Congress this week for funding for enough medicine to treat 10 million additional cases.

"I know people are afraid," Thompson told CNN. "But I want to reassure them that the federal government, working with the state and local governments, [is] able to respond."

Thompson, who also appeared on ABC and Fox news shows, stressed that there is a "big difference" between being exposed to anthrax spores and contracting anthrax.

There are three ways a person can be infected with anthrax--by eating food tainted with it, by exposure to it through an open wound or by inhaling it. The latter poses the greatest health risk, yet thousands of spores must be inhaled to get the disease.

New York Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani said Sunday that a police officer who retrieved the tainted letter from NBC News offices in Rockefeller Center and two lab technicians who also handled it tested positive for anthrax exposure. All are being treated with antibiotics.

Experts in bioterrorism and anthrax said the officer and technicians likely failed to take adequate safety precautions, such as wearing masks and gloves.

"It suggests they didn't treat the powdered material seriously, because there are definitely ways to secure a suspicious package," said Raymond Zilinskas, a senior scientist at the Monterey Institute of International Studies who specializes in biological weapons.

Bush administration officials' efforts to calm the public were complicated by the fact that the officials seemed to know almost nothing about the source of the anthrax.

"All we know is that it is a terrorist act, because anybody that would do this is trying to create terror, trying to create fear in the American public, and that of course is not acceptable," Thompson said.

Federal officials say there is no evidence linking any of the anthrax incidents to one another--or to alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden, the suspected mastermind behind the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Thompson pointed out: "It could be a domestic source. It could be somebody holding a grudge, it could be somebody saying, 'You know I've waited all this time, now I'm going to be able to do something, you know, really radical.'"

Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft said on CBS' "Face the Nation" that although there was no conclusive evidence linking Bin Laden, "we certainly cannot rule that out."

The officials seemed to walk a delicate line between acknowledging the seriousness of the anthrax incidents and trying to prevent public panic. Thompson's message was that the government is ready for whatever happens.

"We have 7,000 medical professionals throughout this country, divided up in 90 medical assistance teams, ready to go in to any particular state or locality in order to assist the state and local health officials," he said on ABC. "We have 400 tons of medical supplies that we can move that are strategically located throughout the United States in eight sites that we can move into a particular site within 12 hours."

Experts in anthrax and bioterrorism said the government was right to try to assuage concerns because the risk to Americans seems to be small--so far.

The circumstances of the anthrax incidents suggest that those behind them do not have a very effective method of dispersing the bacterium, experts say.

"People have to calm down," said Jeanne Guillemin, author of a book on a deadly outbreak of anthrax in Sverdlovsk, Russia. "If you inhale spores, it doesn't mean you're going to get the disease. It isn't sarin gas," she added, referring to the highly toxic nerve gas that a Japanese cult used in the Tokyo subways, killing 12 people and injuring thousands.

Between 5,000 and 10,000 spores must be inhaled into the lungs for spores to initiate the disease process.

There are six possible sources of the anthrax used in the last weeks' incidents, according to Zilinskas. The bacteria could have been harvested from infected animals and manufactured; stolen from a U.S. lab; taken from a cell culture collection, 46 of which are outside the U.S.; supplied by a country with a biological warfare program; bought or taken from facilities in the former Soviet Union, which used to operate biological weapon programs, or acquired in the U.S. before 1996, when strict security requirements for such substances were enacted.

The recent episodes do not trouble Zilinskas deeply. But he does have one concern.

"There's only one difficult step between inefficient dispersal and efficient dispersal. That's what I worry about," he said. "If whoever has this source figures out how to do a more efficient dispersal and actually does it, then the whole calculation changes as far as what kind of threat we're facing."

The threat already seemed real to workers of American Media Inc. in Boca Raton, where one of their co-workers died.

The news Saturday that five additional employees tested positive for exposure to anthrax caused concern among workers at the country's largest publisher of supermarket tabloids.

"Every time you get a little snuffle now, you wonder," said Reginald Fitz, a senior reporter for the National Enquirer who frequently writes on medical issues.

Inhaling spores of the bacterium can cause initial symptoms akin to those of the common cold, followed within several days by severe breathing problems and shock.

Company spokesman Gerald McKelvey said Sunday that at last report, the five American Media employees were in good health and reporting to work as usual.

"They have been taking their medication since this first happened," McKelvey said. "They had some sort of exposure; they do not have [the disease of] anthrax."

In Reno, Washoe County health officials announced Sunday that nasal swabs taken from four Microsoft employees who work at the computer giant's office have tested negative for anthrax exposure.

Washoe County health official Barbara Hunt said preliminary tests conducted on another employee and a family member of one of the workers also came back negative, but their final test results are not expected back until today. Hunt said she was very optimistic that "we'll see no cases of human anthrax."

The six people were tested after anthrax was discovered in a letter sent to Microsoft's Reno office. Hunt said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta has yet to determine whether anthrax found in the letter is a disease-causing strain.

Hunt said Sunday that "very, very little anthrax was found" on one of five pornographic photographs that came with the letter. She said the anthrax was embedded into the fibers of one of the photos and indicated that the small amount raised the question of whether the anthrax was perhaps a contaminant from soil rather than a deliberate attempt to harm someone.

News of the exposures has caused jitters around the world, with a number of false or pending cases reported over the weekend. Among them:

In Hawaii, hazardous-materials teams were called to Lihue Airport after passengers on a flight from Los Angeles discovered a white powder on their luggage after they arrived. Tests were being conducted on the powder.

In England, several hundred people were evacuated from Canterbury Cathedral after a worker said he saw a man dropping a white powder in one of the chapels. Workers wearing chemical protection suits cleared up the powder and took samples for analysis.

Ashcroft discouraged would-be copycats from taking advantage of the situation.

"This is not a joking matter," Ashcroft said on CBS. "Our resources should not be disrupted and diverted."
Times staff writers Julie Tamaki in Reno, John-Thor Dahlburg in Miami and Thomas S. Mulligan in New York and Associated Press contributed to this report.

New York Times
October 15, 2001
Pg. 1

U.S. Is Stepping Up Plan For Handling Anthrax Threat

By Philip Shenon

WASHINGTON, Oct. 14 — As tests confirmed more instances of anthrax exposure, the Bush administration today announced a huge expansion of its program to deal with the threat. It said it was moving to buy antibiotics that could be made available quickly to treat up to 12 million people, six times the number that could be treated by drugs now kept in reserve.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson said the White House would ask Congress for an additional \$1.5 billion for the purchase of the antibiotics and for other programs to combat bioterrorism.

The announcement coincided with the disclosure that a New York City police officer and two laboratory workers had been exposed to minute amounts of anthrax in handling a letter mailed last month to NBC News, apparently the same letter that infected a worker there. The city said insufficient precautions had been taken and announced immediate changes in procedure in such cases. [Page B1.]

The developments underscored the mounting concern about a threat that a few weeks ago seemed hypothetical. Letters containing anthrax have been opened in workplaces in three states, and more than 1,000 people have been tested for exposure since a Florida man's death this month was traced to the bacteria. With the police officer and lab workers in New York, seven people are now known to have been exposed, though only two have become ill. Hundreds of calls have been received by city, state and federal officials reporting substances feared to be anthrax. Officials said the Bush administration's new measures on bioterrorism had not been prompted by any particular threat in recent days of bioterror attacks, however, and Mr. Thompson stressed in television interviews today that the supply of antibiotics to respond to anthrax was adequate for now.

But he said the confirmation of anthrax exposures in at least two states, New York and Florida, and reports of the discovery of an anthrax-contaminated letter in Nevada last week clearly suggested terrorism, even if the source remained a mystery.

"It clearly is an act of terrorism to send anthrax through the mail," Mr. Thompson said on Fox News, adding that it was only prudent for the government to buy more antibiotics to be ready in the event of more anthrax attacks.

"Is it Al Qaeda?" Mr. Thompson asked, referring to the terrorist network run by Osama bin Laden. "We don't know. It could be a domestic source. It could be somebody holding a grudge."

Law enforcement officials say they have been unable to find clear links between the anthrax cases and the Sept. 11 terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, nor have they found links among the individual anthrax cases in the three states.

Mr. Thompson vowed today that the United States "will be fully supplied" in the event of future terrorist strikes using anthrax, which can be treated only with antibiotics.

"We're going into the marketplace very quickly and purchase 10 million doses so that 12 million Americans can be covered for up to 60 days," he said on ABC. "We have enough dosage to treat 2 million people for 60 days, and we are going up on Capitol Hill this week and requesting an additional billion dollars to increase that to 12 million."

Only days ago, Mr. Thompson had requested \$800 million in extra money for a variety of bioterrorism programs, including an increase in the amount of antibiotics stored for anthrax. Now he is requesting an extra \$1.5 billion, with \$643 million set aside for antibiotics and other drugs.

A wide variety of antibiotics, like ciprofloxacin, penicillin and doxycycline, can kill anthrax bacteria, although ciprofloxacin is the only drug specifically identified by the Food and Drug Administration as an anthrax treatment.

Experts have recommended treating asymptomatic people who may have been exposed to anthrax for 60 days.

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association, which represents the nation's drug companies, said it would act quickly to meet the government's demand for new antibiotics.

Alan F. Holmer, the group's president, said drug companies "have always responded in times of both military and civilian emergencies" and "will do whatever it takes to address this important national challenge."

Bayer, the German drug company that is the manufacturer of ciprofloxacin, announced last week that it was increasing the production of the drug by 25 percent by reopening a German factory that had been closed. The United States government maintains tons of antibiotics in its National Pharmaceutical Stockpile, a cache of medicines and medical supplies maintained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at locations around the country.

The government keeps some of the drugs in warehouses — some of those antibiotics were sent to New York after the Sept. 11 attacks and are being used there to treat people for suspected anthrax — but it can also draw on inventories from pharmaceutical manufacturers, as was the case in Florida.

The stockpiling of antibiotics that could be distributed to an additional 10 million people will not satisfy some bioterrorism experts, who have said the United States must be ready for much larger bioterrorism attacks, possibly resulting in the exposure of tens of millions of people who would need quick access to the drugs.

Mr. Thompson said repeatedly today that with the purchase of the new antibiotics the stockpile would be adequate and that there was no need for people to buy their own antibiotics or gas masks to deal with the threat of biological or chemical weapons.

"I'm telling people you don't need to hoard Cipro," he said. "We have no imminent threats. We have a lot of chatter out there, but we have no imminent threats of any chemical or biological attack at this time in America. But the president and all of us want everybody to be very vigilant."

The administration's request for an extra \$1.5 billion toward bioterrorism programs will probably be greeted with enthusiasm on Capitol Hill, where Congress is now considering legislation to add almost exactly the same amount to the government's current \$350 million budget for bioterrorism.

The Department of Health and Human Services said that as part of the \$1.8 billion package it would also request new money to accelerate and increase the production of the vaccine for smallpox, widely seen as another grave bioterrorism threat; to improve hospital preparedness for a bioterrorism attack; to hire more epidemiologists; and to improve security at laboratories handling bioterror agents.

New York Times
October 15, 2001

U.S. Moving To Buttress Defense Against The Bioterrorism Threat

By Andrew Pollack

The Bush administration's decision to seek the money to buy 10 million more doses of drugs to fight anthrax represents the latest measure by the government to build stockpiles in the event of a bioterrorism attack.

Tommy Thompson, the secretary of health and human services, said on news programs yesterday that the government wanted to stockpile enough antibiotics to treat 12 million people for 60 days, up from 2 million now.

The government has already pushed up its order for 40 million doses of a new smallpox vaccine by two years. And it is racing to try to resume production of an anthrax vaccine for soldiers that has been halted because the manufacturer failed inspections by the Food and Drug Administration.

Senator Bill Frist, a Republican from Tennessee, said yesterday that the public health system had enough drugs and capacity to handle isolated incidents like the recent reports of anthrax infections in Florida and New York but not for a large-scale or widespread bioterrorism attack.

"If an airplane flew over and exposed hundreds of thousands of people, you couldn't handle it in our public health infrastructure," Dr. Frist, a physician who is the ranking Republican on the Senate public health subcommittee, said on CBS's "Face the Nation."

But later on the same program, Dr. Frist said that the drug supply was adequate for the time being.

Bayer, the German drug and chemical company, has already said it would reopen a factory in Germany next month to increase by 25 percent its production of ciprofloxacin, sold as Cipro, the only antibiotic approved by the F.D.A. to treat inhaled anthrax, the most deadly kind.

When asked about Mr. Thompson's plan for new purchases, Robert Kloppenburg, a spokesman for Bayer's American subsidiary, said yesterday, "We could meet an order like that."

Bayer sells about \$1.5 billion of Cipro a year worldwide, so if all of the additional \$643 million that Mr. Thompson said would be sought for drugs were to go for Cipro, it would strain the company's capacity. But health authorities

have said that penicillin and other antibiotics can also be used against anthrax, and it seems likely that some of the money will go for those drugs. Indeed, \$643 million would be able to buy only about 1.1 million 60-day treatments of Cipro at Bayer's average wholesale price. Even with the discount the government would get, it does not seem that it could acquire 10 million doses unless it were to spend some of its money on cheaper drugs like penicillin. There is no treatment for smallpox, so protection would have to come from vaccines. The government has 15.4 million doses of vaccine, Mr. Thompson said yesterday. It ordered 40 million doses of a new vaccine from Acambis (news/quote), a British company, with deliveries to begin in 2004. But it recently pushed up the date to 2002. The government is considering whether to increase the size of the order. Vaccination of large numbers of people for anthrax is not considered likely because the infection can be treated and because the vaccine is in short supply and requires 6 injections over 18 months. The BioPort Corporation of Lansing, Mich., is making the vaccine for the Department of Defense, which wants to vaccinate all soldiers. But BioPort has not been able to ship new doses of the vaccine for several years because the company has failed F.D.A. safety inspections. On Friday, the company finished submitting documents to the F.D.A. that are needed for a new inspection, Kim Brennen Root, a spokeswoman for the company, said. Even if the company gets its F.D.A. approval, which could come in weeks or months, the first vaccines shipped would be committed to military use.

Anti-Terror Campaign Turns to Doctors

Physicians Scramble to Learn About Bio-Weapons; Some Urge Mandated Training

By Avram Goldstein

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday, October 14, 2001; Page A12

Public health officials say vast numbers of the nation's private doctors are uninformed about how to recognize, treat and report casualties of a biological attack.

Although tens of thousands of physicians have given themselves crash courses on anthrax and other bioterrorism threats in the past month, most doctors aren't familiar with the 12 bacteria, viruses and toxins most likely to be used as biological weapons, health officials say.

"Every community has physicians who are well versed and prepared to respond, but they are probably the exception," said Craig DeAtley, an associate professor of emergency medicine at George Washington University. Before the attacks, physician interest in seminars was minimal, he said.

Some health officials have suggested that community physicians be urged, if not required, to undergo bioterrorism training to increase the likelihood that the public health system will perform effectively after an attack. Nothing less will suffice, they say, if the government is to respond promptly with drugs and vaccinations that could avert thousands of deaths in population centers.

In the past month, doctors have been offered a barrage of scientific information from medical societies, state health departments and scholarly journals. Health officials hope doctors will take advantage of that free knowledge so they will be able to recognize and treat biological casualties, resist prescribing antibiotics unnecessarily and -- above all -- report suspicious cases immediately.

"The physicians in the U.S. have not been trained to think of themselves as part of the public health network," said Arlington County Health Director Susan Allan. "It wasn't part of their training or practice to be sentinels. I would mobilize every stick of furniture I have to respond to a biological attack, but we can only do something if the calls come to us."

Allan, like other public health leaders, worries that a few infected victims could lead to mass casualties if doctors and druggists are not vigilant.

"Everybody is looking to see anything unusual, but they don't have the knowledge of what to look for," said Mohammed Akhter, executive director of the American Public Health Association and former health director for the District. "Your eyes won't see what the mind doesn't know. Most of us have not seen these exotic, tropical-type diseases in this country."

But DeAtley and other educators are optimistic that public pressure on doctors and their thirst for knowledge will encourage training.

Some doctors support mandatory bioterrorism education. Ramesh Desai, an Arlington gastroenterologist and internist, thinks most doctors already are ready but supports one mandatory three-hour course to reach the "last 10 or 20 percent who are not prepared."

Others reject the idea.

"Mandating education is a fool's errand," said Cheryl Winchell, a Gaithersburg family practitioner and former member of Maryland Board of Physician Quality Assurance. "We dealt with this issue repeatedly at the board, and I was successful for nine years in keeping that from happening. The last thing we need is a law."

Winchell thinks the nation's physicians will "self-correct" their weaknesses -- especially if patients ask doctors whether they have upgraded their knowledge. "If patients start asking that question, doctors will be more likely to stay one step ahead of them," she said.

To help them do that, the D.C. Medical Society will hold a seminar on bioterrorism next month. Still, the group's president, cardiologist Stuart Seides, thinks the heightened concern about the subject should not skew the nation's health care agenda.

"People are still dying in large numbers of AIDS, heart disease, cancer, accidents and other things that were happening before September 11," he said. "I don't think bioterrorism trumps everything else and pushes it into the corner. It scares us, and we think about it all the time right now. But as we move away from this, we will need to put it into perspective."

Medical leaders say doctors are educating themselves. They are being invited to chat rooms, teleconferences, hospital meetings, medical society gatherings and lectures by epidemiologists. Government officials are issuing advisories.

An online medical reference site, emedicine.com, is making more than 2,000 pages of peer-reviewed articles on trauma, terrorism, biochemical and radiological warfare available free to physicians. The Journal of the American Medical Association has published on its Web site the consensus results of scientific conferences on bioterrorism, said AMA board Chairman Timothy T. Flaherty.

A Falls Church technology firm, C2 Technologies Inc., recently finished an interactive training program designed to teach Navy and Marine doctors how to rapidly assess, diagnose and treat victims of exposure to biological, chemical and radiological weapons. C2 created the computer program under a Navy contract using extensive databases provided by biowarfare experts in the military, said company President Curtis Cox. The computer-based program can present 110 attack scenarios and score doctors on their performance. Navy officials did not say Friday whether they would make the material available to private doctors.

George Washington University is developing a program for all health care professionals that includes interactive, Web-based training and live components.

Julie Casani, Maryland's bioterrorism coordinator, has seen demand surge for her class. Before the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington, Casani had booked eight courses for doctors through January.

"I now have 24 courses scheduled" in the same period, with up to 100 doctors in each class, she said. "And that doesn't include the little one-hour talks we're being asked to give."

Casani said community physicians are hungry for information. "There's a sense of unease among physicians," she said. "People have never seen a case. They are as overwhelmed at the prospect of an overwhelming epidemic and outbreak as everyone else."

Maryland Health Secretary Georges C. Benjamin said doctors must be trained not to assume that every patient complaint is ordinary.

"Doctors should track it closely, get a second opinion sooner or order an additional test that they wouldn't order before," he said.

Akhter said he is especially concerned that private physicians abide by laws that require them to report communicable diseases to states even if they find them inconvenient and cumbersome. Those laws must be enforced and expanded to include suspicious illnesses, he said.

"It's one thing not to report syphilis but another to protect the lives of hundreds of thousands of people," Akhter said.

"Life before September 11 was different. Today, our lives are changed forever. I would bet you that if somebody didn't report a case of anthrax or smallpox, that doctor would not only be fired but crucified by his colleagues."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A55906-2001Oct13.html>

From the Chicago Tribune

Racing to counter bioterror

U.S. speeds vaccine creation, research

By Peter Gorner
Tribune science reporter

October 14, 2001

As fears and confusion about biological warfare spread among Americans, government officials are speeding up production of vaccines and researchers are hunting for new medicines to counter such attacks.

Despite evidence of limited anthrax contamination in New York and Florida, experts say the kind of widespread dissemination of anthrax that would justify mass vaccinations is extraordinarily difficult.

Before any large-scale vaccination program would begin, the benefits must surpass the risks, experts say. The likelihood of a bioterrorist catastrophe is unknown, as is the identity of the infectious agent that would be used.

Still, a number of laboratories are pushing forward on new ways to counter the microorganisms that might make good weapons.

Currently, no preventive vaccines against the terrorist weapons most commonly predicted are available to civilians except smallpox shots, which are in extremely short supply. The government's sole supplier of anthrax vaccine for the military has repeatedly failed to meet standards and now isn't producing any.

Developing safe vaccines for mass distribution may take about 10 years and cost \$50 million to \$100 million a year, but that would provide the widest safeguard against a bioterrorist attack, said Dr. Olaf Schneewind, a University of Chicago microbiologist and a member of the National Institutes of Health's panel on bioterrorism.

"In the past, you couldn't convince any company to make a vaccine--we only had four cases of anthrax in 20 years. The U.S. Army, in effect, built the company [Bioport of Lansing, Mich.,] in order to get anthrax vaccine.

"But things are different now."

The world was declared free of smallpox in 1979 after routine vaccinations proved effective. The vaccine, known as Dryvax, is no longer produced, but the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has kept as many as 15 million doses of the old vaccine from the 1970s.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said recently the government hopes to replenish the U.S. supply with 40 million fresh doses of smallpox vaccine by next summer, well ahead of the original deadline of 2004. Acambis, a British firm, is speeding up its \$343 million program, which originally was to take 20 years.

In the meantime, researchers at several institutions, including the Center for Vaccine Development at St. Louis University School of Medicine, are rushing to conduct studies on watered-down versions of Dryvax.

The newest study, scheduled to begin next month, is typical. Volunteers will receive one-fifth the normal dose, one-tenth normal, or the full, undiluted dosage. Researchers will then see how well they are protected.

"Being able to dilute the vaccine would potentially increase the available stock by five- to tenfold," said Sharon E. Frey, associate professor of infectious diseases and immunology at St. Louis University and the lead researcher. The study is financed by the National Institutes of Health.

Dryvax is considered to be an unusually excellent vaccine, according to medical experts. Routine vaccinations ceased in 1980, with about half the Americans alive today having been inoculated.

But the protection wears off, perhaps because of the absence of a wild type virus to provide challenges to someone's immunity. Dr. D.A. Henderson, the director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies who led the campaign that eradicated smallpox, estimates that today only 10 percent to 20 percent of those vaccinated as children still have immunity against the disease.

However, the vaccine works so quickly that it perhaps could be used after someone was exposed. And the issue of how long the immunity lasts is far from settled.

"I'm 40 years old, had my smallpox vaccination when I was 8, and am still immune to the disease" said the U. of C.'s Schneewind, who as a lab researcher closely watches his immunity to various microbes.

Acambis' new vaccine will be grown in cell cultures and will be much more pure than the original version derived from the pus of infected cows. The CDC said it will store it at guarded warehouses to be shipped quickly to suspected sources of contamination to keep the highly contagious and untreatable virus from spreading.

The disaster plan

Areas where smallpox is seen would be quarantined, then everyone who lives around the area would be vaccinated. The disease is so contagious that it spreads exponentially. In 1947, it took a week to vaccinate 6 million people in New York City in response to an outbreak of just eight cases.

Nine million doses of vaccine would be needed to control an outbreak that began with just 100 people, according to experts.

"The best way to deal with infectious diseases is to prevent them. Antibiotics are not magic bullets and all vaccines have side effects. But they're still the best way to go," said Dr. Robert S. Daum, a pediatrics professor at the University of Chicago who serves as head of the Food and Drug Administration's Vaccine Advisory Committee.

"I'm old enough to remember what summers were like when 50,000 kids a year were catching polio and becoming paralyzed. We've taken that number down to zero."

Some researchers are looking for solutions other than vaccinations.

Dr. Meryl Nass, the former government consultant on anthrax vaccine who led the fight against the military's mandatory inoculation program, is calling for a crash program to bring back an old treatment--anthrax antitoxin.

An anthrax vaccine stimulates a person's own immune system to make antibodies--the proteins in blood that counter microorganisms. The anthrax antitoxin borrows those antibodies from an animal.

"You simply inject small quantities of anthrax into horses so they can develop antibodies to a variety of anthrax strains. Then you give them to patients," Nass said.

"The antibodies are only temporary, but they can buy you time and give antibiotics a chance to work."

Other medical experts caution that antiserums generated by animals can have severe side effects, but they also say the medications have a long and honorable history.

Some forms of anthrax poisoning have traditionally been so deadly because its symptoms are often mistaken for flu and patients often do not seek specialized help until it is too late.

"They generally die before antibiotics can work," Nass said.

Anthrax antitoxin could be produced in only a few weeks, she said.

Other researchers support her idea.

"The Chinese and the Russians use horse-based antisera for human anthrax poisoning and our Army scientists tell me it might be a good idea for the U.S. to investigate it too," said University of Michigan anthrax expert Philip C. Hanna.

"The idea would have to be tested. I suspect there would be a problem with side effects--some patients would get serum sickness. Its effectiveness in people would have to be proved. But it certainly works in animals."

Some antitoxins available

The CDC already distributes a number of similar drugs under its Scientific Resources Program. Diphtheria antitoxin is available, as are botulinum antitoxin, and vaccinia (smallpox) vaccine.

The CDC says it provides vaccinia vaccine for laboratory workers directly involved with smallpox or closely related viruses.

Another approach is being developed at the University of Texas, where Brent Iverson and colleagues are working with antibodies that will quickly recognize and attach themselves to the anthrax toxin, thus killing it.

Iverson said he expects to announce progress within six weeks.

The hunt for new vaccines and treatments gained urgency this month after a Florida man died of inhaled anthrax.

Two of his co-workers also were exposed, but did not become ill.

On Friday, doctors diagnosed anthrax as the cause of a rash and fever in a New York woman who works as an assistant to NBC anchor Tom Brokaw. She has cutaneous anthrax--an infection transmitted through a wound in the skin--which is easily treated with antibiotics.

FBI officials said they had no evidence of a connection between the anthrax cases and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/templates/misc/printstory.jsp?slug=chi%2D0110140371oct14>

From the Chicago Tribune

Biochemical detectors gain attention

By D. Ian Hopper
Associated Press

October 15, 2001

WASHINGTON -- Unseen, a terrorist dumps a mystery chemical into the reservoir that supplies drinking water to a large city. He doesn't notice a suitcase-size device in the water, which alerts officials and gives them options to counteract the poison.

The device is just a prototype right now, but defense officials and scientists are scrambling to finish its development and invent other high-tech gadgets to protect Americans from biochemical attacks.

They range from flying machines that would monitor the air to new chemical suits that could protect soldiers from lethal agents on the battlefield.

A Pentagon study released several months ago examined non-traditional warfare, including biological and chemical attacks, and concluded the U.S. was well-prepared to respond and to retaliate, but was lacking in detection and prevention.

Technology has been a major hurdle.

"Our traditional way of detecting biologicals is to catch them and culture them," said Michael Wartell, a chemistry professor and the chairman of the Defense Intelligence Agency's science board. "It's a very slow process--three to four days. By that time, you're dead."

Dr. Guenter Gross of the University of North Texas is developing, with government funding, a device that promises a new approach to detection.

He takes cells from mouse embryos and squishes them between two glass plates in a 2-inch square, loaded with tiny electrodes. The network of cells is attached to a life-support unit and monitored with a laptop computer. The cells respond to harmful chemicals in the same way cells in living animals do.

In short, the device quickly identifies the nature of an attack by reacting just like a human would when exposed to a chemical or biological agent. It alerts scientists to the danger and helps suggest an antidote.

"It's really a physiological detector," Gross said. "It responds to compounds that interfere with the normal function of the nervous system, because it happens to be a little part of the nervous system."

It's like the birds that miners used to send into mine shafts to detect poisonous gases. If the bird died, miners knew there was danger. But the new device is better than a bird, Gross said. "A parakeet ... can't tell you which parts of the nervous system are affected. This network can," he said.

The network doesn't just check for known chemical and biological agents, but also identifies unknown ones, allowing scientists to work on antidotes.

Gross' invention is in the testing phases, and has been used successfully to detect hundreds of harmful compounds.

The Defense Department is spending \$2 million on it, and Gross expects the suitcase-size unit to be available in six months. A hand-held version would come next.

Wartell says it would be the Holy Grail of detectors.

"For the last 20 years, folks have been talking about those types of sensors," Wartell said. "As things get bounced around, as it's exposed to the air, all the challenges you can imagine make it a very difficult thing to do. It would be revolutionary if that could be made to work."

Gross' project is just one of many biological and chemical defense projects getting taxpayer money. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency recently awarded \$6 million for two contracts to create Organic Air Vehicles.

The small flying machines could be used to detect harmful agents and perform traditional battlefield surveillance, relaying images to a soldier's hand-held computer.

In the agency's Unconventional Pathogen Countermeasures program, scientists work on new environmental suits, genetically engineered "super immune cells" that would resist chemical attacks, and ways to speed the development and delivery of vaccines.

Gross' device is already getting a lot of attention. He said Israeli scientists have toured his laboratory and the State Department has asked for information.

Gross said U.S. embassies, frequently the lone piece of American real estate in an entire nation hostile to the United States, wanted to protect their air and water supplies.

"A chemical or biological attack is difficult over a large area, but not so against an individual building," he said.

Agriculture Officials Fear for Supply

By Elliott Minor

Associated Press Writer

Monday, Oct. 15, 2001; 1:39 a.m. EDT

ALBANY, Ga. — At a time when security is being intensified at airports, power plants and stadiums, agriculture officials say farms and the food supply remain among the nation's most exposed targets.

And agroterrorism — attacks on the food supply or turning agricultural materials into weapons — is nearly impossible to guard against, they warn.

Fertilizers can be used to produce powerful bombs, pesticides can become chemical weapons and just a tiny amount of deadly bacteria can taint the food supply for thousands of people.

"Agriculture is vulnerable," said University of Georgia agriculture dean Gale Buchanan, part of an association of academics that has formed a task force on the issue. "There's no way you can put guards around fields or animals." For years, agriculture officials have warned of the dangers of agroterrorism, a threat that intensified as the nation's farms have consolidated into massive agribusinesses.

Today, contagious diseases have the potential to spread rapidly in places where hundreds, even thousands of animals are confined in close quarters, such as Midwest feedlots, North Carolina hog farms and Georgia poultry houses.

And because farming takes place in rural areas, the nation's corn, wheat and peanut crops often have nothing more than scarecrows watching over them.

That's been the case on Frank Lipinski's 360-acre farm near Buckley, Mich., for as long as he can remember. But lately, much of his time has been spent thinking about security, concocting elaborate doomsday scenarios: fertilizers and equipment turned into weapons, crops blighted, milk tanks sabotaged, livestock infected.

"If you think like a terrorist, I guess there's no end to the things you could do," Lipinski said. "It's kind of mind boggling. But who thought someone was going to crash a plane into a high-rise building?"

The chemical industry has urged pesticide dealers to tighten security. Crop dusters, which were grounded by the FBI following the attacks, have new procedures for preventing unauthorized flights.

The Washington-based Fertilizer Institute has asked farmers to secure chemicals that could be used to make bombs.

On top of the list: ammonium nitrate, which Timothy McVeigh used in 1995 to blow up the Oklahoma City federal building in what until last month was the deadliest act of terrorism on U.S. soil.

Terrell Hudson, a cotton, corn and peanut grower near Unadilla, Ga., about 150 miles south of Atlanta, said he's most worried about terrorists using microorganisms such as anthrax to infect livestock and crops.

"Anybody with a little technical knowledge or biological knowledge," Hudson said, "has the capability of doing some pretty unimaginable things."

The American Farm Bureau has asked President Bush to appoint a high-level agroterrorism specialist in the new Office of Homeland Security.

"We just want heightened awareness," said Farm Bureau spokesman Christopher Noun in Washington. "This is not a new issue for the American Farm Bureau. We've been working on it for the last few years, particularly in the area of animal health. If a disease like foot-and-mouth disease were ever let loose here, it could devastate animal production."

A foot-and-mouth outbreak that began last year in Britain has resulted in the destruction of about 4 million animals and bans on the U.S. import of most overseas meat and livestock.

The foot and mouth scare and occasional threats from animal rights groups were all the warnings Rob Robertson needed to increase security on his 2,000-acre farm in Roca, Neb., where he raises cattle, corn and soybeans.

"We all need to be vigilant and keep a lookout for anything out of the ordinary around livestock facilities, pastures or roadsides," Robertson said. "We're all in this together."

For dairy farmer Wayne Bancroft, who has 300 head of cattle near Traverse City, Mich., fears of agroterrorism have forever changed carefree life on the farm.

He recently installed locks on doors leading to the 1,500-gallon milk holding tank to prevent tampering. Tours by school groups have been nixed. And anyone he doesn't know has to show identification.

"We won't hardly let them out of their vehicle unless we know who they are. We won't let them chat their way into the barns or buildings," Bancroft said.

"It sort of takes away some of the freedoms we've always had when you have to be so cautious, but what else can you do?"

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/20011015/aponline013918_000.htm

Initial Test Reveals Anthrax in Daschle Letter

Letter Received Near Capitol; Staffers Receiving Treatment

By Ceci Connolly

Washington Post Staff Writer

Monday, October 15, 2001; 2:47 PM

An envelope containing anthrax was opened today at the office of Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle, according to Capitol Police Lt. Dan Nichols.

After two "field tests" conducted on a white powder inside the envelope came up positive, Nichols said Daschle's office was quarantined and medical personnel moved in to both test several dozen staffers and begin administering the antibiotic Cipro.

"This is a criminal investigation now," Nichols said. "It is not totally unexpected."

President Bush announced the delivery of the deadly bacteria after a meeting with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

"His office received a letter and it had anthrax in it," Bush said. "The letter was field-tested. And the staffers that have been exposed are being treated."

Field testing is not nearly as sophisticated as laboratory work, Nichols said. The sample was sent immediately to Fort Detrick in Maryland for further testing. "These are just preliminary tests," Nichols said.

Today's discovery in Washington comes after anthrax was detected in three states over the past 10 days: In Florida, one man died and five others have been infected; in New York, at least one woman has contracted a skin form of the anthrax disease; and in Nevada, all workers who handled a letter mailed from Malaysia have tested negative for anthrax.

The package, sent to Daschle's personal office in the Hart Building just several hundred yards from the Capitol, "had been wrapped a lot," Bush said. Other sources said the envelope was taped tightly, perhaps to elude chemical scanning. Inside the envelope was a powdery substance.

Sources close to the investigation said the package was postmarked Trenton. An envelope containing anthrax sent to NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw also originated in the New Jersey capital.

"I'm concerned deeply for my staff," said Daschle, who said he was both "disappointed and angered" that "innocent people have been caught up" in the latest apparent anthrax hit.

Although officials have yet to determine the source of the anthrax, Bush said today "there may be a possible link" between the rash of incidents and Osama bin Laden. "I wouldn't put it past him."

"The key thing for the American people is to be cautious," said Bush.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A62204-2001Oct15.html>

Monday October 15 11:31 AM ET

Countries Brace for Bioterrorism

By EMMA TINKLER, Associated Press Writer

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) - Dozens of government workers in Australia took decontaminating showers Monday after their office received a letter containing white powder, and a U.S. consulate was evacuated in a similar scare. Both turned out to be hoaxes.

Around the world, nations were reporting false or pending anthrax cases, and many were taking precautions, after a dozen people in the United States were either infected or exposed to anthrax.

A white powder was found in the mailroom at German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's offices Monday, and authorities were investigating whether the substance is dangerous, the government said.

Gas masks were selling briskly in Hong Kong, China has ordered new quarantine checks on suspicious mail from abroad and Australia is considering protective gear for postal workers.

Several anthrax and bomb scares were reported in Australia, where Prime Minister John Howard has come out staunchly behind the U.S.-led airstrikes on Afghanistan ([news](#) - [web sites](#)). Howard said late Monday that all anthrax scares had proven to be hoaxes.

Authorities evacuated both the U.S. Consulate in the southern city of Melbourne and the offices of the Melbourne Herald and Weekly Times newspapers after letters containing suspicious chemicals were delivered.

U.S. Consul-General David Lyon said 40 staff were evacuated from the consulate as a precaution after an envelope containing a mysterious residue was hand-delivered by a person "in a great rush."

"We screened it a number of different ways and one of those screenings indicated the possibility of explosives," Lyon said.

A police spokesman said the package was found to be harmless. Evacuated staff returned to work about 45 minutes later.

Health authorities also ordered two floors of the Herald and Weekly Times building evacuated and a section of a road nearby cordoned off after five suspicious letters were delivered, one containing powder, a police spokesman said.

Seventeen workers underwent decontamination, but no one was suffering any effects from exposure to the substance, the spokesman said on condition of anonymity.

In the northeastern city of Townsville, authorities emptied two government buildings after they received mail containing a suspicious white powder. Workers were given decontaminating showers, and up to 50 people were sent to hospital for tests. Police later said the powder was identified as non-toxic.

In the Queensland state capital Brisbane, six suspect parcels with the names of President Bush ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) and Microsoft boss Bill Gates ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) were delivered to various addresses. The police commissioner, Bob Atkinson, said the packages did not contain any powder.

In France, police evacuated 600 people from the offices of the French Space Agency and dozens of others at a financial institution, a school and a tax collection office in four separate scares Monday involving a suspicious powder received in the mail.

A police laboratory was examining the powder discovered at all four sites, police officials said, and those who'd touched the suspicious letters were taken to hospitals.

At the French Space Agency in Essonne, a suburb about 20 miles south of Paris, officials did not know when workers would be allowed back in. Five people were reported having touched the letter, and were taken to a military hospital.

The other cases were at a branch of the Caisse des Depots et Consignations financial institution in southern Paris, the College de France, and a tax collection office, also in southern Paris.

In the United States, several of the exposures to anthrax came from packages or letter sent to a Microsoft office in Reno, Nev., and NBC studios in New York City.

The Central Asian nation of Kazakstan, site of Soviet-era anthrax production, on Monday denied any involvement in the anthrax cases discovered in the United States.

The plant at the remote steppe settlement of Stepnogorsk was built starting in 1982 to replace another Soviet factory in Russia's Ural Mountains that accidentally released anthrax into the air in 1979, killing about 70 people. The huge facility was just one of six in the former Soviet Union, which had the largest biological weapons complex in the world.

In China, new quarantine checks of express mail from abroad have been ordered, but an official said the screening was unrelated to the September attacks.

Japan has tightened postal checks and has urged its citizens to report suspicious mail to police. Post offices were using X-rays to screen all international mail and parcels that have no return addresses. Workers at the Tokyo Central Post Office wore white masks Monday when handling mail and parcels.

The Malaysian government has pledged to prosecute anyone involved in sending a letter to the office of Microsoft in Nevada that was contaminated with anthrax.

An international airport terminal in Vienna, the Austrian capital, was closed late Sunday after a passenger reported finding suspicious powder in a newsstand, which was tested negative for anthrax.

Several hundred people were evacuated from Canterbury Cathedral in England on Sunday after a worker said he saw a man dropping white powder in one of the chapels. The historical cathedral, also a popular tourist spot, was reopened Monday after police said tests found no traces of harmful substances in the powder.

Calm Urged Despite New Exposures to Anthrax

Brian Knowlton International Herald Tribune

Monday, October 15, 2001

WASHINGTON Reacting to the discovery of a handful of new cases of suspected exposure to anthrax, U.S. officials struggled Sunday to reassure Americans and to calm their sometimes panicky fears while at the same time urging them to be vigilant of suspicious letters or packages. "There's a lot of people in America who are afraid," Tommy Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services, said Sunday. "But Americans should feel comfortable about conducting their ordinary lives." Mr. Thompson's words echoed reassuring comments a day earlier from President George W. Bush, who said that "all Americans should be assured we are taking strong precautions, we are vigilant." In New York, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said Sunday that anthrax spores had been found on the police officer and two lab technicians involved in detecting the case of anthrax at NBC-TV. Two NBC employees had earlier been exposed to the disease after handling a letter mailed to the television network from Trenton, New Jersey, on Sept. 18. The mayor said the police officer and the lab technicians were being treated with antibiotics and were expected to be fine. He emphasized that exposure to the spores did not necessarily mean they had the anthrax infection. "When they were tested, minuscule spores were found," Mr. Giuliani said. The mayor also said that the Police Department had received more than 100 calls from New Yorkers concerned about exposure, and that hospital emergency rooms had also experienced numerous inquiries. "None of them have proven to be anything else but negative," he said. The series of anthrax incidents began earlier this month at the newspaper offices of American Media Inc., in Florida, where a man died of anthrax. Exposure of five more employees was reported Saturday, bringing the number affected there to eight. On Saturday, Governor Kenny Guinn of Nevada and other state officials said that tests had shown that pictures contained in a letter sent from Malaysia to a Microsoft Corp. office in Reno were contaminated with anthrax. Several people at the office may have come into contact with the letter, but no one has tested positive for exposure, officials said. Mr. Thompson said on Fox-TV on Sunday that no further anthrax investigations had been opened beyond those cases. Tests on a separate set of three letters, all postmarked from St. Petersburg, Florida, and sent to NBC, to The New York Times and to The St. Petersburg Times, have been negative, leading health officials in New York to all but dismiss the possibility that they posed a health threat. The Bush administration has increasingly struggled with what can seem to be a seriously mixed message - urging people to go about their normal business, to go shopping, fly on airplanes, attend sporting events - even as it issues strong alerts on the possibility of new terrorist acts. "We're a nation in a condition of war," Attorney General John Ashcroft said Sunday, explaining the need for vigilance. "It doesn't mean that we stop doing things and that we bring America to a halt." The proper approach, he said, was "a preparedness. It's not a panic, it's not a paralysis." Mr. Ashcroft said that the country remained under the "highest alert" of new attacks. He spoke after the Qaida militant network of Osama bin Laden warned Muslims in the United States and Britain to avoid planes and tall buildings. But Mr. Thompson said that he had checked earlier Sunday with other officials and that there were "no imminent threats" of a chemical or biological attack. Many Americans, still jolted by the sense of collective vulnerability that hit them after the Sept. 11 attacks in New York and Washington, seem not to have heard or believed the words of assurance. Medical experts appear regularly on television to offer advice on the most effective antibiotics against anthrax or to say things like "I would not get a gas mask now" - words allegedly meant to reassure. Yet, nearly half of the people questioned in a weekend survey told CNN pollsters that they were somewhat or very concerned that they or a family member might be exposed to anthrax. That perception, specialists say, seems greatly exaggerated considering that the number of known exposures has barely reached double digits, and that there has been no apparent attempt at a mass-delivery of the substance. A number of commercial airline flights have been disrupted or delayed by the discovery onboard of powdery substances. In San Jose, California, a United Airlines plane from Chicago was kept on the tarmac for hours, with 80 passengers and five crew members aboard, as the authorities weighed what steps to take after one passenger said that another man had placed a white substance into the ventilation system. The man suspected of doing so was removed from the aircraft by crews in bulky hazardous materials suits. He was subjected to a decontamination bath and then questioned. The substance turned out to be confetti from a greeting card, said Andrew Black, an FBI spokesman. He welcomed the public's vigilance but said that people needed to calm down. Other officials added their own words of reassurance. In Nevada, where the

suspicious letter sent to a Microsoft subsidiary in Reno was handled by at least six employees, the governor said that "all our laboratory microbiologists feel this is a very, very low risk for public health." .Attorney General Ashcroft pointed out that only two people had been infected with anthrax, one of whom had died; that the disease is not communicable, and that it is "eminently treatable" when found in time. .Both Mr. Ashcroft and Mr. Thompson said that the government had adequate supplies of vaccines and antibiotics. Within eight hours of the Sept. 11 attacks, Mr. Ashcroft said, sufficient supplies to deal with a bioterrorist attack had been moved into New York. .Mr. Thompson said the possibility that the letters to Florida, New York and Nevada were sent by terrorists overseas was being thoroughly investigated, but added, "Nothing's conclusive." .Mr. Thompson repeatedly declined to speculate on possible links, and noted that it was also possible that domestic terrorists could be involved, or even disgruntled former employees seeking to exploit current fears.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/35681.html>