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Jack Anderson

A Toothless Nuclear Watchdog

The Israeli strike against Iraq's nuclear facility last June raised a storm of controversy over its rights and wrongs.

But the bigger issue is what impelled Israel to undertake the raid in the first place. Iraq is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; if it was in fact building a nuclear weapon, such a violation should have been discovered by the treaty's watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency. The sad truth, though, is that the IAEA is a toothless watchdog.

As a former IAEA inspector told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last year, common sense led to a plausible assumption that the Iraqis were building a nuclear weapon. Iraq has too much oil to feel a need for nuclear power plants.

So why didn't Israel simply voice its suspicions and ask the IAEA to determine whether there was weapons-grade material or capability at Osirak? The answer: Israel presumably realized how ineffectual the IAEA is.

A number of secret studies have been made of the nuclear watchdog agency.

One of the most telling was a confidential report by the General Accounting Office. My associate, Lucette Lagnado, has seen a copy of the report. It notes that:

"The United States has placed great trust in the international safeguards system to sound the alarm if nuclear material is diverted. Moreover, it has, over the years, helped to persuade other nations that they too should rely on the IAEA system for assurances that others were not diverting nuclear material from peaceful uses." The GAO auditors then go on to spell out some of the system's fatal weaknesses:

- Politically motivated "safeguards" allow any signatory nation to reject individual inspectors arbitrarily. This provision has evolved into a wholesale rejection of inspectors on grounds of politics or nationality. The effect has been to limit the makeup of inspection teams to individuals from "friendly" countries.

- Even if a truly neutral inspector is allowed onto an IAEA team, there is still little chance that illegal activity will be discovered. "IAEA inspectors do not have

unlimited access on their inspections," the GAO explained.

- The technical equipment available to IAEA teams is often inadequate. Much of it is not sensitive enough to detect losses of nuclear material that might have been diverted to bombs.

- In addition to everything else, the IAEA is short of money. Its job has grown infinitely more complicated with the proliferation of nuclear energy plants around the world in recent years, but the agency's funding has not kept pace.

- Finally, the GAO concluded, the IAEA doesn't have the necessary expertise to check out the most dangerous kinds of nuclear facilities. Though IAEA inspectors are competent to check the light-water power reactors that were once the norm, they aren't very good with the reprocessing and enrichment plants that have increased in recent years.

"Such plants are key to the proliferation issue because they can provide direct access to weapons-usable material," the GAO noted.

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ling to play a responsible role in the restraint of nuclear arms," the letter said.

"The record needs to be set straight and we believe this resolution will help to do that."

THE RESOLUTION called on the U.S. to propose to the Soviets a "long-term mutual and verifiable nuclear forces freeze at equal and sharply reduced levels of forces, looking, in time, to the reduction of the world's nuclear weapons to the level of zero."

It differs from other efforts by not calling for an immediate freeze, and by including Reagan's idea of negotiated reductions over a lengthy period.

The signers include Sens. Howard Baker (R., Tenn.), the Senate majority leader, and three members of the Armed Services Committee: Democrats Henry Jackson of Washington and Nunn; and Republican John Warner of Virginia.

Another concerned hawk, Sen. Patrick Moynihan (D., N.Y.), warned that any movement for a nuclear arms freeze should be led by the President, or it might become a movement promoting unilateral disarmament.

OTHER ARMS freeze proponents in Congress saw this effort as a "rhetorical trick," a sort of Trojan horse to sneak the outlines of Reagan's policy into a Senate resolution.

"We fail to understand why anyone concerned about arms control will not support a freeze now, followed by negoti-

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The Evidence on 'Yellow Rain'

The Reagan Administration tried last week to chase away the cloud of doubt over its repeated charges that Soviet troops in Afghanistan and Moscow's allies in Southeast Asia have unleashed toxic "yellow rain" against their guerrilla opponents.

A 32-page State Department report brought together extensive circumstantial evidence that the Russians, Vietnamese and Laotians had used chemical agents. The report charged that the substances had caused more than 10,000 deaths since 1975. But some scientists remained unsure whether the agents were intended to be lethal or were akin to the herbicides the United States used in Vietnam. A senior Administration official acknowledged, "We still don't have the kind of hard, direct evidence that would remove all doubts."

The report's conclusions were

based on accounts of symptoms provided by victims of alleged attacks and on the observations of doctors, guerrillas and defectors from the Vietnamese, Laotian and Afghan armies. To support accusations of direct Soviet involvement in the use of chemical agents in Indochina, it cited an incident it said took place in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) in July. Vietnamese soldiers unloading a shipment of Soviet goods broke open a crate and were told that canisters inside contained "deadly toxic substances from the U.S.S.R.," the report said.

The only physical evidence presented had been disclosed by the Administration before. Trichothecenes, a group of toxins produced by fungi, were found in samples of vegetation, water and rock scrapings in Laos and Cambodia. Many other "known chemical warfare agents are nonpersistent and disappear from the environment within a few minutes to several hours after being dispersed," the report said.

ations for major reductions," said Sens. Edward Kennedy (D., Mass.) and Mark Hatfield (R., Ore.), sponsors of a recent joint resolution calling for an immediate freeze.

Reagan has warned that the Kennedy-Hatfield resolution would "legitimize the position of great advantage for the Soviets."

"A freeze simply isn't good enough," Reagan told the Tennessee legislature recently. "We must go beyond a freeze to get at real reductions of nuclear arms."

Reagan administration officials have promised a detailed arms control package "within weeks," and they expect negotiations on strategic nuclear arms with the Soviets to begin by summer.

CHICAGO TRIBUNE 29 March 1982 Pg. 1

Hawks find flaws in Reagan strategy

By John Maclean
and Storer Rowley

Chicago Tribune Press Service

WASHINGTON — Staunchly pro-defense congressman and other hawks are warning the White House that "staggering" defense spending and inattention to antinuclear sentiment threaten the domestic consensus to rearm America.

These conservative voices say the White House must present a more convincing defense strategy, trim waste from the Pentagon budget, re-examine the more expensive new weapons programs and offer a more aggressive nuclear arms control program.

The critics make no threat to abandon the gospel of a strengthened defense, but they are concerned about what they see as potentially damaging defects in Reagan's efforts.

"Thus far the American public has supported increased (defense) spending," a report from the Heritage Foundation, the conservative think-tank most closely identified with Reagan's policies, said last week. "Yet, this robust pro-defense consensus could be threatened by the exorbitant cost of armaments.

"(The) figures are staggering. Making matters worse is the widespread suspicion that the Defense Department, by not carefully monitoring weapons cost, is risking high cost overruns. Weapons cost must be lowered."

The Heritage Foundation report recommended a series of reform measures to save an estimated \$8.5 billion in the coming year, a cut in Pentagon spending that comes close to the \$10 billion figure talked about by many congressional critics of Reagan's defense budget.

WHAT SEEMS to worry true believers most is the lack of rationale for the record \$1.6 trillion military budget proposed for the next five years. The Reagan administration argues it must correct "years of neglect" that allowed the Soviets to build up their nuclear and conventional forces while the United States fell behind.

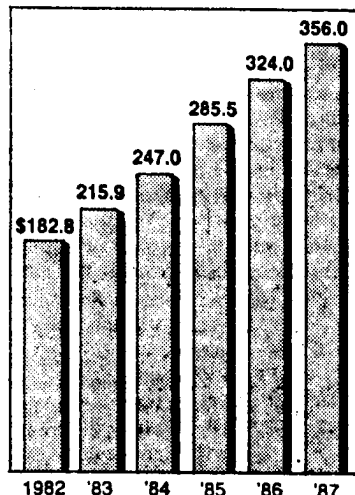
But critics complain the administration has proposed the spending without a clear strategy for using the money.

"The American people continue to want a substantial increase in our overall defense capabilities, consistent with our economic health," said Sen. Sam Nunn (D., Ga.), a leading advocate of a stronger defense. "That brings up the question as to whether we should re-examine our strategy.

"Perhaps we're defining our national

U.S. defense budget forecasts

Fiscal years, in billions of dollars



Note: 1982 figure is estimated expenditure, 1983 is requested amount and 1984-87 figures are estimated amounts of requests

Chicago Tribune Chart;
Source: U.S. Department of Defense

interests too broadly. I'm going to be asking a lot of questions because I think the American people, when they're sacrificing on domestic programs and they're seeing the economy deteriorate, have every right to expect increased military capabilities," he added.

MANY OTHERS have spoken out on the lack of a coherent strategy.

"There is a lingering, and for the administration a potentially dangerous, sense that the rationale offered so far has not measured up to the scale and scope of the Reagan defense program," said Albert Pierce, a defense analyst, writing for the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

A prominent conservative analyst, Walter Laquer of the Center for Strategic and International Studies here, said recently that "a strategy is not yet in sight, only occasional comments, gestures and reactions—sometimes conflicting, often inconsistent."

Specifically, the critics complain that the Pentagon is preparing to fight the Soviets everywhere under every circumstance, rather than picking specific geography and tactics.

FREEZE ... Continued

dent submarines are expensive, but submarines are the most survivable and therefore the least destabilizing weapons and should be among the last to be frozen.

Several undertakings planned by the administration would not necessarily be banned by a strategic weapons freeze, although they could be considered for budget-cutting purposes: air defenses, an expanded civil defense program, and improved command-and-control systems (which, for everyone's peace of mind, should not be significantly cut).

All of these items together might not fully meet the target for cutbacks in defense outlays called for by Senator Domenici, not to speak of Senator Hollings, especially in fiscal '83. But they would make a big dent. Every billion dollars cut from unnecessary and dangerous nuclear spending would be a billion that would not have to be cut from the muscle of conventional preparedness. And the growing ranks of Americans who feel threatened by the spiralling growth of nuclear weapons would breathe a little easier.

Mark Garrison, a former US diplomat with experience in Moscow, is director of the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University.

THE REAGAN administration has given priority to increasing the Navy by 30 percent, to a total of 600 ships. It also wants to increase tactical air power from 36 to 40 major Air Force units and to revitalize nuclear weaponry.

Last week, Congress issued a sharp warning that massive growth on all fronts will have to pass new scrutiny. The normally hard-line Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces voted 9-0 to cancel funding for the controversial MX missile basing plan. Reagan wants to put the MX missiles in existing Minuteman silos.

The subcommittee could have approved the basing plan on grounds it gave the White House a bargaining chip with the Soviets. Their refusal to do so shows they want a more plausible alternative than sticking the new missiles in old sites, presumably already targeted by the Soviets. MX missiles are supposed to be less vulnerable than the old Minutemen.

CONGRESS TOOK even stronger action signalling the President on the arms control front. A group of Senate hawks sponsored their own resolution calling for a freeze on nuclear arms to compete with resolutions by more dovish members.

In a letter circulated by the hawks, they indirectly criticized Reagan for failing to head off the growing anti-nuclear sentiment in this country by putting forward a serious, detailed arms control plan.

"Right or wrong, many of our citizens and many of our friends and allies abroad believe that this nation is unwill-

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