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## Ronald Reagan Library

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239613 CABLE	BONN 08806	3 4/3/1984 B1			
239615 CABLE	BAGHDAD 0749	2 4/3/1984 B1			
239618 CABLE	BONN 774	2 4/4/1984 B1			
239619 CABLE	BONN 08510	1 3/30/1984 B1			
239622 REPORT	[PG. 3 ONLY]	1 ND B1 .			
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Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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No of Doc Date Restric-Document Type ID tions pages **Document Description** B<sub>1</sub> 239615 CABLE 4/3/1984

BAGHDAD 0749

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# U.S. Aides Say Iraqis Made Use Of a Nerve Gas

## Assert Lab Gear Came From West Germans

### By SEYMOUR M. HERSH

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 29 — United States intelligence officials say they have obtained what they believe to be incontrovertible evidence that Iraq has used nerve gas in its war with Iran and is nearing completion of extensive sites for the mass production of the lethal chemical warfare agent.

Pentagon, State Department and intelligence officials said in interviews this week that the evidence included documentation that Iraq has been buying laboratory equipment from a West German company, purchases that are believed to be linked to Iraq's nerve gas production plans.

The intelligence also shows, the officials said, that Iraq has as many as five dispersed sites for the storage, production and assembly of nerve gas weapons. Without intervention, these officials said, Iraq is estimated to be weeks or months away from the ability to mount major chemical attacks against Iran's far more numerous troops.

### **Deep Underground Bunkers**

Each of the sites, the officials said, has been built in deep underground bunkers, heavily fortified by concrete, that are reported to be six stories below the surface. Officials said the Iraqi concern appeared to be protection from an air attack.

Neither the White House nor the State Department would formally comment today on the intelligence information.

If full-scale chemical war develops, one senior American official said, "the genie is out of the bottle." He added: "Arms control is down the drain. And we've got our forces completely at risk." The official warned that because of the nature of chemical weapons, huge doses of which can be transported

Continued on Page At, Column 1

## U.S. Says It Can Prove Iraq Used Gas

Continued From Page Al

in small canisters, it would be virtually impossible to effectively monitor the spread of such weapons to other coun-

In 1969 the United States reaffirmed its renunciation of the first use of chemical warfare, and it later reduced

chemical warfare, and it later reduced its preparations to defend against a chemical war. The United States has accused Iraq of using chemical weapons in the war with Iran, but Baghdad has denied the charge.

A senior official said this week that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had been asked to provide what he termed a "preliminary look" at the feasibility of an American air strike on the fortified sites, but concluded there were not enough American airrott in appropriation provides when the fortified sites, but concluded there were not enough American airrott in appropriation. enough American aircraft in appropri-

emugh American aircraft in appropriate locations.

This official went on to say that there were many in the Government who, recalling the successful Israeli air attack in 1981 on what was determined to be an Iraqi nuclear plant, would like to see the Israeli Air Force attack again, some sensitive high-level conversations on the issue between the United States and Israel have-already taken, place, the official added.

This information could not be confirmed, although many American officials, in Interviews, volunteered their personal judgment that such an attack would be one welcome solution to the problem.

would be one welcome solution to the problem.

A senior State Department official described his frustration over the issue. "it's not lack of knowledge at high levels," he said. "It's been in all the high-rollers' briefing books. The Iraqis appear to be ready to do anything. The question is what do we do? Should we cast a major air strike? That's a big move." The official acknowledged hearing "speculation" that the Israelis might be "ready to move," but added that such talk was in his view only talk.

The intelligence, which was provided from sources depicted as being "better than on-site," has been repeatedly and forcefully presented to President Reagan in the last week, the officials said, with the White House not yet providing any policy guidance.

Officials said that on three occasions.

any policy guidance.
Officials said that on three occasions within the week the Central Intelliwithin the week the Central Intelli-gence Agency, to dramatize its concern over the intelligence, had emphasized, or "red lined," the relevant informa-tion on Iraq's chemical war abilities in the President's daily intelligence brief, one of the most highly classified docu-ments in the Government. This infor-mation is prepared overnight by the C.I.A. and presented early each morn-ing to the President.

### Praise for C.I.A. Director

Praise for C.I.A. Director
One official, reflecting the frustration of many in the intelligence field,
praised William J. Casey, the Director
of Central intelligence, for having "the
guts to stand up and fight," adding,
"He's\_given the correct information to
the White House and it's up to them."
The State Department said on March
5 that the United States had concluded
that the available evidence indicated
that lethal chemical weapons were
being used by Iraq agginst Iran, in
violation of the Geneva Protocol of
1925, which Iraq aggreed to adhere to in
1931. At the time of the statement an
Administration official said the Chemi-1831. At the time of the statement an Administration official said the chemical weapon being used by the Iraqis seemed to be mustard gas, a blistering agent. At that time Iran accused the Iraqis of using nerve gas and nitrogen mustard, but the Administration said there was no evidence Iraq had used nerve gas.

One reason for hesitation over the issue, a White House officials acknowledged, is the traditional concern of insure, a White House officials for the protection of "sources and methods." The specific information about the extent of Iraqi nerve gas development is said to have been derived from unusually sensitive sources.

been derived from unusually sensitive sources.

A major diplomatic complication controus the Administration, officials say. American intelligence agencies have identified Karl Kölb, a scientific and technical supply company in Dreietich, West Germany, as being responsible for the sale and shipping of sophisticated laboratory equipment that, intelligence officials say, has been used — apparently without the company's knowledge — to aid the load of the sale and shipping of the company's knowledge — to aid the load to be apparently without the company's knowledge — to aid the load to be sessential to the Iraqi effort were said to have taken place over a period of at least two years, with the chemical company obtaining all of the registred export licenses from the West German Government before shipment.

### Evidence Presented to Bono

Sometime within the last month, offi-cals said, intelligence officials ob-mined evidence directly linking the managers's shapments to Iraqi develop-

mangany's shapments to Hasp termination ment of new gas.

The C.L.A. relayed some of its information and its concern directly to the limited Source Finishessy in Bonn, an official soul, which is turn made a diplomatic representation to the West Germanic representation to the West Germanic representation.

added, noting that the private company in West Germany had obtained approin West Germany had obtained appro-priate export licensing. "How can we put a stop to it? This isn't the sort of thing you can solve overnight. That may sound sort of callous," the official added, "but to get up on a high moral ground doesn't solve anything. In practical terms, we want to put the genie back in the bottle. What is trou-bling is the potential."

### Serves as a Broker

Serves as a Breker

The Karl Kolb company, which does serves as a broker or agent for various manufacturers, is reported to have been under observation for an extended period by American intelligence officials. Intelligence officials said that the Reagan Administration now had evidence that the company had made large-scale sales of laboratory equipment, all appropriately licensed, to many third-world nations.

Peter Hermes, the West German Ambassador in Washington, said in an interview that the Kolb company had been delivering what he termed "certain facilities" to Iraq, "They have agreed to deliver a regular plant for the regreduction of pesticides," the Ambassador said, adding that such equipment was not subject to special export licens-

production of pesticides," the Ambassador said, adding that such equipment was not subject to special export licensing in West Germany.

"Equipment for the plant," the Ambassador said, "is not yet delivered and assembly is not completed. The whole plant is not ready for production. This is all I know."

In Boam today, a spokesman for the Economics Ministry said an investigation had determined that a pesticide plant, scheduled to go into operation in September, had been sold to Iraq by the Kolb company. But a senior executive of the company denied such a sale bad taken place.

American officials, in the interviews this week, depicted their information as being conclusive. The evidence is "overwhelming," a senior official said, He complained about what he termed the failure of the White House to assume an aggressive role in dealing with the next incliners and the said of the most of the mass of the said of the mass in the next incliners and the said of the most of the said of the mass in the next incliners and the said of th

the nature of the White House to as-sume an aggressive role in dealing with the new intelligence on Iraq. "This demonstrates," he said, "that the Administration has no staff capable of reaching decisions in areas as critical as this."

### Note of Caution From Aide

Note of Caution From Aide

One Administration official did caution that the intelligence he had seen
had yet to be formally confirmed, saying: "If anything, the Iraqis might
have a testing lab, but I'm not convinced by the evidence. The intelligence might be proven right; it might
be proven wrong. I don't think anybody
knows." This official acknowledged
that he had perhaps not seen the most
recent intelligence reports provided in
the last week to the White House.

One as yet unresolved isstu revolves
around the amount of time Iraq would
need actually to begin the large-scale
production of nerve gas. The agent
under development, the officials said,
is Tabun, developed as the first tethal
gas of its kind in late 1938 by German
scientists, and made in large quantities
by the Germans in Word-brans in Developed.

gas of its kind in late 1936 by German scientists, and made in large quantities by the Germans in World War II. Ex-perts depict Tabures the agent closest in chemical makeup to certain power-ful insecticides and describe its produc-tion as being relatively simple, given the proper raw chemicals and equip-ment.

the proper raw chemicals and equipment.

The most critical stage in production, experts said, is the assembling and loading of artillerly shells, bombs and other munitions. A senior State Department official cautioned that there was still time to deal with the issue. "It may be the case that Iraq is not as advanced today as being able to manufacture" gas weapons, he said. Intelligence officials agreed that Iraq might not be able immediately to mass-produce Tabun, but depicted that stage asheing only "months away."

In a report made public Monday, a United Nations team said it had found samples of Tabun as well as mustard gas during an on-site inspection two weeks ago in the war zone. The report did not specifically charge Iraq with

can representation was said to have been at a relatively low level, not involving Arthur F. Burns, the American Ambassador.

"We don't want to be screaming and shouting at them," one State Department official said, in explaining the low-key American approach, "because we don't have the answers ourselves to the problem"— that of determining whether a seemingly ordinary shipment of chemical and laboratory equipment is secretly intended to produce chemical warfare a gents.

"Of course they're sensitive," the official said of the West German Government. "They're perfectly aware of their own history. They have a problem and they have to scramble to figure out how to deal with it. Meanwhile, we're friends of theirs and we have to help them figure it out."

"It's a tough question, with no good answers," one State Department official said. "It's fair to say that the German Government has not been sitting back for the last two years, although it's perfectly true that none of these people knew what is going on. Now we come up with new information and wet come up with new information and wet of the last two years, although it's perfectly true that none of these people knew what is going on. Now we come up with new information and wet of the last two years, although it's perfectly true that none of these people knew what is going on. Now we come up with new information and wet of the state of the perfect of the last two years, although it's perfectly true that none of these people knew what is going on. Now we come up with new information and wet of the perfect of the state of the pe attack further."

One White House official, after cautioning that he was speaking without official sanction, described the Issue of how to respond as far more complicated. "What would you do?" he asked. "How do we' handle our own technical transfer" of goods — such as the fewchemicals used in nerve gas production — which also have legitimate commercial uses?

"It's a very frustrating experience for a government," the official added.

for a government," the official added.
Defense Department officials asid, explaining that the chemicals
Defense Department officials asid, were to be air-freighted to Iraq.

Another official, noting that there
taghtening of the licensing procedures
for certain chemicals that could have
alternate uses in warfare. At least one
fully licensed shipment of chemicals
bound for Iraq, scheduled to be shipped
by an American company, was stopped
after it was concluded the chemicals
could be used in the production of mustard gas. "It was the urgency of the
shipment that troubled us," the official



An Iranian soldier, believed to be a victim of mustard gas, being treated at a hospital in Vienna.

said, explaining that the chemicals

### German Company Denies It Sold A Pesticide Factory to the Iragis

Speniat to Tavin
BONN, March 29 — A spokesman for
the Economics Ministry said today that
an investigation had determined that
the Karl Kolb company, a supplier of
industrial laboratories, had sold a pesticle plant to Iraq that would go into
operation in September. But a senior
executive of the company denied that
such a transaction had taken place.
The ministry spokesman, Dleter
Vogel, said there was no restriction on
the sale of such plants, which Ameri, which Ameri,

Vogel, said there was no restriction on the sale of such plants, which American intelligence officials believe can be easily converted to produce the kind of poison gases that Iraq is accused of having used against Iranian troops. But Dieter Backfisch, he managing director of the coinpany, which is outside Frankfurt, firmly denied that Kolb had made such a sale. "The last time we sold something like that was to Pakistan 15 years ago," said Mr. Backfisch in a telephone interview. "The people there wanted to analyze and make trial runs with pesticides, because they wanted to produce these things based on local raw materials."

things based on local raw materials."

About two weeks ago the United states Government asked Bonn to look into Kolb's dealings with Iraq and, according to one source involved in the exchange, "the Government was obviously concerned." Another diplomatic source said: "There was no protest made. There was much more a question of trying to find out whether if. It's an old reputable firm with a long history, of doing business in the Middle East."

East."
It was impossible to square the contradictory accounts of the reported sale to Iraq. Mr. Vogel speculated that the Kolb executive did not want to acknowledge the deal. "He doebn't have to," conceded the spokesman.

we'Yerk Times

Mr. Backfisch said that the Kolb
company had been doing business with
Iraq-for 28 years and had sold laboratory equipment — such as analytical
balancers, water-distilling apparatus
and electromicroscopes — to the Ministries of Defense, Health, Agriculture
and Education.

The company executive denied that
any equipment sold to Iraq could be
used to produce poison gas. "Our
equipment has nothing to do with such
things," he said.

The executive said his company's annual sales to Iraq had totaled about 38

mile electrive sam ins company's annual sales to Iraq had totaled about 33 million before the outbreak of the war with Iran in 1980, but had dipped us about 3800,000 recently. He said his company faced stiff competition in Iraq from British and Japanese companies, which he said had the biggest share of a \$19 million laboratory business there.

Mr. Backlisch said the Kolb company had a sales engineer and an electronic engineer in Baghdad to service the equipment it had sold to Iraq.

A senior chemical industry official, speaking privately, said Kolb was West Germany's leading exporter of analytical laboratories with an established worldwide reputation. A family-owned company, it registered sales of \$61 million in 1881, the official said. nual sales to Iraq had total

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### Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

BONN 08510

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### Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

BONN 05125

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23962	7 CABLE	5 8/30/1984 B1			

### Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

**BONN 3502** 

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ID	Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions
239628	CABLE	17	8/30/1984	B1

**BONN 3491** 

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- B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]
- C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.