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	EUR-01	UTED-00	H-01	IMMC-01	IM-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE

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AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG PRIORITY

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FAILURES DOMESTICALLY AND IN RELATION TO COMPLIANCE WITH UN SECURITY COUNCIL DISARMAMENT DIRECTIVES.

-- U.S. EXPERTS HAVE FOUND NO ADVERSE EFFECTS ON OUR OWN SOLDIERS FROM THE USE OF MUNITIONS CONTAINING DEPLETED URANIUM.

-- THE PENTAGON, WHICH HAS STUDIED THIS ISSUE IN GREAT DEPTH, IS BEST SUITED FOR GIVING YOU THE TECHNICAL AND MEDICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DEPLETED URANIUM.

SYRIA: CHEMICAL WEAPONS

CONTEXT: ASSOCIATED PRESS IS REPORTING THAT, ACCORDING TO JANE'S DEFENSE WEEKLY, SYRIA IS PREPARING TO PRODUCE THE NERVE AGENT VX. WHILE WE CANNOT COMMENT ON SYRIAN PRODUCTION OF VX, WE CAN SAY THAT IT HAS A LONG-STANDING CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAM AND HAS A STOCKPILE OF THE NERVE AGENT SARIN. WE BELIEVE SYRIA MAY BE TRYING TO DEVELOP MORE ADVANCED NERVE AGENTS (SUCH AS VX). SYRIA REMAINS DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN SOURCES FOR KEY ELEMENTS OF ITS CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAM. EACH TIME THE PRESS FOCUSES ON THE IRAQI VX PROGRAM, STORIES APPEAR ABOUT SYRIA'S VX CAPABILITIES.

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Q. DOES SYRIA HAVE THE NERVE AGENT VX?

A. -- I CANNOT COMMENT ON SYRIA'S POSSESSION OF OR ABILITY TO PRODUCE VX.

-- HOWEVER, WE ARE AWARE THAT SYRIA HAS A LONGSTANDING CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAM. IT HAS A STOCKPILE OF THE NERVE AGENT SARI N AND MAY BE TRYING TO DEVELOP ADVANCED NERVE AGENTS AS WELL.

-- WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO SYRIA OVER THE YEARS THAT IT SHOULD CONFORM TO THE INTERNATIONAL NORMS EXPRESSED IN THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

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CONVENTION, AND TERMINATE THESE PROGRAMS.

Q. DID RUSSIA OR THE SOVIET UNION ASSIST SYRIA'S CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAM?

A. -- IN NOVEMBER 1995, THE U.S. IMPOSED SANCTIONS ON A RUSSIAN CITIZEN NAMED ANATOLLY KUNTSEVICH FOR KNOWINGLY AND MATERIALLY ASSISTING THE SYRIAN CW PROGRAM.

-- THESE SANCTIONS APPLY TO KUNTSEVICH ONLY, AND NOT TO RUSSIA OR THE GOVERNMENT OF RUSSIA.

-- WE HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT WAS INVOLVED IN OR SUPPORTED THIS ASSISTANCE.

IF ASKED:

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-- I CANNOT DESCRIBE THE NATURE OF THE ASSISTANCE KUNTSEVICH PROVIDED.

Q. WHAT SORT OF DELIVERY SYSTEMS CAN SYRIA USE TO DELIVER ITS CHEMICAL WEAPONS?

A. -- SYRIA HAS SCUD B AND C MISSILES, AERIAL BOMBS, AND ARTILLERY SHELLS, AND MAY HAVE DEVELOPED CHEMICAL WARHEADS FOR THOSE WEAPONS.

ALBRIGHT

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