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EXERCISE FINDS U.S. FALLS SHORT IN BIO WAR / OFFICIALS
ADDRESS REALM OF GERM
ATTACK AGAINST U.S. BY LESSER POWERS

By Theresa Hitchens

WASHINGTON -- The Pentagon's first major war game simulating widespread use of chemical and biological weapons has raised critical questions about the adequacy of U.S. policy, military doctrine and operational planning to counter weapons of mass destruction, according to U.S. policy-makers and military officials.

The game's ``big lesson,''' according to a Pentagon expert who requested anonymity, was ``the realization that we haven't done enough thinking about this. ... It doesn't mean we can't do it, but we can't just muddle through. [Dealing with weapons of mass destruction] is something that requires more preparation.''

The war game, called Global 95 was held July 9-31 at the Naval War College, Newport, R.I. Its results were released at a time when concern about the potential use of biological, chemical or nuclear weapons against U.S. troops or civilians has been heightened by the United Nations's discovery of Iraq's advanced germ warfare program.

U.N. representatives and U.S. intelligence officials said recently that Iraq has admitted to maintaining huge stockpiles of anthrax and botulism, as well as having built special Scud missile warheads to deliver the germs.

``The possibility of biological weapons use against the United States is more real today than at any other time in our history,' ' a senior CIA official said in late August.

Major tool

The annual war game is a major tool used by U.S. policy-makers and military leaders to explore key strategic questions, with the results factored into doctrinal decisions and budget plans. Not only do senior Pentagon officials attend, but high-level officials from the State Department, National Security Council and intelligence community also are involved.

Global 95, for example, resurrected the contentious issue of whether or not a nuclear response to biological or chemical weapons is justified, U.S. officials and outside analysts said. The U.S. government has pledged not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries, a policy upheld by President Clinton in last year's Nuclear Posture Review after an acrimonious interagency debate.

``Some countries think of biological and chemical [weapons] as a normal part of their inventory and a normal part of their doctrine and operations. To the degree this is true, it presents us with a very serious problem [of deterrence,]' ' said Robert Wood, dean of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies at the Naval Warfare College.

Big punch for small powers

Because of their frightening power, biological weapons are especially

tempting for nations with inferior militaries as a counterweight to the conventional and nuclear superiority of the United States, experts said.

The United States has virtually no response to such potentially devastating weapons other than threatening to use nuclear weapons, according to a Joint Staff officer.

But it is unclear if even nuclear weapons could provide a deterrent, unless the United States was willing to set aside the ethical issue of destroying a city, he said.

On the other hand, if the United States did launch a nuclear attack in response, "no country would use those weapons for the next 100 years," the official said.

The war game's focus on chemical and biological warfare was devised by Pentagon and senior military officials to help U.S. commanders come to grips with the counterproliferation mission.

Defense Secretary William Perry in May assigned the major regional commanders with responsibility for developing operational plans and equipment requirements for counterproliferation.

Stepping into the arena

"The recent Global 95 war game was the first extensive simulation of the implications of an adversary's use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons," Mitchel Wallerstein, deputy assistant secretary of defense for counterproliferation policy, told Army Times. "We explored a wide range of issues and gained good insight into the policy dimensions of some real

operational challenges.'

Not only was the game's substance important, the fact that it was held also signifies a crossroads in the Pentagon's counterproliferation effort: moving the debate from the realm of policy into the arena of military operations, Pentagon officials said.

Global 95 represented ``the first time the military as a community at large stepped up to the counterproliferation issue,' the Pentagon expert said.

Until now, many military leaders have been loath to address chemical and biological warfare in an in-depth manner, he said.

``The whole area is getting a lot more attention, and rightly so,' said a Marine Corps officer who participated in the war game. Military officials have been reluctant to address the issue because use of such weapons poses often intractable operational, political and moral dilemmas for military commanders, he added.

For example, the U.S. pharmaceutical industry does not stockpile anywhere near the amount of antidote required to inoculate troops against even expected biological toxins, military officials said. This raises questions about which troops should receive inoculations and whether the shots also should be extended to coalition partners or the civil population.

The war game explored the U.S. military's response to two major regional crises: one in Korea and one in the Persian Gulf. Whereas chemicals were used in both scenarios, biological weapons were used only in the Persian Gulf

exercise.

Echoing revelations over the last month about Iraq's germ warfare program, the Persian Gulf exercise featured an attack on U.S. carriers by specially rigged crop-dusting aircraft. It also included a terrorist attack on Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, with anthrax that killed more than 1 million civilians, officials involved in the war game said. The United States retaliated with nuclear weapons against Baghdad, ending the war.

The trouble with toxins

The specter of biological warfare, or of a terrorist attack against a U.S. city, is particularly worrisome to U.S. policy-makers and intelligence officials. Not only are biological weapons potentially more deadly than chemicals, their production is easy to hide, as many toxins have legitimate pharmaceutical and agricultural uses.

In fact, Global 95 for the first time included a special simulation of a domestic terrorist attack with biological weapons. It centered on an attack of Norfolk, Va., and Washington by Iraqi terrorists and involved other U.S. government agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the FBI.

The war game also revealed that any enemy willing to use chemicals or biologicals in war also might be willing to use such weapons in terrorist attacks on U.S. targets, said Carmel Cassidy, who coordinated participation in Global 95 for the Federal Emergency Management Agency.