

Funding CW Demilitarization in Russia: Time to Share the Burden

Harold P. Smith, Jr.

Prior to April 29, 1997, when the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) entered into force, there was neither a legal basis nor a set of timelines for the complete destruction of chemical weapons (CW) that was acceptable simultaneously to the Russian Federation and to the United States. With the approval of the CWC by the Russian parliament and the U.S. Senate, all was changed. At last, there was an agreed-upon instrument with international approval and the means for international scrutiny by which the world's two largest stockpiles of chemical weapons would be destroyed.

The Clinton administration was hard pressed to convince the Senate to take this step, and given the limited financial resources available to Russia to destroy its huge stockpile of some 40,000 metric tons of CW agents, it was at least as difficult for the Yeltsin government.¹ Nonetheless, both administrations succeeded and with this step the question became not whether to eliminate the two stockpiles, but how to do so. Of course, there was also the question whether the two countries could meet the destruction deadlines specified by the treaty and, if not, what should be done?

At the time the CWC entered into force, neither country had exhibited great success with CW demilitarization. Admittedly, the American approach—high-temperature incineration—was beginning to destroy weapons, but the program's life-cycle cost has grown from the original estimate of \$1.7 billion in 1985 to the current estimate of \$15.7 billion; its completion date has been extended several times, and is now set for 2007.²

Although the U.S. Army's chosen pro-

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cess of incineration is technically successful, its implementation has been a domestic political nightmare. The Russian program, however, is even worse off. It has destroyed only a few thousand weapons (most by means of a mobile destruction process), and the country's demonstration destruction facility at Chapayevsk was never fully commissioned due to public opposition and never destroyed any CW munitions.³ It is from this minimal base that both countries have agreed, under the terms of the CWC, to eliminate their CW arsenals 10 years after the treaty's entry into force for each state.⁴

There is good reason to think that CW demilitarization will take much longer than the 10 years prescribed in the CWC. The United States will probably have to petition the convention's Executive Council for an extension (up to five years) as provided in the treaty, to meet its destruction obligations, and Russia will certainly have to do so. In fact, it is now evident that destruction of the Russian arsenal will extend beyond the 15-year maximum period allowed by the CWC.

Thanks to the generosity of Congress, a beginning has been made in the destruction of Russia's arsenal. The Clinton administration has developed a program of fund-

ing to provide the facilities for complete destruction of weapons at one of the seven CW stockpile locations in Russia. (See figure, next page.) Given steady progress, it is conceivable that funding by the United States, its allies and other concerned CWC states-parties could be continued beyond that point and applied to other sites, but it will take time.

If the CWC is to remain effective in prohibiting the development of new chemical weapons by its signatories and, indeed, by all states, it is essential that steady progress in the elimination of Russia's CW arsenal continue. To accomplish this, it is imperative that America's NATO allies take up a greater share of the financial burden, an essential step if Congress is to continue its generosity. If steady progress can be maintained, Russia will have to request extensions beyond the 15-year period. These will presumably be granted, although the treaty, itself, is silent on this point. If the presumption is correct, the CWC should remain effective. Conversely, if steady progress is not maintained, it is difficult to see how the treaty will discourage the development of chemical weapons throughout the world.

The Political Will and Way

At the end of the Cold War, it was widely recognized that the arsenals of the two superpowers should be greatly reduced and, in the case of chemical weapons, eliminated. But it was also recognized that the magnitude of the task was beyond the resources of a Russia in transition. No one could expect Russia to restructure its political, military and economic bases, and at the same time dismantle its stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in the absence of assistance from those nations that should, in their own interest, assist. The United States was, in particular, well poised

to help. It had the experience, the resources and, most importantly, thanks to Senators Sam Nunn (D-GA) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) and to Representatives John Murtha (D-PA) and Joseph McDade (R-PA), the political support to offer such assistance.

The political will was there, but just barely. It took great skill by the interested congressional leaders to provide authorization in the fiscal year (FY) 1992 Department of Defense (DOD) budget for \$400 million in security assistance to support the states of the former Soviet Union in dismantling and eliminating weapons of mass destruction. Because no new funding was appropriated under the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act (commonly referred to as the Nunn-Lugar legislation), the Pentagon had to reallocate monies from other DOD accounts, all of which were fully subscribed and strongly defended. With the end of the Cold War, the entire DOD budget was in decline and demands for everything from equipment acquisition to quality-of-life improvements were on the rise.

It should surprise no one that very little money was actually obligated in FY

1992 for actual Nunn-Lugar expenditures. In fact, although Congress approved an additional \$400 million in Nunn-Lugar assistance in the FY 1993 DOD budget, by the end of 1992 the Bush administration had obligated essentially no funds at all.

However, 1993 marked an important turning point. In January, the Clinton administration came to power and with it came a new deputy secretary of defense, William Perry. In collaboration with Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, Perry brought with him not only a fresh, experienced and dedicated team. Perry also brought a firm personal commitment to implement what was to become the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program. An important part of that commitment was to assist Russia in dismantling its CW arsenal. From that moment, it was ordained that CW dismantlement would proceed as fast as Russia would allow. By January 1994, the necessary commitment from the Russian government was obtained. A journey of innumerable twists had begun.

General agreement on chemical demilitarization, although difficult, was

simple compared to the ensuing details. The first consideration was the selection of a technology for eliminating Russia's CW stockpile. From the American point of view, nothing could have been simpler. The United States had been working on the problem for over a decade—with expenditures of almost \$2 billion—to see if high-temperature incineration could eliminate the U.S. stockpile safely and effectively. By 1995, U.S. officials were quite confident that they had succeeded.

The United States' pilot destruction facility on Johnston Island, a remote island over 700 miles southwest of Hawaii, was operating at satisfactory levels of destruction with an enviable safety record and without harm to the environment. The former was a matter of record; the latter was the conclusion of the (on-site) Fish and Wildlife Commission, an agency beyond the purview of DOD. Furthermore, the use of incineration technology at Tooele, Utah—the largest of the nine U.S. storage sites, holding more than 40 percent of the stockpile—had been accepted by all appropriate authorities despite the loud and skillful pro-

The Russian Chemical Weapons Stockpile



tests of local and national interest groups inalterably opposed to incineration. In short, the American side was justifiably confident that the correct technology was at hand and could be offered *gratis* to the Russians, there being no proprietary considerations.

It was not to be. The Russians had their own technology, of which they were understandably proud, for the destruction of CW agents. Perhaps the Russians saw a long-

ticed (although they had not been informed by the Yeltsin government) that the Russian technology left behind a waste product—the bituminized residue of neutralization—that might be judged dangerous long after the Americans had left. Incineration was not only immediately available, it had no significant long-term storage liability.

At the conclusion of the negotiations, the United States had no choice. Certainly,

than a technical choice. It made a difficult political task more so. Although Russian officials were aware of this, there was no choice other than to accept their decision and to press on.

Initially, Russia's neutralization process had to be understood at its most basic level. There were no developmental data to support even the beginning of an industrial process. Proof testing in the laboratory was required, and even this was compounded by unwillingness on the part of the Russians to provide samples of the agents that were to be destroyed. The best that could be done was to arrange for cooperative testing at the U.S. Army Chemical Research, Development and Engineering Center Edgewood Laboratories, located within the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland, of replicated Soviet chemical agents using the proposed Russian neutralization process. Fortunately, the testing proceeded in a satisfactory manner, and for the first time, a sense of teamwork began to develop.

The neutralization process was then tested jointly in Russia using actual Russian agents, again with apparent success. These results were validated by a peer group which concluded that, in minute quantities under laboratory conditions, the proposed neutralization process was effective. However, difficulties were anticipated when moving to an industrial scale. A modified chemical reagent has, accordingly, been developed and tested at the laboratory level. No further difficulties in moving to large-scale testing are anticipated. The chosen path may have been slow, but it is beginning to seem sure.

Selection of a Depot

The selection of a technology was only the first of a difficult set of decisions. Next was the choice of the first depot in Russia. The criteria proposed by the United States were straight-forward: maximum reduction of the military threat, with a minimum expenditure of time and money. The former led U.S. officials to suggest that the first set of weapons to be destroyed should be those containing persistent nerve agents that could be delivered quickly at long range, such as air-delivered munitions carrying VX. The second criterion called for a site with an established infrastructure of power, water and transportation, along with a pool of skilled labor at a large storage depot near an established point of entry for ease of logistics and transportation. It is not an exaggeration to claim that the U.S. position was rejected in toto.

The Russian plan for destruction of chemical weapons calls, first, for the elimination of blister agents at the Gornyi and Kambarka sites followed by destruction of nerve agent weapons at the remaining five stockpile locations, starting with artillery munition storage sites at Shchuch'ye and Kizner. Consequently, Russia offered artillery rounds with mostly non-persistent agents stored at Shchuch'ye (located in the foothills of the Ural Mountains), the smallest depot containing nerve agents and the site farthest from any point of entry that would be convenient to shipments from the United States or Europe.

There are three possible reasons, of increasing concern to the West, for the Russian insistence on such a remote and relatively unimportant site. The first, and perhaps, overriding consideration was remoteness from population centers and from European nations. After all, the United States chose a truly remote site, a Pacific atoll hundreds of miles from Hawaii, to develop its technology to eliminate lethal chemical weapons. Why should the Russians do otherwise? For CW demilitarization, remoteness is the best and first line of defense in the event of an accident. If the Russians had chosen incineration as their disposal technology, remoteness would have been a minor consideration. But in the face of a decision to pursue an unproven technology, Moscow's insistence on maximizing the disposal facility's distance from population centers can only be applauded. While U.S. officials agreed with the logic, they rued the previous technological decision that made such logic acceptable.

There may have been, however, other, less logical and less acceptable reasons for Russia's decision. There is far more involved in the destruction of chemical weapons than the technological processes involved, whether incineration, neutralization or another process is used. In all cases an immense infrastructure is required. There must be power, roads, railroads, water, security, hospitals and other crucial elements. Moscow's logic may have been that if the Americans were going to underwrite the costs for one demilitarization site, it might as well be the one requiring the most infrastructure.

After all, when the weapons are gone and the facility is decommissioned, the infrastructure would remain. That infrastructure would mean a far better life for those who chose to remain in Shchuch'ye. Russia's demand for a total infrastructure, including such niceties as day-care centers, did not go unnoticed by Congress, nor should it have. At this stage of the negotia-

tions, the chances for killing the program were quite high.

There were also those who saw far more malevolent reasons in the Russian rejection of what the U.S. side considered to be a straight-forward, sound, generous business approach to the problem of destroying vast amounts of unneeded weapons of mass destruction. Sooner or later, it was inevitable that the long series of Russian counter-proposals would be interpreted as stalling, and the purpose of stalling was presumed to be reluctance by Moscow to give up its chemical weapons. Undoubtedly, there were those, presumably within the Russian military establishment, who felt exactly that, but it seems unlikely that they commanded much attention. Other than the weapons themselves, there was no evidence to support such a conclusion. For example, the use of chemical weapons demands far more than the munitions. At the very least, use of such lethal materials demands intense training and special equipment, of which there was no evidence.

The selection of Shchuch'ye as the first site where CTR funding would assist in the direct destruction of Russia's chemical weapons was a deep frustration to U.S. officials, already confounded by Russia's rejection of incineration. However, the selection of Shchuch'ye was, in fact, a considerable step forward. The principal U.S. objective was not to tell Russia what technology to use or where to apply it; the goal was to begin the destruction of the world's largest arsenal of chemical weapons, and that had been accomplished. Surely, the willingness of the United States to cooperate in the removal of this previously highly secret remnant of the Cold War was proof that the journey had an end, and was a significant factor in convincing the Duma that the CWC should be ratified.

The Status at Shchuch'ye

One cannot describe the ensuing progress at Shchuch'ye as breathtaking. Tedious might be a better word, but there has been progress. No project of this unique complexity could be expected to proceed smoothly. There was the predictable haggling over industrial infrastructure, critical to running the plant, and the social infrastructure, necessary to convince the local population that their interests would be protected. The United States agreed to underwrite portions of the former, and the Russian Ministry of Defense has guaranteed that construction of the social infra-

structure will begin by June 1999. How this will be accomplished in light of Russia's present financial crisis is by no means clear. If the work on the social infrastructure does not begin in June, the U.S. contractor, Ralph M. Parsons, Inc., will not be mobilized in September 1999, as currently planned. Nonetheless, a location has now been chosen and has been commemorated with a three-meter granite monument with local and international press as witnesses. The real work can now begin.

The selection of an actual site has brought to an end the interminable arguing over infrastructure. A site demands a boundary, and a boundary, in this case, requires a fence separating potentially dangerous plant operations from all other activity. The United States has assumed responsibility for all aspects inside the fence and the supporting industrial infrastructure outside the fence, including the site for burial of the bituminized waste. The Russians have assumed responsibility for all aspects of the social infrastructure, including the industrial infrastructure that supports the general community around Shchuch'ye.

Congress has provided sufficient funding for FY 1999 to set the stage for the essential steps required before construction can begin. If all goes well, preparation of the final working documents (blueprints) required for construction should be completed by the end of FY 1999 and groundbreaking should occur in March 2000. Funding has been programmed through 2004, and if Congress provides the funding, actual operations could begin in 2005. It is presumed, at this point, that Russia will underwrite the cost of operations, which will require seven years to complete. It cannot go unnoticed that even under these optimistic assumptions, destruction of the munitions at Shchuch'ye will barely meet the CWC's maximum 15-year destruction timetable. Moreover, Shchuch'ye is only the first of the sites containing nerve agents.

The Path Ahead

The path beyond Shchuch'ye looks bleak. Indeed, the financial travail through which Russia is (hopefully) passing may preclude Moscow's ability to make even the comparatively minor investment required to proceed at Shchuch'ye. Unfortunately, forfeiture of the opportunity at Shchuch'ye could well foreclose all opportunity to destroy Russia's 40,000-ton CW arsenal. Yet, the source of Russian funding for Shchuch'ye is not in sight—at least not to those

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term competitive advantage in developing an alternative technology to incineration, but their neutralization-bituminization process had not been developed beyond the laboratory bench. Therefore, additional time and expense for full-scale development and large-scale testing would be required. The U.S. approach would have eliminated both of these steps and would have allowed an instantaneous start-up in Russia with no prior expenditure of funds for research and development. Nonetheless, it became apparent that the Russians would not accept incineration on their territory, and after all, it was their territory. The United States had a choice: it could either leave the Russian weapons as they were or stay and undertake the long and tedious mission to determine if the proposed Russian technology was safe and effective. The Clinton administration chose to stay.

It remains a mystery why the Russians have been so obdurate. Supposedly, the local populace would not accept incineration even though their counterparts in the United States already had. One of the major responsibilities of the U.S. contractor that would be selected to build the facility would be to conduct an aggressive public relations campaign. American industrial bidders were not confused on this issue, nor was DOD bashful in making clear the overwhelming importance of public relations. Moreover, given the strong distrust of Russian governmental projects, why would the local population be more willing to accept an unproven Russian technology rather than an established American one? The local authorities might also have no-

Americans are in no position to instruct the Russian government on how their local populations will react to the ever-present danger of eliminating chemical weapons by any technology, even one as well-established as incineration. Furthermore, it is in America's interest that Russia's CW arsenal be eliminated. The choice of technology is secondary.

There was a cost, however, in agreeing to a Russian approach that, *ipso facto*, assured that the job would take longer and cost more. It was inevitable that an increase in cost to the American taxpayer, with a resultant delay in removing weapons of mass destruction, would be viewed unfavorably by members of Congress, and indeed it was. Without invoking all the demands for expenditure of public funds that must be adjudicated by Congress, the legislators needed only to look at the allocation within the CTR program budget itself. It was apparent that removal of nuclear warheads from missiles and the destruction of the missiles and launchers was moving forward nicely under effective and cooperative management. At the same time, not one chemical weapon had been destroyed. As a result, U.S. support for the Russian chemical destruction program grew increasingly hard to defend in the Congress, and suspicions began to surface regarding Moscow's intentions.

Was there a sinister Russian military purpose for delaying the elimination of the country's chemical arsenal? Probably not, but Russia's answer, supplied at the insistence of Congress, was less convincing than it would have been otherwise. The decision to reject incineration was, therefore, more

looking in from the outside. On the U.S. side, it seems doubtful that Congress will continue its generosity if there is no physical progress at Shchuch'ye in 1999. Additional funds must be found elsewhere, and soon.

The central problem is the absence of an economic multiplier in the world of chemical demilitarization. In essence, a ruble spent on dismantlement is a ruble gone; whereas, a ruble spent on a potentially productive factory is an investment likely to lead to more rubles, more factories, and to a more stable Russia. One should not look to the Russian government, at least at this time, nor to Russia's private sector to make such an economically poor investment.

In the near term, the costs of dismantlement should be borne by those most threatened by a possibly unstable Russia possessing still-effective chemical weapons. In the long term, the inevitable deterioration of the weapons will first threaten local residents and then slowly spread its poison into the national and international environments. At the same time, without progress in Russia, the CWC will lose much of its value, opening wide the door to any nation that chooses to develop an arsenal of chemical weapons. It is in the interest of all nations, but particularly those near Russia's borders, to invest in the short term and avoid the consequences of inaction.

To date, the United States has obligated over \$130 million and will expend almost \$800 million to complete the project at Shchuch'ye. Because the current U.S. program to destroy its own chemical weapons will exceed \$15 billion, one can estimate that at least half that amount is required to complete the Russian program. There is only one source for such funds: the wealthier governments of Europe and North America. Japan will, necessarily, be preoccupied with its obligations under the CWC to remove the chemical munitions from China it left behind in World War II.

There is no disagreement on the need for additional funding. The 1996 Conference on Dismantlement and Destruction of Nuclear, Chemical and Conventional Weapons, held in Bonn, came to exactly this conclusion.

Jointly sponsored by NATO, the German Foreign Office and the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the conference was well represented by all affected parties and devoted a majority of its time to the chemical problem. Joachim Krause, deputy director of the Research Institute of the German Society for Foreign Affairs, summarized the situation accurately in his concluding remarks:

How does it come that European and Japanese efforts in this field are virtually

dwarfed by the U.S. programmes? There is nothing on the side of the Europeans that could—even if everything is added together—come close to the huge U.S. effort. I always hear European politicians complaining about the increasingly inward looking U.S. Congress and the lack of interest in international affairs. I wish we had at least one single parliament in Europe which would show the same degree of international responsibility as the U.S. Congress did in this field—and I wish we had parliamentarians such as Senators Nunn and Lugar, who made such concerns a matter of priority.

The problem is not obtaining agreement. The problem is finding the funds. To date, setting aside the U.S. contribution and the Russian contribution (in real and in kind), less than \$20 million has been earmarked for Russian CW demilitarization by all other funding sources. In a world facing a global economic recession, and with recent major shifts in the governments of Britain, France, Germany and Italy, using public expenditures to tidy up the mess in other lands left over from the Cold War is not politically appealing. Nonetheless, it is economically correct and environmentally necessary. The United States is more than willing to lead the search, or not to lead the search. But the funds must be found, or all will be the poorer. At this point, the journey to complete CW demilitarization seems long indeed, but the way seems clear. The United States and its allies must find sufficient funding to maintain the progress that has been established at Shchuch'ye, and the Russians must cooperate to the greatest extent possible. If this can be done, chemical weapons will steadily disappear, and the goals of the CWC can be fulfilled. If not, the CWC will steadily lose its way and become merely a hopeful, but ineffective, piece of paper.

NOTES

1. The ratification vote by the Russian Duma (the lower house of parliament) included language reflecting President Boris Yeltsin's pledge to secure international assistance for roughly 20 percent of total destruction costs.
2. U.S. Army, Office of Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization.
3. On September 5, 1989, Soviet Government Decision No. 1565 turned the Chapayevsk facility into a training center for CW demilitarization.
4. The United States was an original state-party to the CWC. Russia, which is not an original state-party, deposited its instrument of ratification on November 5, 1997, and the CWC entered into force for Moscow on December 5, 1997.



Despite the success of the high-temperature incineration technology used in the destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons (CW) stockpile underway, Russia has chosen an alternative approach, one which could further delay Moscow's destruction obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Above, an earth-covered, concrete "igloo," where CW munitions and agents are stored at the first full-scale U.S. destruction facility, near Tooele, Utah.

UNSCOM Future Uncertain After Strikes on Iraq

CULMINATING EIGHT years of frustration with Iraq's obstruction of UN disarmament efforts, on December 16 the United States and Britain unleashed 70 hours of air and missile strikes against weapons- and security-related sites in Iraq. Despite frequent warnings, the strikes surprised many nations and fractured the long-standing but fragile unity of the UN Security Council in dealing with Baghdad. Washington and London have publicly called for the replacement of Saddam Hussein's regime and insist that UN sanctions remain in place until Iraq proves it has disarmed. Conversely, Russia, France and China are urging the Security Council to adopt a new, more conciliatory approach that would lift the sanctions and change the mandate of UN inspectors from investigating Iraq's past weapons activities to a more limited monitoring role.

At the center of UN debate is UN Security Council Resolution 1194, adopted on September 9 in response to Iraq's August 5 suspension of UN weapons inspections. The compromise resolution promised a "comprehensive review" of Iraq's compliance with UN disarmament and other mandates once Baghdad resumed full cooperation with inspectors. (See ACT, August/September 1998.) The determination of whether Iraq was fully cooperating was left to the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM), responsible for the chemical, biological and ballistic missile components of Iraq's UN-mandated disarmament, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which handles nuclear issues, once they were able to resume their work inside Iraq.

When the Security Council's plan for the comprehensive review did not call for an immediate or automatic lifting of sanctions, Baghdad escalated its confrontation with the United Nations on October 31 by blocking UNSCOM (and, in effect, the IAEA) from conducting monitoring activities. The United States and Britain, which since the showdown with Iraq in February had left the task of gaining Iraq's cooperation up to the Security Council, began preparations for strikes on Iraq.

On November 14, Baghdad's last-minute capitulation and pledge of complete cooperation with UN inspectors staved off a U.S.-British strike. The inspectors re-

turned to work in Iraq four days later. Still charged by the Security Council with assessing whether Iraq was indeed providing the full cooperation required for the comprehensive review to begin, UNSCOM and the IAEA reported back to the Security Council on December 15.

While the IAEA reported that it had received sufficient cooperation to do its work, UNSCOM offered a sharply different assessment. Detailing Iraq's refusal to provide long-requested documents, its unwillingness to offer new information on its biological weapons or VX nerve gas programs, new forms of obstruction and interference and outright blockages of some attempted inspections, UNSCOM Executive Chairman Richard Butler reported that "Iraq did not provide the full cooperation it promised on 14 November."

Operation Desert Fox

Anticipating a negative report, on December 13 Washington and London ordered their forces to execute an attack, dubbed "Operation Desert Fox," on Iraq beginning December 16. Utilizing some 415 air- and sea-launched cruise missiles in addition to 650 aircraft sorties, U.S. and British forces struck over 100 targets, inflicting damage on 85 percent of them.

Publicly, the purpose of the attack was to "degrade" Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities and "diminish" Baghdad's ability to threaten its neighbors. Defense Secretary William Cohen insisted on December 18 that "We are not trying to destabilize [Saddam Hussein's] regime." Yet in his televised address announcing the strikes, President Clinton reiterated the U.S. position that the best way to end the Iraqi threat to the region "once and for all is with a new Iraqi government."

Because the same institutions that protect Iraq's weapons of mass destruction also protect Saddam Hussein's regime, the line between the two was easily blurred. All attacks other than 34 strikes on Iraqi air defenses focused on targets at the nexus of the regime and its proscribed weapons capabilities. As listed by the Defense Department, these targets included: security forces; presidential palaces, TV and radio,

command and control; air bases; the Republican Guard; and the Basrah oil refinery.

According to Defense officials, for example, the six targeted air bases hosted not only L-29 pilotless drones, suspected of having been modified to release chemical or biological agents, but also attack helicopters that played a critical role in the suppression of revolts in 1991. Similarly, the estimated \$500 million that Baghdad obtains each year from oil smuggling supports the cadres of regime supporters as well as scientists involved in ongoing weapons activities.

Notably absent from the Pentagon's target list were suspected chemical and biological production facilities. Secretary Cohen explained on December 17 that a number of facilities that have "civilian activities on certain floors and inappropriate activities on others" had been avoided to prevent civilian casualties. *The Washington Post* on December 19 cited Red Cross spokesmen who estimated 30 to 40 people had been killed and about 80 injured in metropolitan Baghdad. During his post-operation review on December 21, General Anthony Zinni, who commanded the strikes, said he was unaware of any civilian targets having been hit by accident.

Reaction to the Air Strikes

News of the first strikes on Iraq came in the middle of the Security Council's meeting to consider the December 15 UNSCOM and IAEA reports. Caught off guard by the U.S.-British attack, Russia and China declared the strikes "illegal." In addition, Moscow recalled its ambassador to Washington for consultations on December 17.

France, while accepting the U.S. and British claim that Baghdad's non-cooperation with UN inspectors was responsible for the strikes, proposed ending the international embargo on Iraq and transforming UNSCOM into a long-term monitoring group—essentially acquiescing in Iraq's retention of some of its proscribed weapons capabilities. French President Jacques Chirac called on December 20 for "fresh organization, fresh methods" to monitor Iraq's weapons development. French Foreign Minister Herbert Vedrine added, "We think its time to move on to a mechanism more geared to the risk of future danger, rather than the systematic examination of what has happened in the past."

Russia and China have long advocated

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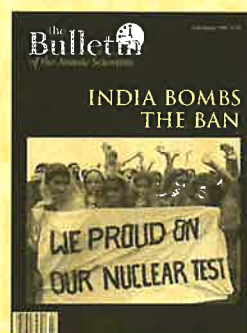
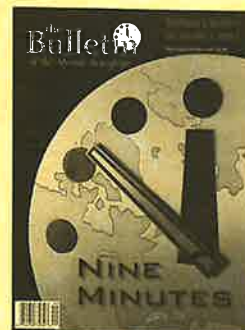
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