

Syria Chemical Chronology

[2008-2000](#) | [1999-1990](#) | [1980-1968](#)

Last update: October 2008

This annotated chronology is based on the data sources that follow each entry. Public sources often provide conflicting information on classified military programs. In some cases we are unable to resolve these discrepancies, in others we have deliberately refrained from doing so to highlight the potential influence of false or misleading information as it appeared over time. In many cases, we are unable to independently verify claims. Hence in reviewing this chronology, readers should take into account the credibility of the sources employed here.

Inclusion in this chronology does not necessarily indicate that a particular development is of direct or indirect proliferation significance. Some entries provide international or domestic context for technological development and national policymaking. Moreover, some entries may refer to developments with positive consequences for nonproliferation.

2008-2000

3 March 2008

The US Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) releases its Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2006. The section of the report addressing the Syrian chemical program states: "Syria continued to seek dual—use technology from foreign sources during the reporting period. Syria has had a chemical weapons program for many years and already has a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin, which can be delivered by aircraft or ballistic missile. In addition, Syria is developing the more toxic and persistent nerve agent VX. We assess that Syria remains dependent on foreign sources for key elements of its CW program, including precursor chemicals."

—Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2006, (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2008), p. 6, www.dni.gov.

3 March 2008

The US Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) releases its Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2005. In the section addressing Syrian chemical weapons activities the report states: "Syria continued to seek dual—use technology from foreign sources during the reporting period. Damascus already held a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin, but apparently has tried to develop a more toxic and persistent nerve agent. We assess that Syria remains dependent on foreign sources for key elements of its CW program, including precursor chemicals."

—Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2005, (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2008), p. 4, www.dni.gov.

27 February 2008

Testifying before the US Senate Select Committee on Armed Services, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Michael Maples, states that: "Syria's chemical warfare program is well established with a stockpile of nerve agent, which it can deliver by aircraft or ballistic missiles. During the past several years, Damascus has continued to seek chemical warfare—related precursors and expertise from foreign sources. Syria has the facilities and the expertise to domestically produce, store and deliver chemical warfare. Syria will continue to improve its chemical warfare for the foreseeable future to counter regional adversaries."

—Lieutenant General Michael Maples, Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States, Statement for the Record before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services, 27 February 2008, www.dia.mil.

11 February 2008

In an article discussing the 6 September 2007 attack on a Syrian facility by Israeli aircraft a Syrian official is quoted as saying "Syria had concluded ... that chemical warfare had little deterrent value against Israel, given its nuclear capability."

—Seymour M. Hersh, "A Strike in the Dark: What did Israel bomb in Syria?" *New Yorker*, 11 February 2008, www.newyorker.com.

26 July 2007

An attempt "to weaponise a 500 km [range] 'Scud C' with a mustard gas warhead" is reportedly undertaken at a Syrian military facility in the vicinity of Aleppo. An accident during the test results in a series of explosions that kill as many as 15 Syrian military personnel and an unspecified number of Iranian missile weaponization engineers who were also present. The accident allegedly results in the dispersion of quantities of mustard, sarin and VX nerve agents all of which were apparently stored in close proximity to the site of the initial accident. The Syrian government which immediately announces the explosion, claims that it is triggered by a sudden rise in ambient air temperature which causes a chemical reaction in sensitive and highly reactive substances. Although this explanation did not entail any acknowledgement of the presence of chemical weapons it could be a description of the explosion of fuel for Syria's Scud missiles.

—Robin Hughes, "Explosion aborts CW project run by Iran and Syria," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 26 September 2007, (first posted on Jane's website on 17 September 2007), www.janes.com.

11 January 2007

Testifying before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Michael Maples, states that "Syria has pursued development of a strategic deterrent principally based on ballistic missile, chemical, and, to a limited extent, biological warfare programs, as a means of countering Israel's conventional force superiority." Mr. Maples went on to note that "Syria has had a chemical weapons program for many years and already has a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin, which can be delivered by aircraft or ballistic missiles."

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



—Lieutenant General Michael Maples, Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States, 11 January 2007, p. 14, intelligence.senate.gov.

5 January 2007

The U.S. Department of the Treasury announces that it has designated three Syrian entities, the Higher Institute of Applied Science and Technology (HIAST), the Electronics Institute, and the National Standards and Calibration Laboratory (NSCL) pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 13382. This EO gives the Department of the Treasury the authority to freeze the assets of proliferators of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their supporters. The effect of the designation is to prohibit all transactions between the designees and any U.S. person and freeze any assets of the designees that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons. This move builds upon an earlier designation by the U.S. Department of Commerce in March 2005.

—Three Entities Targeted by Treasury for Supporting Syria's WMD Proliferation, 5 January 2007, www.treas.gov.

25—27 October 2006

A Syrian government representative attends the Third OPCW Workshop to Promote the Universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention among States in the Mediterranean Basin, the Middle East, and neighboring regions held in Rome, Italy.

—"Rome Workshop on Chemical Weapons Ban in the Middle East," *Chemical Disarmament Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (December 2006), p. 17—18.

15 June 2006

Iran and Syria sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that calls for accelerating the implementation of existing defense cooperation agreements. The MoU also calls for the "elimination of all weapons of mass destruction" which usually represents a demand for Israeli nuclear disarmament. [see also 14 November 2005]

—Robin Hughes, "Iran, Syria sign a further defence cooperation agreement," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 5 July 2006, www.janes.com.

May 2006

The US Central Intelligence Agency releases its Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2004. In the section dealing with Syria the report states: "Syria continued to seek dual—use technology from foreign sources during the reporting period. Damascus already held a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin, but apparently has tried to develop a more toxic and persistent nerve agent. We assess that Syria remains dependent on foreign sources for key elements of its CW program, including precursor chemicals."

—Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2004, (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2006), p. 5, www.dni.gov.

28 February 2006

Testifying before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Michael Maples, states that "We believe Syria already has a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin and apparently has

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



tried to develop a more toxic and persistent nerve agent."

—Lieutenant General Michael Maples, Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States, Statement for the Record before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 28 February 2006, p. 10, www.dia.mil.

26 January 2006

Georges Sada, formerly second in command of the Iraqi Air Force, claims that in June 2002 Iraq transported WMD to Syria aboard several refitted commercial jets, under the pretence of conducting a humanitarian mission for flood victims. He says that two commercial jets were converted to cargo jets, in order to carry raw materials and equipment related to WMD projects. The passenger seats, galleys, toilets and storage compartments were removed and new flooring was installed. Hundreds of tons of chemicals were reportedly included in the cargo shipments. Sada says he obtained the information from two Iraq Airways captains who were reportedly flying the sorties. The allegations are included in Sada's newly published book, "Saddam's Secrets" which he is promoting in the United States.

—Ira Stoll, "Iraq's WMD Secreted in Syria, Sada Says," The New York Sun, 26 January 2006, [web.lexis—nexis.com](http://web.lexis-nexis.com).

10 November 2005

In its Amended national report submitted to the U.N. 1540 Committee Syria includes the following amended statement: "The Syrian Arab Republic is a State that neither possesses nor intends to acquire weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery, or related materials, as Syria has made clear in a number of general statements presented to the United Nations, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and the First Committee of the General Assembly in New York, which deals with disarmament issues." On page 7 of the document Syria states: The Syrian Arab Republic does not possess any biological weapons, their means of delivery, or any related materials.

—*Annex to the note verbale dated 7 November 2005 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee: Amended national report* of the Syrian Arab Republic submitted pursuant to the comments of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) (Note No. S/AC.44/2005/DDA/OC.S dated 15 June 2005), 10 November 2005.*

5 May 2005

U.S. President George W. Bush renews sanctions he imposed on Syria one year ago.

—"Bush renews sanctions on Syria," Xinhua News Agency, 6 May 2005.

4 May 2005

Hearings on the controversial nomination of U.S. Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton to the position of U.S. ambassador to the UN continue. The chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee declines to endorse a request from Democrat committee members asking that the U.S. State Department turn over documents related to a long—running dispute between U.S. Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton and American intelligence agencies over assessments of Syria's weapons programs. The purpose of the request was to obtain evidence supporting claims that Mr. Bolton is prone to the manipulation and exaggeration of intelligence information.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



—"Lugar declines to endorse Democrats' request of Bolton documents," Bulletin News Network, 5 May 2005; Douglas Jehl, "A setback to Democrats' request for papers on Bolton and Syria," *New York Times*, 5 May 2005, p. A10.

27 April 2005

The U.S. State Department releases Country Reports on Terrorism 2004. Although the Syrian section of the report makes no reference to weapons of mass destruction or Syria's alleged chemical or biological weapons programs other sections of the report draw links between Syria, terrorism and WMD. Listing Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism the report goes on to say: "[m]ost worrisome is that these countries also have the capabilities to manufacture weapons of mass destruction and other destabilizing technologies that could fall into the hands of terrorists." At a press conference introducing the report U.S. State Department Counselor Philip Zelikow says: "Unfortunately, Cuba, North Korea, Syria, and in particular, Iran, continue to embrace terrorism as an instrument of national policy. Most worrisome is that these countries also have the capabilities to manufacture weapons of mass destruction and other destabilizing technologies that could fall into the hands of terrorists." —"Country Reports on Terrorism," US Department of State, April 2005, pp. 8, 90—91, www.state.gov; "Philip Zelikow holds a State Department news briefing on the release of the Annual Country Report on Terrorism," Political Transcript Wire, 27 April 2005.

27 April 2005

The Iraq Survey Group (ISG) publicly releases the Addendums to the Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisors to the DCI on Iraq's WMD. On the question of purported transfers of Iraqi WMD to Syria the report says: "There was evidence of a discussion of possible WMD collaboration initiated by a Syrian security officer, and ISG received information about movement of material out of Iraq, including the possibility that WMD was involved. In the judgment of the working group, these reports were sufficiently credible to merit further investigation. ISG was unable to complete its investigation and it is unable to rule out the possibility that WMD was evacuated to Syria before the war. It should be noted that no information from debriefing of Iraqis in custody supports this possibility." The report concluded that "based on the evidence available at present, ISG judged that it was unlikely that an official transfer of WMD material from Iraq to Syria took place. However, ISG was unable to rule out unofficial movement of limited WMD—related materials."

—"Addendums to the Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisors to the DCI on Iraq's WMD (Duelfer Report)," March 2005, www.cia.gov; Dana Priest, "Report finds no evidence Syria hid Iraqi arms," *Washington Post*, 26 April 2005; Katherine Shrader, "Weapons inspector ends WMD search in Iraq," Associated Press, 26 April 2005; Rowan Scarborough, "CIA can't rule out WMD move to Syria," *Washington Times*, 27 April 2005, www.washingtontimes.com; "Puncturing another weapons myth," *New York Times*, 30 April 2005, p. A12; Anders Strindberg, "Report finds no evidence of WMD transfers to Syria," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 June 2005.

26 April 2005

Unnamed U.S. intelligence officials are quoted as stating that Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton "had planned to say in a classified portion of his [July 2003 Congressional] testimony that Syria's development of chemical and biological weapons posed a threat to the stability in the Middle East." Intelligence officials say this prepared testimony "went well beyond what the United States had

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



previously said about Syria's weapons program."

—Douglas Jehl, "Ex—Officials say Bolton inflated Syrian Danger," *New York Times*, 26 April 2005, p. A1; Douglas Jehl, "Intelligence official told staff to resist Bolton," *International Herald Tribune*, 29 April 2005, p. 7.

1 April 2005

"Scientists from Surrey—based CABI Bioscience have been examining fungal—based insecticide to control Sunn Pest as part of an Integrated Pest Management project coordinated [sic] by ICARDA in Syria." CABI Bioscience is part of a global not for profit organization dedicated to improving human welfare. The ICARDA is the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas that works through a network of partnerships with national, regional and international institutions.

—"CABI Bioscience: Fungi to help fight key pest of Middle East cereals," M2, 1 April 2005.

8 March 2005

In Washington DC, Republican Representative Ileana Ros—Lehtinen and Democrat Eliot Engel announce that they are co—sponsoring a bill pressing for harsher sanctions on Syria and other countries that provide support to Damascus. The Lebanon and Syria Liberation Act, calls on President Bush "to push for tighter UN and other international sanctions against Syria. The bill would also withhold foreign aid to any country receiving U.S. assistance which could help Syria obtain nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons, among other measures."

—"Lawmakers propose new Syria sanctions," Agence France Presse, 8 March 2005.

7 March 2005

Speaking in the United States, Hans Blix, former head of UNMOVIC says: "I don't believe that weapons from Iraq have been smuggled into Syria."

—Derek Gentile, "Ex—weapons inspector in Berkshires," *The Berkshire Eagle*, 8 March 2005.

7 March 2005

The Center of Studies and Research at Naif Arab University for Security Sciences in Saudi Arabia holds a seminar on biological terrorism. Experts participating in the seminar are from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bahrain, Comoros, Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Qatar, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Egypt.

—"Seminar on biological terrorism opens in Saudi capital," Financial Times Information, 7 March 2005.

21 February 2005

Representatives from Syria, and other Middle Eastern and Western European nations, attend an international conference on bio—safety at the Al—Bustan Palace hotel in Oman, under the patronage of Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq al—Said, Oman's Minister of Heritage and Culture. The three—day event is organized by the Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources. "The conferees ... discuss case studies assessing risks to bio—safety. The conference...also provide[s] the opportunity for participants to exchange information and experience on bio—safety."

—"Int'l Bio—Safety Conference to open today in Oman," Asia Pulse, 21 February 2005.

16 February 2005

In testimony before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence the Director of the Defense Intelligence

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



Agency, Vice Admiral Lowell E. Jacoby, addresses the question of Syria's pursuit of WMD capabilities. He says: "Longstanding Syrian policies of supporting terrorism [and] relying on WMD for strategic deterrence...remain largely unchanged."

—Vice Admiral Lowell E. Jacoby, Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States, Statement for the Record before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 16 February 2005, p. 15, www.dia.mil.

17 January 2005

Unnamed US congressional officials, speaking in anticipation of the final report of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), say that "they have not seen any information — never 'a piece,' said one' — indicating that WMD or significant amounts of components and equipment were transferred from Iraq to neighboring Syria, Jordan or elsewhere."

—Katherine P. Shrader, "US Intelligence found no evidence WMD moved from Iraq," Associated Press, 17 January 2005, web.lexis—nexis.com.

17 January 2005

U.S. Intelligence and congressional officials say they have not seen any evidence that WMD components or equipment were moved from Iraq to Syria, Jordan or elsewhere before or after the March 2003 U.S. invasion. In a separate statement Charles Duelfer, head of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) says: "What I can tell you is that I believe we know a lot of materials left Iraq and went to Syria. There was certainly a lot of traffic across the border points. But whether in fact in any of these trucks there was WMD—related materials, I cannot say."

—Katherine P. Shrader, "U.S. intelligence found no evidence WMD moved from Iraq," Associated Press, 17 January 2005, web.lexis—nexis.com.

14 January 2005

White House spokesman, Scott McClellan, rules out the possibility that Iraqi WMD may have been moved to Syria.

—Brian Knowlton, "Search for banned weapons in Iraq ends quietly," *International Herald Tribune*, 14 January 2005, p. 3.

5 January 2005

Pakistani Federal Minister for Science and Technology Ch. Nouraz Shakoore Khan and Syrian Deputy Minister for Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Mohamed Najib Abdul Wahid participate in the meeting of the Pak—Syria Joint Committee on Science and Technology. Topics to be discussed and potentially finalized in the Joint Committee meetings "include items in the fields of Agricultural Research, Biotechnology, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Water Resource Management in Arid Areas, Oceanographic Research standards, Accreditation, Precision Mechanics."

—"Latest Technology is need for progress in all sectors: Nouraz," *Financial Times Information*, 5 January 2005.

6—10 December 2004

A Syrian representative attends the Meeting of States Parties to the BWC in Geneva, Switzerland. The purpose of the meeting is to continue preparations for the Sixth BWC Review Conference which is to take place in 2006.

—*The CBW Conventions Bulletin*, No. 66 (December 2004), p. 23.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



23 November 2004

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency submits its *Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions 1 July Through 31 December 2003* in accordance with S.721 of the FY1997 Intelligence Authorization Act. In respect to Syria, the report states that until 31 December 2003, "Syria probably also continued to develop a BW capability." This statement, which repeats the statements issued on this matter by the CIA for a number of years now suggests an absence of new developments.

—*Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions 1 July Through 31 December 2003* (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, 2004), p. 6, www.cia.gov.

November 2004

The German Zollkriminalamt (Federal Customs Administration) releases a report entitled *Exportkontrolle Informationen sensible Länder [Export Controls: Information about Countries of Concern]*. The section addressing Syria says: "Syria is presumed to have initiated biological weapons research in the late 1980s under the auspices of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC, or CERS), Damascus. Syria is thought to have developed biological weapons agents such as botulinum toxin, algae toxins and Bacillus anthracis." [original text in German — translation by Harvard Sussex Program]

—*The CBW Conventions Bulletin*, No. 67 (March 2005), p. 12; *Exportkontrolle Informationen sensible Länder*, (Berlin, Federal Customs Administration, November 2005) p. 8, www.zollkriminalamt.de.

27 October 2004

US Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, John R. Bolton, delivers a speech at the Tokyo American Center following the conclusion of a Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) related naval exercise in the sea of Japan. Bolton thanks Japan for hosting Team Samurai and says: "While PSI is helping stem the spread of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials, serious proliferation threats remain. These threats must be met head on by active, concerted efforts through PSI cooperation and other available means. North Korea, Iran, and Syria, among others, are clearly states of proliferation concern; we believe that PSI partners should be ready to scrutinize shipments going to or from such states or terrorist groups."

—John R. Bolton, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, *Stopping the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Asian—Pacific Region: The Role of the Proliferation Security Initiative*, Address to the Tokyo American Center, 27 October 2004, www.state.gov.

19 October 2004

Syria and the European Union (EU) initial a 1,450 page association agreement. The agreement, which will enter into force after it is ratified by EU and Syrian political institutions, provides a framework for increased economic relations between the parties. It also includes sections addressing the expansion of social, cultural and political ties. The finalization of the agreement was delayed by disputes over the late inclusion of language on fighting terrorism and the non proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. This language was added at the insistence of German and the UK [see 23 December 2003].

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



—"EU and Syria mark end of negotiations for an Association Agreement," Press Release IP/04/1246, 19 October 2004, www.eu.int.

8 October 2004

Charles Duelfer, head of the Iraq Survey Group is quoted responding to a question about the possibility that Iraqi WMD were transferred out of Iraq prior to March 2003. He says: "We cannot yet definitively say whether or not WMD materials were transferred out of Iraq before the war. Neither can we definitely answer some questions about possible retained stocks though, as I say, it is my judgment that retained stocks did not exist." [By excluding the possibility of retained stocks of WMD, or new production prior to March 2003 Duelfer also excludes the possibility that WMD were transferred to Syria or any other country.]

—Janine Zacharia, "Bush concedes Iraq had no WMDs," *Jerusalem Post*, 8 October 2004, p. 1, web.lexis-nexis.com.

17 August 2004

The CIA is reported to have discovered that in the weeks before the war, Saddam Hussein replaced Iraqi border guards with trusted intelligence agents who supervised moving truckloads of contraband materials into Syria. Although officials caution that the new information is "not considered concrete evidence Saddam shipped chemical and biological agents to Syria before the U.S. invasion," there is a clear intention to raise the possibility that this transfer did occur.

—Niles Lathem, "Saddam's WMD may be in Syria," *New York Post*, 17 August 2004, p. 10, web.lexis-nexis.com.

26 July 2004

In Damascus, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq Shara says that the EU has recognized it had made a "mistake" by insisting on the WMD clause in the EU Mediterranean joint political and economic pact. "I believe [the EU] have started to shift closer to our point of view, and I do not rule out that between now and September there may be a new thing regarding the Syrian European partnership, toward signing," says Shara. The next day, the Lebanese Daily Star quotes an unidentified Beirut-based European diplomat as saying that the EU has "somewhat diluted" the clause by "rephrasing" it, but that it was really the Syrians that "gave in", not the EU.

—*The CBW Conventions Bulletin*, No. 65 (September 2004), p. 49.

15 July 2004

In Damascus, EU envoy Annalisa Gianella holds talks on weapons of mass destruction proliferation with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara. Speaking after the meeting Gianella says: "The purpose of my visit is to explain to our friends, the Syrians, the security strategy and the strategy against proliferation of WMD which were adopted by EU countries." The official Syrian news agency quotes Shara as saying "all parties without exception (including Israel) must cooperate to make the Middle East a region free of weapons of mass destruction."

—*The CBW Conventions Bulletin*, No. 65 (September 2004), p. 46.

15 June 2004

The London Al-Sharq al-Aswat reports that yesterday's meeting of EU foreign ministers did not approve the contentious draft Association Agreement with Syria [see 8 April 2004] because of "the absence of any new element

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



that justifies returning to it or discussing it." The latest draft of the agreement, approved by all 25 EU member states, consists of a preamble and three clauses. It calls on Syria to implement the agreements on WMD it has signed and to sign the BWC and CWC. It also calls for setting up monitoring mechanisms and a commitment not to import, export or allow the transit of the components of such weapons. According to unidentified European diplomatic sources quoted by the newspaper, Syria had tried to intervene to achieve a more flexible paragraph but to no avail. The sources also state that Syria objects to the fact that the EU's Association Agreement with Israel does not include a similar paragraph and believes that the EU's stance is a result of US pressure.

—*The CBW Conventions Bulletin*, No. 65 (September 2004), p. 35.

7 June 2004

The government of the United Kingdom releases its annual report on the application of strategic export controls in 2003. The report notes the approval of exports of civil and military NBC protection equipment, including clothing and respirators, to Syria.

—United Kingdom Strategic Export Controls, Annual Report 2003, (June 2004), pp. 390 and 391, www.fco.gov.uk.

13 May 2004

Libya declares — in a statement read out by U.S. Under—Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton in Washington, DC — that it will "not deal in military goods or services with countries that it considers of serious weapons of mass destruction proliferation concern." Bolton says that Libya included North Korea, Syria and Iran as countries with which it had renounced all military trade. Subsequent to Bolton's comments, in a statement carried by the official Libyan news agency JANA, the Libyan Foreign Ministry says: "The Libyan statement was clear, it cited no country and was not aimed at Syria...Tripoli cannot say that Syria has WMD since it is a peaceful country whose land is occupied and is threatened by Israel."

—*The CBW Conventions Bulletin*, No. 65 (September 2004), p. 23.

11 May 2004

Using authority granted to him by the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, U.S. President George W. Bush imposes sanctions on Syria for its alleged pursuit of WMD and support of terrorist groups. The sanctions ban all U.S. exports to Syria except food and medicine; ban Syrian airlines from flying to or from the United States; restrict relations between U.S. banks and the Syrian national bank; and authorize the U.S. Treasury Department to freeze assets of Syrian nationals allegedly involved in terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, occupation of Lebanon, or terrorism in Iraq.

—Megan K. Stack, "Accusing Syria of Aiding Terrorists, Bush Imposes Sanctions," *LA Times*, 12 May 2004, p. A3, web.lexis-nexis.com.

8 April 2004

Efforts to conclude a Free Trade Agreement between Syria and the European Union [see 9 December 2003] stall. Syrian officials publicly complain that the EU has added new clauses to the proposed agreement that require all parties to uphold bans on the possession or production of WMD including biological weapons. The Syrian officials complain that this clause is discriminatory as a similar agreement between the EU and Israel does not include any such clause. Syrian Minister of Expatriate Affairs, Mr. Buthaina Shabaan says: "[w]e feel the wording is a deliberate

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



attempt to raise impossible issues." He also rejects suggestions that Syria replicate Libya's example and give up its chemical weapons. He points to Israel's occupation of Syrian territory and possession of nuclear weapons.

—Daniel Williams, "Syria—EU Trade Deal Stalls Over Chemical Weapons Issue," *Washington Post*, 8 April 2004, web.lexis—nexis.com.

25 March 2004

In Israel, the Sub—Committee for Intelligence and the Secret Services of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee publishes a report entitled "The Committee of Enquiry into the Intelligence System in Light of the War in Iraq." The report states that the possibility that Iraq's alleged WMD stockpiles and their means of production "were moved to Syria on the eve of the war, still exists."

—Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, *The Committee of Enquiry into the Intelligence System in Light of the War in Iraq Report — Volume 1 (Unrestricted section)*, 25 March 2004, p. 28.

16 January 2004

US Secretary of State Colin Powell is interviewed on British television and makes a number of statements regarding US relations with Syria. Powell says: "We have not characterized Syria as one of the members of the axis of evil but we are concerned about some of Syria's policies with respect to supporting terrorist activity, with respect of what they might be doing with weapons of mass destruction." Powell added that: "They [Syria] should follow the example of other nations in the region, especially Libya." [This statement is clearly part of a broader effort to apply pressure on Syria in the wake of Libya's December 2003 repudiation of its weapons of mass destruction programs.]

—"Powell renews call on Syria to end support for terrorism, WMD," *Agence France Presse*, 16 January 2004, web.lexis—nexis.com.

9 January 2004

Responding to the claims of Syrian dissident Nijar Nijjof that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction were smuggled into Syria in February and March 2003, US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice says: "I don't think we are at the point that we can make a judgment on this issue," Rice said. "There hasn't been any hard evidence that such a thing happened. But obviously we're going to follow up every lead, and it would be a serious problem if that did in fact happen." Rice added: "I can't dismiss anything that we haven't had an opportunity to fully assess."

—"ROUNDUP: No proof Iraq smuggled weapons to Syria, Bush advisor says," *Deutsche Presse—Agentur*, 9 January 2004, web.lexis—nexis.com; "Dissident claims Saddam's weapons were smuggled into Syria," *ONASA News Agency*, 9 January 2004, web.lexis—nexis.com.

9 January 2004

Exiled Syrian human rights campaigner Nijar Nijjof appears on Britain's Channel Five News claiming that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction were moved to Syria in the months prior to the US led invasion of March 2003. Nijjof claims that a senior Syrian military intelligence source has told him that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction were smuggled into Syria in ambulances under the supervision of Brigadier Zoul—Himla Shalish, chief of the presidential guards. Nijjof asserted that the Iraqi chemical and biological weapons are now stored at three locations in central Syria, near the cities of Hama and Homs; a bunker controlled by the Syrian Department for Document Security (Bureau 489) built into a mountain near the town of Misyaf; a bunker 20 meters (66 feet) beneath a radar base in

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



the town of Chenchar; a "large factory workshop" making missiles and warheads in the village of Tal Snan.
—James Lyons, "Saddam's weapons smuggled to Syria," *Liverpool Daily Post*, 10 January 2004, p. 4.

6 January 2004

Responding to Syrian President Bashar Assad's call for Israel to give up its undeclared arsenal of nuclear weapons [see 5 January 2004] a senior British government official says: "Israel is in a unique position as the only state whose very existence is threatened. There is no point in asking for a WMD—free Middle East while there are countries parading missiles with a sign up the side saying Death to Israel." An additional unnamed "senior Western diplomatic source said: "They [the Syrians] have to make a decision about whether [their] chemical weapons will make much of a difference against the Israelis, or whether they would not be in a better position by saying, 'we're giving it up and now we want a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction.'"

—Anton La Guardia, "Syria rebuffed by Washington, London: President Assad told to give up weapons of mass destruction," *National Post* (Canada), 7 January 2004, p. A10.

5 January 2004

Syrian President Bashar Assad is reported to have said that Syria is entitled to defend itself by acquiring its own chemical and biological deterrent. He also says that any deal to destroy Syria's chemical and biological capability would come about only if Israel agreed to abandon its nuclear arsenal.

—"Syria ties disarmament to Israel," *Calgary Herald*, 6 January 2004, p. A5, web.lexis—nexis.com.

24 December 2003

Following a summit meeting in the Egyptian town of Sharm El—Sheikh, the presidents of Egypt and Syria issue a joint statement that includes language on the issue of WMD. "The two presidents underlined their call to eliminate weapons of mass destruction from the region and to work jointly to achieve this goal within the framework of the United Nations and other international bodies. Events in the region have shown the importance of making the Middle East, Israel included, a region free from all WMD." The statement makes no mention of alleged WMD in either of the two countries and is generally perceived as directed at Israel.

—"Egypt, Syria presidents urge mideast free of weapons of mass destruction," Agence France Presse, 24 December 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

24 December 2003

US Secretary of State Colin Powell is quoted as calling on Syria to emulate the example of Libya and repudiate its pursuit of WMD and support of terrorism. Powell adds that Syria needs "to get out of the hole that you have been in for all these years."

—Maxim Kniazkov, "US advises rogue states to "get smart" and follow Libya's example," Agence France Presse, 24 December 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

23 December 2003

The United Kingdom indicates that it is trying to secure the support of France and Germany in order to apply pressure to Syria on the issues of WMD, terrorism, and Iraq. One goal of the proposed pressure is to secure Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is also revealed that Britain and Germany have warned the

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



European Commission, which recently completed technical discussions with Syria on a trade agreement, that they want to see stronger language in the proposed agreement on the topic of WMD.

-Ian Black, "UK plan to pressure Syria on weapons," *The Guardian*, 23 December 2003, p. 1, web.lexis—nexis.com.

22 December 2003

In the wake of Libya's repudiation of WMD, reports emerge that British Prime Minister Tony Blair has ordered British diplomats to negotiate with Syria and Iran on a handover of their alleged arsenals of chemical and biological weapons. A British diplomat is quoted as saying: "We are engaged in similar processes to those which got results in Libya. There is a lot going on behind the scenes and we are hopeful of progress."

-"Blair's bid to rid Iran and Syria of WMDs," *The Daily Record (Scotland)*, 22 December 2003, p. 4, web.lexis—nexis.com.

19 December 2003

In a surprise development, Libya announces that it will join the Chemical Weapons Convention, destroy its existing stockpiles of chemical weapons, and end its pursuit of all WMD, and long—range missiles.

-David E. Sanger, Judith Miller "Libya to give up arms programs, Bush announces," *New York Times*, 20 December 2003, Section A p. 1, web.lexis—nexis.com.

12 December 2003

US President George W. Bush signs the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act into law. He also issues a statement that his "approval of the act does not constitute my adoption of the various statements of policy in the act as US foreign policy."

-Jennifer Loven, "Bush signs Syria sanctions bill," Associated Press, 12 December 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

9 December 2003

After five years of negotiations, Syrian and European negotiators reach an agreement in principle on an association accord. The chief EU negotiator, Mr. Christian Leffler notes: "Syria and the EU have reached an accord on all points, even the political ones." The next stage in the process is approval of the agreement by political authorities. A successful conclusion of the agreement is necessary for Syria's participation in efforts to create an EU—Mediterranean free trade area by 2010.

-Rouaida Mabardi, "Syria, EU agree in principle on association accord," Agence France Presse, 9 December 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

2 December 2003

Speaking at a conference organized by the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis and the Fletcher School's International Security Studies Program, US Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton issues a warning to Syria and a number of other states. Mr Bolton says: "Rogue states such as Iran, North Korea, Syria, Libya and Cuba, whose pursuit of weapons of mass destruction makes them hostile to US interests, will learn that their covert programs will not escape detection or consequences." He went on to warn: "[w]hile we will pursue diplomatic solutions whenever possible, the United States and its allies are also willing to deploy more robust techniques, such as the interdiction and seizure of illicit goods. If rogue states are not willing to follow the

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



logic of nonproliferation norms, they must be prepared to face the logic of adverse consequences."

-"Washington warns five countries over weapons of mass destruction," *Deutsche Presse—Agentur*, 3 December 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

20 November 2003

The US House of Representatives votes 408 to 8 to accept the US Senate version of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act.

-"Legislation: Congress clears Syria sanctions," *Facts on File World News*, 20 November 2003, p. 956A2, web.lexis—nexis.com.

13 November 2003

Syrian Information Minister Ahmad al—Hassan issues a statement in which he says: "Syria will not close the door on dialogue with the American administration, even if the hawks in that administration want to push for escalation in an unjustifiable way." This statement is the first direct response by a Syrian official to the US Senate's passage of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act.

-Rouaida Mabardi, "Syria to pursue dialogue with US after sanctions move," *Agence France Presse*, 13 November 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

12 November 2003

Responding to the US Senate's passage of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, Syria's *Al—Baath* newspaper observes, "those who want any useful dealings with Syria must understand that only dialogue can bear fruit."

-Rouaida Mabardi, "Syria caught between defiance and fear of US sanctions threat," *Agence France Presse*, 12 November 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

11 November 2003

With an 89 to 4 vote, the US Senate passes the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act. The bill was passed by the House of Representatives on 15 October 2003; the Senate version of the bill is slightly different. It includes a provision allowing the president to invoke a national security waiver asserting that it is in the US interest not to sanction Syria.

-Carl Hulse, "Senate Follows House Vote and Votes to Impose Sanctions against Syria," *New York Times*, 12 November 2003, p. A10.

10 November 2003

The US Central Intelligence Agency submits its "Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions," for 1 January Through 30 June 2003 in accordance with S.721 of the FY1997 Intelligence Authorization Act. In respect to Syria, the report states that until June 2003, "Syria continued to seek CW—related expertise from foreign sources during the reporting period. Damascus already held a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin, but apparently tried to develop more toxic and persistent nerve agents. Syria remained dependent on foreign sources for key elements of its CW program, including precursor chemicals and key production equipment."

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



- *Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions* (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, 2003), p. 6, www.cia.gov.

30 October 2003

Mr. William J. Burns, US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, provides written testimony to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee in which he states: "Syria is fully committed to expanding and improving its chemical and biological weapons programs, which it believes serve as a deterrent to regional adversaries."

-*Statement by Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs William J. Burns to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, 30 October 2003, foreign.senate.gov.

30 October 2003

In testimony before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Cofer Black, the State Department counter—terrorism coordinator, says: "[w]hile there is currently no information indicating that the Syrian government has transferred WMD to terrorist organizations or would permit such groups to acquire them, Syria's ties to numerous terrorist groups underlie the reasons for our continued attention."

-Stephanie Griffith, "Despite US pressure, Syria continues to support terror: State Department," *Agence France Presse*, 31 October 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

28 October 2003

Speaking with reporters, General James R. Clapper Jr., head of the US National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA), suggests that evidence of Iraqi WMD programs was moved to Syria, and perhaps other countries, prior to the US invasion of March 2003. Describing his position as an educated hunch, Clapper notes that US intelligence tracked large numbers of Iraqi trucks moving into Syria in early 2003 and that these "may have been people leaving the scene, and unquestionably, I am sure, material."

-John J. Lumpkin, "Intelligence chief suggests Iraq's WMD moved outside country," *Associated Press*, 28 October 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com; Douglas Jehl, "The Struggle for Iraq: Weapons Search; Iraqis Removed Arms Material, U.S. Aide Says," *New York Times*, 28 October 2003, Section A p. 10, web.lexis—nexis.com.

17 October 2003

The Organization of the Islamic Conference concludes its tenth summit in the city of Putrajaya, Malaysia by issuing a special declaration denouncing "the American Congress' Accountability Act to impose unilateral sanctions on Syria."

-Kazi Mahmood, "Malaysia: OIC slams Syria sanctions, but offers no Iraq resolution," *IPS—Inter Press Service*, 17 October 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

16 October 2003

Speaking in Putrajaya, Malaysia, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher describes impending US moves to apply sanctions on Syria as inadmissible and unjustifiable.

-*"Egypt denounces US moves to sanction Syria," Agence France Presse*, 16 October 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



15 October 2003

The US House of Representatives passes the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act. The vote is 398 to 4. The bill requires the president to enact at least two of a possible six economic sanctions against Syria if Damascus fails to end its alleged support for terrorism and its suspected efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction.

-Stephanie Griffith, "US House of representatives votes to sanction Syria for alleged terror ties," Agence France Presse, 16 October 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

10 October 2003

US Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton gives a speech in London in which he links Syria with the so—called Axis of Evil. In his speech, Bolton accuses Syria of sponsoring terrorism and pursuing WMD. Bolton also included Libya and Cuba in the Axis of Evil.

-Michael Evans and Richard Beeston, "US extends axis of evil to Syria, Libya and Cuba," *The Times (London)*, 10 October 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

8 October 2003

White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan indicates that the Bush administration has ended its two—year long opposition to passage of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act. In the US Congress, the House International Relations Committee approves the bill 33 to 2, freeing it for a vote in the House of Representatives. The bill has 275 co—sponsors in the House.

-"Bush clears way for Syrian sanctions bill," Agence France Presse, 8 October 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com. Glenn Kessler, "Support grows for sanctions on Syria; Bill would give Bush six options," *Washington Post*, 8 October 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

6 October 2003

Israeli aircraft bomb and destroy a facility 14 miles from Damascus that is described as a training facility for Islamic Jihad terrorists. This is the first raid on Syria by Israeli forces since 1982.

-Rachel Walley, Israeli's target Syrian base," *Birmingham Post*, 6 October 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

3 October 2003

Responding to reporters' questions, the head of the US Iraq Survey Group (ISG), David Kay, says that the group has "multiple reports from Iraqis of substances being moved across borders." Kay further notes that there were movements of Iraqi military and scientific officials to Syria and Jordan before and immediately after the beginning of the war. Kay also says that the ISG does not know if any of these movements were directly related to Iraqi WMD programs.

-Justin Cole, "Kay says Iraqi WMD may have been moved abroad," Agence France Presse, 3 October 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

16 September 2003

US Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton gives testimony before Congress in which he describes Syria's arsenal of chemical weapons as the largest in the Arab world. Mr. Bolton

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



also indicates that the United States is continuing to investigate rumors that Iraq transferred its WMD to Syria prior to the US invasion in March 2003, which he describes as unconfirmed but a cause for concern.

-Bill Gertz, "US Probe focuses on Syria Weapons," *Washington Times*, 17 September 2003, www.washingtontimes.com.

July 2003

A senior Israeli defense source claims that "at least 100 Syrian long—range ballistic missiles, equipped with VX" are aimed at Israel.

-"Syria's 'nerve gas' missiles," *Jane's Foreign Report*, 31 July 2003, www.janes.com.

31 May 2003

US President George Bush announces a new effort to combat weapons of mass destruction (WMD) called the Proliferation Security Initiative. The goal is to work with other concerned states to develop new means to disrupt the proliferation trade at sea, in the air, and on land. The initiative reflects the need for a more dynamic, proactive approach to the global proliferation problem. It envisions partnerships of states working in concert, employing their national capabilities to develop a broad range of legal, diplomatic, economic, military, and other tools to interdict threatening shipments of WMD and missile—related equipment and technologies.

-NTI website; "Transcript — Bush Urges NATO Nations to Unite in Fight against Terrorism," 31 May 2003, www.nti.org.

3 May 2003

US Secretary of State Colin Powell visits Damascus to discuss US—Syria relations and US concerns regarding Syria's support of terrorism and pursuit of WMD. Speaking with reporters prior to his meeting with Syrian President Bashar Assad, Secretary Powell dismisses a Syrian proposal to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction labeling the proposal "political." He says; "[i]t has always been a US goal that conditions should be created in this part of the world where no nation would have a need for weapons of mass destruction." "I am not supportive at the moment of a particular declaration that might be put forward for political purposes or to highlight the issue."

-" Powell trashes Syrian WMD proposal, for now," *The Statesman* (India), 4 May 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

28 April 2003

Speaking at a press conference in the Hague, US Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control Stephen Rademaker says: "[t]he US strongly supports universality and we are concerned about states not party to the Convention (for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) like Syria, Libya and North Korea that have an active chemical weapons program." Asked about Syria, Mr. Rademaker says that he would "absolutely" support a mission by the OPCW's director to convince Damascus to join the Convention.

-"US concerned over Syria, Libya and North Korea seeking chemical weapons," Agence France Presse, 28 April 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

17 April 2003

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq al—Sharaa says that Syria will not allow inspections of its military arsenal and

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



territory in order to refute US accusations of chemical weapons possession. The minister is speaking after a meeting in Cairo with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. He further states that Syria "will only contribute, with its [Arab] brothers and the countries of the whole world, to transforming the middle east into a region devoid of all weapons of mass destruction, chemical, biological or nuclear." This statement further underlines the Syrian position that all WMD issues in the region need to be addressed at the same time, including Israel's possession of WMD, rather than on a case by case basis.

- "Iraq War: Syria will not allow weapons inspections — Update," *AFX European Focus*, 17 April 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

16 April 2003

On behalf of the 22—state Arab League, Syria introduces a draft resolution in the UN Security Council calling for all states in the region to join all three anti—WMD treaties: the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

- "Syria asks UN to put heat on Israel's nuclear arms," *Reuters*, 16 April 2003, www.reuters.com.

15 April 2003

Speaking on French television, France's European Affairs Minister Noelle Lenoir says that France does not have any proof to support US accusations against Syria. The minister adds: "the world is dangerous enough, without our targeting one country or another on the question of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction." The statement is made in response to claims made by US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld that Syria has tested chemical weapons in the previous 15 months.

- "France has no proof that Syria tested chemical weapons — Minister," *AFX European Focus*, 15 April 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

15 April 2003

Speaking in Cairo, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher responds to a reporter's question about proposed US sanctions on Syria related to that country's alleged pursuit of chemical weapons with the following statement: "Egypt rejects all threats against an Arab state." He also says: "we feel threats are not an appropriate way of dealing with a problem, if there really is one." Responding to speculation that the US might be considering military action against Syria now that it has concluded the initial conquest of Iraq, Maher says: "Arab countries and the international community are unanimous on [the need] to avoid what happened in Iraq being repeated once again."

- "Egypt rejects US pressure on Syria over alleged chemical weapons," *Agence France Presse*, 15 April 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

14 April 2003

Speaking with reporters, Osama al—Baz, a close adviser of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, states that there is "a great difference between Syria and Iraq under Saddam Hussein." He adds that Egypt is sure that Syria does not have chemical weapons.

- "Egypt rejects US pressure on Syria over alleged chemical weapons," *Agence France Presse*, 15 April 2003, web.lexis—nexis.com.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



13 April 2003

In a briefing to reporters at the White House US President George W. Bush says: "we believe there are chemical weapons in Syria." He also warns that "we expect cooperation" from Syria in respect to this and other issues such as Iraq.

- "Bush says Syria has chemical weapons, country must cooperate over Iraq," *AFX European Focus*, 13 April 2003, [web.lexis—nexis.com](http://web.lexis-nexis.com).

10 April 2003

The CIA releases its unclassified "Biannual Report on WMD Proliferation." It repeats previous assessments that Syria possesses a stockpile of weaponized sarin and is pursuing the development of other more lethal and persistent CW agents.

- *Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions, 1 January through 30 June 2002*, (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, 2003), www.cia.gov.

9 April 2003

US Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton tells a press conference in Rome, "I think Syria is a good case where I hope that they will conclude that the chemical weapons program...that they have been pursuing are things that they should give up...It is a wonderful opportunity for Syria to forswear the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction..."

- "US tells Iran, Syria, N. Korea 'learn from Iraq'," Reuters, 9 April 2003, www.reuters.com.

7 April 2003

It is revealed that the United Kingdom exported unspecified "toxic chemical precursors" to Syria in 2000 and 2001 that could be used for the manufacture of chemical weapons despite the existence of tight export controls on such materials.

- Douglas Davis, "UK said to have sold chemical, night vision equipment to Syria," *Jerusalem Post*, 7 April 2003, p. 7.

5—6 April 2003

It is alleged that during the night of 5 to 6 April 2003, Saddam Hussein's entire chemical weapons arsenal, which reportedly includes hundreds of artillery rockets for truck mounted Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS), travels from Tikrit in Iraq to eastern Syria. Reportedly the weapons are subsequently stored near the town of Kamishli (Al—Qamishli), a town on the Syria — Turkey border.

[This report has been included for completeness but should be treated as of uncertain value pending more substantial confirmation.]

- Yossef Bodansky, *The Secret History of the Iraq War* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), pp. 232 and 438.

March 2003

Sources in Jerusalem claim that Britain has informed Israel that it has warned Syrian President Bashar al—Assad not to store Iraq's WMD in his country or cause an escalation along the Lebanese border with Hizballah's help. The warning was relayed to Bashar al—Assad by a special British emissary several days prior.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



-"Israeli Political Sources: UK Warned Syria Not To Hide Iraqi WMD, Heat Up Border," GMP20030320000181
Jerusalem Voice of Israel Network B in Hebrew, 20 March 2003.

23 December 2002

During a television appearance, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon says: "[w]e believe that biological and chemical weapons that Saddam Hussein wanted hidden were transferred to Syria." The Prime Minister subsequently indicated that this information had not yet been confirmed. In Iraq UNMOVIC inspectors continue their efforts to verify Iraqi declarations on the status of its WMD programs.

-Paul H. B. Shin, "Saddam Hiding Arms in Syria — Sharon," *Daily News* (New York), 25 December 2002, p. 9.

June 2002

Syria is preparing to begin serial production of an extended range version of the Scud—C ballistic missile. The missile is believed to be fitted with a warhead specially designed to accommodate biological or chemical warfare agents that separates from the missile after engine cutoff.

-Steve Rodan and Andrew Koch, "Syria Preparing to Build Extended—Range Scud," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 19 June 2002, www.janes.com.

6 May 2002

US Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton delivers a speech in which he draws attention to Syria's possession of weapons of mass destruction and its ties to terrorist groups.

-Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton, *Beyond the Axis of Evil: Additional Threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction, Remarks to the Heritage Foundation*, 6 May 2002, www.state.gov.

18 April 2002

In the US Senate, Senators Barbara Boxer (D—CA) and Rick Santorum (R—PA) introduce the Syria Accountability Act of 2002 (S 2215). The act states that "the government of Syria should halt the development and deployment of short— and medium—range ballistic missiles and cease the development and production of biological and chemical weapons." The act would make it US policy that "Syria's acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs threaten the security of the Middle East and the national interests of the United States." Sanctions are also provided for in the act.

-*The CBW Conventions Bulletin*, No. 56 (June 2002), p. 44.

9 March 2002

The *Los Angeles Times* prints extracts from the classified "Nuclear Posture Review," which was submitted to the Congress in January 2002. The review states that US nuclear weapons could be used in three types of situation: against targets able to withstand non—nuclear attack; in retaliation for attacks with nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons; or "in the event of surprising military developments." The review also includes a list of seven countries against which US nuclear weapons could be used, including Syria.

-Paul Richter, "US Works Up Plan For Using Nuclear Arms," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 March 2002, p. A1.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



December 2001

US officials state that if Syria has not "already weaponized a VX warhead, they are pretty close."

-Steve Rodan and Andrew Koch, "Israel warns of Syria's work on CW—tipped Scuds," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 12 December 2001, www.janes.com.

1 July 2001

Syria tests a Scud—B missile fitted with a simulated chemical warhead. The missile was fired from Haleb in northern Syria, traveling to a target area 300km away in southern Syria.

-David C. Isby, "Syrian Scud Carried A Simulated Chemical Warhead," *Jane's Missiles and Rockets*, 1 September 2001, www.janes.com.

January 2001

US Defense Secretary William Cohen releases the third edition of "Proliferation: Threat and Response," which includes a section describing Syrian CW capabilities. Syria is said to have a stockpile of sarin and to be developing VX.

-*Proliferation Threat and Response* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2001), p. 45.

11 October 2000

Jane's Defense Weekly publishes an article on the topic of Syria's alleged chemical weapons programs that draws on Israeli and US sources. Unnamed US Department of Defense officials are quoted as saying: "if they [Syria] haven't already weaponized a VX warhead, they are pretty close." The article also repeats claims that Syria flight—tested a Scud—B missile fitted with a warhead designed to disperse VX nerve agent in early 1998. [This article is the latest in a series of reports quoting Israeli sources alleging that Syria has deployed or is about to deploy VX nerve agent on missiles aimed at Israel: see May 1995, May 1998].

-"USA, Israel say Syria continues with WMD," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 11 October 2000, www.janes.com.

20 October 2000

The Director—General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Jose Bustani, addresses the UN General Assembly and calls upon Middle East nations to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention. In response, the Syrian delegate draws attention to the threat posed to his nation by Israeli nuclear weapons.

-*The CBW Conventions Bulletin*, No. 50 (December 2000), pp. 43—44.

July 2000

The UK government publishes its third annual report on Strategic Export Controls, which reveals that export licenses for Australia Group chemicals were issued for destinations in Syria and at least 54 other countries.

-*The CBW Conventions Bulletin*, No. 49 (September 2000), p. 42.

[Back to Top](#)

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



1999-1990

Late October 1999

The Syrian Air Force conducts a chemical weapons test using an unidentified live agent dropped from a MiG—23 fighter—bomber.

—Arieh O'Sullivan and Itim Adds, "Syria tested chemical bomb," *Jerusalem Post*, 28 November 1999, p. 1.

September 1999

Israeli Intelligence Chief Amos Malka states that "[T]he Syrians are manufacturing and developing more ground-to-ground missiles, and I think we have to suppose that they also have chemical weapons."

—"Warning on Syrian Chemical Weapons," *Jane's Intelligence Digest*, 1 October 1999, www.janes.com.

July 1998

Israeli intelligence sources allege that Syria is about to locally produce quantities of VX agent. The item also alleges, though without providing details, that Syria has previously received VX from foreign sources.

—"Syria to make VX gas, says Israel," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 1 July 1998, p. 7, www.janes.com.

June 1998

A senior Israeli military intelligence officer tells the Knesset Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security that Syria continues to manufacture Scud C missiles and will soon have the capability to make VX nerve agent.

—"Syria Close to Producing Nerve Gas," *Ha'aretz*, 24 June 1998, www.haaretzdaily.com.

19 May 1998

Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai briefs the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee that Syrian long-range, ground-to-ground missiles, including the Scud C, have been equipped with VX nerve agent, which Mordechai said changes the strategic balance between Israel and Syria.

—"Mordechai Warns of Syrian Missile Development," *Ha'aretz*, 19 May 1998, www.haaretzdaily.com.

May 1998

Israeli sources claim, apparently on the basis of satellite images, that Syria has carried out a live agent test of VX mounted on a Scud-C missile.

—"The Great Arsenal of Autocracy: Syria's Weapons of Mass Destruction," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* (February 1999), www.meib.org.

May 1998

Israeli military intelligence sources claim that Syria has moved two Scud-C units, believed to be equipped with chemical warheads, into the Damascus region. Reference is also made to Syria efforts to develop "novichok," which can supposedly be produced using unrestricted chemicals.

—"Syrian Scuds Move South, We Reveal What Target In Israel They Will Be Able To Hit," *Jane's Foreign Report*, 7 May 1998, www.janes.com.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



April 1998

A description is provided of one of Syria's alleged CW production facilities near the city of Homs. It is co-located with a large petro-chemical facility.

—"Middle East, CW Production Site," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 10 (April 1998), p. 25, www.janes.com.

September 1997

US Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO) officials claim that Syria will begin producing chemical bomblets for Scud-C missiles at a new facility near Damascus within months. The facility is described by Israeli intelligence officials as co-located with the Centre D'Etudes et de Recherche Scientifique. The current Syrian arsenal is described as being composed of unitary chemical warheads. It is also claimed that Scud-B missiles have been fitted with VX warheads since 1979-1982. [Note: Passage is unclear and may simply refer to the missiles rather than the warheads.]

—Paul Beaver, "Syria to Make Chemical Bomblets for Scud C's," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 3 September 1997, p. 3.

2 May 1997

President Assad states that if Israel will rid itself of nuclear weapons, Arab states will be ready to get rid of other weapons. This statement is widely regarded as an oblique confirmation of the possession of chemical weapons.

—*Al-Hayat* (London), 2 May 1997, pp. 1, 6.

29 April 1997

The Chemical Weapons Convention enters into force. Syria remains outside the regime.

—Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, www.opcw.org.

April 1997

Israeli officials claim that, with Russian assistance, Syria has begun to produce VX nerve agent and is in the initial stages of preparing missiles warheads to deliver the agent. Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai states that he has discussed this development with the US and UK governments. The Israeli claims are vigorously denied by Syrian sources, which respond that Israeli is attempting to distract attention from its hard-line on peace negotiations.

—"Israeli claims that Syria is making VX nerve gas," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 7 May 1997, p. 6, www.janes.com; David Rudge and Michal Yudelman, "Levy, Mordechai warn Syria over nerve gas" *Jerusalem Post*, 30 April 1997, www.jpost.com.

22 November 1996

Syria's CW stockpile is described as comprising thousands of aerial bombs filled with chemical agents and between 100 and 200 chemical warheads for Scud-B and Scud-C surface-to-surface missiles.

—*Jerusalem Post*, 22 November 1996, web.lexis-nexis.com.

September 1996

Western and Israeli Intelligence sources reveal that Syria has received at least two consignments of material for the manufacture of chemical weapons through the Greek Cypriot port of Limassol. The two consignments apparently originated in Russia and Cuba. However, it is believed that several Western European companies have

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



also sent material to Syria via the same route.

—"Syria's Chemical Weapons - The Cyprus Connection," *CDISS News and Views - September 1996*, www.cdiss.org.

6 June 1996

Responding to allegations that Syria is constructing a chemical weapons production facility, the Minister of Information, Dr. Muhammad Salman, neither confirms nor denies the report. He says, "Syria is entitled to possess any weapons it deems necessary to face up to its enemies."

—Ibrahim 'Awad and Al-Sharq al-Awsat, 6 June 1996, p. 4, as translated from the Arabic in FBIS-NES-96-110, 6 June 1996, p. 39.

June 1996

Syria is building a chemical weapons factory in Aleppo, according to the German weekly magazine *Stern*, which states that US intelligence officials have passed satellite imagery of the plant to their German counterparts, who are now investigating possible German industrial involvement in the Syrian project.

—Reuter from Bonn as in Jerusalem Post, 5 June 1996, p. 1, "Syria said to be building poison gas plant," via Lexis-Nexis; Rudolf Lambrecht and Leo Müller, "Giftgas gegen Israel," *Stern*, 6 June 1996, pp. 16-21.

June 1996

In Germany, the managing director of Rose GmbH, Mr. Hans-Joachim Rose, is reported to be under investigation by German authorities for possible involvement in the Syrian chemical weapons program. Mr. Rose is already on trial for illegally exporting chemical equipment to Libya.

—Rudolf Lambrecht and Leo Müller, "Giftgas gegen Israel," *Stern*, 6 June 1996, pp. 16-21.

October 1995

In Russia, the former chairman of the Presidential Committee on CBW Convention Problems, Lt-Gen Anatoliy Kuntsevich, is under criminal investigation in connection with the export of CW-related chemicals to the Middle East. According to the FSS, General Kuntsevich had sold 815 kilograms to Syria in 1993; and the FSS had blocked a further 5-ton shipment in 1994. The chemical is later identified as methylphosphonyl dichloride, a nerve agent precursor.

—*Interfax* (Moscow) in English, 1250 hrs GMT 22 October 1995, as in FBIS-SOV-95-204, 23 October 1995, pp. 29-30; Vil Mirzayanov, statement before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, 1 November 1995, as transcribed over Federal Document Clearing House, Inc., FDCH Political Transcripts, 1 November 1995, "Hearing on weapons of mass destruction," web.lexis-nexis.com.

September 1995

The Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies in Israel describes Syria's CW capabilities as follows: personal protective equipment and Soviet-type unit decontamination equipment; stockpiles of various CW agents including mustard gas and the nerve agents sarin and VX (the latter "unconfirmed"); chemically filled aerial bombs and chemical warheads for surface-to-surface missiles.

—*The Middle East Military Balance, 1994-1995* (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 1995).

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



May 1995

Dany Shoham, of the Begin-al-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, asserts that Syria produces hundreds of tons of chemical weapons a year, chiefly sarin and VX. These agents have been loaded into thousands of aircraft bombs that can be delivered by the Sukhoi-22, Sukhoi-24, and MiG- 23 aircraft possessed by Syria. Syria also has, so the newspaper reporting continues, 100-200 CW warheads for its Scud-B missiles.

—D. Shoham, *Chemical Weapons in Egypt and Syria: Evolution, Capabilities, Control* [in Hebrew], 1995. [Note: English-language synopsis by courtesy of the author.]

June 1994

In the US Congress, a study of potential military countermeasures against nuclear and CBW weapons proliferation is published by the Congressional Research Service. It includes Syria in a list of 12 states that probably possess chemical weapons.

—John M Collins, Zachary S. Davis, and Steven R Bowman, *Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapon Proliferation: Potential Military Countermeasures: Congressional Research Service Report for Congress No. 94-528 S* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1994).

April 1994

Concern is expressed that North Korea is assisting Syria in the development of chemical and biological weapons and warheads.

—"Chemical and Biological Warfare Programme Special Report," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 6 (April 1994), p. 192, www.janes.com.

2 November 1993

In Germany, Federal Economics Ministry official Hans Dieter Hermann, addressing a meeting of experts in Frankfurt, states that there are chemical weapons programs in Syria and that it is urgently attempting to set up its own production plants.

—Deutsche Press Association from Frankfurt, 1642 hrs GMT 2 November 1993, as translated from the German in JPRS-TND-93-036, 17 November 1993, p. 44.

14 September 1993

In the US House of Representatives, Representative Tom Lantos, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Security, International Organizations and Human Rights, releases a staff compilation of information on "400 companies from 40 countries that have supplied goods and production equipment with dual civilian and military applications" to Libya, Syria, Iran, and North Korea.

—United States Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Security, International Organizations and Human Rights, *Hearings on US Security Policy Toward Rogue Regimes*, 28 July and 14 September 1993.

16 June 1993

US Defense Secretary Les Aspin, in a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, speaking of the growing challenge faced by Israel from ballistic missiles with nuclear or CBW warheads notes that Syria has

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



chemical weapons and is seeking long-range missiles.

—"Israel safer today than at any time, but new threats loom - Aspin," *Defense Daily*, 16 June 1993, p. 434.

May 1993

Syria has reportedly received assistance from North Korea in the development of its chemical weapons capabilities beginning in the late 1980s.

—Joseph S Bermudez, Jr., "North Korea's Chemical and Biological Warfare Arsenal," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 5 (May 1993), pp. 225-228, www.janes.com.

April 1993

Syria is described as possessing the largest and most advanced chemical warfare program in the Arab world. Syria is reported to have begun to produce tube and rocket artillery rounds filled with mustard type blister agents. Syria is also reported to be seeking assistance from Chinese and Western companies in the development of more advanced chemical warheads.

—Michael Eisenstadt, "Syria's Strategic Weapons," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 5 (April 1993), www.janes.com.

January 1993

In Moscow, the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service presents a report, "New Challenge after the 'Cold War': Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction." The 130-page report includes an account of WMD programs at various stages of development in 16 countries, including the Syrian CW program.

—Baniel Sneider, "Former KGB details Nuclear Arms Spread," *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 February 1993.

1993

A declassified Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report, *Chemical Warfare Assessments Syria*, claims Syria began developing chemical weapons in the 1970s. This is the only reference to Syria's indigenous efforts beginning so early and is at odds with a 1990 DIA report, *Offensive Chemical Warfare Programs in the Middle East* which claimed indigenous production efforts only began in the 1980s.

—E J Hogendoorn, "A Chemical Weapons Atlas," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 53 (September/October 1997), www.bulletinarchive.org Syria allegedly receives a shipment of 850 kilograms of methylphosphonyl dichloride (a CW precursor) from Russia on the authority of the chairman of the Presidential Committee on CBW Convention Problems, Lt-Gen Anatoliy Kuntsevich. *Interfax* (Moscow) in English, 22 October 1995, as in FBIS-SOV-95-204, 23 October 1995, pp. 29-30.

December 1992

At the Paris Conference, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq Ash-Shar declares that Syria will not sign the Chemical Weapons Convention "because it will not agree to be exposed to the non-conventional threat from Israel."

—*Al-Hayat* (London), 18 December 1992, web.lexis-nexis.com.

September 1992

Jane's Foreign Report describes Syria as possessing two underground chemical weapons production facilities, one near the village of Safiya (Al-Safira), and the other on the main road to Damascus south of Homs. The report alleges that these facilities were constructed with the aid of West German companies and operated with East

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



German technical assistance. They are supplied with precursors from India and have recently begun to produce VX nerve agent. Production had previously focused on mustard.

—"Syria's Secret Poison Gas Plants," *Jane's Foreign Report*, 10 September 1992, www.janes.com.

September 1992

According to unidentified Israeli sources quoted by the Paris newsletter *Middle East Defense News*, in May 1992, the Syrian CW stockpile was estimated at "several thousand aerial bombs, filled mostly with sarin," and 50 to 100 ballistic missile warheads. Syria is described as being capable of producing several hundred tons of CW agents per year. Three chemical weapon production sites are identified, one located just north of Damascus, and the second near the industrial city of Homs. The third, in Hama, is believed to be producing VX nerve agent in addition to sarin and tabun while Israeli intelligence is reported to be monitoring several additional "suspicious sites."

—"Investigation: Syrian CW programs," *Middle East Defense News* (Paris), 28 September 1992, pp. 5-6.

September 1992

Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur speaks during a radio interview of the threat posed by Syrian production of chemical weapons, stating that Israel will continue to take action to stop it. "There is no need to panic, but we—those in charge of the defense establishment—must certainly view this with utmost seriousness," he says.

—IDF Radio (Tel Aviv), 0600 hrs GMT 25 September 1992, as translated from the Hebrew in FBIS-NES-92-188, 28 September 1992, p. 27.

July 1992

At the prompting of the German foreign ministry, authorities in Cyprus stop a German freighter en route to Syria, ordering it to return its cargo to India. The cargo includes 25 containers of the nerve agent precursor trimethyl phosphite, for which the German shippers had not obtained an export license. This is the second half of a \$200,000 order placed with an Indian company, United Phosphorus Limited. It is claimed that the chemical is intended for production of the pesticide DDVP.

—"Poison Gas for Syria is intercepted," *International Herald Tribune*, 10 August 1992, p. 2; Michael Rotem, "Indian Chemical Company Won't Stop Shipment to Syria," *Jerusalem Post*, 22 August 1992, p. 1.

30 May 1992

A 45-ton shipment of the nerve gas precursor trimethyl phosphite arrives from India at the premises of Damascus-based Setma Ltd. corporation.

—"Poison Gas for Syria is intercepted," *International Herald Tribune*, 10 August 1992, p. 2; Michael Rotem, "Indian Chemical Company Won't Stop Shipment To Syria," *Jerusalem Post*, 22 August 1992, p. 1.

April 1992

A Syrian MiG-23 fighter-bomber makes the first test of dropping a VX bomb north of Damascus.

—"Syria's 'nerve gas' missiles," *Jane's Foreign Report*, 31 July 2003, www.janes.com.

22 January 1992

Addressing a U.S. Senate committee, Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates states that Syria "apparently is

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



seeking assistance from China and Western firms for an improved capability with chemical warheads."

—*Statement of the Director of Central Intelligence before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, Central Intelligence Agency, 22 January 1992, p. 12, www.foia.cia.gov.

15 January 1992

In the U.S. Senate, Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates testifies on proliferation questions and mentions the existence of a chemical weapons program in Syria.

—Robert Gates, Prepared Testimony, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, 15 January 1992.

Early 1992

Syria allegedly test-fires chemical warheads.

—"Israeli claims that Syria is making VX nerve gas," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 7 May 1997, p. 6, www.janes.com.

December 1991

Israeli Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq tells an audience of leading Israeli industrialists in Tel Aviv that the chemical weapons capability of Syria is larger than that of Iraq.

—"Investigation: Syrian CW programs," *Middle East Defense News* (Paris), 28 September 1992, pp. 5-6.

October 1991

Israeli Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, speaking at a meeting in Beersheba, says that Syria possesses the world's third-largest arsenal of chemical weapons.

—IDF Radio (Tel Aviv), 1500 hrs GMT 27 October 1991, as translated from the Hebrew in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts 30 October 1991 via FT Profile.

March 1991

Syria has recently started to produce VX nerve agent according to unidentified intelligence sources quoted in the *Washington Times*.

—Bill Gertz, "North Korean Scuds added to Syrian arsenal," *Washington Times*, 13 March 1991, p. 3.

March 1991

Director of US Naval Intelligence Rear-Admiral Thomas Brooks names Syria as one of 14 states that probably possesses chemical weapons.

—Statement of Rear Admiral Thomas A Brooks, USN, Director of Naval Intelligence, before the Seapower, Strategic, and Critical Materials Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, on Intelligence Issues, 7 March 1991, pp. 56-59.

23 November 1990

President George Bush meets with Syrian President Hafez Assad in Geneva and claims that Syria has equipped its stockpile of SS-21 missiles with chemical warheads.

—David Makovsky, "Bush-Assad meeting angers Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Post*, 22 November 1990, web.lexis-nexis.com.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



17 July 1990

Israeli Air Force commander Major-General Avihu Bin-Nun seeks to minimize the significance of the threat posed to Israel by Syrian chemical weapons. He notes that Syria did not use chemical weapons in 1973 even though its Army had been defeated and Israeli forces had advanced to within 41 kilometers of Damascus. This represents the first official open source support of claims that Syria possessed chemical weapons in 1973.

—Joshua Brilliant, "Best Defense is a Good Offense says Bin-Nun," *Jerusalem Post*, 17 July 1990, web.lexis-nexis.com.

March 1990

Director of US Naval Intelligence Rear-Admiral Thomas Brooks names Syria as one of 12 third world states that has either achieved or is developing CW capabilities.

—Prepared statement, Rear Admiral Thomas A Brooks before the Seapower, Strategic, and Critical Materials Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, 14 March 1990, p. 53.

February 1990

Israeli reserve Brigadier-General Aharon Levran claims that Syria has now equipped several of its Scud missiles with chemical warheads.

—*Jerusalem Post*, 22 February 1990, web.lexis-nexis.com.

16 January 1990

A US Congressional Research Service publication notes that prior to the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee's announcement, the Army Intelligence Agency included Syria in the list of countries suspected of possessing chemical weapons or being in the process of acquiring them.

—Steven R Bowman, *Chemical weapons: a summary of proliferation and arms control activities*, CRS Issue Brief (US Library of Congress: Congressional Research Service).

1990

A classified Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report claims Syria has two chemical munitions storage depots, at Khan Abu Shamat and Furqlus. It also claims that the Centre D'Etude et Recherche Scientifique, near Damascus, is Syria's primary chemical weapons research facility.

—E.J. Hogendoorn, "A Chemical Weapons Atlas," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 53 (September/October 1997), www.bullatomsci.org. [Note: There is reference to a 1990 DIA report, "Offensive Chemical Warfare Programs in the Middle East," which had been released in sanitized form to the author under the freedom of information act.]

[Back to Top](#)

1980-1968

September 1989

Syria, Egypt, Libya, Iran, and Iraq are all listed as openly deploying or suspected of producing chemical weapons.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



—David Fairhall, "US-Soviet convention would help reverse trend to poison warfare," *The Guardian* (London), 26 September 1989, web.lexis-nexis.com.

22 February 1989

In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, the US Director of Naval Intelligence, Rear-Admiral Thomas Brooks, describes Syria as a country that has obtained or is developing CW capabilities.

—Admiral Thomas Brooks, prepared testimony, House Armed Services Committee, 22 February 1989, pp. 38-39.

9 February 1989

In testimony before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, CIA Director William Webster states, "Syria is stockpiling a variety of chemical warfare agents for various battlefield missions [and] producing and amassing a variety of munitions that can be used as delivery systems for chemical agents...Syria has nerve agents in some weapon systems."

—William Webster, Prepared Testimony, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, 9 February 1989, p. 5.

1989

China sells Syria over 11,000 MF-11 gas masks. The exact date of the sale or the delivery remains unspecified.

—*ASA Newsletter*, No. 2, 1990, p. 4.

December 1988

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy publishes a report stating that Syria received a small number of chemical weapons from Egypt prior to the 1973 Middle East war.

—W. Seth Carus, "Chemical Weapons in the Middle East," *Research Memorandum No. 9*, (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy), 1988.

24 March 1988

Colonel-General Vladimir K. Pikalov, chief of the Soviet Union's Chemical Troops, visits Syria and holds meetings with the defense minister, the commander in chief, and the deputy chief of staff of the Syrian armed forces. The purpose of the visit is reportedly to express the USSR's displeasure over the Syrian pursuit of chemical weapons in the wake of controversy generated by the Halabja incident in Iraq.

—Gordon M. Burck and Charles C. Flowerree, *International Handbook on Chemical Weapons Proliferation* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), pp. 216-217.

4 August 1987

The United States adds eight more chemicals to the list of precursors banned from export to Syria.

—*The Journal of Commerce*, 4 August 1987, p. 6a.

2 December 1986

Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin tells parliament, "we are aware that Syria is armed with chemical weapons—artillery shells, bombs, and ground-to-ground missile warheads...including nerve gas." He also states that Syria is engaged in the production of gas carrying bombs.

—Andrew Meisels, "Israel Confirms Syria has Chemical Weapons," *Washington Times*, 3 December 1986, p. 1.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



7 August 1986

Syria is reported to be helping the Iranian CW program, which is described as much smaller than the Syrian program.

—Michael Gordon, "Talks resume to stop spread of chemical arms," *New York Times*, 25 August 1986, p. A4.

7 August 1986

In a speech before Israel's National Defense College, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres announces that Syria is spending large sums to acquire surface-to-surface missiles and to develop chemical warheads. This publicly reported statement represents a change in Israeli policy, which had previously censored all mention of Syrian chemical weapons capabilities.

—Reuters, "Syria plans 'poison gas warheads'," *Daily Telegraph*, 8 August 1986.

5 June 1986

The United States bans the sale of eight chemical precursors to Syria.

—David B. Ottaway, "Syria included in ban of chemical arms ingredients," *Washington Post*, 6 June 1986, p. A35.

Early 1986

Unidentified US officials describe Syria's chemical weapons capabilities as including domestically produced sarin.

—Aharon Levran, ed., *The Middle East Military Balance 1986* (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 1987), pp. 94-95.

1985

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith indicates that Syria has a production capability for nerve agents.

—Tom Diaz, "Syria said to have offered chemical weapons to Iran," *Washington Times*, 9 December 1985, p. 4.

15 September 1983

A U.S. Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) asserts that Syria is "a major recipient of Soviet CW assistance, [and] probably has the most advanced chemical warfare capability in the Arab world, with the possible exception of Egypt. Both Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union provided the chemical agents, delivery systems, and training that flowed to Syria. As long as this support is forthcoming, there is no need for Syria to develop an indigenous capability to produce CW agents or materiel, and none has been identified."

Note: This intelligence assessment is potentially at odds with later assessments that Syria obtained its initial CW capability through Egypt. Additionally it should be noted that there is no direct reference to the size of the Syrian CW arsenal although the clear implication is that it is not insignificant.

—*Implications of Soviet Use of Chemical and Toxin Weapons for US Security Interests*, SNIE 11-17-83, Central Intelligence Agency, 15 September 1983, p. 11, www.foia.cia.gov; Don Oberdorfer, "Chemical arms curbs are sought," *Washington Post*, 9 September, 1985, pp. A1, 6; Gordon M. Burck and Charles C. Flowerree, *International Handbook on Chemical Weapons Proliferation* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), p. 209.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



1983

Syria receives a shipment of corrosion-resistant glass vessels and pipes and other lab equipment apparently destined for a Damascus Research facility. The materials, imported from Germany, have the potential to be used for the production of chemical weapons agents.

—John J. Fialka, "Fighting Dirty: Western Industry Sells Third World the Means To Produce Poison Gas," *Wall Street Journal*, 16 September 1988, p. 1.

Late 1982

The Syrian leadership decides to build an indigenous chemical weapons capability.

—M. Zuhair Diab, "Syria's Chemical and Biological Weapons: Assessing Capabilities and Motivations," *The Nonproliferation Review* 5 (Fall 1997), p. 110.

June 1982

Syria suffers a major defeat by Israeli forces in Lebanon, including the destruction of air-force and air-defense network.

—Statement in U.S. House of Representatives by Representative Bobbi Fielder (California), Congressional Record, Daily Edition, 17 May 1984, p. H4088.

February 1982

There are unsubstantiated claims by Amnesty International that Syrian forces employ cyanide gas during the suppression of Moslem brotherhood in Hama.

—Walter Andrews, "Assad: Terrorism's Master of Disaster," *Washington Times*, 9 December 1985, p. 4; Gordon M. Burck and Charles C. Flowerree, *International Handbook on Chemical Weapons Proliferation* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), p. 209.

1979-1982

It is claimed that Scud-B missiles have been fitted with VX warheads since 1979-1982.

—Paul Beaver, "Syria to Make Chemical Bomblets for Scud C's," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 3 September 1997, p. 3.

October 1973

Syria suffers a major defeat by Israel in the Yom Kippur war. Some reports indicate that Israeli forces capture samples of Syrian chemical weapons.

—Statement in U.S. House of Representatives by Representative Bobbi Fielder (California), Congressional Record, Daily Edition, 17 May 1984, p. H4088.

Late 1972-Mid-1973

Egypt supplies Syria with weaponized CW in preparation for Yom Kippur War. The shipment is variously described as mustard and sarin or mustard only.

—W. Seth Carus, "Chemical Weapons in the Middle East," *Research Memorandum* No. 9, (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy), 1988, p. 5.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



17 December 1968

Syria accedes to the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

[Back to Top](#)

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.



This material is produced independently for NTI by the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of and has not been independently verified by NTI or its directors, officers, employees, or agents. Copyright © 2011 by MIIS.