

# *A Chronology of Events Relating to Iraq and Chemical & Biological Warfare*

## **1984**

### First Quarter

### Sample file

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

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As with any compilation of this size, there is always a difficulty in deciding at what point to stop collating material and organize and refine the document for publication.

This working draft is, of necessity therefore, a snapshot of the progress towards the final publication. The intention for producing working drafts is to enable reviews of the work in progress. As the final publication format has yet to be decided, sample files are being posted in the form of annual sub-sets of the draft chronologies. Those interested in reviewing or contributing to fuller drafts are encouraged to contact Richard Guthrie at <[richard@cbw-events.org.uk](mailto:richard@cbw-events.org.uk)>.

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## **Introduction**

### **Sources and methodology**

The information gathered for this chronology comes from open-source documentation (such as news reports, academic papers, published governmental and inter-governmental reports, and national archives). Some of the material has been gathered directly by Richard Guthrie. Much of the rest of the material has been collected by other current or former members the Harvard Sussex Program (HSP) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). As in any exercise such as this, the compilation of material has been a collective effort.

### **Chronology entries**

All chronology entries are written in the present tense. Entries for the same date are put in the sequence of events that happened (if specific times are known) or are placed in the order that dawn rises around the world. This means that entries for Japan, for example, will appear before Iran, which will appear before Iraq, which will appear before Germany. Specific times for events are given in GMT/UTC, where known, and local time if that has been specified.

Holding entries are preceded by the letter 'H' to indicate this status. Entries with outstanding queries relating to them are preceded by the letter 'Q'.

# 1984

*This year is a turning point in the conduct of the Iran–Iraq War and how it is perceived from outside. Some governments are sufficiently convinced that chemical weapons have been used that they make public statements on the subject for the first time. There is the first use of nerve agents by Iraq in March. March is specifically significant, starting with the dispatch of injured Iranian soldiers to European hospitals. The political attention created by this move perhaps prompts the United States to publicly condemn chemical weapons use by Iraq earlier than it had intended. Taken with a subsequent Red Cross report, this condemnation makes it impossible for the UN Secretary-General not to investigate the allegations, despite Soviet objections. The UN investigators are under pressure not to name a country to be responsible for the attacks. In a parallel with events of 20 years later, the United States wants to deal with the issue of Iraqi chemical weapons on a bilateral basis and to limit the involvement of the United Nations. When the Security Council considers the issue late in the month, no consensus can be found to do anything that would have the effect of hindering Iraq in this field. At the end of the month the first of the new national export controls of chemicals is introduced. As national controls are introduced by many of the industrialized countries, the difficulties of imposing controls on materials that can also have legitimate uses become apparent.*

**4 January 1984** At the United Nations in New York, the Iranian Permanent Representative delivers fragments of bombs alleged to have been used in chemical weapons attacks to the UN Secretariat.[1]

At a press conference before the handover, Ambassador Said Rajaei-Khorassani displays four specimens of shrapnel, sand and tree bark gathered from a battle front that he says contain chemical substances that burn the skin. Khorassani, arguing he is being conservative with figures, claims ‘10 people were martyred by chemical bombs and more than 300 people affected in the Iraqi attacks. ... The symptoms were burning of the skin, vomiting, irritation of the eyes and sometimes blindness and death’.

According to the Ambassador, the items were brought to the United Nations because an invitation to the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, to send an investigation team to inspect evidence the battle front had gone unanswered for more than two months [see 3 November 1983]. Francois Giuliani, spokesman for the Secretary-General, confirms an Iranian request for an investigation was received but says, ‘Our hands are tied by a Security Council resolution that Iran declines to recognize’.[2] He does not specify the resolution he is referring to.

[1] Referred to in the speech by Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati to the Conference on Disarmament, 16 February 1984, as reproduced in CD/PV.242.

[2] John Usher, [no title], United Press International, 4 January 1984.

**7 January 1984** Four bottles of silver nitrate are discovered washed up on a beach near Cherbourg in France. Iran subsequently claims they were part of a shipment of materials on an Iraqi ship, *Ibn Khaldun*, travelling from Liverpool in Britain to Kuwait and

claims this discovery has ‘proved the secret sales of chemical weapons to Baghdad’ by the British Government.[1] [See also 22 December 1983.]

Four days later, Prime Minister Mir Hussein Moussavi of Iran warns that ‘hostile policies’ of Britain’s supply of chemical weapons to Iraq would not go unanswered. Speaking at a cabinet meeting, as reported by Tehran radio, Moussavi as says ‘We have received information that chemical weapons that have been used against our forces were placed at the disposal of Saddam Hussein’s regime by the British government. In general, the British government has followed a hostile policy toward the Islamic Republic since the revolution, and we warn all imperialist enemies of the Islamic Republic that their hostile policies will not go unanswered by our nation’.[2]

The British government denies it has supplied Iraq with chemical weapons. A Foreign Office spokesman says that the United Kingdom has not sold lethal weapons of any kind to either side in the Iran–Iraq war.[3]

[1] IRNA (in English), 2006 GMT 9 January 1984, as reported in “‘Secret Sales of Chemical Weapons’ to Iraq by the UK”, BBC-SWB, 11 January 1984, ME/7537/A/1.

[2] [no author listed], Reuters (from Tehran), as in: ‘Iran warns UK over sales to Iraq’, *International Herald Tribune*, 12 March 1984.

[3] Ian Black, ‘Tehran turns on Britain’, *Guardian* (London), 12 March 1984; Henry Stanhope, ‘UK denies chemical weapons charge’, *The Times* (London), 12 January 1984, p 6.

**11 January 1984** In London, Ministry of Defence section ‘DS17’ circulates a letter to the highest levels of the Ministry saying ‘MOD intelligence experts have now confirmed the recent use by the Iraqi Armed Forces of choking and blistering agents, almost certainly mustard gas ... The Intelligence Staffs have a high degree of

confidence in the certainty of Iraq's use of CW, which makes this the best confirmed violation of the Geneva Protocol since the 1930s. The evidence derives from several mutually reinforcing sources and is much stronger than that for lethal CW use in SE Asia ("Yellow Rain") or Afghanistan, over both of which the UK has given qualified support to American allegations. It also seems clear that Iraq is engaged in manufacturing chemical munitions on a large scale (although CW acquisition as such is not of course restricted by the Protocol). [Note: This letter remains classified until a copy is released by the Scott Inquiry. This copy carries a hand written annotation by a civil servant — 'This subject has aroused the interest of MoD Ministers'.][1]

Prompted by this letter, two days later the Minister for Armed Forces asks Defence Sales for details of any chemical warfare (CW) kits sold by the UK to Iraq (including details of which government authorised the sale) and of any industrial plant supplied by the UK that might have been diverted to CW production. [Note: This second letter also remains classified until a copy is released by the Scott Inquiry. This copy carries a hand written annotation next to the passage on CW kits — 'Not just licensable!'.]

[1] Letter dated 11 January 1984, 'Use of Chemical Weapons by Iraq', from Defence Secretariat 17 to the private office of the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, John Stanley, with copies to 20 other governmental offices, Scott Inquiry reference FCO/123.2.11.

[2] Letter dated 13 January 1984, 'Use of Chemical Weapons by Iraq', from the private office of the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, John Stanley, to Defence Secretariat 17, Mr Schulte, with copies to 20 other governmental offices, Scott Inquiry reference FCO/123.2.14.

**30 January 1984** In Geneva, the Permanent Representative of Iran, Nasrollah Kazemi Kamyab, writes to the President of the Conference on Disarmament giving details of the attack with chemical weapons alleged to have taken place some six months earlier [see 9 August 1983]. The letter repeats many details published earlier but also reports results of laboratory analyses indicating the use of 'nitrogenous compounds usually known as "mustard gas"'. [1] [See also 24 November 1983.]

[1] Letter dated 30 January 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament transmitting a report containing a description of an attack with chemical weapons in Piranshahr, Iran, CD/432, 13 February 1984.

**13 February 1984** Iraqi forces use chemical shells in attacks on Khorramshahr, according to IRNA claims. Three people are reported to be injured by the weapons which 'were effective against eyes and caused severe vomiting'. [1]

[1] IRNA (in English), 1616 GMT 14 February 1984, as reported in 'Alleged Use of Chemical Weapons by Iraq', BBC-SWB, 16 February 1984, ME/7568/A/1. See also Letter dated 16 February 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General, UN document S/16346, 17 February 1984.

**16 February 1984** In Geneva, Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati speaks in the Conference on Disarmament. The Minister complains of a lack of concern about what is happening during the war: 'in spite of the fact that we have, in a well-documented

manner, informed the international community of the use of chemical weapons against the people of Iran in the course of the invasion of my country by foreign troops, no positive or beneficial reaction has yet been noted'. Calling for action from the rest of the world he says: 'Has the United Nations Organization not been duty-bound by the Resolution 37/98 of the General Assembly [see 15 December 1982] to investigate any information concerning the use of chemical weapons by any Member State reaching the United Nations and inform the Members of the results?' [See also 4 January.]

Velayati also says: 'Read the reports of the Pugwash Conference held last year in Geneva and see for yourselves which countries have provided the biological weapons used against our people'. A month later, a dispatch from Vienna carried by IRNA reports: 'Western sources allege that such lethal weapons have been delivered to Iraq by the Soviet Union. The Soviets, one of the major suppliers of arms to the Baghdad regime, has not so far denied the allegation, while the Pugwash conference, in a report on the deployment of chemical weapons against 13 countries in the world, including Iran, in 1982, believes that the socialist government of France has provided Iraq with such toxic weapons.' [2]

[Note: While no evidence of such a Pugwash report can be found, a draft of the chapter on chemical and biological warfare issues for *SIPRI Yearbook 1983* was circulated at a Pugwash meeting in Geneva at the end of 1982. This chapter simply reports an unsubstantiated and otherwise unreported press suggestion of supply by France (see 3 October 1982).]

[1] The speech is reproduced in CD document CD/PV.242, 16 February 1984.

[2] IRNA (in English), 1225 GMT 10 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Reports on Iraq's Use of Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 14 March 1984, ME/7589/A/1.

**Hxx February 1984** ['In late February, the US submitted to the United Nations its fourth report on the alleged use of trichothecene (yellow rain) toxins in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan. In that report, the US expressed its "deep concern" over reports that chemical weapons were being used in the Iraqi-Iranian war. The US charged neither country but noted that both had signed the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which bans the use of such weapons in war.' — Lois Ember, 'Charges of toxic arms use by Iraq escalate', *Chemical & Engineering News*, 19 March 1984, pp 16–18; Possibly 'Note verbale dated 21 February 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/39/113)', ref from A/39/488]

**22 February 1984** Iranian forces capture the Majnoon Islands. Iraq then launches 10 unsuccessful counteroffensives before dropping canisters of toxic gas on the islands, according to an Iranian revolutionary guard who is being treated in a Belgian hospital for chemical poisoning. [1] No specific date is given for the suggested chemical attack.

[1] Claude van England (from Brussels), 'Iraq's Strategies Get a Desperate Edge', *Christian Science Monitor*, 4 April 1984, p. 18.

**25 February 1984** Chemical bombings occur in the Hur-al-Hoveizeh area, leaving some 400 casualties, according to Iranian claims.[1]

[1] *Letter dated 28 February 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16380, 1 March 1984.

**27 February 1984** Iraqi forces ‘extend the use of chemical weapons’ on ‘a wide scale in the Uzayr sector’, according to Iranian sources.[1]

The following day IRNA reports over 400 casualties are hospitalised in Susangerd and Ahvaz as a result.[2] Some hours later a total of 700 casualties from this chemical bombing is reported; symptoms described include facial burns, eye injuries and ‘intense coughing’. An explosion is said to have emitted a yellow gas that affected people within a radius of a kilometre. Doctors at the scene are reported as saying the symptoms displayed by the casualties are consistent with exposure to nitrogen mustard.[3]

Two days later the chemical casualty total rises to 1000.[4] A group of some 20 journalists, a number of whom are foreign, visit casualties who have been moved to a hospital in Tehran.[5] By the end of the week the deaths of 400 Iranians and the injury of some 1100 others are claimed in relation to these chemical attacks,[6] although 300 of the injured combatants are said to have returned to the front lines.[7]

[*Note*: it is not clear whether they may have been further attacks by this stage, or whether the casualty total reported for this attack is combined with the total reported for the attack of 25 February.]

[1] Ahvaz regional radio (in Persian), 1230 GMT 27 February 1984, as reported in ‘Iranian Military Communiques’, BBC-SWB, 29 February 1984, ME/7579/A/1. See also ‘5 Iranian aircraft shot down Iraq says’, *The Times* (London), 28 February 1984, p 32.

[2] IRNA (in English), 0927 GMT 28 February 1984, as reported in ‘Iraq’s alleged use of chemical weapons’, BBC-SWB, 29 February 1984, ME/7579/A/1.

[3] *Letter dated 28 February 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16380, 1 March 1984; IRNA (in English), 1726 GMT 28 February 1984, as reported in ‘Iraq’s reported use of chemical weapons’, BBC-SWB, 1 March 1984, ME/7580/A/1.

[4] IRNA (in English), 1640 GMT 29 February 1984, as reported in ‘Iranian chemical warfare casualties’, BBC-SWB, 2 March 1984, ME/7581/A/1.

[5] IRNA (in English), 1657 GMT 29 February 1984, as reported in ‘Iranian chemical warfare casualties’, BBC-SWB, 2 March 1984, ME/7581/A/1.

[6] Joseph Panossian (from Nicosia), ‘Iran Sends Wounded Soldiers Abroad, Asks for Probe Into chemical Warfare’, Associated Press, 4 March 1984.

[7] IRNA, 1657 GMT 2 March 1984, as reported in ‘Iranian Military Communiques and Reports’, BBC-SWB, 3 March 1984, ME/7582/A/1.

**28 February 1984** Iran invites representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit Iranian soldiers who, it is claimed, have been wounded by chemical bombs dropped by Iraqi planes.[1]

[1] Associated Press (from Nicosia), ‘Iraq Renews Its Warning to Shipping’, *New York Times*, 29 February 1984, p. A6. See also: *Letter dated 29 February 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16378, 1 March 1984.

**1 March 1984** Iraqi forces bomb Iranian positions in the Hur al-Huwayzah and Hur al-Azim regions, so IRNA reports.[1]

[1] IRNA, 1657 GMT 2 March 1984, as reported in ‘Iranian Military Communiques and Reports’, BBC-SWB, 3 March 1984, ME/7582/A/1.

**1 March 1984** In London, a junior defence minister tells the House of Commons: ‘Export licences would not be granted for licensable equipment which could be used in the manufacture or assembly of chemical weapons in cases where it was thought that the equipment was intended for such use’.[1]

[1] Geoffrey Pattie, Minister of State for Defence Procurement, Written Answers, 1 March 1984, *Hansard* (Commons), c342–43.

**2 March 1984** Five Iranian soldiers arrive in Sweden to receive treatment at the Karolinska Hospital for injuries said to be caused by exposure to chemical weapons in recent military action [see 27 February]. A Swedish army doctor confirms the injuries are caused by the effects of chemicals, but indicates it is not yet possible to confirm the particular substances involved. Eleven other casualties arrive in Austria and Switzerland.[1]

Bengt Körlof, assistant professor at the burns unit of the Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm, says he ‘will not rule out’ the possibility that three Iranians he is treating were burned by chemical weapons. He says the worst case he has seen involves burns over 75 per cent of the body, and the other two have burns over 50 per cent and 25 per cent of their bodies, respectively.[2] The further two soldiers in Sweden are receiving treatment at the Uppsala Akademiska University Clinic.[3]

On 5 March one of the five, named as Hassan Ibrahim, dies.[4] The Karolinska Hospital says suspicions that the soldiers’ wounds were of chemical origin had greatly increased.[5] A second, named as 19-year-old Ali Sorjani, dies in Uppsala on 9 March.[6] Overall, three of the five receiving treatment in Sweden die of burns;[7] the third, named as Ali Reza Ebrahemi, passing away on 10 March. He is said to be in his early twenties.[8] The surviving soldier in Uppsala, 20-year-old Muhammed Reza Asadi, is interviewed by a number of journalists. He reports having seen a ‘big orange-coloured cloud of gas’ emanate from an Iraqi bomb landing 20 yards from him that had been dropped from an Iraqi plane. His eyes started to sting and he went blind — 14 hours later his skin began to swell and it felt like his whole body was burning.[9]

Ernst Wolner, a doctor in Vienna, confirms that the ten soldiers being treated there were wounded ‘by chemical causes’. ‘Eight of the patients are suffering from superficial acid burns of the skin. Two others are under intensive care with lesions of inner organs as well, including a drop in white blood corpuscles’, he says.[10]

[1] IRNA, 0830 GMT 4 March 1984, as reported in ‘Chemical warfare “victims” hospitalized in Europe’, BBC-SWB, 4 March 1984, ME/7584/A/1.

[2] Joseph Panossian (from Nicosia), ‘Iran Sends Wounded Soldiers Abroad, Asks for Probe Into chemical Warfare’, Associated Press, 4 March 1984.

[3] [no author listed], Associated Press (from Nicosia), as reproduced in: ‘Iran accuses Iraq of chemical war’, *New York Times*, 10 March 1984.

[4] *Letter dated 27 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16447, 28 March 1984.

[5] Moshin Ali (from Washington), 'US accuses Iraq of chemical warfare', *The Times* (London), 6 March 1984, p 6.

[6] *Letter dated 27 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16447, 28 March 1984.

[7] Roland Prinz (from Vienna), 'Teenagers Among Soldier Victims of Chemical Weapons Arrive Flown West', Associated Press, 17 February 1986.

[8] Ian Mather and Robin McKie, 'How Iraq built a secret horror plant', *Observer*, 11 March 1984, p 1

[9] [no author listed], 'Soviet Envoy Objects to UN Chemicals Weapons Probe in Iran', Associated Press, 12 March 1984. See also Ian Mather and Robin McKie with David Willey (from Milan), Peter Pringle (from Washington) and Chris Mosey (from Stockholm), 'Baghdad's deadly secret', *Observer*, 11 March 1984, p 11.

[10] [No author listed] (from Stockholm), [no title], Associated Press, 5 March 1984; Joseph Panossian (from Nicosia), [no title], Associated Press, 5 March 1984.

**2 March 1984** Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations, Said Rajaie Khorassani, writes to the Secretary-General claiming that Iraq continues 'savage missile attacks and aerial bombardment of innocent civilians and residential areas, and has kept on using chemical weapons'. The Ambassador lists alleged attacks, since 25 February, 'over the cities of Baneh, Ilam, Khorramabad, Poledokhtar, Kohdasht, Islamabad, Gilan-e-qharb, Borujerd, Saghez, Houvizeh, Bostan, Mahabad and Bakhteran which resulted in the martyrdom of 246 people and 1,507 injured' but does not specify which types of attacks may have been made in which locations.[1]

A letter couched in similar terms is sent to the President of the Conference on Disarmament by the Iranian Ambassador in Geneva, Nasrollah Kazemi Kamyab.[2]

[1] *Letter dated 2 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16384, 5 March 1984.

[2] *Letter dated 2 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament Containing Information on Missile Attacks and Bombardments in Both Military and Civilian Areas of the Islamic republic of Iran*, CD document CD/447, 9 March 1984.

**4 March 1984** Iran accuses Britain of providing Iraq with the chemical weapons [see 7 January] that resulted in the death of 400 Iranians and the injury of some 1100 others in recent fighting [see 27 February].[1] Tehran Radio is reported as claiming that 'Britain has been providing aid and signing agreements with the Ba'athist rulers of Iraq for billions of dollars under which various weapons were provided ... Internationally banned chemical weapons were the most recent genocidal weapons Britain supplied'. The British Foreign Office denies both that it has chemical weapons and that it sold them to Iraq; an official spokesman says, 'no weapons, chemical or otherwise, has been supplied to either side' since the start of the conflict in September 1980.[2]

The next morning Speaker Rafsanjani meets with the Swedish Ambassador in Tehran. He asks the Ambassador to pass on a message: 'The British government, which has close, friendly relations with

you, should be told to stop delivering chemical bombs to Iraq so that this war can be ended more quickly'.[3]

[Note: with the suspension of diplomatic relations between the UK and Iran, Sweden is representing British interests in that country.]

[1] Joseph Panossian (from Nicosia), 'Iran Sends Wounded Soldiers Abroad, Asks for Probe Into chemical Warfare', Associated Press, 4 March 1984.

[2] [no author listed], 'Iran Charges Britain Supplying Chemical Weapons to Iraq', Associated Press, 4 March 1984.

[3] Tehran home service, 1630 GMT 5 March 1984, as reported in 'Rafsanjani's Meeting with Swedish Ambassador: Chemical Weapons and Reparations', BBC-SWB, 7 March 1984, ME/7585/A/1.

**4 March 1984** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati says the UN should investigate the use by Iraq of chemical weapons in accordance with resolution 37/98D [see 13 December 1982 and 16 February]. He says the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should be assigned to the investigation.[1]

At UN Headquarters the following day, Iranian Ambassador Said Rajaie Khorassani reports that he will make a formal request for a UN investigation of the chemical weapons attacks by Iraq.[2]

[1] Tehran home service, 1630 GMT 4 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Message to UN on Use of Chemical Weapons by Iraq', BBC-SWB, 6 March 1984, ME/7584/A/1.

[2] Joseph Panossian (from Nicosia), Associated Press, 5 March 1984, AM cycle.

**H 4 March 1984** [Rafsanjani — 'we have succeeded in solving the problem of chemical bombs ... as soon as area is hit by one of those bombs, sprinklers are used to distribute antidotes and to clean up the area' — Tehran home service, 1030 GMT 4 March 1984, as reported in 'Rafsanjani on Progress of the War', BBC-SWB, 6 March 1984, ME/7584/A/1.]

**4 March 1984** Iraq's Commander of the East Tigris Forces, Major-General Hisham Sabah Fakhri, denies use by his forces of chemical weapons.[1] Speaking to a group of reporters, he defends Iraq's right to take all necessary measures, saying, 'We never welcome an enemy with flowers. Therefore, we will use all possible means to defend our country'. He states that he has never used chemical weapons and would only use 'the usual means' of warfare. But he avoids direct answer to questions on whether poison gas has been used in other areas. He says he does not know whether chemical weapons are available in his command.[2]

[1] INA, 0905 GMT 5 March 1984, as reported in 'Iraqi Commander Denies Use of Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 6 March 1984, ME/7584/A/1.

[2] Henry Kamm (from Basra), 'New Gulf War Issue: Chemical Arms', *New York Times*, 5 March 1984, p. A3; William Drozdiak (from Baida), 'Iraqis Bracing for New Assault on Basra Road', *Washington Post*, 5 March 1984, p. A1.

**Q 4 March 1984** The Turkish newspaper *Gunes* publishes an article suggesting Soviet experts are training Iraqi armed forces in the use of chemical weapons.[1]

Two days later, Iranian sources note that the USSR has not denounced Iraqi use of chemical weapons, nor denied the Turkish newspaper's report.[2] The day after that, Rafsanjani says the allegations are 'not improbable

from our point of view. But we are looking further into the matter'.[3]

On 13 March, Radio Moscow says of the *Gunes* allegations 'It is truly difficult to think that there can be lies that are more absurd than these concoctions and phantasies'.[4]

[1] [\*author, title, get original\*], *Gunes*, 4 March 1984.

[2] Tehran home service, 1230 GMT 6 March 1984, as reported in 'Soviet chemical weapon training for Iraqi troops alleged', BBC-SWB, 9 March 1984, ME/7587/A/1.

[3] IRNA, 1937 GMT 7 March 1984, as reported in 'Iran and US Condemnation of Chemical Weapons: Gulf Insurance Rates', BBC-SWB, 9 March 1984, ME/7587/A/1.

[4] Radio Moscow (in Persian), 1700 GMT 13 March 1984, as reported in 'Turkish Paper's "Lies" about Soviet Chemical Training of Iraqis', BBC-SWB, 9 March 1984, ME/7592/A4/1.

**5 March 1984** The Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations, Said Rajaie Khorassani, tells a press briefing in New York that there is 'overwhelming evidence' of use of chemical weapons by Iraq against his country, however, such evidence will 'fade away' in the field unless United Nations authorities record it. He says some 1,000 persons have been injured by chemical weapons, 35 per cent of whom have been slightly injured.[1]

[1] 'Chemical weapons in Iran: confirmation by specialists, condemnation by Security Council', *UN Chronicle*, March 1984, p. 3.

**5 March 1984** In Washington, a prepared statement is issued by the US State Department on the situation in the Iran-Iraq War.[1] The statement says 'The US has concluded that the available evidence indicates that Iraq has used lethal chemical weapons. The US strongly condemns the prohibited use of chemical weapons wherever it occurs. There can be no justification for their use by any country'.

The statement also elaborates on US perceptions of the wider political situation with regard to the war: 'While condemning Iraq's resort to chemical weapons, the United States also calls on the Government of Iran to accept the good offices offered by a number of countries and international organizations to put an end to the bloodshed. The United States finds the present Iranian regime's intransigent refusal to deviate from its avowed objective of eliminating the legitimate government of neighboring Iraq to be inconsistent with the accepted norms of behavior among nations and the moral and religious basis which it claims'.

Press coverage of the statement quotes a Reagan administration official as stating that the United States believes that the weapon being used by the Iraqis seems to be mustard gas and that there is no evidence that Iraq has used nerve gas. The official also states that the US has known for at least a year that Iraq was contemplating the use of chemical warfare. The official suggests that the US government decided to go public with the charges only after Iraq had appeared to ignore diplomatic appeals to cease using chemical weapons.[2] Other coverage indicates US officials believe that the mustard gas was made in Iraq and that Iraq is capable of producing nerve agents.[3]

The *Washington Post*, in its coverage of the prepared statement, reports that US intelligence sources say that Iraq's involvement with chemical weapons dates back to the 1960s, when Baghdad, using equipment provided by

the Soviet Union, sought to develop defences against chemical warfare. But, in the early 1970s, Iraq began making mustard gas for offensive weapons, accelerating production after the war with Iran began. Sources also say that Iraq had three plants producing gas and one, about 50 miles from Baghdad, is the main mustard gas producer.[4] American officials would not publicly confirm the details in the *Washington Post* report.[5]

In a speech to delegates at a conference in Baghdad the next day, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein dismisses the US comments, saying the US 'borrowed this talk and these reports from Iran'.[6] Iraqi Defence Minister General Adnan Khayrallah also says at a press conference that Iraq has not used chemical weapons and that all its weapons are (depending on the translation) 'conventional' or 'traditional'.[7] In the words of a confidential memo from the US representatives in Baghdad to Washington, later released, 'The Iraqis apparently have been stunned by our public condemnation'.[8]

[1] United States, Department of State, 'Press Statement: Iraq's Use of Chemical Weapons', 5 March 1984; Moshin Ali (from Washington), 'US accuses Iraq of chemical warfare', *The Times* (London), 6 March 1984, p. 6; see also R Gregory Noakes (from Washington), 'US Condemns Iraqi Use of Chemical Weapons', Associated Press, 5 March 1984; and Tim Ahern (from Washington), 'US Officials Condemn Reported Nerve Gas Use in Iran-Iraq War', Associated Press, 5 March 1984.

[2] Bernard Gertzman (from Washington), 'US says Iraqis used poison gas against Iranians in latest battles', *New York Times*, 6 March 1984, p. A1.

[3] Lois Ember, 'Charges of toxic arms use by Iraq escalate', *Chemical & Engineering News*, 19 March 1984, pp. 16-18.

[4] Michael Getler (from Baida), 'U.S. Accuses Iraq of Employing Chemical Weapons Against Iran; Mustard Gas Use Condemned', *Washington Post*, 6 March 1984, p. A1.

[5] Moshin Ali (from Washington), 'US accuses Iraqis of making mustard gas for use in Gulf battles', *The Times* (London), 8 March 1984, p. 8.

[6] Saddam Hussein, address to 12th Arab Labour Conference, Baghdad, 6 March 1984, as transmitted on Baghdad home service, 2105 GMT 6 March 1984, as reported in 'Saddam Husayn Rejects US Denunciation of Use of Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 8 March 1984, ME/7586/A/1.

[7] Details of the press conference are carried in Arabic on the Amman home service, 2100 GMT 6 March 1984. The term 'conventional' is reported in 'Iraqi Defence Minister: Only "Conventional Weapons" Used', BBC-SWB, 8 March 1984, ME/7586/A/1, while the term 'traditional' is reported in 'Khayrallah: "Traditional Weapons" Used', FBIS JN062254, 7 March 1984, p. E4.

[8] William L Eagleton, US Interests Section in Iraq, to US Department of State, 'Iraq reacts angrily to US condemnation of CW use', 7 March 1984, as partially declassified and posted on the website of the National Security Archive.

**6 March 1984** In London, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher tells the House of Commons 'We have repeatedly made it clear to the Iranian Government that there is no truth in the accusation that the United Kingdom has supplied chemical weapons to Iraq. I am glad to reaffirm that the United Kingdom has not manufactured chemical weapons for 25 years and has destroyed stocks of such weapons.'[1]

British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe repeats the PM's statement adding 'I have carefully noted the US statement that there is evidence to substantiate Iranian allegations of Iraqi use of lethal chemical weapons in the recent fighting' and that the UK will support any international inquiry into allegations that chemical

weapons are being used in the war between Iraq and Iran.[2]

Tehran Radio, commenting on British denials, says that ‘the lying BBC’ was simply trying to ‘clean up decrepit British imperialism’ which had been delivering chemical weapons to Iraq and that there were ‘irrefutable documents and evidence’ to prove this.[3]

[1] Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister, Oral Answers, 6 March 1984, *Hansard* (Commons), vol 55, c731.

[2] [no author listed], Press Association, 6 March 1984, as reported in FBIS, LD061449, 7 March 1984.

[3] Tehran Radio, 6 March 1984, as reported in ‘Chemical Weapons in Iran-Iraq War: Britain Criticized’, BBC-SWB, 7 March 1984, ME/7584/i.

**7 March 1984** Speaker Rafsanjani describes the US denunciation of Iraq’s use of chemical weapons as ‘a sweet reproach from a father to a son’ and ‘a mere trick to fool the people, and to pretend that they are not indifferent towards the issue. When Iraq uses these [chemical weapons] and the world centres close their eyes to it, then what could be done tomorrow if a terrorist throws a poisonous capsule in a large crowd in any country’.[1]

[1] IRNA, 1937 GMT 7 March 1984, as reported in ‘Iran and US Condemnation of Chemical Weapons: Gulf Insurance Rates’, BBC-SWB, 9 March 1984, ME/7587/A/1.

**7 March 1984** A Red Cross team [see 28 February] reports on its examination of wounded Iranian combatants who exhibit symptoms of exposure to chemical weapons.[1]

The Red Cross statement reads: ‘A medical team of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Islamic Republic of Iran, surveying [*sic*] the needs caused by the latest clashes at the Iran-Iraq war front, was confronted on 6 March, during Visits to several hospitals at Tehran, with 160 cases of wounded combatants who presented a disquieting clinical picture, whose nature leads to the presumption of the recent use of substances prohibited by international law’.

‘The common symptoms found by the ICRC doctor among all the wounded — extensive superficial burns (first and second degree), serious respiratory problems, keratoconjunctivitis — appear to be responding favorably to treatment. However, the clinical progress of some patients is marked, eight days after exposure, by severe problems of the blood crisis, accompanied by a major drop in the number of white corpuscles (leukopenia). These problems, linked to respiratory and renal difficulties, have led to the deaths of several patients, two of them dying during the ICRC delegates’ visit’.

‘Parallel to the steps it is undertaking with the parties concerned, the ICRC strenuously recalls that the use on the battlefield of toxic substances is incompatible with the respect of the principle of humanity and constitutes a violation of customary and codified rules of the law of war’.

The Government of Iraq declares that this report is unfair and, in a memorandum to the ICRC says ‘the Foreign Ministry protests vehemently against the ICRC stand and views it as a political and biased stand which fully contradicts the role that has been entrusted to it by the Geneva conventions. Iraq had previously reiterated its commitment to international agreements based on the

principled stand it has been adopting in its foreign policy. Iraqi officials have stressed that chemical weapons were not used in the dispute with Iran. To prove this to world public opinion, Iraq is ready to co-operate with any neutral party so that those allegations can be investigated.’[2]

[1] Lois Ember, ‘Charges of toxic arms use by Iraq escalate’, *Chemical & Engineering News*, 19 March 1984, pp 16–18; [Middle East Staff], ‘Red Cross findings support claims of chemical warfare’, *Financial Times*, 8 March 1984.

[2] INA, 1350 GMT 11 March 1984, as reported in ‘Iraqi Rejection of “Biased” Red Cross Report’, BBC-SWB, 13 March 1984, ME/7590/A/1.

**7 March 1984** UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar states that he ‘strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons wherever and whenever this may occur’. However, he stops short of saying he would investigate Iranian charges that Iraq used gas bombs against Iranian troops last week [see 4 March].[1]

[1] Alex Efty (from Nicosia), [no title], Associated Press, 7 March 1984.

**8 March 1984** In London, a junior minister tells the House of Commons ‘our policy is one of neutrality and a refusal to sell lethal arms to either side [in the Iran–Iraq war]. We believe that it would be both constructive and helpful if all nations followed that policy’. Challenged to qualify his use of the words ‘lethal arms’ and to confirm the UK has not ‘supplied mustard gas to the Iraqis, which the Iranians have accused us of doing’ [see 4 March], the minister responds ‘Our policy is not to sell any arms that can be used for lethal purposes to either side. As to chemicals, we have already made our position absolutely clear. The allegation that Britain is selling chemical weapons to Iraq is completely untrue’.[1]

The question and answer session follows a statement by the government on the missile attack on the *Charming*, a British cargo ship, in the Gulf by Iraqi forces on 1 March.

[1] Richard Luce, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 8 March 1984, *Hansard* (Commons), c998.

**8 March 1984** Spokesman for the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Francois Giuliani, issues a one-sentence statement: ‘The Secretary-General has decided to send experts to Iran to ascertain the facts in connection with the allegations of the use of chemical weapons’.[1]

Earlier in the day, Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations, Said Rajaie Khorassani, writes to the Secretary-General making a further formal request [see 4 March] for a UN investigation of the chemical weapons attacks by Iraq. He calls delaying ‘tactics’ by the United Nations ‘deplorable’ meaning that ‘not only the vital and decisive evidence of the crime of chemical warfare has faded away in the field, but the criminal enemy was also farther abetted in its savagery and consequently resorted to the same prohibited weapon more and more extensively, to such an extent that the media at the international level, as well as many other independent sources, like hospitals, physicians, Governments and the International Committee of the Red Cross [see 7 March] have testified to the perpetration of these criminal acts by Iraq.’ He notes: ‘It



is evident that the obligation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in fulfilment of the resolution 37/98 D [see 13 December 1982] does not require the involvement of any other organ of the United Nations'.[2]

The Secretary-General himself does not refer to powers deriving from the above resolution in carrying out the investigation, rather noting 'the humanitarian principles embodied in the Charter and of the moral responsibilities vested in his office'.[3] The decision to send the team is criticised by Soviet UN envoy Richard S Ovinnikov who suggests that the Secretary-General should have consulted the Security Council before deciding on such an important matter[4] and that the decision was illegal.[5]. Ovinnikov's objections are said to have 'managed to delay the team's trip but not prevent it'.[6]

There is some suggestion that the decision to proceed with the investigation was prompted by the Red Cross report [see 7 March].[7]

[1] Michael Littlejohns, 'UN to probe charges that Iraq used chemical weapons', Reuter, 8 March 1984.

[2] *Letter dated 8 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/163397, 8 March 1984 (also circulated as UN document A/39/127, 9 March 1984).

[3] 'Note by the Secretary-General', paragraph 4, introducing: *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN Security Council document S/16433, 26 March 1984.

[4] [no author listed], 'Soviet Envoy Objects to UN Chemicals Weapons Probe in Iran', Associated Press, 12 March 1984.

[5] IRNA, 1821 GMT 13 March 1984, as reported in 'The USSR and Chemical Weapons in the Iran-Iraq War', BBC-SWB, 15 March 1984, ME/7592/A/1

[6] [editorial, no author listed], 'None of your beeswax', *Wall Street Journal* (European edition), 30 March 1984, p 8.

[7] Lois Ember, 'Charges of toxic arms use by Iraq escalate', *Chemical & Engineering News*, 19 March 1984, pp 16-18.

**Q 8 March 1984** The *Washington Post* reports that Iraq is producing mustard gas at a facility in the town of 'Samawa'. The paper cites 'diplomatic sources', that indicate Iraq used chemical weapons three times in the previous year. The first was in July of 1983 [*\*what might this refer to??\**] along the central section of the front and that it used chemical weapons for a second time in the Penjwin hills along the northern front [see 21 October 1983].[1]

[1] William Drozdiak (from Baghdad), 'Diplomats Say Iraq Used Mustard Gas; Toxic Agent Produced Locally', *Washington Post*, 8 March 1984, p. A1.

**9 March 1984** Tehran radio reports that Iraqi forces have been using chemical weapons in 'several places' during fighting in the Majnoon Islands [see 22 February]. The Iranians claim 'immediate precautionary measures were taken' and 'dozens of our troops received injuries and were taken to treatment centres'.[1]

Some days later, IRNA says local doctors maintain the attacks 'used blistering as well as asphyxiating gas bombs'[2] and reports that some 600 Iranian troops were contaminated and that 'several' were killed in these chemical attacks.[3]

[1] Tehran home service, 1634 GMT 9 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Military Communiques and Reports', BBC-SWB, 12 March 1984, ME/7589/A/1.

[2] IRNA (in English), 1720 GMT 12 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Official on Possibility of Iraqi Chemical Attacks on Towns', BBC-SWB, 14 March 1984, ME/7591/A/1.

[3] IRNA (in English), 1940 GMT 12 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Official on Possibility of Iraqi Chemical Attacks on Towns', BBC-SWB, 14 March 1984, ME/7591/A/1.

**Q 9 March 1984** Iraq says it has agreed to comply with all Security Council resolutions concerning the Iran-Iraq war and has 'declared its complete readiness to settle the conflict by peaceful means'. It asks the Secretary-General to declare his 'unequivocal and clearly defined position with regard to the fact that the Iranian regime continues to wage a flagrant war of aggression against Iraq and refuses to comply with obligations imposed on Iran' by the Charter with regard to respect for Security Council and General Assembly resolutions 'and with regard to its violations of provisions of humanitarian international law concerning the treatment of prisoners of war'.[1] [*\*where does Iraq say this? — primary source?\**]

[1] 'Chemical weapons in Iran: confirmation by specialists, condemnation by Security Council', *UN Chronicle*, March 1984, p 3.

**10 March 1984** Foreign Minister of Iran, Ali Akbar Velayati, calls on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to send a mission to investigate Iraqi use of chemical weapons against Iranian armed forces. Writing to the Foreign Minister of India, Mr Narasimha Rao, chair of the NAM foreign ministers, he says: 'The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran expects the Non-Aligned Movement to delegate a fact-finding team to Iran in order to witness personally the victims of chemical weapons as used by the Iraqis against the Iranian soldiers, so that the peoples in the non-aligned member countries may better learn of the ignominious crime against humanistic principles by the Baghdad government'.[1]

[1] IRNA (in English), 1840 GMT 10 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Appeals to International Bodies on Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 12 March 1984, ME/7589/A/1.

**10 March 1984** Dr. Herbert Mandl, a senior surgeon at the Second University Clinic, Vienna says that laboratory tests in Belgium found traces of mycotoxin and mustard gas in blood and urine samples taken from two soldiers being treated in Austria [see 2 March].[1] Mandl says the tests revealed 'with certain proof' the presence of mycotoxins.[2] In relation to the deaths of three of the patients in Vienna, and one in Stockholm, 'the cause of death was definitely mustard gas and yellow rain; we have established that now without a doubt'.[3]

Aubin Heyndrickx, who had examined the casualties in Vienna and had performed the toxicological study at the State University of Ghent says 'This is the first time in world history — as far as we know — that mustard gas and mycotoxins have been used in combination, producing a synergistic effect'.[4]

The Iranian government allows autopsies to be carried out on the fatalities in Vienna, having previously refused them on the grounds such actions were against Islamic laws.[5]

The toxicological studies relating to the presence of trichothecene mycotoxins are soon disputed.[6]

[1] [no author listed], [no title], United Press International, 11 March 1984; Marcus Eliason (from London), 'UN In Tehran Checks Charges, Dispute over Gas Supplier' Associated Press, 13 March 1984.

[2] [no author listed] (from Vienna), Associated Press, as in 'Toxins are reported in Iran tests', *New York Times*, 11 March 1984, p. 14.

[3] [no author listed], 'US Charges Iraqi Use of Chemical Warfare; Iraq Calls Charge "Hypocrisy"', *Facts on File World News Digest*, 23 March 1984, p. 200, G1.

[4] Gary Yerkey (from Brussels), 'Expert says USSR may be Iraq's source of chemical weapons', *Christian Science Monitor*, 13 March 1984, p. 11; Craig Canine with Elaine Sciolino (from Baghdad), 'The Iran-Iraq War: Is Baghdad Using Poison Gas?' *Newsweek*, 19 March 1984, p. 39. See also IRNA, 1225 GMT 10 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Reports on Iraq's Use of Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 12 March 1984, ME/7589/A/1.

[5] [no author listed], 'Soviet Envoy Objects to UN Chemicals Weapons Probe in Iran', Associated Press, 12 March 1984. See also: Helene von Damn, US Embassy in Vienna, cable to US Secretary of State, 'Iranian war wounded in Vienna', 13 March 1984, as posted on the website of the National Security Archive.

[6] See, for example, Judith Perera, 'Yellow rain evidence does not stand up', *New Scientist*, 22 March 1984, p 3-5; [no author listed], 'Claim of toxin use in Persian Gulf war questioned', *Chemical & Engineering News*, 26 March 1984, p 7; and [no author listed] (from Boston), "'Yellow rain" warfare is bees' fault', UPI, 29 March 1984.

**11 March 1984** Iraq has built a secret underground chemical plant in the desert to supply its armed forces with nerve gas, so the London-based Sunday newspaper, *Observer*, reports today.[1] The paper claims Iraqi sources indicate that an Italian chemical company, Montedison, built the pesticide plant at Akashat in nine months at a cost of £29 million. The company acknowledges negotiations with Iraq had taken place through a subsidiary called Tecnimont but says these led to nothing and therefore denies it was responsible for construction. The plant's design is said to be such that it can be used for both pesticide and nerve agent production [see 24 January 1976].

Iraq denies accusations that its Akashat industrial plant is producing chemical weapons, claiming the plant uses phosphates to produce fertilizer[2] and allows journalists, under escort, to visit the facility.[3] Iraqi Minister of Industry and Minerals, Subhi Yasin, says employees from 40 countries, including Belgium, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, Poland, Pakistan, China and Bangladesh, work at the plant.[4]

[1] Ian Mather and Robin McKie, 'How Iraq built a secret horror plant', *Observer*, 11 March 1984, p 1; [editorial, no author listed], 'Pandora's poison box', *Observer*, 11 March 1984, p 10; Ian Mather and Robin McKie with David Willey (from Milan), Peter Pringle (from Washington) and Chris Mosey (from Stockholm), 'Baghdad's deadly secret', *Observer*, 11 March 1984, p 11.

[2] Baghdad Voice of the Masses, 1600 GMT 15 March 1984, as reported in 'Iraqi Minister Denies Manufacture of Chemical Weapons at Akashat', BBC-SWB, 17 March 1984, ME/7594/A/1. See also Associated Press, *The Times* (London), 16 March 1984, p 7; and G Jacobs, 'Iran discusses war aims amid major new assaults', *Janes Defence Weekly*, 24 March 1984.

[3] Sajid Rizvi, 'Iraq expecting new Iranian offensive', United Press International, 20 March 1984; Vera Lebedeva, 'The World Today', Radio Moscow, 1500 GMT 23 March 1984, as reported in 'Chemical Weapons in Iran-Iraq War: Lies of Imperialist Propaganda', BBC-SWB, 26 March 1984, SU/7601/A4/1; and Aleksey Zlatorunskiy, 'Window on the Arab World', Radio Moscow, 1530 GMT 23 March 1984, as reported in 'Chemical warfare between myth and reality', BBC-SWB, 26 March 1984, SU/7601/A4/1.

[4] Baghdad Voice of the Masses, 1600 GMT 15 March 1984, as reported in 'Iraqi Minister Denies Manufacture of Chemical Weapons at Akashat', BBC-SWB, 17 March 1984, ME/7594/A/1.

**11 March 1984** Major General Maher Abed Al-Rashid, head of the Iraqi Third Army Corps, is quoted saying he would take pleasure in using an 'insecticide to wipe out the bothersome hordes of insects' in reference to Iranian forces.[1]

The insecticide theme appears in a number of further quotes from Iraqi sources. *Newsweek* reports that Baghdad radio 'boasted pointedly' that Iraqi troops had used 'insecticide' on Iranian troops.[2] [Note: the official Iraqi position remains that chemical weapons are not being used by its forces.]

Elsewhere Rashid is quoted thus: 'If you gave me some insecticide that I could squirt at this swarm of mosquitoes, I would use it so that they would be exterminated, thus benefiting humanity by saving the world from these pests'.[3] Rashid's candour in making these statements — such as 'When you are attacked by insects, you use insecticide, don't you?' — is attributed to his relationship with Saddam Hussein. The two men are said to be one year apart in age, and both come from the same village, Auja.[4]

[1] Jon Swain, 'Nerve gas - the evidence on the battlefield', *Sunday Times* (London), 11 March 1984, p 1.

[2] Russell Watson with Elaine Sciolino (in Baghdad), Kim Willenson and William J Cook (in Washington), Elizabeth O Colton (in Bahrain) and bureau reports, 'The Holy War in the Persian Gulf', *Newsweek*, 12 March 1984, p. 40.

[3] William E. Smith with Barry Hillenbrand (from Baghdad) and Raji Samghabadi (from New York), 'Clouds of Desperation', *Time*, 19 March 1984.

[4] David B. Ottaway, 'Outspoken Officer — General is of a New Breed in Iraq', *Washington Post*, 30 July 1984, p A13.

**12 March 1984** Further chemical attacks take place in the Majnoon islands, IRNA reports [see 9 March]. 'The frustrated Iraqi troops once again resorted to chemical bombings this morning in the strategic Majnun islands, now under the control of the Islamic Republic forces. Reports reaching here from the Majnun islands today said that strong wind had considerably reduced the contamination of the area and thus minimized the danger against possible victims. However, precise reports on possible victims were not immediately available'.[1]

The Tehran Home Service claims that the attacks here, and at Hur al-Hoveyzeh, continue into the next day.[2]

[1] IRNA (in English), 1553 GMT 12 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Official on Possibility of Iraqi Chemical Attacks on Towns', BBC-SWB, 14 March 1984, ME/7591/A/1.

[2] Tehran Home Service, 1030 GMT 13 March 1984, as reported in 'Iran's Request for UN Probe into Iraqi Use of Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 15 March 1984, ME/7592/A/1.

**12 March 1984** *The Times* publishes an editorial saying 'It is now established beyond reasonable doubt that Iraq has been using chemical weapons against Iranian forces', and that this 'is a clear breach of the 1925 Geneva Protocol'. The editorial goes on to say Iraq is in 'a war that it started itself' and 'fighting for its existence against waves of suicidal forces ... Yet the report that it started building a chemical plant for the production of poison gas some years ago suggests that the decision was not made suddenly in a desperate bid for survival. It was

the product of deliberate planning and over a long period'.[1]

[1] [editorial, no author listed], 'Poison spreading from Iraq', *The Times* (London), 12 March 1984, p 13.

**12 March 1984** Eleven further Iranian soldiers are sent for medical treatment to France, Switzerland and the UK [see 2 and 10 March].[1] In London, three Iranian soldiers, said to be suffering effects of chemical warfare, arrive to receive treatment at the Cromwell Hospital. British officials state that Iranian soldiers had been arriving in Britain 'for many months'.[2]

The following day, two Iranian soldiers, Mohammad Hassan Parvaneh and Abbas Jani Majnoon, arrive in Tokyo for medical treatment. It is alleged that they have been wounded by chemical weapons in the war with Iraq. Japanese Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe tells reporters the Tokyo government is not directly involved in the Iranians' trip but Japan 'is receiving these soldiers on a non-governmental basis for humanitarian reasons'.[3]

A Swiss doctor treating two Iranian soldiers in Lausanne states that chemicals had apparently caused burns, but cannot confirm what the patients had been exposed to.[4]

It is reported that 6 of the 15 Iranian chemical weapons victims flown to Europe in early March to receive medical treatment [see 2 March] have now died.[5]

[1] Marcus Eliason (from London), 'UN in Tehran Checks Charges, Dispute over Gas Supplier', Associated Press, 13 March 1984.

[2] Henry Stanhope, 'Britain to treat Iranians', *The Times* (London), 13 March 1984, p 13.

[3] [no author listed] (From Tokyo), 'Iranian soldiers seized by chemical gas arrive in Japan', United Press International, 13 March 1984.

[4] [no author listed], [no title], *Wall Street Journal*, 14 March 1984, p 1.

[5] Marcus Eliason (from London), 'UN in Tehran Checks Charges, Dispute over Gas Supplier', Associated Press, 13 March 1984.

**13 March 1984** The investigation team dispatched by the UN Secretary-General [see 8 March] arrives in Tehran. The team comprises: Dr. Gustav Andersson, a senior research chemist at the National Defense Research Institute (FOA) in Sweden; Dr. Manuel Dominguez, an army colonel and professor of preventive medicine in Spain; Dr. Peter Dunn, a scientist at the Materials Laboratory in Australia's Defense Department, and Col. Ulrich Imobersteg, Chief of Chemical Weapons Defense of the Swiss Army.[1] The team is accompanied by Iqbal Riza from the Office of the Under-Secretaries-General for Special Political Affairs who had been part of a UN Secretary-General's investigation in May 1983 into allegations of attacks on civilian areas in the Iran-Iraq War.[2]

On Wednesday 14 March the team visits the war zone — surveying sites, examining aerial bombs and extracting samples, and interviewing patients in a field hospital. On 15 March, team members examine patients in Tehran hospitals and analyse samples collected the previous day. On 16 and 17 March they examine in Tehran aerial bombs transported from the war zone. On 18 March, after Iranian authorities allege that a further chemical attack has taken place, the specialists returned

to the war zone, examine patients in the Tafti Stadium Infirmary, receive new samples and return to Tehran for further patient interviews. On 19 March, the team leaves Tehran for Geneva, where they prepare their report over the next two days.[3]

Riza later shares with an official from the US mission to the UN some additional details relating to the visit. One detail is reported in a cable to Washington in the following terms: 'Iranian authorities showed the UN team gas masks and associated gear which they said had been captured from the Iraqis. The equipment was manufactured in Eastern Europe and bore Arabic script. This was not included in the team's report'.[4]

[1] *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN Security Council document S/16433, 26 March 1984.

[2] *Mission to inspect civilian areas in Iran and Iraq which have been subject to military attack*, UN Security Council document S/15834, 20 June 1983.

[3] 'Chemical weapons in Iran: confirmation by specialists, condemnation by Security Council', *UN Chronicle*, March 1984, p 3.

[4] US Mission to the United Nations in New York, cable to US Secretary of State, 'UN report on chemical weapons use in Iran/Iraq war: consideration in security council', 28 March 1984, as posted on the website of the National Security Archive.

**H 14 March 1984** [In Geneva, UN Human Rights Commission to debate Iranian draft resolution on CW use; US delegation told to abstain — US DoS telegram on NSArch site; no action is taken on the resolution — E/CN.4/1984/L.83/Rev.1]

**14 March 1984** CBS Evening News reports that the United States is sharing information with Iraq about Iranian military action received from satellite surveillance.[1] [Note: this appears to be the first public reference to such activity taking place.]

[1] R Gregory Nokes (from Washington), [no title], Associated Press, 15 March 1984.

**15 March 1984** In the British House of Commons, the Ministry of Defence is asked if it will 'ban the export of anti-nerve gas kits, gas masks and protective suits to Iran and Iraq whilst a state of war exists between those countries'. A junior defence minister responds: 'The export of these items is kept under close scrutiny. I can confirm we do not intend to authorise the supply of any item which might assist Iran or Iraq to wage chemical warfare during the current conflict'.[1] [See also 8 March.]

[1] Geoffrey Pattie, Minister of State for Defence Procurement, Written Answers, 15 March 1984, *Hansard* (Commons), vol. 56, c214.

**15 March 1984** In West Germany, 15 Iranian soldiers arrive to receive treatments for wounds said to have resulted from exposure to chemical weapons [see 12 March]. Five of the soldiers are taken to Munich, the other ten are taken to a specialist skin clinic in Recklinghausen.[1]

[1] Associated Press, as in 'More Iran war victims flown to Europe', *The Times* (London), 16 March 1984, p. 7.

**Q 15 March 1984** Iraq's Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, Ismat Kittani, who is on an unofficial [*\*but does*

*he meet with US officials?\**] visit to Washington, DC, says the USA has fallen for an Iranian trick in accusing Iraq of using chemical weapons. He suggests that Iran was trying to divert attention from its inability to defeat Iraq in its latest offensive. Kittani says even if the doctors saying that the Iranian soldiers in Europe were victims of chemical weapons are correct, it didn't mean the Iranian soldiers were contaminated by weapons used by Iraq; he suggests they could have been contaminated in Iran just as easily.[1]

[1] R Gregory Nokes (from Washington), [no title], Associated Press, 15 March 1984.

**17 March 1984** Iraq uses chemical weapons during heavy fighting in the borderland marsh regions, according to claims by Iran. The Iranian government tells the UN that three attacks are launched against military personnel 'in the West of Gofier region' and that nerve agents were used.[1] Other Iranian sources claim chemical warfare bombs dropped from aircraft wound 460 Iranian soldiers[2] and that the weapons were 'microbic and nerve bombs'.[3]

[1] *Letter dated 27 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16446, 28 March 1984.

[2] [no author listed] (from Nicosia) 'Iran, Iraq Battle in Basra Marshes and More Wounded Flown to Europe', Associated Press, 19 March 1984.

[3] Sajid Rizvi, 'Iran accuses Iraq of using nerve gas, germ warfare', United Press International, 18 March 1984; [no author listed] (from Nicosia), 'Battles near Basra', Associated Press, 18 March 1984.

**17 March 1984** Commander of the Iraqi Third Corps, Maj-Gen Maher Abdel Rashid, gives a widely-reported press conference near Basra. One paper quotes him saying he might think of using chemical weapons 'when I want to finish off the prey'. He denies having used chemical weapons but says he would not hesitate to do so 'if the Iranians reach our strategic positions and penetrate our defence lines'.[1] Another paper quotes him thus: 'Manjooon [*sic*] is my territory and I did not use chemical warfare ... We have not used chemical weapons so far and I swear by God's Word, I have not seen any such weapons ... But if I have to finish off the enemy and if I am allowed to use them, I will not hesitate to do so.'[2]

[1] Henry Kamm (from Baghdad), 'Big Iranian offensive is thought to have started', *New York Times*, 18 March 1984, p. 15.

[2] Maj-Gen Edward Fursdon, Defence Correspondent, with the Iraqi Third Corps east of Basra, 'Iraqi general swears "I have used no gas"', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 19 March 1984, p 5. See also: Mark Fineman (from Basra), 'Iraq says Tehran now is a target', *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 March 1984, p 1; William Drozdiak (from Baghdad), 'Iraqi High Command Girds Nation for Climactic Iranian Assault', *Washington Post*, p A13; William Drozdiak (from Baghdad), 'Baghdad warns of new offensive by Iran', *Guardian* (London), 19 March 1984, p 5; David Fairhall, 'Iraq's last trump', *Guardian* (London), 20 March 1984, p 19.

**19 March 1984** Iran sends an additional 15 alleged chemical weapons casualties to Europe to receive treatment [see 15 March]. All travel via Schipol airport. Five remain in the Netherlands, receiving treatment at Utrecht University Hospital, five fly on to Belgium to be admitted to the Ghent General Hospital, and five travel on to the UK to receive treatment in London.[1]

Two of the five casualties treated in London are stretcher cases.[2] It is not clear what has caused the injuries to the patients.[3] Three of them are named as Bahman Amani (aged 18), Hami Rezaei (30), and Ali Lotfi (54).[4]

[1] [No author listed] (from Nicosia), 'Iran, Iraq Battle in Basra Marshes and More Wounded Flown to Europe', Associated Press, 19 March 1984.

[2] A J McIlroy (from London), 'Iranians frustrated by an early plane', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 20 March 1984, p 4.

[3] A J McIlroy (from London), 'Cause of Iran soldiers wounds inconclusive, say medical experts', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 21 March 1984, p 5

[4] Larry Thorsen (from London), 'Blistered Soldiers Eager To Fight Despite Poison Gas', Associated Press, 23 March 1984

**20 March 1984** In London, the *Guardian* publishes a lengthy article by its Defence Correspondent who has just returned from Iraq, in which he reflects on the accusations that the country has used chemical weapons: 'the mounting medical evidence is accepted as conclusive by most of the foreign diplomatic community there and the Iraqi denials follow a pattern which suggests a plausible explanation for what has been going on. General Rashid [see 17 March] directly denied to me and to other journalists that he used gas in the battle for Majnoon Island, pointing out that it would make no military sense when his troops were so closely intermingled with the enemy. He said he had never seen such weapons. But he added that were he authorised to use such weapons, and if they were available and appropriate for use against an Iranian force breaking through his strategic defences, he would not hesitate to do so. When all the available evidence is put together, it suggests a stockpile of gas bombs that have been tried out experimentally by the Iraqi air force on troop concentrations behind the Iranian lines ... and are now being held back, like the Super Etendards, against the possibility that the human waves will finally break through to Basra or Baghdad'.[1]

[1] David Fairhall, 'Iraq's last trump', *Guardian* (London), 20 March 1984, p 19.

**H 21 March 1984** ['Riyad radio reported on 21st March an announcement by President Sekou Toure of Guinea that the mediation committee set up by the Islamic Conference Organization to find a peaceful solution to the Iran-Iraq war would leave for Tehran soon at Iran's request' — in ME/7599/A/i.]

**21 March 1984** UK Foreign Secretary, Geoffrey Howe, is asked on the floor of the House of Commons what action has been taken 'to mobilise an international response to evidence of weapons being used in the Iran-Iraq war that are outlawed by the laws of war, in particular, chemical weapons?' Howe responds: 'We obviously view with great concern reports that chemical weapons have been used in [the Iran-Iraq War] ... a United Nations team is currently involved in assessing the evidence and I should not want to prejudice its findings. I have already made it clear that we would roundly condemn any violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol'.

[1] Geoffrey Howe, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Oral Answers, 21 March 1984, *Hansard* (Commons), c1035-36.

**H 21 March 1984** [UN report completed [see 13 March]. Report confirms that, ‘chemical weapons in the form of aerial bombs have been used in the areas inspected in Iran by the specialists...’ [\*\*\*add more\*\*] [1]

The report is made public in five days time.

[1] *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN Security Council document S/16433, 26 March 1984.

**H 22 March 1984** [*New Scientist* articles on CW/mustard]

The *New Scientist* articles receive widespread press coverage, including a comment by one journalist on the Iranian interviewees that their symptoms ‘match those seen by myself and a British neurologist in Tehran in November’ [see 25 November 1983].[2]

[1] Judith Perera, ‘Yellow rain evidence does not stand up’, *New Scientist*, 22 March 1984, p 3-5. The article includes inserts entitled: ‘Iranian soldiers in London tell their stories’, ‘Ten years of allegations’ and ‘The industrial connection’.

[2] Andrew Veitch, ‘Mustard gas fears mount’, *The Guardian* (London), 22 March 1984. p 3.

**23 March 1984** The problem of control of exports of dual-use chemicals is addressed at the highest levels of the British Government. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Geoffrey Howe, writes to his counterpart at the Department of Trade and Industry as follows: ‘We learned yesterday from the Security Service of the proposed supply by a British firm [identity deleted] to Iran of two chemicals which can be used in the manufacture of mustard gas. Although the quantities involved are not large enough for immediate operational requirements, they may well be intended for Iranian research into the production of chemical weapons’. The chemicals involved are thiodiglycol and chloroethanol.

He notes the current situation in the Middle East, noting ‘we have been accused repeatedly by Iran of supplying chemical weapons to Iraq. We have not done so, and have worked hard to put the record straight in public. Publicity in the present case would lead many in the Arab world to suspect that we were acquiescing in the supply of chemical weapons to Iran instead’.

The Secretary of State identifies three options: ‘(i) to make informal approaches to the British company with the aim of persuading them to delay or cancel this shipment. I know that our officials are in touch direct on this, but any action must be taken very quickly if there is to be any hope of stopping this shipment. I would hope that your officials could take the lead on this with the company; (ii) to act immediately to bring the two chemicals within the scope of the Export of Goods Control Order; (iii) to arrange an inter-departmental meeting of officials very early next week to consider all the implications of an extension of the Export of Goods Control Order’.

Having addressed some benefits of prompt action, he continues: ‘I have some doubts about precipitate action to extend the Export of Goods Control Order. We do not know for sure that Iran has ordered these chemicals in order to make mustard gas. Given that the chemicals concerned may be widely used, there could be considerable administrative problems in including them under the Order. I am also struck by the fact that other

major Western countries do not seem to be moving quickly to impose their own ban. I understand that the Americans have set up an inter-agency body to review the list of chemicals which might be made subject to licensing if it was established that they could be used in the Gulf war. This does not suggest that they will be acting overnight. We have drawn the attention of the Dutch authorities to secret reports of supplies by Dutch chemical companies to Iraq. We have not had any reports to suggest that they have acted swiftly to impose controls.

The Secretary of State concludes: ‘In the circumstances, my inclination would be to adopt the approach in [iii] above, as well as pressing ahead urgently with the informal contacts to discourage this particular shipment suggested in [i] above. If informal approaches fail to stop this shipment — and more particularly if the result of our enquiries confirms our fears about the purpose of the order — we might need to move quickly to amend the Export of Goods Control Order, all the more so if we get wind of further shipments. Early inter-departmental consideration of the issues involved would put us in a better position to do so.’

Copies of the letter are sent to the Prime Minister [Margaret Thatcher] and the Secretary of State for Defence [Michael Heseltine].

[1] This document remains private until released with other evidence presented to the Scott Inquiry in 1996, carrying inquiry reference mark FCO/123.2.109

**Q 23 March 1984** An Iranian chemical weapons casualty receiving treatment in London claims he was injured when an artillery shell filled with chemical weapons struck his bunker on 13 March. Another Iranian casualty said he had been attacked on 28 February when Iraqi planes attacked a concentration of 400 Iranian soldiers.[1] [\*\*\*add more?? recast for dates of alleged incidents??\*]

[1] Larry Thorson (from London), ‘Blistered Soldiers Eager to Fight despite Poison Gas’, Associated Press, 23 March 1984.

**H 24 March 1984** [‘In a March 24 briefing document, Mr. Rumsfeld was asked to present America’s bottom line. At first, the memo recapitulated Mr. Shultz’s message to Mr. Kittani, [\*\*\*was this 15 March??\*] saying it “clarified that our CW condemnation was made strictly out of our strong opposition to the use of lethal and incapacitating CW, wherever it occurs.” The American officials had “emphasized that our interests in 1) preventing an Iranian victory and 2) continuing to improve bilateral relations with Iraq, at a pace of Iraq’s choosing, remain undiminished,” it said’. — NYT, 23 December 2003]

**26 March 1984** The UN releases the report of its investigation of possible chemical weapons use in the Iran–Iraq War [see 21 March].[1] In transmitting the report of the investigation team to the Security Council, the Secretary-General says he ‘cannot but deplore that their unanimous conclusions substantiate the allegations that chemical weapons have been used’.[2]

Iraqi officials at the UN criticize the report for alleged bias.[3] The Government claims ‘Iraq has not used such weapons, and if the experts sent by the

Secretary-General found substances of this kind in some Iranian areas, Iran is the one which bears responsibility for that.’[4]

Notwithstanding the efforts of the authors of the report not to attribute blame to any country for the use of chemical warfare, this report is taken by many reporters and analysts to support the case that Iraq was the culprit.[5] Press reports suggest it is unlikely that the Security Council, ‘where a majority tilt towards Iraq’, would issue a condemnation.[6]

The report is often mis-quoted. For example, one later analysis states ‘UN Document S/16433, referring to an event in August 1983, officially concludes, “Iraqi forces have used chemical warfare against Iranian forces”’ when no incident in August is referred to and the quotation does not appear in the report.[7]

[1] *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN Security Council document S/16433, 26 March 1984 (also circulated as A/39/210, 27 April 1984).

[2] ‘Note by the Secretary-General’, paragraph 8, introducing: *Report of the Specialists Appointed by the Secretary-General to Investigate Allegations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Concerning the Use of Chemical Weapons*, UN Security Council document S/16433, 26 March 1984.

[3] Zorina Pysariwsky (from New York), ‘Gas used against Iran, says UN team’, *The Times* (London), 27 March 1984, p. 1.

[4] *Letter dated 27 March 1984 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*, UN document S/16438, 27 March 1984, 3 pp.

[5] For example: Michael Kallenbach (from UN New York), ‘Poison gas dilemma for UN’, *Daily Telegraph* (London), 28 March 1984; Agence France Press, as in: ‘UN team proves Iraq used poison gas in Iran’, *The Australian*, 28 March 1984.

[6] Zorina Pysariwsky (from New York), ‘UN report is first proof of breach in chemical war ban’, *The Times* (London), 28 March 1984, p. 8.

[7] Jack Mendelsohn and David Grahame, *Arms Control Chronology*, Center for Defense Information, Winter 2002, p 101.

**28 March 1984** Pope John Paul II condemns the use of chemical weapons in the Iran–Iraq war. Speaking in Italian, he tells 80,000 people gathered in St. Peter’s Square ‘The thought of so many horrors continually assaults me. ... I am referring in particular to the use of chemical weapons, prohibited by the Geneva Protocol of 1925 ... The use of weapons of that type cannot escape the severe judgment expressed by Vatican Council II (1962-65) ... against what has been called total war’.

He goes on to say ‘We must hope that such a terrible reality is never repeated, for the good of those people and the respect of the fundamental values that are found in the conscience of every man’.[1]

[1] [no author listed] (from the Vatican), ‘Expresses Concern Over Use of Chemical Weapons’, Associated Press, 28 March 1984.

**30 March 1984** The *New York Times* publishes a set of articles on chemical warfare in the Iran–Iraq War[1] which are picked up by a number of other media outlets.[2]

An article by Seymour Hersh reports that the Central Intelligence Agency has concluded that the nerve agent Tabun was used for the first time this month against an Iranian mass ground assault, causing heavy casualties. An official is cited as saying the Tabun used in that attack came from Iraq’s research and development stockpile, which had previously been used only on

animals in tests. The success of the nerve agent is said to be astonishing. ‘Military analysts, looking at how the Iranians retreated after what seemed to be an insignificant attack, could not understand it’, the official added. This article also reports that intelligence shows Iraq has as many as five dispersed sites for the storage, production and assembly of nerve gas weapons. According to Hersh’s sources, each of the sites, has been built in bunkers, heavily fortified by concrete, and are said to be six stories below ground, apparently to afford protection against aerial attack. The intelligence is said to be from reliable, but unusually sensitive, sources and has been passed up to the highest levels of government.

Hersh also reports that US intelligence agencies have, within the last month, identified a company in Dreieich, West Germany, as being responsible for the sale and shipping of sophisticated laboratory equipment to Iraq. Sources indicate that equipment supplied by this company, Karl Kolb, has been used — apparently without the company’s knowledge — to aid the Iraqi development of nerve agent weapons. An unnamed State Department is quoted as saying ‘We don’t want to be screaming and shouting at them [the West German government] because we don’t have the answers ourselves to the problem’. The problem being one of determining whether a seemingly ordinary shipment of chemical and laboratory equipment is secretly intended to produce chemical warfare agents. While a West German government spokesman said an investigation had determined that a pesticide plant, scheduled to go into operation in September, had been sold to Iraq by the Kolb company, a senior executive of the company denied such a sale had taken place.

At a press conference in Bonn, prompted by the allegations in the *New York Times*, the West German government denies that Iraq is manufacturing chemical warfare agents using an insecticide plant supplied by a West German company. Government spokesman Peter Boenisch confirms that a US\$12 million insecticide factory is being constructed in Iraq from components sold by Pilot Plant, a West German company, adding that this is only a small test facility which would not become operational until later in the year. Pilot Plant is linked to Karl Kolb. A spokesman for Pilot Plant is quoted as saying ‘We cannot believe that the test plant will be misused for the producing of nerve gas, but everything is possible’.[3]

[1] Seymour Hersh, ‘US aides say Iraqis made use of a nerve gas’, *New York Times*, p A1 & A6; Wayne Biddle, ‘Nerve gases and pesticides: links are close’, *New York Times*, p A7; and [no author listed] (from Bonn), ‘German company denies it sold a pesticide factory to the Iraqis’, *New York Times*, p A6

[2] For example: Angus Deming, John Walcott and Nicholas M Horrock (from Washington), ‘Persian Gulf; Iraq Escalates to Nerve Gas’, *Newsweek*, 9 April 1984, p. 71.

[3] William Drozdiak, ‘Bonn denies Iraq using W. German-made plant for poison gas’, *Washington Post*, 31 March 1984, p A15.

**30 March 1984** The UN Security Council issues a presidential statement in which the members of the Council ‘strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons’ in the Iran–Iraq War without naming either country as using them. Instead, it encourages both to adhere to the 1925 Geneva Protocol.[1] The media notes that Iraq is not named but views the statement as a condemnation of Iraq.[2] and describes the statement as

a 'vague condemnation ... the weakest form of action the council could take'.[3]

Iran's Ambassador to the UN tells the press that if the Council does not specifically condemn Iraq for its actions, it would show that 'the Council is a joke'.[4] An official Iranian statement the next day says the Security Council had been duty bound to condemn Iraq's use of chemical weapons and that its 'failure to carry out its duty in this respect makes it obvious more than ever that the superpowers are involved in supplying Iraq with chemical weapons'.[5] Press reports suggest 'Iraq's allies on the council lobbied successfully' against a resolution which would have had 'more impact by explicitly condemning Iraq' and that only four council members were in favour of a resolution — the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan and the UK.[6]

The text of the statement derives from a resolution proposed by the Netherlands. An official from the Dutch mission to the UN is reported as telling the US mission that his delegation has instructions to support a draft resolution, but that speed is of the essence before the Ukrainian SSR assumes the Council presidency and tries to sidetrack the issue.[7] [Note: it is not clear what is driving the Netherlands interest in the subject, although it may be connected with recent unpublished information suggesting chemical exports by Dutch companies to Iraq [see 23 March].]

An internal UK paper describes the text as a 'Presidential statement which, being couched in the language of a Resolution, will constitute a "decision" of the Council'[8] and notes 'Because the Resolution [*sic*] does not explicitly condemn Iraq, it will probably come as a welcome relief to the Iraqi government. On the other hand, it will no doubt cause irritation to the Iranians, who are likely to renew their pressure on us for a statement which explicitly condemns Iraq for using chemical weapons.'[9]

[Note: the non-permanent members of the Council at this time are Egypt, India, Malta, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru (President), the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Upper Volta and Zimbabwe.]

[1] Note by the President of the Security Council dated 30 March 1984, UN document S/16454, 30 March 1984, 2 pp. The record of the statement being read out in the Council chamber appears in S/PV.2524, 30 March 1984.

[2] For example: [no author listed], 'UN condemnation - Iraq not mentioned', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 31 March 1984, p 34.

[3] Dan Oberdorfer, 'U.S. Curbs chemicals to Iran, Iraq', *Washington Post*, 31 March 1984, p 1.

[4] 'UN Council Set to Condemn Chemical Arms Use in Iran-Iraq War', Associated Press, 30 March 1984.

[5] Tehran Home Service, 2030 GMT 31 March 1984, as reported in 'Iranian Statement on UN View of Chemical Weapons', BBC-SWB, 2 April 1984, ME/7607/A/1.

[6] Zorina Pysariwsky (from New York), *The Times* (London), 31 March 1984, p. 6.

[7] US Mission to the United Nations in New York, cable to US Secretary of State, 'UN report on chemical weapons use in Iran/Iraq war: consideration in security council', 28 March 1984, as posted on the website of the National Security Archive.

[8] DK Haskell (Middle East Department, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office), confidential memorandum, 'Iran/Iraq: Use Of Chemical Weapons: Possible Press Statement', 30 March 1984, paragraph 3. This document remains private until released with other evidence presented to the Scott Inquiry in 1996, carrying inquiry reference mark FCO/123.2.122.

[9] Scott FCO/123.2.122, paragraph 4.

**30 March 1984** In Washington, the State Department announces the United States is to control the export of five chemicals that might be used to make chemical weapons to Iraq and Iran.[1]

The chemicals are potassium fluoride, dimethyl methylphosphonate, methylphosphonyl difluoride, phosphorous oxychloride and thiodiglycol.[2]

[1] Moshin Ali (from Washington), 'US bars export of chemicals for warfare', *The Times* (London), 31 March 1984, p. 6.

[2] Angus Deming, John Walcott, and Nicholas M Horrock (from Washington), 'Persian Gulf; Iraq Escalates to Nerve Gas', *Newsweek*, 9 April 1984, p. 71; and [no author listed] (from Washington), 'U.S. charge Iraq using nerve gas', United Press International, 30 March 1984.

**31 March 1984** In New York, a shipment of potassium fluoride bound for Iraq is 'detained' at Kennedy Airport. The shipment, totalling some 500 kg in 74 drums, is addressed to the Ministry of Pesticides in Baghdad.[1] The chemical is one of the five for which US export controls have just been announced [see 30 March].

The shipment is said to be part of an order for 122 drums of the substance. Potassium fluoride can be used to make either mustard gas or two varieties of nerve gas known as GD and GB. The size, expense and destination of the shipment apparently aroused the suspicions of the customs agents.[2]

[1] Reuter (from New York), as in 'Chemical bound for Iraq held at Kennedy Airport', *The Times* (London), 2 April 1984, p. 4.

[2] Angus Deming, John Walcott, and Nicholas M. Horrock (from Washington), 'Persian Gulf; Iraq Escalates to Nerve Gas', *Newsweek*, 9 April 1984, p. 71.