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**HEADLINE:** Iraq **Dossier:** Suspect plants open their doors: Target sites Iraqis arrange tour of factories named in report

**BYLINE:** Ewen MacAskill in the al-Qa'qa weapons site, Iraq

**BODY:**

With bright yellow smoke pouring from a chimney behind him, Sinan Rasim Said stood in the middle of Iraq's biggest explosives site and rejected accusations in Tony Blair's **dossier** that he was possibly engaged in the production of nerve gas.

Mr Said, director-general of the al-Qa'qa military industrial complex, near Baghdad, said that at least one of the chemical warfare allegations in relation to his plant was easily refutable: "It is a pretty stupid mistake for the British to make."

He expected to be bombed anyway: "The way the Americans are talking, they are very aggressive. They need a war always." He and his staff of more than 1,000 would remain on the site to try to fight fires and protect equipment.

The site was one of two visited by British journalists within hours of Mr Blair's **dossier** being published. The deputy prime minister of Iraq, Tariq Aziz, said British journalists in Baghdad could visit any part of any site mentioned in the report. That promise was fulfilled yesterday.

The journalists chose two sites which have never been visited by Western media before: al-Qa'qa and the Amariyah Sera and Vaccine Institute, which is in a Baghdad suburb. The latter, accused of involvement in biological warfare, also disputed the allegations made in Mr Blair's report.

Both sites will be high on the list to be visited by UN inspectors, who are due to return to Iraq next month.

At the entrance to al-Qa'qa, south of Baghdad, which covers 26 square kilometres, is a slogan: "The heroes of military production say yes to Saddam Hussein."

Al-Qa'qa produces almost all the explosives and propellant fuel for the Iraqi military: this is allowed under the terms of the UN ceasefire agreement at the end of the 1991 Gulf war.

But that same ceasefire resolution bans Iraq from producing chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Al-Qa'qa was bombed in 1991 and again in 1998. Mr Blair's **dossier**, based mainly on intelligence assessments, said that parts of the plant were operational. "Of particular concern are elements of the phosgene production plant at al-Qa'qa. These were severely damaged during the Gulf war and dismantled under Un scom (the UN weapons inspectors, now called Unmovic) supervision, but have since been rebuilt. While phosgene does have industrial uses, it can also be used by itself as a chemical agent or as a precursor for nerve agent."

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