

But finally, there are some even more powerful reasons for assuming the programme was up and running. From 1998 right through to the beginning (and even during) the last gulf war, Syria was used as a transit point for a succession of sanctions-busting imports by Iraq, including items that were almost certainly destined to power-up their secret CW/BW programme. Machine tools to make centrifuges and lathes with very high tolerances were sent from India via Syria (where Western intelligence seized them). The originating company Hindustan Machine Tools of Bombay and Bangalore were ordered by the Al Bashir Company in Baghdad, a known front for the Iraqi Ministry of Defence. Although some of these machine tools could be used for civilian purposes, the discovery of a military manual for use as ordnance in one shipment tends to suggest the purpose of the shipments was not benign.

Western intelligence also discovered that enquiries had been made by Iraqi agents for engines and engine spare parts for their Aero L-29 Delfin basic flight trainers. Some of these flight trainers had already been converted to produce the most credible chemical and biological weapons delivery system. Special tanks with British-made valves had been added to the wings to spray death on the enemy. Although not capable of long range attacks, they would have been formidable weapons against Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Enquiries for spare engines or parts fro the trainers had been made as far away as Bulgaria, Ukraine and the Czech Republic.

If all this evidence is taken together it points inescapably in one direction only.

The irony is it never needed 'sexing up'.

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