

No evidence of chemical weapons at Sudan factory targeted by US

Martin McLaughlin
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No traces of chemical weapons or compounds used in their production have been found in the Sudanese factory that was destroyed by US cruise missiles last August, according to a study prepared by a Boston University chemist.

The plant's owner, Sudanese businessman Saleh Idris, has retained a prominent Washington law firm, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, and a New York-based security company, Kroll & Associates, in an effort to obtain compensation from the US government and a retraction of the Clinton administration's claims that he is associated with a "terrorist" network headed by Osama bin Laden.

Idris hired Thomas D. Tullius, chairman of the Boston University chemistry department, to oversee the study of soil samples taken from the site of the devastated factory, which produced much of Sudan's supply of pharmaceuticals for both human and animal consumption.

Tullius said that samples were taken from 13 locations, including the intact septic tank which was a collection point for chemicals from throughout the facility. None of the samples, which were tested at several leading laboratories, showed any trace of either Empa, a chemical precursor used in the production of VX nerve gas, or its breakdown product, known as Empa.

The Clinton administration attempted to justify the cruise missile attack on the Al Shifa factory with the claim that Empa had been detected in a sample of the soil outside the factory taken by a CIA operative before the attack. Officials of the National Security Council have repeatedly refused either to allow their evidence to be verified by independent analysts or to look at the counter-evidence being assembled on behalf of Saleh Idris.

Kroll Associates found that there was no evidence of any secret activity at the factory, with no security beyond that which would be expected at any chemical manufacturing facility. The security firm--which has worked on high-profile US cases such as the Justice Department takeover of the Teamsters union--said that Idris had commercial links to Sudan's Military Industrial Corporation through other holdings, but that there was no connection between that government-owned company and the Al Shifa plant, and no connection to bin Laden.

Mark J. MacDougall, a partner at Akin, Gump--whose roster includes Clinton confidant Vernon Jordan--said that neither the White House, the NSC, nor the Justice, Treasury and Defense departments would look at the material submitted by Idris. The Sudanese businessman is seeking both compensation and the unfreezing of assets held by an American bank.

This stonewalling takes place as the Clinton administration is making the threat of "international terrorism" the pretext for a vast buildup in the powers of the American military, intelligence agencies and police, especially within the United States itself.

Osama bin Laden and the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania have been at the center of the media propaganda campaign for tens of billions in new spending on security and intelligence measures. These plans include the centralization of anti-terrorism efforts in a White House office directed by former Bush administration national security operative Richard Clarke, and the creation, for the first time in US history, of a military command which will encompass the entire continental United States. The Clinton administration is also seeking \$6.6 billion for an intensified effort to create a missile defense system, with the suggestion that "rogue" nations and

independent "terrorist" groups may launch missile attacks on American cities.

The tests on the Al Shifa factory add to the already substantial evidence that the pretext for this vast military buildup, the alleged terrorist threat targeted in the missile attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan, is a hoax perpetrated by the White House and Pentagon.



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