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LETTER DATED 18 MARCH 1988 FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Further to my letters of 17 and 18 March 1988 (S/19639 and S/19647), I have the honour to draw your attention to the madness of the Iraqi régime which has not even spared its own citizens from blind and massive chemical attacks, as well as the urgency of an appropriate reaction on the part of the international Organization.

In this context, an article entitled "Iraq now Middle East's biggest chemical weapon producer" appeared in Jane's Defence issue of 27 February 1988, revealing Iraq's production and stockpiling of chemical agents; the Iraqi régime's renewed use of chemical weapons were predicted.

A copy of the said article is herewith enclosed.

It would be highly appreciated if this letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad Ja'afar MAHALLATI
Ambassador
Acting Permanent Representative

Annex

Jane's Defence issue of 27 February 1988

Iraq now Middle East's biggest chemical weapon producer

IRAQ has built up its chemical warfare (CW) capability and is believed to be now manufacturing Sarin, a deadly nerve gas, at its two main CW plants.

With Iran also capable of producing chemical weapons, with Syrian help, and carrying out new ground offensives, the Iraqi development has raised fears that the outlawed weapons could be used on a wider scale than they have so far in the seven-year-old Gulf War.

Sarin, developed from the Tabun nerve gas the Iraqis first used in 1984, can kill within two minutes of contact. The Iraqis have been manufacturing mustard gas, Lewisite and Tabun for some time.

According to diplomatic and other sources in Baghdad and other Arab capitals, the Iraqis can produce at least 60 tons of mustard gas a month, along with four tons each of Tabun and Sarin.

If those figures are correct, Iraq is the major manufacturer of chemical weapons in the Middle East. The only other Arab country believed to come anywhere near that level of production is Syria.

The United Nations has accused Iraq at least four times of using gases in the war. The

Iranians allege the Iraqis have used chemical weapons, mainly air-dropped bombs or artillery shells, more than 100 times. An estimated 8000 Iraqis have been affected. About 1000 of them died.

The Iraqis' main plant is at Samarra, a 26 km² complex protected by batteries of SA-2 missiles 100 km north-west of Baghdad. The other key centre is at al-Fallujah, 65 km west of Baghdad.

The Iraqis have also built a chemical warfare research centre at Salman Pak, 40 km south-east of the capital. This is where the nerve gases are being developed, sources said.

US sources have said the Iraqis are developing a germ warfare capability at a complex south-east of Baghdad (*JDW* 9 January), but it is not clear from the latest reports whether this is at Salman Pak.

VX, which the USA has in its CW inventory, has the consistency of diesel oil, unlike most nerve gases which are lighter and will lie around the battlefield in deadly puddles.

Diplomatic sources in Baghdad said there have been indications the Iraqis may be building yet another chemical warfare plant.
