

5. The Middle East

There has been considerable speculation in the open literature about the number of possible chemical weapons production facilities and chemical weapons stockpiles in the Middle East. Recent statements by the President of Iraq provide official national confirmation of the various documentation available in the public domain, to the effect that Iraq possesses a significant CW stockpile and CW production capacity.

Iraq is said to have mustard and nerve gas facilities at Samarra north of Baghdad, in a plant built for the Iraqi State Enterprise for Pesticide Production (SEPP) in 1975. A BBC report indicated that this plant has the capacity to produce mustard, sarin and tabun. Another plant is also believed to be at Al Fallujah. Syria was reported to have acquired a chemical weapon capability and a production facility located in a desert site north of Damascus. The most recent controversy relates to the allegations that Libya is developing a chemical weapons program and that a factory, being built at Rabta about 50 miles south of Tripoli, has a large chemical weapons production capability. It has been claimed that Iran is developing a chemical weapons production capability and has stockpiled chemical weapons.

Egypt was reputed to have a chemical weapons capability in the early 1960's, when there were reports of the use of CW in the Yemen. There is a very recent report that Egypt has