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# Iraq's Nuclear Threat

To the Editor:

A Nov. 25 front-page article says that "tracking Iraq's nuclear weapons sites is considered less complicated because of the radioactivity they emit and because the United Nations compiled a detailed picture of Iraq's program in the early 1990's."

Unfortunately, key technologies like centrifuges to enrich uranium for bombs release little detectable radiation. Fabrication of nonnuclear components for bombs, like high-explosive lenses, emits no radioactivity.

Before 1998, inspectors dismantled much of Iraq's bomb program. But significant issues remain unresolved: Iraq's bomb designs and nuclear-weapon components, for example, are still missing.

The greatest risk is Saddam Hussein's smuggling in bomb material stolen from civil or military programs, which the International Atomic Energy Agency concedes it has very little chance of detecting.

The only fail-safe approach is to halt production and use of plutonium and highly enriched uranium worldwide. Bomb-usable nuclear materials are too dangerous for civilian commerce.

STEVEN DOLLEY

Washington, Nov. 25, 2002

The writer is research director, Nuclear Control Institute.

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