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Disease Occurrence -- Worldwide

(DI-1812-311-03, 24 Mar 2003)

General

(U) The DOWW, published under the auspices of the Department of Defense Intelligence Production Program (DoDIPP), reflects the Defense Intelligence Production Community position. The DIA’s AFMIC is the designated DoDIPP producer for this subject.

(U) The weekly DOWW provides timely alerts and updates on militarily significant infectious diseases.

(U) Health events from 03/21/2003 through 03/24/2003 include:

CENTCOM

Iraq

(U) Forecast: Degradation of Water Treatment may Lead to Increased Disease in Al Basrah

(U) Diseases: Bacterial diarrhea, cholera, typhoid

(U) Risk Period: March 2003 - December 2003

(U) Location: Al Basrah Governorate

(U) Summary: The complete failure of all water treatment facilities serving the city of Al Basrah on 21 March. International Committee of the Red Cross teams managed to restore water supplies to approximately 40 percent of the city 24 hours later. A loss of power was cited as the primary cause of the interruption in water services. The city cannot tap ground water without desalination, and the Shatt al Arab River also is highly saline and requires desalination, thereby restricting use of easily obtained surface or ground water. Because of its location and the limited availability of fresh water supplies, Al Basrah has a history of potable water shortages.

(U) Assessment: Even before Operation Iraqi Freedom, the city's piped municipal water generally was not
potable. Water treatment chemicals, with the exception of chlorine, are lacking. A prolonged loss of water
treatment capability will cause widespread health problems for the inhabitants. Attempts to use water from
easily available though highly polluted sources also will expose the populace to the variety of enteric diseases.
Unless potable water is restored, expect bacterial diarrhea, cholera, and typhoid outbreaks to occur within
days to weeks, with a higher than normal mortality rate among the malnourished population, particularly
among children under 5.

(U) Potential Risk to US Forces: A very high percentage (greater than 50 percent) of personnel consuming
local food, water, or ice could develop symptomatic bacterial diarrheal infections. Infrequent or sporadic
numbers of personnel consuming local food, water, or ice could develop symptomatic cholera infection. A
small number (potentially as high as 1 percent per month) of unvaccinated personnel consuming local food,
water, or ice could develop symptomatic typhoid/paratyphoid infection.

Appendix

(U) Request for feedback: This Center has an ongoing effort to upgrade its worldwide epidemiological
intelligence reporting and requests that any feedback be forwarded to the Defense Intelligence Agency,
Building 6000, Washington D.C., 20340-5100, Attn: AFMIC, by electronic message to DIRAFMIC FT
DETROIT MD, or through the comments/feedback link on the AFMIC home page on Intellink.

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Sec. 1.4(c)

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