

## BUSINESS

- Stocks
- Technology
- Real Estate
- Calculators
- Columnists

## Previous Business

- Tuesday, Sep 24
- Monday, Sep 23
- Saturday, Sep 21
- Friday, Sep 20
- Thursday, Sep 19
- Wednesday, Sep 18

## STOCK QUOTES

- Ticker lookup

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## Weapons antidote in Denver

Modec makes foam to clean up whatever Iraq throws at U.S.

By Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg News  
September 25, 2002

WASHINGTON - Growing fears of a U.S. war with Iraq have put a decontaminant foam made by a Colorado company in the national military spotlight.

The U.S. Central Command has made "an urgent request" for the new foam made only by two private U.S. companies: Modec Inc. in Denver and Enviro Foam Technologies Inc. in Huntsville, Ala.

The foam removes chemical and biological agents from tanks, trucks, armored personnel carriers and electronics, officials say.

The nontoxic foam was developed by the Energy Department's Sandia National Laboratories.

Modec Chief Executive Brian Kalamanka said Modec already "sells a lot of product to the military," and that it's too soon to tell what the military's "urgent request" might mean for Modec, which has 20 employees in Denver.

"At this point it's all conjecture," he said. "But we obviously have a 50-50 chance" of selling the Modec foam, called Decon, to the military.

Modec's Decon is something of a cocktail of ordinary household cleaning products. It digests anthrax and other biological agents and reduces them to nontoxic pieces, developers have said.

Peter Beucher, chief executive of Enviro Foam Technologies, said his company has gotten "a lot of inquiries from commanders.

"The military has got to get off the dime," Beucher said. "It's a big decision that impacts training, logistics, doctrine."

The new foam would replace the decontaminant "DS2" - a corrosive liquid proved harmful to soldiers and only marginally effective against biological agents, officials said.

The foam's primary use is to wash weapons, armored vehicles, large



Steven G. Smith © News

Brian Kalamanka, CEO of Modec Inc., said the Denver company has on hand 100,000 gallons of foam to neutralize chemical and biological weapons that Iraq could use in a war against the United States.

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containers and even airfields. It's proved effective against all known chemical and biological agents, said Mark Tucker, a Sandia researcher.

The sudsy foam is hosed on by soldiers in protective gear and can break down the agents within 30 minutes into harmless compounds, Tucker said.

Kalamanka said Modec has 100,000 gallons of foam on hand, enough for about 3,000 vehicles.

Iraq has chemical and biological weapons and "you'd have to assume they'd be used" against attacking U.S. troops, Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Congress last week. Iraq is believed to have aerial bombs, rockets, artillery and aerosols that can dispense pathogens such as anthrax and botulism.

*Staff Writer Heather Draper contributed to this report.*

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