

## War Spurs Interest in Water Treatment



It is disheartening to think that it takes negative occurrences to make the government take into account the water treatment industry's potential. However, it makes me feel honored to be a part of an industry that has the ability to offer safety to our nation.

It was September 11 that originated the drive for the country to take a closer look at protecting its citizens. Our nation's drinking water has since risen to become a top priority for protection.

A few headlines that demonstrate how the industry's work is so crucial have made me take notice.

- Iraqi citizens—who already suffer from poor water conditions—have begun to face a cessation to their water supplies. It is being said that contaminated water may end up being responsible for more deaths during the war than those caused by weapons. A recent example of this was in the city of Basra where damage to the electric power grid shut down its water treatment plant, leaving some citizens with no safe water for four to five days and even longer for half of the city. Our products are needed in areas such as these as well as on the homefront. For instance, our military has truck convoys carrying tens of thousands of gallons of water for troops and it also continues to utilize reverse osmosis water purification units.
- Inspired by the incidents of September 11, researchers at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry are developing a microchip that will alert authorities when drinking water supplies are contaminated. The chip will pass a laser beam through the water to measure disruptions caused by particles from biological and chemical contaminants. It is expected to be on the market next year.
- In addition, in March at the Water Quality Association show in Las Vegas, NSF International reported that it is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to review technologies and work on protocols for POU devices for bioterrorist and chemical terrorist agents. NSF will focus its efforts on reverse osmosis systems, partially because the government already relies on RO units for military purposes. So, theoretically, RO could gain faster acceptance as a treatment option. Not everyone at the meeting agreed that RO was a good technology to start with. Evan Koslow from KX Industries commented, "ROs are built for TDS, and they are not going to stop chemicals." The comments received in the meeting were welcomed and although others agreed with his concerns, NSF will continue its research and work with the EPA, which hopefully will lead to the exploration of other technologies as solutions.

As the war continues, our water treatment industry will continue to rise to the challenges and be there when the government and public need us. It is a proud time to be a part of an industry that produces such important technologies.

Best wishes to each of you,

*Wendi*

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