

29 October 2008

Chem-Bio News

1. MILITARY INTELLIGENCE CUTS RISK UK'S NATIONAL SECURITY, DOCUMENT

SHOWS: *"The military's intelligence service is facing severe cuts that will reduce its ability to foresee future threats to national security and dangers to British forces abroad, a confidential Whitehall document shows."*

2. NATION [AUSTRALIA] AT RISK FROM 'DIRTY BOMB':

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3. GUINEA-BISSAU CHOLERA EPIDEMIC SEEN LASTING MONTHS:

"The death toll in Guinea-Bissau's rapidly spreading cholera epidemic is rising and the outbreak may continue for months, United Nations agencies said on Tuesday."

4. OBJECTS CLOSEST TO PATIENTS ARE MOST CONTAMINATED, SURVEY FINDS:

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5. USING INTERNET SEARCHES FOR INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE:

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Chem-Demil News

1. [PUEBLO CHEMICAL] DEPOT GROUNDWATER CLEANUP SCHEDULED:

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CB Daily Report

Chem-Bio News

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE CUTS RISK UK'S NATIONAL SECURITY, DOCUMENT SHOWS

By James Kirkup
The Daily Telegraph (UK)
October 28, 2008

"The military's intelligence service is facing severe cuts that will reduce its ability to foresee

future threats to national security and dangers to British forces abroad, a confidential Whitehall document shows.

British analysis of Russia's military capabilities and activities will be reduced as the Ministry of Defence slashes the size and budget of the Defence Intelligence Staff, a senior officer has warned.

The agency is losing more than one in five of its Whitehall staff and having its budget cut by nearly £7 million as the Ministry of Defence cuts costs."

"The DIS analyses foreign countries' military capabilities, monitoring both conventional weapons like aircraft and missiles and nuclear, biological and chemical weapons proliferation."

"Despite growing diplomatic concerns about growing Russian militarism, the document reveals: "Analytical effort will be reduced on Russian land and air force capabilities and activities."

"During the Hutton Inquiry into the death of David Kelly in 2004, it was revealed that DIS intelligence experts had raised doubts about the accuracy of Government claims over Iraq's weapons of mass destruction but were overruled. A subsequent inquiry, by Lord Butler, said the DIS budget should be increased."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/defence/3270493/Military-intelligence-cuts-risk-UKs-national-security-document-shows.html>

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NATION [AUSTRALIA] AT RISK FROM 'DIRTY BOMB'

By Cameron Stuart

The Australian

October 27, 2008

"AUSTRALIA'S proximity to the hotbeds of terrorism in Asia places it at greater risk of a biological terror attack, one of the US's leading biosecurity experts has warned.

John Clerici, an architect of US President George W. Bush's emergency bio-terrorism laws, says Australians must be wary of complacency about the threat of this unusual form of terrorism, which he says represents a growing challenge to the Western democracies."

"The biggest gap in preparations by the US and in the rest of the world is in dealing with a so-called dirty bomb (which disperses deadly radioactive material).

"If a dirty bomb were set off near the White House, it would make a five-block radius unlivable for many years. We are not yet ready to deal with something like that."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/>

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GUINEA-BISSAU CHOLERA EPIDEMIC SEEN LASTING MONTHS

Reuters

October 28, 2008

"The death toll in Guinea-Bissau's rapidly spreading cholera epidemic is rising and the outbreak may continue for months, United Nations agencies said on Tuesday.

The death toll is now 213, with 12,785 people known to be infected, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs told a news briefing in Geneva.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) said that experience from the last major epidemic in 2005 suggested the present outbreak in the West African country would continue for at least another three months, peaking by November."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LS322811.htm>

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OBJECTS CLOSEST TO PATIENTS ARE MOST CONTAMINATED, SURVEY FINDS

Infection Control Today Magazine

October 28, 2008

"The first stage of the U.S. Department of Defense-funded clinical trials exploring the role of hospital high-touch surfaces in the transmission of infectious pathogens has been completed and the researchers reported their findings today in a poster session at the Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy (ICAAC) in Washington, D.C.

The data presented describe the first results of a three-phase study where the bioload found on stainless steel, plastic and aluminum objects in intensive care unit rooms were measured. Phases two and three of the study are ongoing. During these phases, the bioload on identical objects made of microbiodical copper will be measured to determine the effectiveness of copper at combating hospital-acquired infections.

The findings being presented at ICAAC show that the most heavily contaminated objects are those in closest proximity to the patients: bed rails, call buttons and chairs were found to have the highest levels of staphylococcus, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and vancomycin-resistant Enterococci (VRE). These pathogens can survive for extended periods of time on such objects, which act as reservoirs for the bacteria.

Independent laboratory studies have shown that copper, brass and bronze are more than 99.9 percent effective in killing potentially deadly pathogens, such as MRSA, which are

commonly found in healthcare facilities. In response to these findings, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has registered copper, brass and bronze as antimicrobial materials, allowing public health claims to be made about them."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/hotnews/high-touch-survey-findings.html>

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USING INTERNET SEARCHES FOR INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE

By Philip M. Polgreen, Yiling Chen, David M. Pennock, and Forrest D. Nelson

Clinical Infectious Diseases

October 27, 2008

"The Internet is an important source of health information. Thus, the frequency of Internet searches may provide information regarding infectious disease activity. As an example, we examined the relationship between searches for influenza and actual influenza occurrence. Using search queries from the Yahoo! search engine (<http://search.yahoo.com>) from March 2004 through May 2008, we counted daily unique queries originating in the United States that contained influenza-related search terms. Counts were divided by the total number of searches, and the resulting daily fraction of searches was averaged over the week. We estimated linear models, using searches with 1–10-week lead times as explanatory variables to predict the percentage of cultures positive for influenza and deaths attributable to pneumonia and influenza in the United States. With use of the frequency of searches, our models predicted an increase in cultures positive for influenza 1–3 weeks in advance of when they occurred (), and similar models predicted an increase in mortality attributable to pneumonia and influenza up to 5 weeks in advance (). Search-term surveillance may provide an additional tool for disease surveillance."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/593098>

ANALYST NOTE:

This article indirectly highlights what has become a frequent situation; that people rely on the Internet for medical information and even diagnosis. As a result, this approach may also have a sentinel application in CB situations, especially when the possible symptoms or combination of symptoms may be more distinctive than just the normal "flu-like" symptoms.

In those cases however, there will also be a greater necessity for weeding out the "worried well" (e.g., "I have a temperature of 99.3.....do I have Ebola?!"). Thus, prompt, frequent, and accurate information from medical authorities will be vital if the adverse effect of the proliferation of erroneous Internet postings on medical resource demand is to be minimized or avoided.

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Chem-Demil News

[PUEBLO CHEMICAL] DEPOT GROUNDWATER CLEANUP SCHEDULED

By John Norton

The Pueblo Chieftain

October 29, 2008

"After years of study and tests, work will begin in January to clean up two of the major sources of groundwater pollution at the Pueblo Chemical Depot."

Members of the depot's Restoration Advisory Board heard a report this week from Andrew Ellison of Shaw Environmental Inc. about how the company will use bacteria, along with nutrients for the organisms, to break down the residue from chrome-plating operations and a munitions washout area."

"The plumes are two of the problems the Army is dealing with on the 66-year-old installation, along with other areas where soil will be excavated and replaced. The Restoration Advisory Board is made up of area residents and state and local officials to oversee the continuing effort to clean up residue from decades of ordnance storage and maintenance activities."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.chieftain.com/articles/2008/10/29/news/local/doc490819412cdce452949226.txt>

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