

23 April 2010

Chem-Bio News

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- 2. BIOAGENTS BILL READIED FOR HOUSE:** *"The House bill gives DHS responsibility for ensuring that labs that possess Tier 1 agents increase security, an aide familiar with the bill said. But HHS and the Agriculture Department remain in charge of the Select Agents program, as stipulated in the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002."*
- 3. NEW DEADLINES PROPOSED FOR CLEANUP OF BURIED RADIOACTIVE WASTE AT HANFORD:** *"The Department of Energy and its regulators have agreed to new legally binding environmental cleanup deadlines for radioactive waste that has been temporarily buried at central Hanford since 1970."*
- 4. INL[IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY] LASER RESEARCH COULD HELP U.S. RESPOND TO TERROR ATTACK:** *"Getting contaminants off surfaces is difficult," says INL chemist Gary Groenewold. "They start inhabiting cracks and pores." Water inhabits those cracks and pores, too, and that's where lasers come in. Fox, Groenewold and their colleagues have shown that laser pulses can flash that water into steam, carrying the contaminants back to the surface for removal by chelation or other means. "It's a kind of laser steam-cleaning," Fox says."*
- 5. GRAHAM: 'SERIOUS' BIO-WEAPONS THREAT IN MIDDLE EAST:** *"Former Senate Intelligence Committee chairman Bob Graham, just back from a trip to the Middle East, says he is worried that the flashpoint states of India and Pakistan, as well as Syria and Israel, may have manufactured biological weapons."*

Chem-Demil News

- 1. DCD [DESERET CHEMICAL DEPOT] AND TOCDF [TOOELE CHEMICAL AGENT DISPOSAL FACILITY] PASS INSPECTIONS:** *"The U.S. Army Materiel Command Surety Office conducted the two week SMR of the DCD and TOCDF. The review team consisted of subject matter experts who inspect everything related to surety, including mission and demil operations, safety, security, environmental, emergency response and medical support. According to final reports, neither DCD nor TOCDF had any deficiencies written against them, only some recommendations for improvement."*
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CB Daily Report

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NNSA PROVIDES RADIATION TRAINING TO IRAQI FIRST RESPONDERS

US National Nuclear Security Administration News Release

April 22, 2010

"The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) today announced that it recently completed radiation medical emergency training in Baghdad, Iraq, as part of its ongoing commitment to nuclear and radiological incident response.

More than 40 representatives of the Iraqi medical community from the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Defense, Civil Protection and Radioactive Source Regulatory Authority participated in a three-day Radiation Medical Emergency Training course from April 11 to 13. The training course hosted by the Iraq Radioactive Source Regulatory Authority and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Embassy Baghdad was conducted by the NNSA's Office of Emergency Operations.

"Radiation medical emergency training with Iraq is part of NNSA's comprehensive approach to nuclear and radiological incident response," said NNSA Associate Administrator for Emergency Operations Joseph Krol. "The breadth of our experience working in nuclear security over the past 60 years enables us to prepare other professionals for such incidents."

The Radiation Medical Emergency Training course provides the medical professionals including doctors, nurses, and emergency medical team personnel with appropriate processes and procedures for stabilizing, handling, transporting, and care for individuals exposed to radiation and/or contaminated with radioactivity.

These training courses are conducted by NNSA's Office of Emergency Operation's Radiation Emergency Assistance Center/Training Site (REAC/TS), and supported by personnel from the Oak Ridge Institute of Science and Education (ORISE). REAC/TS is tasked with medical management of radiation incidents and accidents. Since its inception, REAC/TS has responded to more than 2,450 calls for assistance and many more calls for information related to the medical management of radiological events. In 2008 alone, REAC/TS received more than 200 calls for information and responded to approximately 50 calls for assistance."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/2915.htm>

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BIOAGENTS BILL READIED FOR HOUSE

By Chris Strohm

CongressDaily on Global Security Newswire

April 21, 2010

"Key lawmakers on the House Homeland Security Committee said Tuesday they are drafting a bipartisan bill that would regulate dangerous biological agents -- and, they hope, will avoid problems confronting similar legislation in the Senate.

In a conference call Tuesday, King and Pascrell said their bill will be similar in many ways to legislation introduced last year by Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chairman Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) and ranking member Susan Collins (R-Maine).

But the Lieberman-Collins bill came under fire from Senators Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and George Voinovich (R-Ohio) for putting the Homeland Security Department in charge of regulating security at labs that work with Tier 1 biological agents. They said this essentially cut out HHS or other federal agencies that now have oversight responsibilities.

Pascrell said he is trying to avoid that problem in the House bill. "We listened to the concerns of the scientific community and took them to heart," he said.

The House bill gives DHS responsibility for ensuring that labs that possess Tier 1 agents increase security, an aide familiar with the bill said. But HHS and the Agriculture Department remain in charge of the Select Agents program, as stipulated in the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002.

The House bill also would establish a process under which DHS, HHS, USDA, the Defense Department, the Energy Department and other relevant federal agencies would work with private research institutions and public health labs to negotiate higher standards that Tier 1 labs must achieve and maintain, the aide added.

While the Lieberman-Collins bill splits the Select Agents list into three categories, the Pascrell-King bill would only have two tiers because the labs and scientists felt that dealing with a third tier would be too burdensome, the aide said.

"The intent of our bipartisan legislation is to provide a truly comprehensive approach to securing the nation against weapons of mass destruction by looking at all angles -- prevention and deterrence, preparedness, detection, attribution, response and recovery," Pascrell said."

The full article can be found at: http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20100421_3043.php

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NEW DEADLINES PROPOSED FOR CLEANUP OF BURIED RADIOACTIVE WASTE AT HANFORD

By Annette Cary

The TriCity Herald
April 22, 2010

"The Department of Energy and its regulators have agreed to new legally binding environmental cleanup deadlines for radioactive waste that has been temporarily buried at central Hanford since 1970.

The proposed new package of deadlines would allow more time for some work but also add new deadlines DOE must meet. They include the first-ever deadlines for when some of the waste must be shipped to a national repository in New Mexico and a final cleanup deadline for some of the most difficult-to-handle solid waste, which Hanford now lacks the capabilities to prepare for disposal."

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"The current deadlines date from 2003, but regulators agreed last year to consider extending them, depending on how much federal economic stimulus money Hanford would receive. Of the \$1.96 billion coming to the Hanford nuclear reservation, about \$1.3 billion is being spent by CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co., which does central Hanford and ground water cleanup.

What is being dug up varies widely, and officials have different sets of milestones for five different waste groupings.

Two types of waste being retrieved are particularly difficult to handle. They include transuranic waste in large boxes, some about the size of a railcar, rather than the typical 55-gallon drums. It also includes research waste packaged in paint-can sized containers that is called "remote-handled" because it is too radioactively hot for workers to get near. Some of it was dropped down slanted chutes to 10-foot-tall boxes, or caissons, buried 14 feet below the ground.

Under the new deadlines, DOE would be required to have all but the remote-handled waste that was temporarily buried dug up by Sept. 30, 2016. Remote-handled waste, including that in four caissons, would need to be dug up by the end of 2018."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/04/22/986216/new-deadlines-proposed-for-cleanup.html>

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INL [IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY] LASER RESEARCH COULD HELP U.S. RESPOND TO TERROR ATTACK

By Mike Wall

Idaho National Lab

c. April 20, 2010

"In theory, chemists already know how to clean up radiological contaminants. They can

"chelate" affected areas, for instance, using grabby, reactive chemicals to wrench radionuclides off surfaces. But in the real world, that's easier said than done. Many building materials — like cement and brick — are extremely porous.

"Getting contaminants off surfaces is difficult," says INL chemist Gary Groenewold. "They start inhabiting cracks and pores."

Water inhabits those cracks and pores, too, and that's where lasers come in. Fox, Groenewold and their colleagues have shown that laser pulses can flash that water into steam, carrying the contaminants back to the surface for removal by chelation or other means.

"It's a kind of laser steam-cleaning," Fox says."

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"Lasers can degrade weapons like VX in two ways: photochemically or photothermally. In photochemical decomposition, high-energy laser photons blast apart chemical bonds, slicing the agent into pieces. In photothermal decomposition, photons heat up the target surface enough to speed along natural degradation reactions. In some cases, the intense heat by itself can cause contaminant molecules to fall apart.

Some chemical agents are susceptible photochemically, others photothermally. Knowing how chemical contaminants fall apart is key, because some of their degradation products can themselves be hazardous. But according to Fox, the tests look good in this regard, too.

"The lasers are showing neutralization of agent without generation of dangerous byproducts," he says."

The full article can be found at: https://inlportal.inl.gov/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=1269&mode=2&featurestory=DA_547419

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GRAHAM: 'SERIOUS' BIO-WEAPONS THREAT IN MIDDLE EAST

By Jeff Stein

The Washington Post

April 20, 2010

"Former Senate Intelligence Committee chairman Bob Graham, just back from a trip to the Middle East, says he is worried that the flashpoint states of India and Pakistan, as well as Syria and Israel, may have manufactured biological weapons.

"The extent to which they may have done it is classified, but it is a serious threat," the Florida Democrat said in an interview on the eve of his appearance at a House Homeland Security Committee hearing on legislation related to weapons of mass destruction."

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"The danger of a conflict between India and Pakistan, or Israel and Syria, respectively, with nuclear or biological weapons is "dangerously high," he said.

Moreover, he said, the close relationship between a segment of Pakistani intelligence and the Taliban, on the one hand, and Syria and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah militia, on the other, were special cause for worry."

The full article can be found at: http://blog.washingtonpost.com/spy-talk/2010/04/graham_serious_threat_of_bio-w.html

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DCD [DESERET CHEMICAL DEPOT] AND TOCDF [TOOELE CHEMICAL AGENT DISPOSAL FACILITY] PASS INSPECTIONS

US Army Chemical Materials Agency Monthly Update
April 22, 2010

"Two recent inspections – the Surety Management Review (SMR) and Environmental Performance Assessment System (EPAS) – went well for Deseret Chemical Depot (DCD) and the Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (TOCDF).

The U.S. Army Materiel Command Surety Office conducted the two week SMR of the DCD and TOCDF. The review team consisted of subject matter experts who inspect everything related to surety, including mission and demil operations, safety, security, environmental, emergency response and medical support. According to final reports, neither DCD nor TOCDF had any deficiencies written against them, only some recommendations for improvement.

"Overall we came out with glowing remarks with just a small list of things to address," said Col. Gerald Gladney, DCD Commander. Final reports state that both DCD and TOCDF have "solid" surety programs and are fully "mission capable."

The most recent inspection, the EPAS, is very similar to the SMR, but focuses on continuous environmental improvements. The EPAS was performed by a team from the U.S. Army Public Health Command, along with representatives from the Chemical Materials Agency. Preliminary reports indicate that there were a few minor "findings" and some corrective actions needed to be made, none of them were of major concern and most were corrected before the one-week inspection concluded.

"Once again, we have successfully completed these inspections, which I attribute to the

teamwork and professionalism shown by the DCD and TOCDF workforce," said Col. Gladney. "Without their expertise and dedication, such accomplishments would not be possible."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cma.army.mil/fndocumentviewer.aspx?DocID=003682775>

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DESERET CHEMICAL DEPOT – CAMDS CLOSURE

US Army Chemical Materials Agency Monthly Update
April 22, 2010

"It's been one year since URS (formerly EG&G) assumed control of the Chemical Agent Munitions Disposal System (CAMDS); although no buildings have been razed, recent months have brought notable milestones as progress is made toward facility closure.

In late February, the Utah Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste approved a request to merge the existing CAMDS permit requirements into the current Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit. The combined RCRA permit includes the approved CAMDS Closure Plan and a modified Waste Analysis Plan, which details the specific requirements for closure-related wastes.

This month, CAMDS workers also completed the Unventilated Monitoring Test (UMT) for the Material Treatment Facility (MTF), which was previously used to treat various agent-contaminated secondary wastes.

"This is a significant milestone for CAMDS closure," noted CAMDS Site Project Manager Jerry Linn. "As soon as the final test reports are approved by CMA, the MTF will be ready for demolition."

Following approval of the final MTF UMT test report, URS officials will be allowed to cease agent monitoring, shut off the controlled ventilation and prepare the building for demolition—remove lights, disconnect utilities and remove doors to allow air circulation. Although the MTF will soon be ready for demolition, it will be left standing until all CAMDS structures meet the UMT requirements. Final closure activities include the demolition of CAMDS structures, which is expected to begin in summer 2011."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cma.army.mil/fndocumentviewer.aspx?DocID=003682775>

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Steve Tesko: Steve.Tesko@anser.org

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