

Chem-Bio News

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- 2. GOVERNORS OPPOSE THE PENTAGON:** *"This comes at the same time that the Defense Department is eying the formation of new military units designed to rapidly respond to catastrophic terrorist attacks on domestic soil, a move that could establish 10 "Homeland Response Forces," one aligned with each of the Federal Emergency Management Agency regional administrators."*
- 3. OFFICIALS MAY RECOMMEND 3 FLU SHOTS:** *"In a sign of heightened concern that the upcoming flu season could be severe, top national and local health officials warned Wednesday that employers should brace for worker absences and cautioned the public that as many as three shots this season may be needed to protect against the H1N1 strain and seasonal flu."*
- 4. THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT WANTS DETAILS ON BWC PROGRESS:** *"Nevertheless, it's important to give credit where credit is due. In this case, it's the fact that despite the myriad pressing domestic and international priorities, a senior group of MPs recently called on the British government to refocus its attention on nonproliferation in terms of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, as well as ballistic missile defense, terrorism, and conventional weapons."*
- 5. IRAN ALLOWS U.N. WATCHDOG ACCESS TO PLANNED REACTOR:** *"Iran has allowed U.N. nuclear inspectors access to a reactor under construction after blocking visits for a year, and has let them upgrade monitoring at another site ahead of a crucial report on its atomic program."*
- 6. BIODEFENSE RESEARCH COULD VIOLATE WEAPONS CONVENTIONS, REPORT WARNS:** *"Some experts have said that almost any activity conducted with "defensive intent" would be allowed by the convention. However, others argue that the issue is more complex and that some ostensibly protective research could lead to development and proliferation of biological weapons, the study says."*
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CB Daily Report

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ARMS EXPERT WARNS NEW MIND DRUGS EYED BY MILITARY

By Robert Evans
Reuters
August 19, 2009

"A leading expert on chemical and biological arms control called Wednesday for urgent efforts to stop

new mind-altering drugs developed for medical purposes from being adopted by the military for use in warfare.

In an article in the U.S. journal *Nature*, British academic Malcolm Dando said civilian researchers in many countries seemed largely unaware of the danger and urged quick action to adapt a key arms pact to head it off.

"In the past 20 years, modern warfare has changed from predominantly large-scale clashes of armies to messy civil strife," wrote Dando, citing the Bosnian conflict of the mid-1990s and current fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Chemical agents and even gene therapy being developed in civilian life science laboratories "are particularly suited to this style of warfare; it is not hard to find people in the military world who think they would be useful," he declared.

Dando, Professor of International Security at Britain's Bradford University, is a regular participant in U.N.-sponsored arms conferences and is due in Geneva next week for a meeting of experts on the 1972 biological weapons pact.

But in *Nature*, he said attention should be focused on changing the 1993 global Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

"The CWC urgently needs modifying if it is to continue to help ensure that the modern life sciences are not used for hostile purposes," he wrote. Most pressing was how the pact dealt with non-lethal chemicals developed for law enforcement."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSTRE57I4VL20090819>
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GOVERNORS OPPOSE THE PENTAGON

By Bruce Clarke

Examiner.com

August 18, 2009

"This comes at the same time that the Defense Department is eyeing the formation of new military units designed to rapidly respond to catastrophic terrorist attacks on domestic soil, a move that could establish 10 "Homeland Response Forces," one aligned with each of the Federal Emergency Management Agency regional administrators.

The 10 new Homeland Response Forces would be formed in part by reducing the size of the units that are presently designed to play a key role in dealing with consequences of a large-scale attack involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosives (CBRNE).

The current CBRNE force is a 4,700-person task force comprised of active and reserve personnel from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force that can be tailored to respond to any incident involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosives.

The governors' concerns and these proposed new units that would respond to FEMA regional administrators seem to be deeply related. Shouldn't each state have the capability to respond to CBRNE attacks and thereby increase the states' ability to deal with a problem? Is this just part of the states rebelling against the centralization of power in Washington?"

The full article can be found at: <http://www.examiner.com/x-17537-Defense-Dept-Examiner~y2009m8d18-Governors-oppose-the-Pentagon>
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OFFICIALS MAY RECOMMEND 3 FLU SHOTS

By Rong-Gong Lin II and Kim Geiger

The Los Angeles Times

August 20, 2009

“In a sign of heightened concern that the upcoming flu season could be severe, top national and local health officials warned Wednesday that employers should brace for worker absences and cautioned the public that as many as three shots this season may be needed to protect against the H1N1 strain and seasonal flu.

In Washington, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke urged that common sense take precedence over “the Puritan work ethic.”

He joined two other Cabinet secretaries to tell business owners to prepare for losing key employees to swine flu for days at a time. Federal officials told employers to encourage hand washing and aggressively clean work areas and to send ill workers home at the first hint of flu symptoms, expecting that they will be out for three to five days.

Locke also suggested that employers consider curtailing face-to-face meetings and limiting company travel to prevent swine flu's spread. Business owners, officials said, should be open to telecommuting and other options that could allow employees to work from home.”

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“Inoculations for both -- which can be administered by injection or nasal spray -- can be given on the same day. But the second swine flu vaccination, if recommended, would probably be given three or four weeks after the first dose.

Health officials acknowledged that recommending as many as three flu shots this fall could cause some confusion, but said the possibility was unavoidable because H1N1 emerged as a threat after the seasonal flu shot was in production.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-swine-flu20-2009aug20,0,4256379.story>

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THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT WANTS DETAILS ON BWC PROGRESS

By Malcolm Dando

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

August 19, 2009

“Nevertheless, it's important to give credit where credit is due. In this case, it's the fact that despite the myriad pressing domestic and international priorities, a senior group of MPs recently called on the British government to refocus its attention on nonproliferation in terms of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, as well as ballistic missile defense, terrorism, and conventional weapons.

The call comes in a June House of Commons' report entitled "Global Security: Nonproliferation," which examines the government's present policies on each aspect of nonproliferation. It wasn't a thin study either. In fact, it was accompanied by 300 pages of oral and written evidence taken from a range of experts.”

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“The first was the MPs' suggestion that the government report on its progress in overseeing scientific

research and codes of conduct for scientists as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) intersessional process dictates. I'm eager to see what the government has to say about scientific oversight and codes of conduct, particularly since sensible progress on those issues can't be made without addressing two specific problems: (1) the very low levels of awareness of biosecurity and dual-use in Britain's life sciences community; and (2) the need to make changes to education such as those identified in the 2008 BWC intersessional meetings (for example, making clear the risks associated with working in the biological sciences; see paragraphs 26 and 27 of the 2008 "Report of the Meeting of States Parties"). If the "Strategic Plan for Outreach and Education on Dual Use Research Issues" put forward by the U.S. National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity in December 2008 is any guide to what needs to be done (and I believe it is), governments are going to have a massive task ahead of them in living up to what they believe is required--from raising awareness globally to implementing appropriate communications strategies.

The MPs also made significant points on how to strengthen the BWC at the international level. For instance, they concluded, "Securing a verification protocol for the BWC should remain a key objective for the government." They added, "The government should work to persuade the new U.S. administration that such a protocol for the convention is essential." (It's worth noting, however, that the expert advice they received on this point was pessimistic about rapid progress.) To counteract this pessimism, the MPs argued that the government should give priority to strengthening the BWC by proposing an Accountability Framework, putting forward an Action Plan for Comprehensive Implementation, expanding the role and staff of the Implementation Support Unit, holding formal annual meetings, and refining and improving confidence-building measures as a means of strengthening the convention."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.thebulletin.org/web-edition/columnists/malcolmdando/the-british-parliament-wants-details-bwc-progress>

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IRAN ALLOWS U.N. WATCHDOG ACCESS TO PLANNED REACTOR

By Sylvia Westall
Reuters
August 21, 2009

"Iran has allowed U.N. nuclear inspectors access to a reactor under construction after blocking visits for a year, and has let them upgrade monitoring at another site ahead of a crucial report on its atomic program.

Iran allowed International Atomic Energy Agency officials to inspect the site of the Arak heavy water reactor last week, diplomats said. The agency has been urging Iran to grant it access to verify it is for peaceful uses only.

Diplomats also said Iran had allowed inspectors to upgrade IAEA monitoring at the Natanz uranium enrichment plant as requested by the agency, which had been finding it hard to keep track of expanding activity.

The IAEA is due to circulate its latest report on Iran next week, ahead of the annual meeting of the IAEA's 150 member states in September."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSLK11768820090821>

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BIODEFENSE RESEARCH COULD VIOLATE WEAPONS CONVENTIONS, REPORT WARNS

By Martin Matishak
Global Security Newswire
August 20, 2009

"Member states to the Biological Weapons Convention must be careful not to violate their commitments to the pact as they conduct research activities and seek to defend themselves against bioterrorism, according to a think tank report issued this week."

"There is growing recognition that states parties engaged in biodefense research and development activities must take active steps to ensure their own compliance with the convention and to effectively reassure others of their compliance," according to the document released Monday by the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation."

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"Some experts have said that almost any activity conducted with "defensive intent" would be allowed by the convention. However, others argue that the issue is more complex and that some ostensibly protective research could lead to development and proliferation of biological weapons, the study says.

"When one is doing bioresearch and biodefense, one has to be careful to not overstep the treaty itself," independent analyst Gerald Epstein, who participated in the 2008 meeting as a senior fellow for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said yesterday in a telephone interview.

He cited the U.S biodefense effort Project Bacchus -- an investigation by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency to determine whether it was possible to build a bioweapons production facility using readily available equipment -- as an instance where questions were raised if the treaty had been violated.

The type of biodefense activity that is most likely to raise questions regarding treaty compliance is "threat assessment," the process of determining what type of biological attacks are most likely to occur, he told Global Security Newswire. A dangerous biological agent could inadvertently be developed during such research, Epstein said.

"If one had perfect intelligence and a perfect ability to predict the future, one could base threat assessment on intelligence, and no scientific research or technical activity would be needed to assess or characterize biological threats," he wrote yesterday following the interview. "In the real world, where intelligence is imperfect and the ability to make predictions quite limited ... one has to make assumptions about what the threat might entail."

Epstein added it is difficult to determine what kind of research could cause a violation because "the treaty is not at all specific about what's prohibited."

The full article can be found at: http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20090820_6796.php
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UN WATCHDOG HIDING EVIDENCE ON IRAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

By Barak Ravid

Haaretz.com

August 19, 2009

"The world's nuclear weapons watchdog is hiding data on Iran's drive to obtain nuclear arms, senior Western diplomats and Israeli officials told Haaretz.

The officials and diplomats said that the International Atomic Energy Agency under Director General Mohamed ElBaradei was refraining from publishing evidence obtained by its inspectors over the past few months that indicate Iran was pursuing information about weaponization efforts and a military nuclear program.

ElBaradei, who will soon vacate his post, has said that the agency does not have any evidence that suggests Iran is developing a nuclear weapon. But the sources told Haaretz that the new evidence was

submitted to the IAEA in a classified annex written by its inspectors in the Islamic Republic. The report was said to have been signed by the head of the IAEA team in Iran.

The classified report, according to the sources, was not incorporated into the agency's published reports. The details, they said, were censored by senior officials of the IAEA in the organization's Vienna headquarters."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1108564.html>

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Chem-Demil News

JUDGE TOSSES CHEMICAL WEAPONS INCINERATION SUIT

By Nedra Pickler
The Associated Press
August 19, 2009

"The U.S. Army on Wednesday won a court challenge to its plan to incinerate chemical weapons at storage sites around the country, over objections from a watchdog group that says the practice releases toxic pollution.

A federal judge threw out the suit aimed at stopping the plan to destroy the stockpiles dating back as far as World War II, required under an international treaty, the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention. More than half the United States' aging cache of 31,500 tons of nerve agents and mustard gas has been destroyed so far, with a 2017 congressional deadline for completion.

The Army conducted several environmental impact studies comparing different methods of destruction and concluded that incineration was the most safe and effective when explosive munitions are involved.

A watchdog organization called the Chemical Weapons Working Group, based in Berea, Ky., sued in 2003, arguing there are new alternative technologies for destruction. They say the Army's environmental impact studies are outdated and failed to assess the impact of weapons, such as mustard agents, containing mercury.

The group asked that new studies be required, but U.S. District Judge Richard Eaton ruled Wednesday the group did not prove that "alternatives to incineration are readily available and capable of destroying the quantity and type of chemical warfare agents and munitions at the challenged sites."

Chemical Weapons Working Group Director Craig Williams said the organization is assessing whether to appeal the ruling, which he said was based on outdated information after six years of litigation."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cwwg.org/ap08.19.09.html>

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PUEBLO GETS DESTRUCTION PREVIEW

By John Norton
The Pueblo Chieftain
August 21, 2009

"Members of the local group monitoring the destruction of chemical weapons here got a detailed description Wednesday evening of the work that's already being done to test the kind of machinery that will be used in Pueblo in a few years.

With slides and videos, Paul Dent, equipment manager for Bechtel, showed the Colorado Chemical Demilitarization Citizens Advisory Commission how a fully automated system would dismantle the weapons stockpiled at the Pueblo Chemical Depot and remove the deadly mustard agent stored inside them.

The depot is home to 780,000 artillery shells and mortar rounds that contain a total of 2,611 tons of mustard agent.

While most demilitarization facilities around the country have incinerated weapons, Pueblo's will be treated with hot water to break down the mustard agent into less dangerous compounds. Before the water treatment, however, explosive fuses and bursters have to be removed, a job that will be done by arrays of robotic stations."

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"Dent said that in addition to having experience with the equipment before it's installed in Pueblo, there's going to be an experienced human component of people transferring here from Anniston when that work is finished and Pueblo's starts. "There are a lot of people working in Anniston who are really looking forward to coming here," he said, adding that not having to hire all new workers and train them is "a major, major benefit to us."

The full article can be found at:

<http://www.chieftain.com/articles/2009/08/21/news/local/doc4a8e2483dbd86508687500.txt>

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Steve Tesko: Steve.Tesko@anser.org

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