

Chem-Bio News

1. IS MYANMAR GOING NUCLEAR WITH NORTH KOREA'S HELP?: *"The recent aborted voyage of a North Korean ship, photographs of massive tunnels and a secret meeting have raised concern that one of the world's poorest nations may be aspiring to join the nuclear club — with help from its friends in Pyongyang."*

2. JUDGE DISMISSES SUIT AGAINST FEDS FOR KAN. BIOLAB: *"A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed by a Texas consortium protesting the Homeland Security Department's choice of Kansas for a multimillion-dollar biodefense lab."*

3. HOUSE ATTEMPTS TO EXTEND CHEMICAL SECURITY ACT: *"The House of Representatives is working on extending a law set to expire in October that aims to harden chemical facilities against terrorist attacks."*

4. HHS MUST IMPROVE BIOSHIELD SPENDING CONTROLS: *"The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has not identified appropriate purchasing risks in Project BioShield, thereby increasing chances that an agency might procure biological countermeasures at an unreasonable price, warned congressional investigators Tuesday."*

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1. LEXINGTON BLUE GRASS ARMY DEPOT - ARMY REPORT FINDS FAULTY MONITORING AT KY. DEPOT: *"An Army inspector general's report concludes Kentucky's chemical weapons stockpile inadequately monitored a deadly nerve agent for two years, although it found no evidence any workers were exposed or any agent escaped the storage igloos into the atmosphere."*

2. UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT - TRACE OF MUSTARD CHEMICAL AGENT VAPOR DETECTED: *"Depot chemical operations monitoring workers detected trace amounts of HD mustard chemical agent vapor today inside a depot storage structure or "igloo" that houses bulk containers. The traces of mustard chemical agent vapor were detected during routine weekly monitoring. The vapor is likely due to a leaking bulk container."*

CB Daily Report

Chem-Bio News

IS MYANMAR GOING NUCLEAR WITH NORTH KOREA'S HELP?

By Denis D. Gray
Associated Press on Yahoo! News
July 21, 2009

"The recent aborted voyage of a North Korean ship, photographs of massive tunnels and a secret meeting have raised concern that one of the world's poorest nations may be aspiring to join the nuclear club — with help from its friends in Pyongyang.

No one expects military-run Myanmar, also known as Burma, to obtain an atomic bomb anytime soon, but experts are closely watching the Southeast Asian nation.

"There's suspicion that something is going on, and increasingly that cooperation with North Korea may have a nuclear undercurrent. We are very much looking into it," says David Albright, president of the

Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington, D.C. think tank.”

The full article can be found at:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090721/ap_on_re_as/as_myanmar_nuclear_ambitions

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JUDGE DISMISSES SUIT AGAINST FEDS FOR KAN. BIOLAB

By Suzanne Gamboa

Associated Press on Google News

July 17, 2009

“A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed by a Texas consortium protesting the Homeland Security Department's choice of Kansas for a multimillion-dollar biodefense lab.

The judge decided the lawsuit was premature and dismissed it without prejudice, opening the way for the Texas Bio- and Agro-Defense Consortium to refile the lawsuit later, which the group said it may do.

Details of the judge's decision were temporarily sealed. Federal Court Claims Judge Mary Ellen Coster Williams said in a hearing this month the lawsuit seemed premature. She said the lab may never materialize and noted that a deal had not been made for Kansas to provide land in Manhattan, Kan. for the lab. The Kansas Board of Regents has agreed to provide the land but the Homeland Security Department has not signed that agreement.”

The full article can be found at:

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gF10hzkUPBSBldrJmafLAMzuPgMQD99GFP3G0>

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HOUSE ATTEMPTS TO EXTEND CHEMICAL SECURITY ACT

By Katie Breitbach

NationalDefenseMagazine.org

August, 2009

“The House of Representatives is working on extending a law set to expire in October that aims to harden chemical facilities against terrorist attacks.

Officials with the Department of Homeland Security’s chemical facilities antiterrorism standards program, or CFATS, have not had enough time to fully assess all of the country’s chemical facilities that may be vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

Under a law Congress passed in 2007, facilities identified as the most vulnerable — designated as tiers one through four — must inventory all hazardous materials, carry out a vulnerability assessment, then draw up site security plans to address any risks.

There are some 7,000 such sites in the United States.

The revised law, the Chemical Facilities Antiterrorism Act of 2009, will fine tune the regulations and make CFATS rules permanent.”

The full article can be found at:

<http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2009/August/Pages/HouseAttemptstoExtendChemicalSecurityAct.aspx>

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HHS MUST IMPROVE BIOSHIELD SPENDING CONTROLS

By Mickey McCarter

HSToday.com

July 22, 2009

“The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has not identified appropriate purchasing risks in Project BioShield, thereby increasing chances that an agency might procure biological countermeasures at an unreasonable price, warned congressional investigators Tuesday.

To rectify this situation, HHS should include comprehensive risk assessment statements in all written guidance provided for internal controls to BioShield procurement agents, said the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in a report titled "Project BioShield: HHS Can Improve Agency Internal Controls for Its New Contracting Authorities."

The department has awarded a total of nine contracts under Project BioShield since its inception in 2004. These contracts were awarded to procure countermeasures against biological agents such as anthrax, botulism, smallpox and others, as well as to counter radiation poisoning. HHS eventually terminated one contract, leaving the eight remaining with a cumulative value of roughly \$2 billion, GAO reported.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.hstoday.us/content/view/9469/128/>

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Chem-Demil News

LEXINGTON BLUE GRASS ARMY DEPOT - ARMY REPORT FINDS FAULTY MONITORING AT KY. DEPOT

By Jeffrey McMurray

Associated Press on Kentucky.com

July 20, 2009

“An Army inspector general's report concludes Kentucky's chemical weapons stockpile inadequately monitored a deadly nerve agent for two years, although it found no evidence any workers were exposed or any agent escaped the storage igloos into the atmosphere.

The report covering September 2003 through August 2005 at the Blue Grass Army Depot in Richmond was obtained under a Freedom of Information Act request by the Washington-based Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility.

Richard Sloan, a spokesman for the chemical weapons operation at the depot, said Monday the Army was preparing a response but had no immediate comment on the specific findings.

"We have received a copy of the inspector general's report and will go over it carefully to see if there's anything additional we can do to provide enhanced safety for the community and its citizens," Sloan said.

The 51-page inspector general's report seems to validate some allegations by Donald Van Winkle, a former weapons monitor at the depot who claimed he was pushed out of his job after raising safety concerns about the air monitoring system used in the igloos where rockets and mortars containing the nerve agent VX are housed. In December, an administrative law judge dismissed a whistle blower lawsuit in which Van Winkle argued the depot retaliated against him for reporting the violations.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.kentucky.com/471/story/868022.html>

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UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT - TRACE OF MUSTARD CHEMICAL AGENT VAPOR DETECTED

US Army Chemical Materials Agency News Release

July 15, 2009

“Depot chemical operations monitoring workers detected trace amounts of HD mustard chemical agent vapor today inside a depot storage structure or “igloo” that houses bulk containers. The traces of mustard chemical agent vapor were detected during routine weekly monitoring. The vapor is likely due to a leaking bulk container.

There was no danger to the public or environment. The igloos have a passive filtration system that prevents chemical agent vapor from escaping outside the structures. As a further protective measure after each leak is discovered, a powered filtration system is installed on the igloo. The leaking container will be identified, inspected, repaired as necessary, and decontaminated.

The depot is currently disposing of the HD mustard ton containers in its final agent disposal campaign after successfully destroying its stockpile of GB Sarin and VX nerve agents.

Mustard is a blister agent that freezes below 59 degrees Fahrenheit and is thawed above that temperature. As aging mustard bulk containers thaw out in warmer months of the year, they can leak. Those leaks are typically first discovered when depot monitoring workers routinely check for agent vapors from outside the igloo.

Mustard agent is a colorless to light yellow to dark brown oily liquid, depending upon the age and relative purity of the material. It has the odor of garlic or horseradish and its vapor is approximately 5.5 times heavier than air. Although mustard does not readily evaporate, it may pose both a liquid contact hazard and a vapor hazard to the eyes, skin or respiratory tract. The only type of mustard munition stored at the Umatilla Chemical Depot is bulk containers or “ton containers.” Those munitions have no explosive components.

Depot officials routinely notify the public when such incidents occur. Army officials also notify off-post emergency operations centers in Umatilla and Morrow counties, Ore.; Benton County, Wash.; those in Oregon and Washington states; the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation; and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cma.army.mil/include/docrendition.asp?DocID=003681106>
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