

24 July 2009

Chem-Bio News

1. NOAA TO TRACK MUNITIONS IN SEA: "Nine ocean current monitoring sensors will be placed off Pokai Bay at two World War II weapons dumpsites Friday as part of the Pentagon's continuing assessment of the potential effects of sea-disposed munitions."

2. DARPA SEARCHES FOR NEXT-GEN NUKE-SPOTTERS: "Darpa's latest project is after a new way to detect dangerous radioactivity in the first place. Instead of sensing "primary radiation signatures" that can be shielded, they're considering "secondary effects" of radioactive materials, like ultra-violet signals emitted by gamma rays."

3. TERRORISTS HAVE REAL CHANCE OF STEALING NUKES: "Knowledge that such a transfer has occurred may not become evident until the aftermath of a nuclear 9/11 in Pakistan or elsewhere in the world," says Dr. Shaun Gregory, director of the Pakistan Security Unit at the University of Bradford in Britain."

4. CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN BALTIC SEA REMAIN A THREAT, LITHUANIA SAYS: "Lithuania on Monday called for continued attention to the danger posed by chemical weapons dumped decades ago in the Baltic Sea, the Baltic News Service reported."

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Chem-Demil News

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2. ADVOCACY GROUP CALLS FOR LEADERSHIP SHIFTS AT BLUE GRASS DEPOT: "An advocacy group hopes to see senior officials ousted at a U.S. Army chemical weapons storage facility in Kentucky following an improper relocation of equipment used for detecting potentially dangerous leaks of VX nerve agent, Defense Environment Alert reported yesterday."

3. PINE BLUFF ARSENAL - ARSENAL UNVEILS PLAN FOR TRANSITION AFTER INCINERATION: "For the first time Thursday, the Pine Bluff Arsenal provided details about its plans for the chemical weapons incineration facility there once its mission is completed by November 2011, possibly sooner."

CB Daily Report

Chem-Bio News

NOAA TO TRACK MUNITIONS IN SEA

By Gregg K. Kakesako
StarBulletin.com
July 22, 2009

"Nine ocean current monitoring sensors will be placed off Pokai Bay at two World War II weapons dumpsites Friday as part of the Pentagon's continuing assessment of the potential effects of sea-disposed munitions.

Tony Reyer, a scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said yesterday that four sensors will be located at the conventional weapons dumpsite a few miles off Waianae known as ordnance reef. Two will be placed in 300 feet of water, and another two at 50 feet.

Five others will be anchored with 3,000-pound weights in 8,000 feet of water at a deep-sea chemical weapons munition disposal site 10 miles west of Pokai Bay. A string of sensors will be linked at depths of 40, 492 and 1,476 feet."

The full article can be found at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090722_NOAA_to_track_munitions_in_sea.html

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DARPA SEARCHES FOR NEXT-GEN NUKE-SPOTTERS

By Katie Drummond

Wired.com

July 21, 2009

"In 2007, former Homeland Security nuclear office director Vayl Oxford reported that metal containers like steel and lead could prevent the detection of dangerous radioactive material being smuggled into the country. The same year, an initial test campaign of detectors suggested their effectiveness was shaky at best - though official test results were never released.

Now Darpa, the military's way out research arm, wants proposals for radiation detectors with better accuracy than previous models. In particular, they're hoping for sensors that can spot dangerous substances through dense storage materials. "Since alpha and beta particles are effectively shielded by containment, innovative concepts and approaches to detect secondary effects associated with neutron and gamma ray emission is of interest."

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"Darpa's latest project is after a new way to detect dangerous radioactivity in the first place. Instead of sensing "primary radiation signatures" that can be shielded, they're considering "secondary effects" of radioactive materials, like ultra-violet signals emitted by gamma rays. But Darpa's still open to old-school detection. As long as it can pick up concealed radiation:"

The full article can be found at: <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/07/darpa-wants-next-gen-nuke-spotters/>

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TERRORISTS HAVE REAL CHANCE OF STEALING NUKES

By Peter Goodspeed

The National Post (CA)

July 18, 2009

"There is a genuine risk Islamist terrorists may get their hands on Pakistan's nuclear weapons or nuclear material for a dirty bomb, according to a British security expert.

"Knowledge that such a transfer has occurred may not become evident until the aftermath of a nuclear 9/11 in Pakistan or elsewhere in the world," says Dr. Shaun Gregory, director of the Pakistan Security Unit at the University of Bradford in Britain.

"The challenge to Pakistan's nuclear weapons from Pakistani Taliban groups and from al-Qaeda constitutes a real and present danger," he writes in an article to be published in the Combating

Terrorism Center's magazine Sentinel at the U. S. Military Academy West Point.

Last month, terrorist commander Mustafa Abu al-Yazid vowed to use Pakistan's nuclear weapons against the United States if al-Qaeda can get its hands on them. This week, al-Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, claimed "American crusaders" are trying to "manipulate Pakistan's destiny" and are plotting to seize the country's nuclear weapons."

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"Pakistan has a robust set of safety and security guidelines to protect its weapons, he says. It relies on "a layered concept of concentric tiers of armed forces personnel to guard nuclear weapons facilities."

In addition to physical barriers, intrusion detectors and the physical separation of warhead components from their detonators, Pakistan has an extensive program to select nuclear guards who are all screened for Islamist sympathies, personality problems, drug use, inappropriate external affiliations and sexual deviancy, Dr. Gregory says.

Still, he warns, "no screening program will ever be able to weed out all Islamist sympathizers or anti-Westerners."

To reduce the risk of collusion with terrorists or selling nuclear technology on the black market, Pakistan regularly rotates its 8,000 to 10,000 nuclear security staff and uses a "two person" rule under which no action involving nuclear materials can be taken by fewer than two people.

Large portions of Pakistan's arsenal and its nuclear infrastructure also remain secret.

Pakistan's army has complete control of the country's nuclear weapons and relies on a rudimentary electronic lock on its nuclear arsenal "similar to the banking industry's 'chip and pin' to ensure that even if weapons fall into terrorist hands they can not be detonated," Dr. Gregory says."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=1802736>

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CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN BALTIC SEA REMAIN A THREAT, LITHUANIA SAYS

Global Security Newswire

July 22, 2009

"Lithuania on Monday called for continued attention to the danger posed by chemical weapons dumped decades ago in the Baltic Sea, the Baltic News Service reported."

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"The Baltic Sea was used as a repository for tens of thousands of tons of chemical weapons confiscated from Germany after World War II, according to a 1995 report from a working group of the Helsinki Commission (Baltic News Service, July 20)."

The full article can be found at: http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20090721_9461.php

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INDIA'S 'HOTTEST' NEW WEAPONS POWERED BY CHILLI

By David Hambling

Wired.com

July 20, 2009

“India’s military is getting ready to deploy weapons-grade chillis for counter-insurgency and riot control. The Indian Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) is harnessing the super-hot bhut jolokia chilli pepper as an alternative to tear gas as a filling for grenades, Asia Times notes.

Chili-based weapons have been around for years — think “pepper spray” — and are gaining popularity in the U.S. The bhut jolokia could take the spicy arms up several notches; it is rated the hottest chili in the world.

The active ingredient in chillis is Oleoresin Capsicum (OC), a complex mixture of organic compounds. Aficionados rate the hotness of chills using the Scoville scale, which measures the amount of dilution needed before the heat is no longer detectable to a panel of tasters. Bell peppers have a rating of zero, Jalapenos can rate up to 8,000, and Habanero and scotch bonnets a blistering 100,000. The Jolokia rates just over a million on this scale. (Existing OC “pepper pray” weapons using the refined product go over two million Scoville units.)”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/07/indias-hottest-new-weapons-powered-by-chilli/>

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PYONGYANG USING DISABLED CHILDREN TO TEST CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

AsiaNews.it

July 24, 2009

“Pyongyang is testing its “biological and chemical weapons” on “humans, specifically mentally or physically handicapped children,” a former officer in the North Korean military who defected to South Korea is quoted as saying on the al-Jazeera website. In the interview the defector said that Pyongyang has estimated stockpile of more than 5,000 tonnes of biochemical weaponry, including mustard gas, nerve agents such as sarin, anthrax and cholera.

Im Chun-yong is a former captain in the North Korean military who fled in 1999 with a number of soldiers. He swam across the half frozen Tumen River into China. During their escape he and his men battled their way out, chased by dozens of members of other commando units. “I myself killed three men,” he told al-Jazeera.

He now lives in South Korea and devotes his time to gathering intelligence about the North's military capabilities.”

The full article can be found at: <http://new.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=15871>

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Chem-Demil News

LEXINGTON BLUE GRASS ARMY DEPOT - ARMY: AGENT MONITORING SYSTEM WAS INOPERATIVE

By Ronica Shannon

The Richmond Register

July 21, 2009

“Chemical weapons stockpiled at the Blue Grass Army Depot went two years without being monitored, according to a report released Monday by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER).

The U.S. Army's inspector general's agency investigated several claims made by Donald VanWinkle, a former depot whistle blower, who claimed he was retaliated against when he voiced concerns about how the weapon storage igloos were being monitored.

The report covered September 2003 through August 2005 and was obtained under a Freedom of Information Act request by PEER."

The full article can be found at:

http://www.richmondregister.com/localnews/local_story_202082209.html

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ADVOCACY GROUP CALLS FOR LEADERSHIP SHIFTS AT BLUE GRASS DEPOT

Global Security Newswire

July 22, 2009

"An advocacy group hopes to see senior officials ousted at a U.S. Army chemical weapons storage facility in Kentucky following an improper relocation of equipment used for detecting potentially dangerous leaks of VX nerve agent, Defense Environment Alert reported yesterday."

"The group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility represented a former Blue Grass Army Depot employee who alleged he lost his security clearance for calling attention to the practice. One source with the organization accused depot leaders of fostering a culture of retaliation and demonstrating poor technical understanding of chemical weapons stockpile maintenance."

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"The depot has taken the necessary steps to resolve problems noted in the IG report, said a spokesman for the Army Chemical Materials Agency, which oversees the depot. The environmental group was incorrect in attacking Blue Grass administrators, the spokesman added (Defense Environment Alert, July 21)."

The full article can be found at: http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20090722_7514.php

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PINE BLUFF ARSENAL - ARSENAL UNVEILS PLAN FOR TRANSITION AFTER INCINERATION

By Amy Riggan

Pine Bluff Commercial

July 23, 2009

"For the first time Thursday, the Pine Bluff Arsenal provided details about its plans for the chemical weapons incineration facility there once its mission is completed by November 2011, possibly sooner.

Larry Wright, civilian executive assistant to the commander, emphasized after a meeting of the arsenal's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) that the state's only active Army installation's plan is "not a done deal." But he, along with Col. Franz Amann, arsenal commander, said they are taking steps to provide the Department of Defense with "concepts for reuse" in order to maintain a military presence in the community — and with that, jobs.

"We want to leverage what we can to maximize our efficiency, with our strong points being ammunition production and chemical-biological [defense equipment] production," Amann said, adding, "These projects are long-term, which is what we're also looking for."

The plan calls for reusing 15 buildings totaling 115,000 square feet in the chemical weapons disposal facility complex for the following activities:

- Storage and maintenance of large equipment items, such as military field hospitals;
- Reset and repair of military vehicles and attached chemical-biological defense equipment, such as collective protection shelters and vehicular smoke generators; and
- Storage and warehousing of vehicle components and sub-components.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.pbcommercial.com/articles/2009/07/24/news/news3.txt>

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