

29 July 2009

Chem-Bio News

1. HHS TO TIGHTEN RISK ASSESSMENT CONTROLS IN BIOSHIELD CONTRACTS:

"According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), when HHS uses certain acquisition procedures called for in the BioShield Act, it needs to better gather "cost or pricing data" in order to "determine if the price of a contract is fair and reasonable."

2. DECISION ON BIOLAB WILL BE EXAMINED: *"A congressional panel will conduct a review to determine whether the Homeland Security Department used a flawed analysis in its decision to locate a \$650 million agricultural lab in Kansas, instead of in San Antonio or other locations, officials said Monday."*

3. PROTECTING AMERICA AGAINST PERMANENT CONTINENTAL SHUTDOWN FROM ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE: A NATIONAL CONFERENCE: *"Scheduled speakers include U.S. Congressional leaders, Department of Defense experts, and many other experts on EMP. In addition, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich will deliver an exclusive video address on EMP prepared specifically for this conference."*

4. MILITARY CHEM-BIO DEFENSE IS UNCOORDINATED WITH STATES: *"The Department of Defense (DoD) presently lacks the means to assess whether its plans to respond to domestic incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosives (CBRNE) bridge holes in other federal, state and local capabilities--or to integrate its plans with other agencies, congressional investigators testified Tuesday."*

5. NEW DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY DIRECTOR NAMED: *"Kenneth A. Myers III has been selected as the new director, Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). He was sworn in July 27, 2009, at the Pentagon."*

Chem-Demil News

1. RANGE FIRE REPORTED AT SOUTH END OF UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT: *"Depot officials said the incident is not close to the area where chemical weapons are stored."*

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

HHS TO TIGHTEN RISK ASSESSMENT CONTROLS IN BIOSHIELD CONTRACTS

By Louis Chunovic
Government Security News

July 27, 2009

"According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), when HHS uses certain acquisition procedures called for in the BioShield Act, it needs to better gather "cost or pricing data" in order to "determine if the price of a contract is fair and reasonable."

GAO reviewed how HHS used its purchasing and contracting authorities under the BioShield Act, and the "extent to which HHS has internal controls in place to manage and help ensure the appropriate use of its new authorities."

Those new contracting authorities included "increased simplified acquisition and micropurchase thresholds, and expanded abilities to use procedures other than full and open competition and personal services contracts."

Since passage of the act, HHS has let nine contracts, including one that was subsequently terminated, GAO said."

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"While HHS identified some risks, according to GAO, it has not discussed a "key risk associated with using simplified acquisition procedures -- namely, that an agency is prohibited from obtaining cost or pricing data for acquisitions at or below the simplified acquisition threshold. Without this data, the agency may not be able to determine if the price of a contract is fair and reasonable. Moreover, not having adequately documented and appropriately communicated risk assessments potentially results in future employees not knowing or understanding the risks or trade-offs involved in using the authorities. With employee turnover, HHS' reliance on the knowledge of current personnel to appropriately implement key controls will not enable future employees to make sound, informed, and consistent decisions."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.gsnmagazine.com/cms/features/news-analysis/2393.html>

[Return to Top](#)

DECISION ON BIOLAB WILL BE EXAMINED

San Antonio Express News on HSToday.com

July 28, 2009

"A congressional panel will conduct a review to determine whether the Homeland Security Department used a flawed analysis in its decision to locate a \$650 million agricultural lab in Kansas, instead of in San Antonio or other locations, officials said Monday.

The disclosure that locating the laboratory in Kansas was not "scientifically defensible" gave new hope to a San Antonio consortium that has aggressively sought to get the lab in Texas.

Jim Dublin, chairman of the Texas Research and Technology Foundation, said, "More people

are asking the obvious question: Why would you locate this in Tornado Alley.”

.....

“Kansas' congressional delegation released a statement Monday saying the consortium's claims about tornado risk are disingenuous.

They said Bexar County “has more than double the tornado touchdowns than Riley County, Kan.; and Texas is the No. 1 state for tornadoes and No. 2 for hurricanes.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.hstoday.us/content/view/9545/192/>

[Return to Top](#)

PROTECTING AMERICA AGAINST PERMANENT CONTINENTAL SHUTDOWN FROM ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE: A NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EMPACTAMERICA.net

29 July 2009

“A National Conference, September 8th-10th, 2009, Niagara Falls, NY.”

“EMPACT America is conducting a national conference bringing in the most knowledgeable minds in the world about EMP. Scheduled speakers include U.S. Congressional leaders, Department of Defense experts, and many other experts on EMP. In addition, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich will deliver an exclusive video address on EMP prepared specifically for this conference.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.empactamerica.net/>

[Return to Top](#)

MILITARY CHEM-BIO DEFENSE IS UNCOORDINATED WITH STATES

By Mickey McCarter

HSToday

July 29, 2009

“The Department of Defense (DoD) presently lacks the means to assess whether its plans to respond to domestic incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosives (CBRNE) bridge holes in other federal, state and local capabilities--or to integrate its plans with other agencies, congressional investigators testified Tuesday.

Military servicemembers can provide specialized expertise when terrorists using CBRNE materials threaten US assets. US Northern Command, the Defense Department's organization for defending the US homeland, and the National Guard both have the ability to activate specialized units to respond to CBRNE threats, acknowledged Davi D'Agostino, director of Defense Capabilities and Management at the Government Accountability Office

(GAO), before a House panel.

But DoD has not yet made use of the Integrated Planning System established in December 2007 to link planning documents at the federal, state and local levels, GAO noted. The system's framework has been set up, but CBRNE guidance is so far incomplete.

"DoD has had operational plans in place and revises these plans regularly. However, until the Integrated Planning System and its associated plans are complete, DoD's plans and those of other federal and state entities will not be integrated, and it will remain unclear whether DoD's [response forces] will address potential gaps in capabilities," the GAO reported in testimony titled "Homeland Defense: Preliminary Observations on Defense Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives Consequence Management Plans and Preparedness."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.hstoday.us/content/view/9564/128/>

[Return to Top](#)

NEW DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY DIRECTOR NAMED

Defenselink

July 28, 2009

"Kenneth A. Myers III has been selected as the new director, Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). He was sworn in July 27, 2009, at the Pentagon.

Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Ashton B. Carter, said, "The selection of Ken Myers as the director of DTRA is another significant step in transforming how we defend against the threat of weapons of mass destruction. He has the right background with 15 years of hands-on nonproliferation, counter-proliferation and arms control experience at the national level to lead the agency in its mission to protect the United States and its allies from weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and support a safe, secure and reliable deterrent." Carter added that Myers also brings experience with the Moscow and START treaties; export controls; the U.S. - India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act; and Cooperative Proliferation Detection, Interdiction Assistance, and Conventional Threat Reduction Act.

Myers most recently served as a senior professional staff member on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. In this position, he serves as the senior advisor to Sen. Richard G. Lugar, the committee's ranking member, on European, former Soviet and Central Asian Affairs, and the Caucasus. He joined the committee in 2003.

Myers earned his bachelors degree from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and a masters degree from the Catholic University of America."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=12853>

[Return to Top](#)

Chem-Demil News

RANGE FIRE REPORTED AT SOUTH END OF UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT

US Army Chemical Materials Agency News Release

July 27, 2009

“Firefighters from the Umatilla Chemical Depot and nearby communities are fighting a range fire along the south end of the depot near the I-84 freeway. The fire was first reported about 1 p.m. today.

Boardman and Hermiston Fire Departments were alerted about the fire and sent firefighters to assist the depot fire department under a mutual assistance agreement.

Depot officials said the incident is not close to the area where chemical weapons are stored.

Depot officials have notified the off-post emergency operations centers in Umatilla and Morrow counties, Ore., Benton County, Wash., those in Oregon and Washington states, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality.

Community Advisory: Please do not call 911 or the Depot for additional information. Tune into your local radio or television stations for emergency preparedness information. In Oregon, tune to KUMA Radio, FM 107.7, and in Washington, tune to KONA Radio, AM 610, FM 105.3.”

More information will be released as it becomes available.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cma.army.mil/include/docrendition.asp?DocID=003681147>

[Return to Top](#)

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT - TRACE OF MUSTARD CHEMICAL AGENT VAPOR DETECTED

US Army Chemical Materials Agency News Release

July 27, 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=003681159>

[Return to Top](#)

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