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CB Daily Report

Chem-Bio News

'DIRTY BOMB' SCENARIO WITHOUT THE BLASTS

By Robert Gavin
June 03, 2009

"Imagine a "dirty bomb" exploding in downtown Albany.

Now envision two bombs going off only blocks apart.

That very possibility was simulated Tuesday as hundreds of federal, state and local law enforcement officials staffed would-be command posts on Albany Shaker Road to prepare for the potentially catastrophic event.

The reaction to the exercise, part of a three-day effort called "Empire 09," was staged around the county hockey facility near Albany International Airport. It featured radiation screenings, officials in white "space suit"-type outfits and aircraft to watch contaminated areas from the sky.

The exercise, hosted by the New York State Disaster Preparedness Commission, was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. It comes only weeks after the FBI arrested four alleged conspirators in a plot to blow up two synagogues in the Bronx and shoot down military planes at Stewart International Airport in Newburgh."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=806113>

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ZOMBIES, RABIES AND SYNTHETIC GENOMICS

By Anthony L. Kimery

HSToday.us

June 02, 2009

"Ability to create nasty pathogens in your bathroom is becoming easier and easier"

"The ability to create nasty pathogens like your hybrid rabies virus in your bathroom is becoming easier and easier," one of the authorities told HSToday.us. "In the opinion of many in my field, this is much easier than trying to get enough fissile material to make a nuclear bomb and then being able to construct an effective bomb."

In the world of these hybrid pathogens, virus-inspired zombies - think the movie "28 Days Later" - are "possible," a virologist who helps the Intelligence Community (IC) keep track of the work being done in the field of genetic engineering as it specifically relates to virology research and development told Homeland Security Today.

Viral threats carefully are being monitored by American intelligence authorities and bio-weapons experts. And apparently there's reason for them to be even more concerned than they were two years ago. The Viral Visions report noted that the ability of individuals to create frightening new viruses in their basements was rapidly growing.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) began worrying in earnest about designer pathogens soon after the October 2001 anthrax attacks provided evidence indicating the anthrax had been weaponized. An expert panel was convened to study the problem and to make an

assessment of the seriousness of a synthetic viral threat.

Following an outcry from some of the scientists it empanelled to study the issue, the CIA Intelligence Directorate's Office of Transnational Issues quietly released a short, unclassified synopsis of the academican's November 2003 report, *The Darker Bioweapons Future*. It concluded that the "growing understanding of the complex biochemical pathways that underlie life processes has the potential to enable a class of new, more virulent biological agents engineered to attack distinct biochemical pathways and elicit specific effects."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.hstoday.us/content/view/8747/150/>

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RUSSIANS VISIT DYESS AS PART OF START TREATY

US Air Force Air Combat Command News Release

June 02, 2009

"Dyess was recently the host to a 10-person Russian-led team of inspectors visiting the base for a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty inspection.

The team arrived May 29 for a day of updating data relating to the 7th Bomb Wing's compliance with terms of the START treaty.

The purpose of the team's trip to Dyess was to inspect the 7th BW's bombers and weapons storage to ensure Dyess has no Air Launched Cruise Missiles or the capability to carry ALCMs and to ensure the base is compliant with the treaty.

"Dyess was found to be in compliance with the START treaty," said Mr. Mike Simpson, Dyess' treaty compliance officer. "Everything went like clockwork."

Mr. Simpson credits the preparation of all base agencies and units that were inspected for the START team to be able to conduct their inspections quickly and effectively.

Under the terms of the treaty, officials from the republics of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine are allowed to inspect specific military facilities to take a look at its strategic capabilities. The START treaty was signed Dec. 5, 1994.

Dyess' last visit by a START inspection team was August 2008. This is the 15th year of the START inspection.

"The treaty allows them to come and inspect us twice a year on a short-notice basis," said Mr. Simpson.

The START team was escorted by Mr. Simpson, Master Sgt. Douglas Metcalf and eight other base personnel to specific negotiated locations. The inspection team spent approximately eight hours devoted to inspections and reports during their stay, said Mr. Simpson.

As part of the process, American teams also inspect military installations in the former Soviet Union.

The full article can be found at: <http://www.acc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123152191>

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ROBOTS TO HANDLE MUSTARD SHELLS

By John Norton

The Pueblo Chieftain

May 28, 2009

"Most of the mustard agent in the 780,000 artillery shells and mortar rounds stockpiled at the Pueblo Chemical Depot is going to be taken apart by robotic machines and neutralized in a hot water solution that will break down the poison into less hazardous compounds.

That's the plan for the ones that are intact and can be safely dis-assembled.

But there is a very small percentage of weapons already encased in steel cylinders that won't be sent through the robotic disassembly line and never make it to the processing building. There also are an unknown quantity of weapons that may now be leaking unbeknownst to Army technicians or that leaked long ago, or are so corroded they can't safely be taken apart.

All of those are going to have to go through a separate process where they'll be blown up in containment chambers that incorporate their own neutralization processes."

"Richard Ayen, a retired Waste Management Inc. engineer who chaired the committee, said that there currently are 537 leakers already overpacked in steel at the Pueblo depot but that when the weapons destruction program gets under way, the total is estimated to grow to 1,000.

That figure is based on experience at other bases where chemical weapons are being destroyed and new leakers are found during the process."

"The known total could be higher because it's possible that the decades-old weapons may have leaked earlier and no vapor is present now. Some may have corroded to the point they can't be disassembled.. Those are things that won't be known until the CMA crews go into the igloos to transfer them to the ACWA workers.

Recently, badly corroded mortar rounds were found inside boxes at the Anniston, Ala., Army Depot, where there had not been any outward signs of leaking. No one thinks all the problem weapons have been found here although the situation might not be as bad in

Pueblo because of the low humidity.

There are a number of devices that can be used to explode the damaged weapons and then dispose of the contents. Some are mobile and some would have to be constructed but all have been tested both in the United States and abroad where small stockpiles of chemical weapons have been found and needed to be destroyed.

The National Academies committee report said that all four would be acceptable but recommended a mobile unit the Army has, called the Explosive Destruction System II.

Built on a semi-trailer, it can be hauled to the depot. Shaped charges are placed on the leaking weapon and it's placed in a detonation chamber where the mustard agent would be released. Neutralizing agents would then be added to the chamber to break down the mustard.

The system has been used at the Pine Bluff Arsenal. It's a slower system than the other detonation processes but Ayen said an EDS-II unit costs about \$5 million while other systems can run as high as \$50 million or more."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.chieftain.com/articles/2009/05/28/news/local/doc4a1e251fe6ae1271980183.txt>

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NEWPORT CHEMICAL DEPOT (NCD) - NEW SITE PROJECT MANAGER AT NEWPORT

US Army Chemical Materials Agency News Release
June 04, 2009

"Officials at the Newport Chemical Depot (NECD) announced today the promotion of one of its deputy site project managers to site project manager.

Anthony W. Reed, who has been a deputy site project manager at the Newport Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (NECDF) for the last year, will begin site project manager duties June 22.

"I am grateful and excited for the opportunity to assume the site project manager responsibilities at Newport to ensure a safe and compliant closure at NECDF," Reed said. Prior to NECDF, Reed's previous work experience in manufacturing included a plant manager, resins operations manager and an environmental engineer with various companies.

Jeffrey Brubaker, who has been the site project manager at NECDF for the last six years, will begin site project manager duties at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant located on Blue Grass Army Depot in Richmond, Ky.

Brubaker said, "I am pleased that Anthony Reed has been selected to become the NECDF Site Project Manager. Anthony will bring great leadership to the Newport team based on his prior experience as both a manager and engineer."

NECD Commander Lt. Col. William Hibner added, "We are sad to see Jeff go, but we know Anthony will step in and do a wonderful job continuing the legacy of safety and expertise at Newport."

Mr. Reed will be the third site project manager for the NECDF project. Workers completed destruction of the VX nerve agent stockpile in August 2008. Employees at the former VX destruction facility and the depot are continuing work to transition and close the installation."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cma.army.mil/fndocumentviewer.aspx?docid=003680766>

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UMATILLA DEPOT TO DESTROY MUSTARD GAS

The Associated Press on seattlepi.com

June 04, 2009

"Workers began delivering bulk containers filled with mustard blister agent to the depot's disposal facility Thursday morning, after the state of Oregon gave final authorization Wednesday evening to incinerate the agent.

"Our experienced crews are dedicated to safe and secure munitions movement and delivery to the disposal plant," Lt. Col. Bob Stein, depot commander, said in a statement. "Deliveries have gone very well during the 12 previous munitions campaigns, but risk remains until the last ton container is gone."

The work is expected to take one to two years, which should easily meet an April 2012 international treaty deadline."

The full article can be found at: http://www.seattlepi.com/local/6420ap_or_mustard_agent.html

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PUEBLO CHEMICAL AGENT DESTRUCTION FACILITY - OPCW DELEGATION VISITS U. S. CHEMICAL WEAPONS DESTRUCTION FACILITIES

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Press Release

June 04, 2009

"At the invitation of the government of the United States of America, a delegation from the OPCW Executive Council visited the Pueblo Chemical Agent Destruction Pilot Plant in Colorado on 2 June 2009. The delegation comprised the Chairperson of the Council, Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco Tonda, together with a representative from each of the other regional groups, a representative from the Russian Federation, and the OPCW Director-

General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter.

The visit took place in pursuance of a decision taken by the Conference of the States Parties at its 11th session in December 2006 on visits by the representatives of the Executive Council to chemical weapons destruction facilities (CWDF) and CWDF construction sites. The purpose of the visits is to “consider progress and efforts towards achieving complete destruction in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and any measures being taken to overcome possible problems in a destruction programmes in accordance with Part IV (A), paragraph 26 of the Verification Annex”.

The full article can be found at: <http://www.opcw.org/news/news/article/opcw-delegation-visits-us-chemical-weapons-destruction-facilities/>

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