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Chem-Bio News

- 1. ZELAYA: BRAZILIAN EMBASSY IN HONDURAS ATTACKED WITH GAS:** *"Zelaya and his aides said at a news conference that a local public health specialist they identified as Dr. Mauricio Castellano took air samples near the embassy after the attack and determined that the gas contained HCN, an abbreviation for hydrogen cyanide."*
- 2. EXPERT: ANTHRAX SPORE COATINGS NOT UNIQUE:** *"The presentation Friday to a scientific panel confirmed nothing new but provided the group, convened by the National Academy of Sciences, a glimpse into the investigative science used in the wake of the nation's first major bioterrorism event."*
- 3. NNSA COMPLETES THE CONVERSION OF TWO U.S. RESEARCH REACTORS:** *"The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), in cooperation with Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the University of Wisconsin, the Idaho National Laboratory (INL), and the Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy recently completed the conversion of two research reactors from highly enriched uranium (HEU) to low enriched uranium (LEU)."*
- 4. EXPERTS DISAGREE OVER LEAD AGENCY FOR LABS, CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM:** *"There needs to be, clearly, somebody, in overall charge," Jean Reed, deputy assistant to the defense secretary for chemical and biological defense and chemical demilitarization, told the Senate Judiciary Terrorism and Homeland Security Subcommittee on Tuesday."*
- 5. U.S. CHAMBER EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER CHEMICAL SECURITY LEGISLATION:** *"The U.S. Chamber of Commerce on September 28 joined 26 associations representing the leading manufacturers, users, and distributors of chemical and petrochemical products in the United States to express their concern to Congress over chemical security legislation that would, among other things, lead to public disclosure of sensitive or classified information in citizen suits."*
- 6. IRAN MAY QUIT NUCLEAR TREATY IF GENEVA TALKS FAIL (UPDATE1):** *"Iran may end its participation in the global nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty if talks this week fail to resolve the international dispute over the country's atomic development, a member of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said."*
- 7. BRITISH INTELLIGENCE BELIEVES IRAN HAS RESUMED WORK ON NUCLEAR WARHEAD:** *"British intelligence has disputed an American assessment that Iran has not resumed work building a warhead for a nuclear weapon."*

CB Daily Report

Chem-Bio News

ZELAYA: BRAZILIAN EMBASSY IN HONDURAS ATTACKED WITH GAS

CNN.com

September 28, 2009

"Ousted Honduran President Jose Manuel Zelaya said he and supporters holed up at the Brazilian Embassy were victims of a "neurotoxic" gas attack Friday morning that caused many people to have nose bleeds and breathing difficulties.

An official with Brazil's Foreign Ministry told CNN there was some type of gas used in the area but could not confirm it was a nerve agent. Some embassy employees felt minor symptoms, said the official, who did not want his name used because that is foreign ministry protocol."

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"Zelaya and his aides said at a news conference that a local public health specialist they identified as Dr. Mauricio Castellano took air samples near the embassy after the attack and determined that the gas contained HCN, an abbreviation for hydrogen cyanide. HCN can cause dryness and burning of the throat, shortness of breath, convulsion, coma and cardiovascular collapse."

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"Andres Tamayo, who was with Zelaya at the embassy and identified himself as a priest, said the chemical attack came from three sources: neighboring houses that have been evacuated, a white truck that was seen near the embassy and a low-flying helicopter."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/americas/09/25/honduras.president.deposed/>

[Return to Top](#)

EXPERT: ANTHRAX SPORE COATINGS NOT UNIQUE

By Adam Behsudi
The Frederick News Post
September 26, 2009

"A microscopy expert said there was nothing unique about the silicon found in the anthrax spores recovered from the 2001 letter attacks.

The presentation Friday to a scientific panel confirmed nothing new but provided the group, convened by the National Academy of Sciences, a glimpse into the investigative science used in the wake of the nation's first major bioterrorism event."

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"Michael's presentation is part of an 18-month, \$880,000 National Academy of Sciences study commissioned by the FBI. It was the second day this week the panel met.

The study seeks to affirm the validity of the investigative science, but will stay clear of

examining how the FBI connected Ivins to the crime.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.fredericknewspost.com/sections/news/display.htm?StoryID=95744>

[Return to Top](#)

NNSA COMPLETES THE CONVERSION OF TWO U.S. RESEARCH REACTORS

US National Nuclear Security Administration News Release

September 25, 2009

“The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), in cooperation with Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the University of Wisconsin, the Idaho National Laboratory (INL), and the Department of Energy’s Office of Nuclear Energy recently completed the conversion of two research reactors from highly enriched uranium (HEU) to low enriched uranium (LEU).”

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“The University of Wisconsin Research Reactor and Neutron Radiography Reactor at INL were converted from the use of HEU to LEU fuel through NNSA’s Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI). NNSA has now converted or verified the shutdown of a total of 67 HEU research reactors around the world.

The conversion of the University of Wisconsin Research Reactor completes implementation of the North American Security and Prosperity Partnership of 2005 two years ahead of schedule. With these recent efforts, the Department of Energy has now completed the conversion of 17 U.S. university HEU fueled research reactors. Two remaining HEU fueled university research reactors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MITR) and the University of Missouri (MURR) both require a new higher density LEU fuel currently under development.

The University of Wisconsin Research Reactor and INL’s Neutron Radiography Reactor are the fourth and fifth reactors to be converted or verified as shut down by NNSA in 2009. The others include the shutdown of General Atomics’ TRIGA reactor in California and Bulgaria’s IRT-2000 in Sofia, and the conversion of Hungary’s Budapest Research Reactor.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/2615.htm>

[Return to Top](#)

EXPERTS DISAGREE OVER LEAD AGENCY FOR LABS, CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

By Martin Matishak

Global Security Newswire

September 25, 2009

"Federal officials and independent experts this week prodded Congress to consolidate government oversight of the nation's disease research laboratories but offered divergent views about which agency should take the lead role.

"There needs to be, clearly, somebody, in overall charge," Jean Reed, deputy assistant to the defense secretary for chemical and biological defense and chemical demilitarization, told the Senate Judiciary Terrorism and Homeland Security Subcommittee on Tuesday."

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Senators Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) this month introduced legislation that would require the U.S. Homeland Security Department to establish security standards for laboratories that handle the most dangerous disease materials (see GSN, Sept. 9).

On Tuesday, subcommittee Chairman Benjamin Cardin (D-Md.) decried the gaps in government oversight, saying about 15 federal departments work with biodefense laboratories but "no one agency has primary or full responsibility" for overseeing their safe operations. Those departments include Defense, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services.

He said most people would turn to the Homeland Security Department as the "logical place" to have responsibility over facilities working with disease materials. The lawmaker did not elaborate.

When DHS compliance assurance program manager Brandt Pasco said the agency only had authority over the 42 sites it funds, Cardin replied, "That's clearly inadequate."

That same day Cardin said he would call for legislation to select a lead agency to oversee security measures at high-containment laboratories and establish uniform guidelines for those sites, including background checks of researchers, according to a statement from his office."

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"I think having an interagency task force do this is a big mistake. I think putting it in the National Security Council is a big mistake," said Michael Greenberger, director of the Center for Health and Homeland Security at the University of Maryland.

"No blame to the national security adviser, but he has a lot of things on his plate," he told the panel. "There must be somebody in the federal government that assumes overall responsibility."

Greenberger complimented Reed for noting that Defense Department measures likely could not apply to university facilities.

"It's impossible to apply military precision and security to a university laboratory" due to the

lack of resources at many schools and the "element of openness" on most campuses, he said.

Instead, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention should take the lead, according to Greenberger. "In all candor, you'd have to say the ... CDC has the superior record" in terms of supervising researchers at sites that receive federal funds, he said.

Greenberger said he did not know if the Atlanta-based health agency had enough resources to handle the job as it grapples with the H1N1 flu epidemic, but "they should be the single agency setting up standards -- both safety standards [and] security standards -- for all those laboratories, having the entire inventory, being responsible for having evidence of mishaps and setting up an accreditation process."

Nancy Kingsbury, the managing director of applied research and methods at the Government Accountability Office, said instead that oversight should be put "at the HHS level." The Health and Human Services Department is the parent agency to the Centers for Disease Control."

The full article can be found at: http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20090925_1736.php

[Return to Top](#)

U.S. CHAMBER EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER CHEMICAL SECURITY LEGISLATION

The Financial

September 29, 2009

"The U.S. Chamber of Commerce on September 28 joined 26 associations representing the leading manufacturers, users, and distributors of chemical and petrochemical products in the United States to express their concern to Congress over chemical security legislation that would, among other things, lead to public disclosure of sensitive or classified information in citizen suits.

The letter to the leadership of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, in advance of a hearing this week on chemical security legislation, states that the organizations oppose provisions in the bill that would allow "any person" to bring lawsuits against regulated facilities or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to enforce compliance with the act. It echoes the administration's opposition to the citizen suit measure, and notes that the provision would encourage costly litigation and invite disclosure of sensitive information that could be used by terrorists."

The full article can be found at: http://www.finchannel.com/Main_News/Business/48043_U.S._Chamber_Expresses_Concern_Over_Chemical_Security_Legislation/

[Return to Top](#)

IRAN MAY QUIT NUCLEAR TREATY IF GENEVA TALKS FAIL (UPDATE1)

By Ali Sheikholeslami

September 29, 2009

"Iran may end its participation in the global nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty if talks this week fail to resolve the international dispute over the country's atomic development, a member of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said.

The West has always had a "carrots and sticks" approach to Iran, said lawmaker Mohammad Karami-Rad, who urged the powers to "end their excuses and negotiate on significant issues," the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency reported. "If Iran remains under Zionist pressures and U.S. bullying and if the 5+1 talks fail, the parliament will take clear stands, such as quitting the NPT," he said, referring to Israel and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.bloomberly.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=aFWYTVL7C4ag>

[Return to Top](#)

BRITISH INTELLIGENCE BELIEVES IRAN HAS RESUMED WORK ON NUCLEAR WARHEAD

The Telegraph (UK)

September 30, 2009

"British intelligence has disputed an American assessment that Iran has not resumed work building a warhead for a nuclear weapon."

"British officials told the Financial Times that Iran resumed work on a nuclear warhead design in "late 2004 or early 2005." The US assessment is that worked stopped after an order was handed down by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in 2003 and there is no conclusive evidence that it has restarted.

One former US official acknowledged there were deep differences between international intelligence agencies. "It's often the tradecraft that gets us bollixed up," said Rolf Mowatt-Larssen. "It comes down to interpreting the same data in different ways."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/6245819/British-intelligence-believes-Iran-has-resumed-work-on-nuclear-warhead.html>

[Return to Top](#)

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