

15 January 2010

Chem-Bio News

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4. MYSTERY SOLVED: SCIENTISTS NOW KNOW HOW SMALLPOX KILLS: *"In a new research report appearing online in The FASEB Journal, researchers describe how the virus cripples immune systems by attacking molecules made by our bodies to block viral replication."*

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CB Daily Report

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NNSA RECOVERS HIGH-ACTIVITY RADIOACTIVE SOURCES FROM WAREHOUSE 25 MILES FROM NEW YORK CITY

US National Nuclear Security Administration News Release
January 14, 2010

"The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) today announced that it has successfully completed the recovery of two high-activity Cesium-137 devices from a warehouse located approximately 25 miles from Manhattan in Rahway, New Jersey. NNSA recovered these disused and unwanted irradiators as part of its Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI). The devices, which contained more than 3,000 curies of Cs-137 at the time of their recovery, were used for medical research during their useful life.

"Properly disposing of more than 3,000 curies of Cesium eliminates the threat this material poses if lost or stolen and used in a dirty bomb," said NNSA Administrator Thomas P. D'Agostino. "This recovery is

part of NNSA's comprehensive strategy to keep dangerous nuclear and radiological material safe and secure and protect the American people by further enhancing our nation's nuclear security."

Every year, thousands of sources become disused and unwanted in the United States. While secure storage is a temporary measure, the longer sources remain disused or unwanted, the greater the chance that they will become unsecured or abandoned. Due to their high activity and portability, radioactive sealed sources such as these irradiators could be used in radiological dispersal devices (RDD), commonly referred to as "dirty bombs." An attack using an RDD could result in extensive economic loss, significant social disruption and potentially serious public health problems.

As part of NNSA's nuclear security mission, GTRI works to reduce and protect vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials located at sites worldwide. To date, NNSA has recovered more than 24,000 disused and unwanted radioactive sealed sources containing more than 768,000 curies of activity. One of the program's core goals is to remove and dispose of excess nuclear and radiological materials, resulting in permanent threat reduction. GTRI is part of NNSA's comprehensive nuclear nonproliferation efforts currently at work in over 100 countries around the world to detect, secure and dispose of dangerous nuclear and radiological material."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/news/2790.htm>

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DOE LOOKING FOR RISKY REMAINS AT HANFORD

By Annette Cary
The TriCity Herald
January 14, 2010

"Work has begun with federal economic stimulus money to solve the mystery of what's buried in one of the most hazardous burial grounds of the Hanford nuclear reservation.

The 618-10 Burial Ground "received some nasty stuff from the labs in the 300 Area where they did everything done at Hanford but at a small scale," said Larry Gadbois, scientist at the Environmental Protection Agency, a regulator on the project.

The six-acre burial ground includes 94 pipes buried vertically that allowed trucks to drive up and quickly drop radioactive and chemical waste underground. Most were made by removing the tops and bottoms of 55-gallon drums and then welding five of them together to form pipes. The 618-10 Burial Ground also includes 23 trenches.

Many records of what they contain were destroyed in the early 1990s.

Now Washington Closure Hanford and the Department of Energy are trying to determine what they hold using the remaining records and by testing, starting with a method that doesn't require opening or cutting into the vertical pipe units."

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"It started work this summer by using a map to determine exactly where the vertical pipe units were buried in the site, which is about six miles north of Richland near the highway.

More recently, the subcontractor has been pushing narrow steel cylinders into the ground around the vertical pipe units to as deep as 24 feet. Each unit is ringed with four cylinders 6 to 8 inches away, precisely placed to avoid hitting the vertical pipe units even deep underground, said Ron Morris, Washington Closure's subcontractor technical representative.

With many of the cylinders already pounded into the ground, work has begun to lower detectors down the cylinders to take readings at 1-foot intervals. The instruments can detect gamma and neutron

radiation and the strength of gamma radiation to allow an educated guess at what might be in the vertical pipe units."

The full article can be found at: http://www.tricityherald.com/kennewick_pasco_richland/story/862000.html

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N. KOREA'S 2ND NUCLEAR TEST SITE PINPOINTED IN NEW STUDY

By Sam Kim
Yonhap News
January 10, 2010

"Two U.S.-based scientists said Sunday they've located the site of North Korea's second nuclear test last year more precisely than ever before, pinpointing it just 2 kilometers off the place where the first test was conducted in 2006.

Lianxing Wen, a geophysics professor at the State University of New York in Stony Brook, and his graduate student, Hui Long, located the epicenter of the second nuclear test on May 5 last year with a margin of error of only 140 meters, compared with 3.8 kilometers achieved by the U.S. Geological Survey.

"We locate the 2009 test at 723 meters north and 2,235 meters west of the 2006 test," the scientists said in the study, which was published in the January-February edition of Seismological Research Letters of the Seismological Society of America.

Identifying the coordinates of the 2009 test site as 41°17'38.14"N latitude and 129°4'54.21"E longitude, the scientists said their findings should help Asian monitors to pinpoint the location of another nuclear test should North Korea ever decide to go ahead with one."

The full article can be found at:

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2010/01/10/91/0401000000AEN20100110000700315F.HT>
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MYSTERY SOLVED: SCIENTISTS NOW KNOW HOW SMALLPOX KILLS

ScienceDaily
December 23, 2009

"..... In a new research report appearing online in The FASEB Journal, researchers describe how the virus cripples immune systems by attacking molecules made by our bodies to block viral replication."

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"These studies demonstrate the production of an interferon binding protein by variola virus and monkeypox virus, and point at this viral anti-interferon protein as a target to develop new therapeutics and protect people from smallpox and related viruses," said Antonio Alcami, Ph.D., a collaborator on the study from Madrid, Spain. "A better understanding of how variola virus, one of the most virulent viruses known to humans, evades host defenses will help up to understand the molecular mechanisms that cause disease in other viral infections."

In a high containment laboratory at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, scientists produced the recombinant proteins from the variola virus and a similar virus that affects monkeys, causing monkeypox. The researchers then showed that cells infected with variola and monkeypox produced a protein that blocks a wide range of human interferons, which are molecules produced by our

immune systems meant to stop viral replication.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/12/091222105217.htm>

The original article can be found at: <http://www.fasebj.org/cgi/content/abstract/fj.09-144733v1>
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FOLLOW-UP - FUNERAL OF IRAN SCIENTIST MASOUD ALI-MOHAMMADI HIJACKED BY REGIME LOYALISTS

By Martin Fletcher
The Times (UK)
January 14, 2010

“Supporters of Iran’s regime hijacked the funeral of Masoud Ali-Mohammadi, the nuclear scientist killed in a mysterious bomb attack on Tuesday, as it sought to bolster its claim that he was killed by foreign agents.”

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“Two former presidents, the reformist Mohammed Khatami and Hashemi Rafsanjani, have issued statements calling the bombing an act of terrorism, but by not blaming Israel or America they gave the clear impression that they were blaming the regime.

Mr Rafsanjani went further, calling the assassination a sign of “a new era of intrigue” in Iran.”

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“However the regime’s narrative is undermined by the lack of any evidence that Dr Ali-Mohammadi was contributing to Iran’s nuclear programme and his declared support for the opposition.

Dr Ali-Mohammadi, who taught at the University of Tehran, specialised in particle physics and no western official or agency who monitor Iran’s nuclear programme had heard of him.”

The full article can be found at:
http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6988037.ece
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U.S. SENATOR LUGAR VOTED 'ARMS CONTROL PERSON OF THE YEAR' FOR EFFORTS TO DESTROY CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN RUSSIA

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Press Release
January 13, 2010

“In an online poll conducted by the Arms Control Association (ACA), U.S. Senator Richard Lugar has been voted the “2009 Arms Control Person of the Year” in recognition of his long-standing support for U.S. financial contributions to construct Russia’s new chemical weapons destruction facility at Shchuchye.

“The international vote selecting Richard Lugar acknowledges the Senator’s work last year, and clearly celebrates his multi-decade commitment to reducing Cold War legacy weapons,” said Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Washington-based ACA.

The Shchuchye facility will eventually destroy some 2 million chemical munitions and 5,460 metric tonnes of deadly VX, sarin and soman agents, representing about 14% of Russia’s entire declared

chemical weapons stockpile. OPCW inspectors will maintain a 24-hour presence at the facility until all chemical weapons munitions and agents at the site are verifiably destroyed.

The OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, attended the opening ceremonies for the Shchuchye facility with Senator Lugar in late May 2009.

The complete list of nominees for the ACA poll can be seen at [www.armscontrol.org/pressroom/2009personofyearvote.](http://www.armscontrol.org/pressroom/2009personofyearvote)"

The full article can be found at: <http://www.opcw.org/news/news/article/us-senator-lugar-voted-arms-control-person-of-the-year-for-efforts-to-destroy-chemical-weapons-i/>
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REPORT: IRAN TO PAY \$1B FOR SYRIA TO PROCURE WEAPONS

By Yoav Stern
Haaretz.com
January 15, 2010

"Iran will lay out \$1 billion to procure for Syria advanced weapons and assist it in nuclear research and the development of chemical weapons, according to a report published yesterday in the London-based daily Al-Shark al-Awsat.

The reports says the strategic cooperation agreement between Damascus and Tehran was signed during the visit late last week by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Syria. The report describes the cooperation between the countries as including military, economic, scientific and technical aspects.

The military cooperation includes Iranian funding for the procurement from Russia of MiG-31 fighter planes, Sukhoi-24 attack aircraft, helicopters and T-72 tanks. Iran will also provide Syria with technical assistance in nuclear research and the development of chemical weapons."

The full article can be found at: [http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArtStEngPE.jhtml?itemNo=884497&contrassID=2&subContrassID=1&title=%27Report:%20Iran%20to%20pay%20\\$1b%20for%20Syria%20to%20procure%20weapons%20%27&dyn_server=172.20.5.5](http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArtStEngPE.jhtml?itemNo=884497&contrassID=2&subContrassID=1&title=%27Report:%20Iran%20to%20pay%20$1b%20for%20Syria%20to%20procure%20weapons%20%27&dyn_server=172.20.5.5)
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