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WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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PARALYZED MAN SENDS E-MAIL BY THOUGHT

October 13, 2004 Nature.Com reported: A pill-sized brain chip has allowed a quadriplegic man to check e-mail and play computer games using his thoughts. The device can tap into a hundred neurons at a time, and is the most sophisticated such implant tested in humans so far.

Many paralyzed people control computers with their eyes or tongue. But muscle function limits these techniques, and they require a lot of training. For over a decade researchers have been trying to find a way to tap directly into thoughts.

In June 2004, surgeons implanted a device containing 100 electrodes into the motor cortex of a 24-year-old quadriplegic. The device, called the BrainGate, was developed by the company Cyberkinetics, based in Foxborough, Massachusetts. Each electrode taps into a neuron in the patient's brain.

The BrainGate allowed the patient to control a computer or television using his mind, even when doing other things at the same time. Researchers report for example that he could control his television while talking and moving his head. The team now plans to implant devices into four more patients...≡

U.S. SEEKS TO BLOCK WMD THROUGH AMMAN

October 13, 2004 The Middle East Newline reported: A The United States has intensified an effort to block the flow of weapons of mass destruction components through Jordan.

Officials said the United States has been training and equipping Jordanian personnel at the port of Aqaba and border land points to examine cargo from such countries as Iraq, Iran and those in the Gulf Cooperation Council states. They said Washington wants to ensure that Jordan could detect and capture WMD meant for Al Qaida or other clients in the region.

Aqaba was regarded as a leading port of entry for the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq until 2002. Components for Saddam's military and WMD program were said to have come through Aqaba and then by land to Iraq.

Officials acknowledged that a large number of Iraqi WMD-related facilities has disappeared over the last 18 months. They said some of these facilities were believed to have been smuggled to neighboring Jordan and might have been offered for sale to Islamic insurgency groups.≡

REPORT PREDICTS DETERIORATION IN EU-ISRAEL RELATIONS

October 13, 2004 EUobserver reported: A confidential report from the Israeli Foreign Ministry has predicted relations with the European Union could further deteriorate in future, hitting Israel economically and diplomatically.

The report points to the "possibility of a deterioration in relations", one of the report's authors told the EUobserver today (Wednesday 13 October). According to Israeli press reports, the document states that Israel and the EU find themselves on a collision course which would cause serious economic and diplomatic damage to the country.

"It is a prognosis of the general outline of the international environment in the future... it is us looking into the crystal ball", the official said. "Everyone is aware of the importance of the relations with Europe".

There are said to be no recommendations in the report. The EU and Israel have been at loggerheads for months over the implementation of a Middle East peace plan and the construction of Israel's security barrier.

The report does send a strong signal to the Israeli government however, that, faced with an EU which is ever more prominent on the international scene, relations with Europe have to improve. Earlier this week, EU Foreign Ministers criticized Israel's use of force in Northern Gaza.

Although the EU and Israel recently concluded negotiations on a new bilateral agreement setting out deeper relations between the two sides, diplomats described some aspects of negotiations as tense. Israel was the last of the eight countries involved in this round of 'European Neighbourhood' talks to conclude negotiations.≡

NUCLEAR ITEMS MISSING IN IRAQ

October 12, 2004 The Guardian UK reported: A Equipment and materials that could be used to make nuclear weapons

have disappeared from Iraq, the UN's nuclear watchdog warned yesterday.

Satellite imagery and investigations of nuclear sites in Iraq have caused alarm at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The agency found that in some cases entire buildings housing high-precision nuclear equipment had been dismantled; equipment that could be used to make a bomb, such as high-strength aluminum, had vanished from open storage areas, the agency said.

In a report to the UN security council yesterday, the IAEA's director general, Mohamed ElBaradei, said the agency "continues to be concerned about the widespread and apparently systematic dismantlement that has taken place at sites previously relevant to Iraq's nuclear program and sites previously subject to ongoing monitoring and verification by the agency".

Before the war, the buildings had been monitored and tagged with IAEA seals to keep tabs on their function and content. But US authorities barred IAEA inspectors from returning to Iraq after the war began in March 2003, instead deploying US teams in an unsuccessful search for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

Mr ElBaradei has therefore relied largely on satellite imagery in the latest report. IAEA teams were allowed into Iraq in June 2003 to investigate reports of widespread looting of storage rooms at the main nuclear complex, at Tuwaitha, and in August to take inventory of "several tonnes" of natural uranium in storage nearby.

Anti-proliferation agreements mean the US occupying authorities and now the Iraqi interim government were responsible for informing the IAEA if they moved or exported any of that material or equipment. The IAEA said it had received no such reports.

In a September 30 debate both the US president, George Bush, and his Democratic rival, John Kerry, identified nuclear proliferation as the greatest threat facing the US.

In February 2003, a month before the US-led invasion of Iraq, Mr ElBaradei reported to the security council that Iraq's nuclear programme had been "neutralised" by December 1998. In the two and a half months his agency had in which to resume inspections during 2003, his teams found "no evidence of ongoing prohibited nuclear or nuclear related activities in Iraq".

Last week a CIA report by the chief US weapons investigator, Charles Duelfer, agreed that Saddam Hussein had all but given up on his nuclear programme after the first Gulf war in 1991.

But it now appears Iraq may pose a nuclear threat of a different sort: some military goods, including missile engines, that disappeared from Iraq after the US-led invasion later turned up in scrap yards in the Middle East and Europe. However, none of the equipment or material known to the IAEA as potentially useful in making nuclear bombs has been found, according to Mr ElBaradei.

"As the disappearance of such equipment and materials may be of proliferation significance, any state that has information about the location of such items should provide IAEA with that information," Mr ElBaradei said.≡

NORTH KOREA THREATENS WAR OVER POSSIBLE SANCTIONS

October 11, 2004 The Voice of America reported: A North Korea has warned that any attempt by the United Nations to impose sanctions on the Stalinist state would spark a war.

The state-run Korean Central News Agency said Monday that Pyongyang "would promptly and resolutely react to sanctions with self-defensive war deterrent force."

Last month U.S. officials suggested Washington might bring North Korea to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions if it continues to boycott talks on the country's nuclear weapons program.

Pyongyang did not attend a fourth round of six-party talks scheduled to open in September in Beijing, citing what it called Washington's "hostile policy" towards North Korea and reports of secret nuclear experiments in South Korea.≡

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