

PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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PLUTONIUM COULD BE MISSING FROM LAB

December 1, 2005 San Francisco Chronicle reported: "Enough plutonium to make dozens of nuclear bombs hasn't been accounted for at the UC-run Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico and may be missing, an activist group says in a new report.

There is no evidence that the weapons-grade plutonium has been stolen or diverted for illegal purposes, the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research said. However, the amount of unaccounted-for plutonium -- more than 600 pounds, and possibly several times that -- is so great that it raises "a vast security issue," the group said in a report to be made public today.

The institute, which is based in Takoma Park, Md., says it compared data from five publicly available reports and documents issued by the U.S. Energy Department and Los Alamos from 1996 to 2004 and found inconsistencies in them. It says the records aren't clear on what the lab did with the plutonium, a byproduct of nuclear bomb research at Los Alamos.

A spokesman for UC, which manages the national laboratories at Los Alamos and Livermore for the Energy Department, did not address the report's specifics but said the New Mexico lab tracks nuclear material "to a minute quantity."

The report says there are several possible explanations for what happened to the plutonium. They include:

- It was discarded in unsafe amounts in landfills at the Los Alamos lab. It is legal to discard weapons-grade plutonium in landfills, one of which is 40 feet deep, as long as the substance is sufficiently diluted. However, if a landfill holds too much plutonium, the material can eventually contaminate the environment -- for example by leeching into groundwater or being absorbed by the roots of plants -- study co-author Arjun Makhijani said in an interview.
- It was shipped to an Energy Department burial site in a New Mexico salt mine, without accurate records of such shipments being kept.
- It was stolen or otherwise shipped off site for unknown reasons.

"If it has left the site, then it obviously has the most grievous security implications," Makhijani said. "I cannot say that it has left the site, but the government has the responsibility to ensure that it has not..."

PM: ISRAEL PART OF WORLD EFFORTS TO STOP NUCLEAR IRAN

December 1, 2005 Haaretz.com reported: "Prime Minister Ariel Sharon stressed on Thursday that Israel is watching with growing concern Iran's efforts to achieve nuclear capabilities, and that this situation is unacceptable by Israel. Speaking at the editors' convention at Sokolov House in Tel Aviv Sharon said, however, that "Israel is not spearheading the international struggle against Iran's nuclear arming."

The danger posed by Iran "does not relate only to Israel; it risks Israel, Middle Eastern countries and many other countries around the world. Therefore the efforts led by the U.S. today must include free countries that understand this grave danger," the prime minister said. "I said Israel should not lead (these efforts), but it is certainly in close coordination with the countries that run this battle," he stressed..."

BLAIR WARNS IRAN'S NUKE PROGRAM COULD THREATEN 'WORLD STABILITY'

November 23, 2005 SpaceWar.com reported: "Iran's suspected aim to develop nuclear weapons could pose a "very serious threat to world stability and peace", British Prime Minister Tony Blair said Tuesday. Reiterating angry comments he made last month after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called for Israel to be "wiped off the map", Blair said there was a "real risk" that Tehran's stance could derail the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"If Iran was to develop nuclear weapons capability then I think it would pose a very serious threat to world stability and peace," he told a quarterly meeting with parliamentary committee chairmen. "I don't think there's any doubt about that at all."

Blair described relations with Iran as "increasingly strained" since Ahmadinejad's October 27 statement, which was condemned outright by the European Union and the United States. Dialogue and working relations were ongoing with Tehran "at some levels", said Blair, who nevertheless added: "Things have definitely got more difficult since the election of the new president."

Blair refused to comment about whether Britain could be dragged into a potential conflict sparked by alleged Iranian incursions into neighboring Iraqi waters.

But suspected nuclear weapons, Tehran's refusal to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), its support of terrorism and "meddling" in Iraq were all areas where Britain had a "real, genuine cause for concern"..."

U.S. STUDIES ALGERIAN CI EXAMPLE

November 23, 2005 Middle East Newline reported: "The United States has been examining how Algeria overcame a decade-long war with Islamic insurgents.

U.S. officials and analysts agreed that Algeria has largely defeated the Islamic insurgency, which has drawn support from Al Qaida. They said Algeria has employed brute force, relentless military operations, psychological warfare as well as incentives to weaken, divide and demoralize the insurgency movement.

"The U.S. is stepping-up its relationship with the Algerian government, largely through counter-terrorism cooperation," Rep. Ed Royce, chairman of the House Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation, said. "U.S. officials have said that there are lessons to be learned from Algeria's struggle with terrorism."

Royce discussed U.S. cooperation with Algerian officials during his visit to Algeria in January 2005. Congressional leaders have supported plans by the Bush administration to increase defense and security cooperation with Algeria to facilitate the war against Al Qaida. In 2004, the administration approved the export of several unidentified non-lethal military systems to Algeria..."

JAPAN BANS CANADIAN POULTRY BECAUSE OF BIRD FLU

November 22, 2005 Voice of America News reported: "Canadian officials say Japan is banning all poultry exports from Canada after bird flu was found in a duck in the western province of British Columbia. Officials also say Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the United States are imposing temporary bans on poultry from British Columbia.

The sick duck came from a commercial farm near Vancouver. Canadian authorities said Monday the duck did not have the same bird flu strain that has killed more than 60 people in Asia since 2003. But they are killing almost 60-thousand ducks on the farm as a precaution.

Also Monday, Romanian officials said British lab tests confirmed four dead chickens in a remote Danube River village had bird flu. China's agriculture ministry also said Monday that bird flu has been found in chickens, ducks, and geese last week in Inner Mongolia and Hubei province..."

SEA-BASED MISSILE DEFENSE TEST CALLED A SUCCESS

November 18, 2005 SpaceWar.com reported: "An interceptor missile fired from a US Navy cruiser shot down a mock warhead over the Pacific Thursday after it had separated from a medium-range missile the US military said. It was the sixth successful intercept in seven attempts since the tests of the sea-based missile defense system began in 2002, the Missile Defense Agency said.

The sea-based system is designed to intercept short- and intermediate-range missiles with interceptor missiles fired from Aegis warships. The United States is developing a separate ground-based system in Alaska and California to intercept long-range missiles.

Thursday's test was the first to intercept a target warhead that had separated from its launcher, a medium-range missile. In previous tests, the target was a Scud-like missile tipped with a mock warhead. The warhead was launched atop the medium-range missile from a facility in Kauai, Hawaii at 1812 GMT, and four minutes later the USS Lake Erie, an Aegis cruiser, fired an SM-3 interceptor missile at it, the MDA said.

"Six minutes later the interceptor missile successfully intercepted the target warhead more than 100 miles (160 kilometers) in space above the Pacific Ocean and 375 miles (6-4 kilometers) northwest of Kauai," the MDA said. It said the interceptor missile collided directly with the warhead, destroying it..."

PARTIAL FACE TRANSPLANT RAISES ETHICAL CONCERNS

December 1, 2005 Reuters reported: "The world's first partial face transplant has given hope to people disfigured by burns or accidents but raises psychological and ethical issues for the recipient and donor family, medical experts said on Thursday.

Although face transplants have been technically possible for several years, concerns about the psychological impact, consent and the long-term risk of drugs to prevent the immune system from rejecting the new face have prevented them.

But in a ground-breaking operation on Sunday in the city of Amiens in northern France, a 38-year-old woman who had been savaged by a dog received transplanted tissue, muscles, arteries and veins from a brain-dead donor.

"It is a very exciting breakthrough but we still don't know whether this is going to have a long-term success," said Michael Earley, a plastic surgeon at Mater Hospital in Dublin, Ireland..."