

# PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

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## REVEALED: THE LAX LAWS THAT COULD ALLOW ASSEMBLY OF DEADLY VIRUS DNA

*June 14, 2006* Guardian Unlimited reported: "DNA sequences from some of the most deadly pathogens known to man can be bought over the internet, the Guardian has discovered. In an investigation which shows the ease with which terrorist organisations could obtain the basic ingredients of biological weapons, this newspaper obtained a short sequence of smallpox DNA. The deadly virus has existed only in laboratories since being eradicated from the world's population 30 years ago.

The DNA sequence of smallpox, as well as other potentially dangerous pathogens such as poliovirus and 1918 flu are freely available in online public databases. So to build a virus from scratch, a terrorist would simply order consecutive lengths of DNA along the sequence and glue them together in the correct order. This is beyond the skills and equipment of the kitchen chemist, but could be achieved by a well-funded terrorist with access to a basic lab and PhD-level personnel.

One study estimated that because most people on the planet have no resistance to the extinct virus, an initial release which infected just 10 people would spread to 2.2 million people in 180 days.

The DNA sample we ordered had, at our request, three small modifications to render it harmless before it was sent by post to a residential address in London. The company has since conceded that it was not aware it was sending out a sequence of modified smallpox DNA.

There are legitimate reasons for researchers to buy lengths of DNA from pathogens, for example in developing treatments or vaccines against them. However, because this industry is so new and unregulated, companies are selling custom-made DNA without making thorough checks on the identities of the people who are placing the orders or what the sequences are.

Of the four main companies operating in the UK, none currently screens all their DNA orders. There are 39 companies operating in North America and not all screen their orders.

"This is the most disturbing story I have heard for some time," said Phil Willis MP, chairman of the parliamentary science and technology committee. "There is clearly a massive loophole which needs to be dealt with by regulation or legislation."

Alistair Hay, who is an expert on biological and chemical weapons at the University of Leeds and who advises the government and police, said he was concerned that the company was prepared to supply the DNA to a residential address. "I am surprised that it was so easy," he said.

"I think for any company offering [DNA] sequences there is a need to have some screens in place for sequences that may be suspect," added Prof Hay.

"This is a new field and the regulations haven't really caught up with the technology yet," said Robert Jones at Craic Computing in Seattle, a company that makes software which some DNA synthesis companies use to screen their orders for potentially dangerous sequences."..."

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## IRAN REBUFFS US TERMS FOR TALKS

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*June 12, 2006* The Jerusalem Post reported: "Iran insisted Monday on its right to enrich uranium, expressing reluctance to suspend the key nuclear process as a condition for negotiations over a package of incentives offered by the world powers.

Iran has not responded formally to the incentives that are intended to persuade it to step back from enrichment. But it has said that parts of the package were acceptable, others were not, and the key issue of uranium enrichment - a process that can make fuel for a nuclear power plant or material for an atomic bomb - needed clarification.

At a news conference Monday, Iranian spokesman Gholam Hossein Elham gave no indication of when Iran would reply to the package presented June 6. When asked if Iran would suspend enrichment for the sake of negotiations - as the world powers, notably the United States, have demanded - Elham avoided a direct answer, but repeated the government line that enrichment was Iran's "obvious right."

Meanwhile, *The Daily Telegraph* reported on Monday that new evidence has come to light indicating that Iran is engaged in an as-yet-undeclared nuclear development project intended for military use.

The project, codenamed Zirzamin 27, has caused concern among nuclear experts in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, who are demanding a full disclosure from Iran.

Ever since 2003, when UN inspectors found enriched uranium at the Teheran-area Lavizan military base, many have suspected Iran of developing a secret military nuclear program. Now, evidence suggests that this is, in fact, the case-that the Iranians have moved the Lavizan project to a new, top-secret site outside Teheran.

Although the exact location of the project is unknown, the name Zirzamin-"basement" in Farsi- implies that the research laboratories involved in the project are underground. IAEA officials are currently studying reports of Zirzamin 27's activities.

One diplomat who works with the IAEA called this "a truly alarming development" and said it "indicates that the Iranians remain committed to developing nuclear weapons, despite their claims...that their nuclear ambitions are completely peaceful."

### **AL-QAEDA 'COMING TO END IN IRAQ'**

*June 15, 2006* BBC News reported: "The killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi marks the "beginning of the end" of al-Qaeda in Iraq, the country's national security adviser has said. Mowaffaq al-Rubaie said documents seized after the raid that killed Zarqawi had yielded key information about the militant group. "Now we have the upper hand," he told a news conference in Baghdad.

Zarqawi, the al-Qaeda leader in Iraq, was killed last week by a US air strike near Baquba, north of Baghdad.

Mr Rubaie said a pocket hard-drive, a laptop and documents were found in the debris after the strike. The documents and records revealed the names and whereabouts of other al-Qaeda in Iraq leaders, he said, adding that more information has since been found in raids on other insurgent hideouts.

"We believe that this is the beginning of the end of al-Qaeda in Iraq," Mr Rubaie said. "They did not anticipate how powerful the Iraqi security forces are and how the government is on the attack now."

One of the documents showed that Zarqawi was planning to widen the rift between the US and Iran by carrying out attacks on US interests falsely attributed to Iran, the prime minister's office said.

According to a US military spokesman, US forces have carried out 452 raids since the killing of Zarqawi, leading to the death of 104 insurgents and the capture of 759 "anti-Iraqi elements".

Maj Gen William Caldwell said the raids had also yielded 28 significant arms hauls. He said 143 of the raids had been carried out by Iraqi forces acting alone, while 255 raids had involved US forces working with Iraqi security."..."

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### **US TO RESPOND IF NORTH KOREA TESTS MISSILE**

*June 15, 2006* SpaceWar.com reported: "The top US envoy to South Korea warned Wednesday that Washington and its allies would "respond appropriately" if North Korea test-fired a missile capable of reaching the United States. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow said Washington was monitoring preparations for a long-range missile test that have reportedly been under way for more than a month at a remote launch pad in northeastern North Korea.

"We really don't know what are the intentions of chairman Kim Jong-Il or any other military leaders in North Korea," Vershbow said in an interview with state-run KBS radio. "But as I said we want them to understand that tests in light of other problems that we have in our relations with North Korea will be viewed as a very serious matter and we will take appropriate measures in response."

He said consultations would take place with partners to the six-party talks with North Korea before a decision would be made on a response. On-off talks on ending the North Korea nuclear standoff have brought together the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States since August 2003.

South Korea's foreign minister urged Pyongyang to abandon plans for the missile test that would have a "negative impact on the international geopolitical situation and the settlement of North Korea's nuclear issue."

"It is appropriate for North Korea to stop preparations for the missile launch and return to six-party talks," Ban Ki-Moon told a weekly media briefing.

A senior South Korean official who declined to be named earlier confirmed reports that North Korea was preparing to test-fire a Taepodong-2 multi-stage missile with a range of more than 6,000 kilometres (3,600 miles) that was capable of hitting the United States."..."

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### **CHINA SANCTIONED FOR ARMS TO IRAN**

*June 15, 2006* The Middle East Newline reported: "The United States has renewed sanctions on China for arms exports to Iran. The Bush administration has determined that four Chinese companies continued to supply technology and components to Iran's military and strategic programs. All of the companies have already been sanctioned by the United States.

"The companies targeted today have supplied Iran's military and Iranian proliferators with missile-related and dual-use components," Treasury Undersecretary Stuart Levey said.

On Tuesday, the Treasury Department reported sanctions on Beijing Alite Technologies Co., LIMMT Economic and Trade Co., China Great Wall Industry Corp., and China National Precision Machinery Import/Export Corp. Under an executive order issued in 2005, the federal government would freeze the U.S. assets of these Chinese companies and ban Americans from dealing with them."