

CBRN News

PRODUCT WATCH

Med-CM news

Tulane University received a \$7m National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to work with Corgenix to develop a hemorrhagic fever detection kit. Polmedix received a \$1.6m grant from DTRA to develop a new defensin mimetic antibody to combat BWA. Pharmathene and Emergent Biosolutions are the last two companies in the running for the US DoH \$550m anthrax vaccine requirement. Emergent was also able to announce the FDA had extended its Biothrax vaccine's shelf-life from three to four years, which has also now been approved for use in India by the Drugs Controller General. The Universities of Memphis and Tennessee were awarded a \$1.1m contract to study tularaemia and to develop a new anti-TB agent by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The regional Bio-Lab in Memphis, one of only 13 labs in the US funded by the NIH, opened in June. Columbia University, as part of a consortium, received a \$46m grant from NIH to support research and training initiatives. Researchers from the University of Texas announced they had found a way to stop Ebola infecting cells by using a small interfering RNA technique. Human Genome Sciences received a second order for their Abthrax anthrax "infection-fighting" drug from the Department of Health and Human Services. These 45,000 doses, worth \$151m, will become part of the US's Strategic National Stockpile.

DSEI preview

Avon Protection got its PR act together and announced its line-up for the big UK defence show, DSEI, by announcing it will be showing its ST53 self-contained breathing apparatus and FM53 mask, as well as their two escape hoods, EH20 and NH15.

Indian chemical pro

As an example of the potential that India holds for CBRN companies, Evronics announced that it has signed a multi-million Euro contract

with the Indian army for CWA detection, including its Chempro100i. Evronics saw off other international companies to seal the order, and delivery will take place later this year.

New chemical fabric

The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, TUBITAK, has developed a new material to be used in chemical protection suits. The material, called T1, has numerous micro-channels and silicate-based ceramic components, which "absorb" the chemical and "destroy their structure" – says a press release. As with all such press releases, we will try and find out more information.

Watch it George, he's got a simulator!

Argon electronics announced it has delivered its first LCD3.2e SIMS to UK police forces. The simulator, which mimics in look and feel Smiths LCD 3.2, allows the police to use a range of safe simulated scenarios to train police officers in the use of the real detector. LCD-SIM provides remote control features for CBRN instructors and allows them to record operator errors for the after action review. LCD-SIM joins the CAMSIM and ECAMSIM that the police already use.

Swiss model

Thales was pleased to announce the Swiss MoD had signed a contract for 12 NBC recon vehicles, utilising the Mowag Piranha IIC chassis. The Swiss will take possession of the last vehicle by 2011, and they will all have the typical warning and reporting, detection and marking capabilities that you would suspect in a recon vehicle. When this is combined with their MoD's mobile bio detection capability, it marks the Swiss as a serious non-Nato CBRN player.

Bruker grab major US order

Bruker Detection, the US arm of Bruker Daltonics, announced it has a contract for first article test and verification for the Improved Point Detection System, based on their

Raid S2 shipboard chemical detector. While the initial order might be small – ten units at a cost of £1m – if the Raid does pass the US Navy's test system it would mark a major step away from Acada for US forces, and might be the toehold Bruker need to get into the US military chemical detection market.

On the front lion

Lion Apparel announced the release of their Janesville CB-Xit, NFPA 1971-compliant firefighter ensemble for CBRN. Combining Lion's V-Force, and Gore's Chempak barrier, they feel the suit provides a far higher level than NFPA 1971 requires. The suit is designed for a single use, and is designed to allow firefighters to escape from an area where an unexpected agent has been released. It will be interesting to see whether the concept of operations can keep up with the technology, as previous escape technology, such as escape hoods, have come unstuck on the concept of protection levels that are just for rapid exits.

Cobham build up their CBRN defence

Cobham Surveillance is clearly on the prowl in the CBRN market. It won the UK Police's Scene Management, with Indespension, by producing a barrier system to control crowds during a CBRN incident; the towable system can be set up by two officers across variable road widths (up to 13 metres), is hinged to allow different angles and is complemented by a public communication system.

Ceeker found, but it's just not Quidditch!

Vertide, manufacturer of the Ceeker biological identifier, announced its device has been tested by Midwest Research Institute and found to correctly identify anthrax 100 per cent of the time and to correctly identify hoax samples 95 per cent of the time. Ceeker uses UV light and algorithms to detect spores and can provide test results "within minutes". Ceeker is being marketed at the first responder community as a white powder device – allowing users to determine whether the powder is in fact anthrax.

THREAT WATCH

Use of WMD religiously bad – official

As opposed to the column inches expended on various Mullahs who have encouraged the user of CBRN terrorist devices to kill the infidel, the Grand Mufti's comments that it couldn't be sanctioned received less feedback. Grand Mufti Ali Goma'a, Egypt's top cleric, stated that the use of CBRN against non-Muslim countries was "...false... and a slander of religion". So far so good, but unfortunately he went on to say that the possession of these devices by state parties was legitimate – so, much like the parson's egg, it was good in parts.

Now hiring...

An Al-Qaeda recruiting video that aired earlier this year explained their plan was to smuggle biological material into the US via tunnels under the Mexican border, utilising white militia groups and other anti-government entities. This caused a certain amount of excitement. What people failed to take heed of was the fact that al-Qaeda are now advertising that they have no-home grown biological capability and are short of assets and operatives. While Muslim fanatics might be difficult to "penetrate", the US intelligence community has deep roots into the major national crazies – so any attempt to utilise them is playing to US strengths. How desperate is al-Qaeda becoming?



Fighting city hall...

The New York Police Department is facing leaner times as budgets shrink, reported The New York Times, with fewer police officers (34,400 – 1,600 less than a decade ago), layoffs among civilians and less money coming from City Hall. The Commissioner has been fighting Congress for the \$40m Securing the Cities grant (which

includes radiation detectors), and while it has been passed in the House of Representatives it is still "unresolved in the Senate".

Keep focusing on the less-than-WMD

Ricin continues to be the belle of the Toxin ball, with suspected finds in the UK and US. In Seattle, USA, an abused wife found a suspicious substance – that the FBI expects to contain ricin – after entering her husband's office for the first time. After a fracas that left her injured, and her husband unresponsive, she gained access to the office and alerted officers. Both husband and wife later tested positive for ricin, and firefighters are decontaminating the house. Meanwhile police "smashed" a "ring" in Durham, UK, that was planning to poison ethnic minorities with ricin – that they kept in a jam jar (is ricin ever kept in anything else?). The father and son team were arrested and the father charged under Terrorism Act.

EU unveils new policy

The EU Justice Minister, Jacques Barrot, raised the spectre of the Word at Risk report (see *CBRNe World* Spring p10) to unveil the new CBRN policy. The policy itself is influenced by the Graham Report – the UK's CONTEST II – and some of the EU's own work on FP7. There are three areas of action: increased protection of materials of concern; improved detection capacity; and better response. There are 132 concrete measures, based on the 265 recommendations from experts that were delivered in January 2009. Quite what these are is not apparent, as the ever-unfriendly EU website refuses to give up their secrets. Should a paper copy arrive in the office we will try and provide more illumination.

DoD gets a "must try harder" from the GAO

The US watchdog, the Government Accountability Office, slated the interoperability of various military agencies in responding to civil CBRN incidents. "DoD has had operational plans in place and revises these plans regularly. However, until the Integrated Planning System and its associated plans are complete, DoD's plans and those of other federal and state entities will not be integrated, and it will remain unclear whether DoD's [response forces] will address potential gaps

in capabilities," it said. The GAO also raised doubts about whether the military would be able to provide forces in an "acceptable" timeframe and whether these forces were actually what the states need. Some of these issues should come as no real shock; while some units, like CBIRF, are groomed for their fast notice to move, the military is not an emergency responder and should not be thought of as one and have missions other than the homeland. Meanwhile, the GAO was also having fun with the Federal Protective Services (FPS), which has now been dubbed an "agency in crisis". The GAO report pointed to a lack of resources in staff and technology allowing the GAO investigators to bring bomb components into ten of their Level 4 facilities (Level 5 being the highest), assemble them in a restroom and then carry them around the facility in a briefcase. Ouch.

Year of the bumper harvest...

General Nikolai Abroskin announced Russia has destroyed 37 per cent of its chemical stockpile and was on schedule to destroy the whole stockpile by 2012. No doubt it would be a wonderful poke in the eye for the US if Russia could do it, but "observers" are said to be "sceptical", reported the Government Security Newswire.

Interesting...

A Slovakian court yesterday set free the two radiological smugglers caught in 2007, after sentencing them to time served. The Court determined that the 500g of uranium they were dealing was not "usable" for a RDD. What is the message here? That the vast majority of people who deal in radiological material really don't know what they are doing? That if you smuggle radiological rubbish you only get 20 months prison, and the reward may well outweigh the risk? Without wanting to get into a moral maze of how long they should be in prison, surely the novelty of any RDD is going to be enough to get you, and your organisation, in newspapers from Hong Kong to Hounslow? Whether the attack does any serious damage will be secondary to the shock factor (look at the wake of the chlorine bombs), and as such is a more severe sentence needed?