

Prof questions MX safety

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The U.S. Air Force is trying to prevent the White House from seeing a letter written by a Nobel Prize-winning physics professor that says MX missiles may not be protected sufficiently from Soviet attack under a new basing plan, it was reported Wednesday.

The professor who wrote the letter, Charles Townes from the University of California, headed a study group which was set up by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger to examine the new plan.

The Washington Post reports that the letter expresses doubts about whether the Air Force can build the kind of superhardened underground concrete and steel silos needed to protect the MX missiles from the blast, heat and radiation of an attack.

Townes also reportedly says it may be easier for the Soviets to modify their missiles to cope with the new plan — Dense Pack — than it will be for the Air Force to build superhardened shelters as planned.

Weinberger, who returned

from an overseas trip Monday, is to submit his recommendations on the MX to President Reagan soon.

The Post said Weinberger is ready to recommend a go-ahead on Dense Pack to the White House, although he is lukewarm about the plan and has incorporated Townes' concerns into his recommendation. He is said to value Townes' opinion highly.

Dense Pack involves grouping the missiles together on the theory that a blast from the first attacking enemy missiles would deflect or destroy

the trailing missiles and leave the MXs relatively secure.

The Post said Weinberger probably will not make a specific recommendation on the politically touchy question of whether New Mexico, Nevada and Wyoming ought to be the location for the missiles but will leave that up to the president.

In his letter, Townes says a degree of silo hardness would have to be achieved substantially beyond anything previously done and that the Soviets must believe it can be done.

People can't lace tamper-proof bottle

United Press International
HOUSTON — A Turkish businessman working in the United States says he has produced a tamper-proof bottle safe for use around children.

The businessman, an inventor who requests anonymity, said he believes his small bottle will add only about 25 cents to the cost of manufacturing the current most popular dispensers — all of which he says can be fouled with poison.

He developed the prototype bottle under the company name Future Research Design and Manufacturing and says he has submitted the necessary papers for patent.

"I'm not marketing the product myself," he said.

He came up with the new design after a rash of poisonings in this country, apparently by people who contaminated containers that were thought to be safely packaged.

The key properties of the new bottle are:

- glass as the main body;
- an impenetrable twist-off cap;
- a cap that when moved slightly loses its grip and has to be replaced;
- a secondary cap that is child safe;
- an outside plastic covering that contains broken glass;

"There's no way you can get inside this product without knowing it," he said. "At best all we have now on the market are tamper-resistant containers. Mine is tamper-proof," he said.

In a demonstration in the company offices, company spokesman Marc Dickey showed that many medicine containers seemingly safe were not. He was able to introduce dye into them in such a way that the tampering was not evident.

With the new bottle in hand, Dickey could not drill through the top using a small bit.

The bottle Dickey used had the walls of the bottle broken. But the shards were contained and not dangerous.

The company is concealing as proprietary information the chemical makeup of the top and the pliable outer layer.

The inventor said a cellophane safety seal around the lip of a bottle cap is not the answer because most caps can be penetrated by drilling.

He said he revealed his product to the news media in the last few days so a potential manufacturer and marketer would see the product and contact him.

Two weeks to vaccinate

Flu epidemic may occur

United Press International
NEW ORLEANS — One of every 10 Americans faces aches, fever and the risk of developing pneumonia this winter due to a potential "moderate-sized epidemic" of the flu, public health researchers say.

Dr. Sarah Braud, state health officer for Louisiana, said the cyclical nature of viral diseases translates into a greater flu outbreak nationwide this winter than last.

Dr. Robert Couch, professor at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, said his research indicated a Bangkok-type flu would hit 10 percent of people in the Houston area

from early December to mid-February, with its greatest concentration in January.

Braud said Couch's figures could be applied to the entire nation.

"Based on what's happened in the rest of the world we can probably say there's going to be more flu this season in the U.S. than last winter," she said.

Couch said most researchers are expecting a type-A influenza epidemic this winter, based on historic patterns and outbreaks of the virus around the world this year.

"Our prediction is a moderate-sized epidemic this winter," he said.

Couch said the virus has not yet been identified in the continental U.S., but researchers feel it's likely.

"Those type of viruses were epidemic in the Philippines and Southeast Asia in the summer and have already been identified in outbreak form in Alaska during the month of October," he said.

Couch, a representative of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases traveling around the country to encourage people to get vaccinated against the flu and pneumonia, said older people and those with health problems should take special precautions.

The doctor warned there are about two weeks left in what would ordinarily be considered the vaccination period and said people who get the flu risk the chance of developing potentially-fatal pneumonia.

Pneumonia, caused by a viral infection in half of all cases, is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S. and has a fairly high fatality rate, Couch said.

People with chronic heart, lung and kidney diseases, sickle cell anemia, diabetes and metabolic disorders and those who have had their spleens removed or damaged face the greatest danger from pneumonia, he said.

Unemployment checks sent to fewer people

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Another 650,000 people applied for unemployment checks in the week ending Oct. 30, the third consecutive week of slightly decreased first-time claims, the Labor Department said Wednesday.

The latest week's total of initial jobless claims was down 27,000 from the previous week after adjustment for routine seasonal layoff patterns.

The total also was down, but less dramatically before seasonal adjustment. Actual claims for state jobless benefits went to 575,100 in the week ending Oct. 30, a drop of 2,500 claims from the week before.

On Nov. 5 the department reported the overall unemployment rate was 10.4 percent of the workforce, a new post-Depression high representing

11.6 million people out of work.

The monthly unemployment report is based on a survey that is taken in the week that includes the 12th of the month. Initial claims during that week last month were at a level of 687,000 after adjustment.

The latest report showed that for the fourth consecutive week the rate of unemployment among people covered by employment insurance was 5.3 percent after seasonal adjustment. That represented a total of 4,673,000 receiving unemployment insurance benefits under state programs, down 12,000 from the week before.

Before seasonal adjustment the rate of insured unemployment fell from 4.5 to 4.4 percent, representing 3,860,000 people actually getting benefit checks, down 33,100 from the previous week.

Initial jobless claims hit their high point during the week ending Oct. 2, when 696,000 people applied for unemployment benefits.

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