

Team unravels genetic code

LONDON (AP) — An international team of researchers said it is on the verge of unraveling for the first time the genetic pattern of a human chromosome — a milestone toward what experts call one of the most important scientific accomplishments ever.

The team, involving British, U.S. and Japanese scientists, is part of a worldwide collaboration known as the Human Genome Project, which aims to reveal the structure of the estimated 100,000 genes in human DNA.

That will help scientists better understand what can go wrong in the body and how to fix it.

The group investigating chromosome 22 — the second smallest of the 24 kinds of chromosomes that carry human DNA — is putting the finishing touches on its work and plans to submit it for publication in the journal *Nature* later this year, team leader Ian Dunham said yesterday.

"We have it completed now to the point where there isn't anything else we can do. We are now working on the analysis," Dunham, senior research fellow of the Sanger Center in Cambridge,

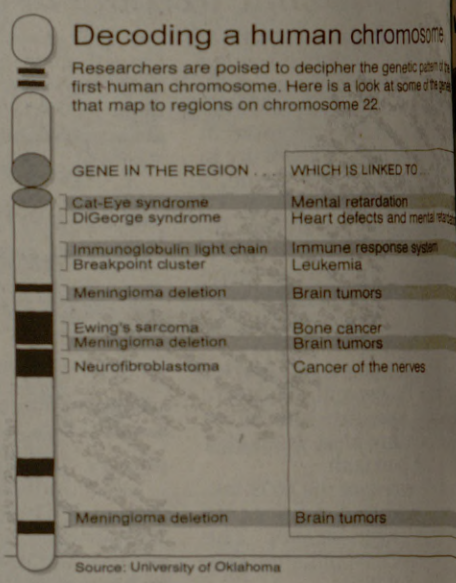
England, which is handling about a third of the entire genome project, said.

Genes are arranged in tightly coiled threads of DNA organized into pairs of chromosomes in every cell of the body.

Genes can promote or cause disease when they do not work properly. Some of the illnesses linked to genes gone bad include cancer, arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, Alzheimer's and multiple sclerosis.

Chromosome 22 contains genes involved in the immune response, schizophrenia, heart defects, mental retardation, leukemia and several other cancers, Bruce Roe of the University of Oklahoma, part of the team examining it, said.

The team, which also involves Keio University in Japan, Washington University in St. Louis and scores of labs across the world, is revealing the sequence of the building blocks of DNA along the length of the chromosome.



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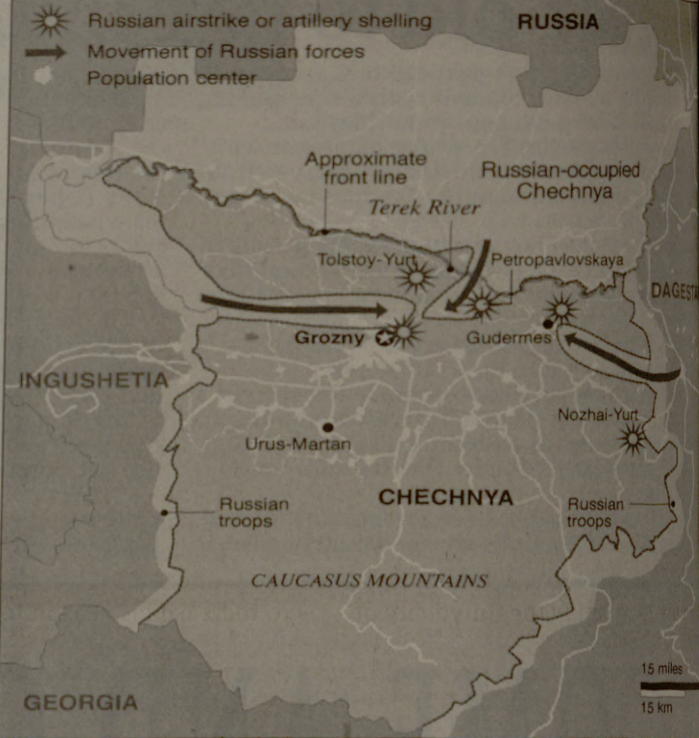
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Rockets hammer maternity hospital



GROZNY, Russia (AP) — Salvos of rockets slammed into a crowded open air market and other parts of Grozny, including a maternity hospital, yesterday, killing at least 118 people and injuring up to 400, a Chechen official said.

Chechen officials said the rockets were fired by Russian forces moving in on the capital. The Russian Defense Ministry in Moscow denied responsibility.

Bodies, severed body parts and pools of blood were scattered throughout the market after six rockets exploded in the stalls, which were crowded with shoppers during the early evening attack.

At least four other rockets slammed into other parts of the city, including one that hit a maternity hospital, Magomed Magomadov, a senior government official, said.

He said 118 people were killed and between 300 people and 400 people were injured. Many of the injured were in critical condition, he said.

Russian forces moved in to Chechnya in late September to impose a security zone around the breakaway republic and to wipe out Islamic militants. Russian forces were devastated by street fighting with guerrillas in the capital during the 1994-96 war, which left Chechnya with de facto independence.

At the market yesterday, these hundreds of terrified people, screaming and crying, ran for cover as the rockets exploded. Surrounding streets were jammed with people trying to escape. Some only tried to help the wounded.

"It was dark and then all of a sudden, the place was illuminated and we saw something was sparking in the sky. Then we heard the explosion and saw Umar Madayev said.

Grozny's already overcrowded and poorly equipped hospitals were packed with the injured. A few doctors, working with almost no medications, operated on some of the wounded under the glare of kerosene lamps because the electricity was out.

Badly wounded people lay in pools of blood in the dirty, dark corridors of the central hospital, where there were no beds for them.

Russian troops, meanwhile, closed in on the Chechen capital, with advance tanks and armored personnel carriers reportedly less than 10 miles outside Grozny. Chechen officials said some Russian soldiers had been spotted even closer.

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