

BOY, THAT ANTHRAX ATTACK SURE LED TO AN EXPANSION OF OUR ANTHRAX PROGRAM, HUH

From Scott Shane's article on USAMRIID's little cataloging problem:

The anthrax case has underscored the threat of biological attack by biodefense insiders like Dr. Ivins, who have access to pathogens and the expertise to work with them.

The number of such researchers has grown rapidly since 2001, when the anthrax letters set off a spending boom on biodefense that led to a rapid addition of laboratories working on potential bioweapons, notably anthrax.

Before 2001, only a few dozen such facilities worked with anthrax. Today, the Centers for Disease Control has registered 219 laboratories to do so, said a C.D.C. spokesman, Von Roebuck. He said 10,474 people had been cleared to work with dangerous pathogens and toxins nationwide after background checks by the Justice Department. [my emphasis]

So we've learned two things in the last day. USAMRIID has not had a way of tracking what all its scientists have been working on (and therefore, any claim that Ivins could have been the only one who had access to the anthrax used in the attack is based on faulty evidence). And, as a result of the anthrax attacks, the number of labs working on anthrax expanded almost ten-fold, from roughly 24 to 219.

I guess they found a really effective way to

quiet concerns that our work on anthrax violated
treaty bans, huh?