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To: Kevin_Tiernan @ jfk-arrr.govcc: (bcc: Kevin Tiernan/ARRB)From: jaculpe @ nswc.navy.mil @ INTERNET @ INTERLIANT Date: 10/20/97 01:52:37 PM ASTSubject: Hi Kevin. Pass this on to Sue.FBI hires nuclear physicist to head crime labOctober 18, 1997 Web posted at: 2:27 p.m. EDT (1827 GMT)From Correspondent Terry FriedenWASHINGTON (CNN) -- The FBI hired the former head of a government nuclearweapons laboratory to direct its troubled crime lab, even though he has nobackground in forensic science.The FBI had promised to seek an experienced crime lab scientist fromoutside the government following a stinging Justice Department report onthe lab last spring.But the man chosen for the post is Donald M. Kerr Jr., 58, aphysicist-engineer who from 1979 to 1985 headed the government's Los AlamosNational Laboratory, where nuclear weapons are designed.The FBI acknowledged that Kerr's selection after the NationalWhistleblowers Center disclosed his name at a news conference Friday."It just seems dumbfounding and implausible that they would not hire aworld-class forensic scientist to take over the crime lab," center DirectorStephen Kohn said.The selection also was criticized by the National Association of CriminalDefense Lawyers."Once again, the FBI has dealt with Congress and the public with incrediblearrogance," said the group's vice president, William Moffitt.Federal Bureau of Investigation officials defended the hiring of Kerr,saying he is the renowned scientist the agency was looking for to beef upits crime lab."He has vast experience in managing large lab operations and a longtrack-record of successfully revitalizing labs," an FBI source told CNN.A formal announcement of Kerr's hiring is expected Tuesday.'This is not somebody from the outside'Kris Kolesnik, senior counselor to Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, one ofthe harshest critics of the FBI, said Kerr's work at Los Alamos and morerecently for a major defense contractor make him a "real government insider.""This is not somebody from the outside who's going to bring a fresh breathof air," Kolesnik said.Justice Department Inspector General Michael Bromwich blasted theworld-renowned crime lab in April for flawed scientific work and inaccurate testimony in major cases, including the Oklahoma City bombing. Bromwichcalled for a new lab director with a scientific background "preferably inforensic science."Meanwhile, another flap over the crime lab erupted Friday when chief labwhistleblower Frederic Whitehurst said that in examining FBI lab reportsrecently released under the Freedom of Information Act, he found that fivemore FBI examiners had altered lab reports."In the last week, I have found five more people that have been alteringcases -- five more that the inspector general didn't find," Whitehurst said.-----J. Andrew

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