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Editorial

Brig Gen (ret'd) Ioannis Galatas, MD, MA, MC

Editor-in-Chief
CBRNE-Terrorism Newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

May was marked by the EgyptAir flight MS804 from Paris to Cairo that crashed into the Mediterranean Sea. Was it mechanical, suicidal or terrorism? Too early to say despite experts' opinions worldwide who – as always – thought it is their time to shine on televisions and mass media providing possible and impossible scenarios. On the other hand, this unfortunate incident proved that still information sharing is not the game nations are willing to play even in situations like this. Perhaps the main problem is that if they reveal their true capabilities this will weaken their future defenses in similar or more severe cases. When a satellite can read a car's plates from thousand of miles above it is ridiculous to loose a commercial flight – especially in the Southeast Mediterranean Sea where currently the biggest concentration of warships is recorded. Time is required to find the evidence and come to the right conclusions. It would be odd to wish this to be the last incident of this kind but it is yet another opportunity to reevaluate plan and strategies related to aviation security and SAR operations. Two important details though: two years ago a graphity was written in the belly of this aircraft stating “we will shoot down this plane” and “traitor” “murderer” (for General Sisi?); the three air marshals were unarmed.

I watch the news from France and this question comes to my mind: If a strong nation such as France is facing such violent riots and peoples opposition to governance, what is happening in Greece?



Are we dead and not aware of it? Greeks are bombed on daily basis with taxes and new austerity measures in a way similar to the coalition strikes Syria and yet there is no public response, there are no people protesting in our streets, there is no violence other than verbal conquest on TV, blogs and social media and if you visit Greece you will not realize that we are a failed state! Where our spirit is hiding? Where our will for a better life gone? Why we still permit incapable amateurs to govern us? To be honest, I am starting to believe that “chemtrails” in the sky is a reality and they are very effective!



Illegal immigration and refugees flows have been diminished as Greece is concerned and the human tsunami shifted towards Italy. Still there are more than 50,000 people in Greece surviving under difficult conditions and the situation is not improving. Verbal solidarity and promised for money are not viable solutions and national attitude towards them is gradually changing – not for the best. Summer is coming and tourism is the only solution to boost our economy. But really, if you are tourist to be, would you choose a beautiful Greek island full of desperate immigrants and refugees when there are many other places where you can enjoy your precious vacation time without having children eyes watching you enjoying your fresh fish or juicy meat? Lack of governance is the main problem here – name a country in which its national export railway (going through the “closed” borders with FYROM at Oidomeni) is closed for more than 65 days and is doing absolutely nothing to solve the problem (other than “trying” to peacefully “persuade” refugees to move to another hot spot or shelter)? Millions of euros are lost and nobody is giving a s** - a left party is always against violence (but only when it rules).

Then we had the 2016 Eurovision song competition. Well what is left from it since it became obvious that politics define even the music industry and awards winners. So sad! By the way it would be very interesting to spend sometime reading about the Tatars’ history and what really happened at that time (main content of the winning Ukrainian song). It is always good to read history in order to have a better understand of the world of today.

Radiation pills were distributed to all people in Belgium following the recent Brussels’ attacks. Lot of fuss and then silence. Panic reactions to their best. Another victory for terrorists! I always believed that you one does not have to execute a real terrorist attack; only to make a very detailed and realistic plan and then allowed to be arrested (he will be a martyr no matter what). The impact (and new measures) would be the same as an actual attack. They play the music and we dance – that is all!

Finally, London has a new Mayor and he is a Muslim. Big news in the mass media and tons of analyses on his background and possible consequences etc. While Londoners are not exactly a representative population of UK allowing to make conclusions on what voters really believe the situation is vividly described in a Youtube clip entitled “What Islam is Not”. Watch it if you have the time and make your own conclusions about the future that is not future anymore.

On the other side of the ocean, Bill Clinton will be assigned to revive US economy if Hilary Clinton is elected as US President. I thought that favoritism and family governance was a Greek phenomenon – but I was wrong! It is amazing how many things Americans and Greeks share. For example citizens in both countries are facing the same dilemma regarding whom to vote for given the fact that both options are equally bad (no we are not facing new elections at home but we might have soon). It makes me wonder how come 300 mil (US) and 10 mil (Greece) cannot select better people to lead their destiny in the future!

Brazilian Olympics are almost two months away and the big questions concentrate to if we are going to have the games and how secure they will be. It is boring to comment on CBRNE preparedness and alike since no open sources’ information exist. The military will take care of the venues and police will guard the cities – this is main conclusion from articles posted on the Internet. Zika virus is heading towards the United States but also traveled to Africa where Ebola virus is still around. My proposal: stay at home and enjoy the games from the comfort of your living room. Same proposal for the UEFA Euro 2016 soccer games in France. It does not worthy to risk your life for sports. There is a lot of evil out there!

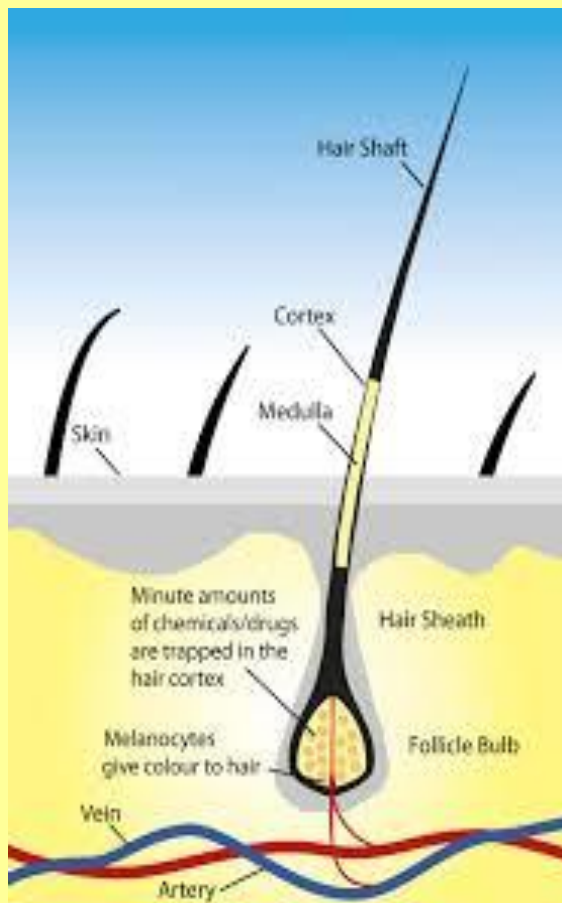
Take care First Responders!

The Editor-in-Chief



Hair analysis is flawed as a forensic technique

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160425-hair-analysis-is-flawed-as-a-forensic-technique>



Apr 25 – Since 1989, seventy-four people who were convicted of serious crimes, in large part due to microscopic hair comparisons, were later exonerated by post-conviction DNA analysis.

A new article highlights the statistical failings of microscopic hair analysis in criminal investigations, noting that more than twenty characteristics can be used to describe or identify a single hair, but many are subjective.

Wiley notes that a re-examination of a hair by the same or a different examiner can result in different descriptions of hair characteristics. Also, there are no population-based databases that contain subjects' hair characteristics, making it impossible to estimate the probability of any given hair characteristic.

“The magnitude of the injustice enabled by such flawed ‘science’ is reflected in the 1056 years of unjust prison time served by the 74 exonerated defendants,” said Dr. H. James Norton, co-author of the *Significance* article. “Relatedly, similar flawed ‘science’ based upon bite mark evidence has led to 24 unjust convictions or indictments, later disproved by DNA evidence.” Dr. Norton and his colleague’s companion paper on bite mark analysis was also published recently in *Significance*.

— Read more in Jim Norton and William E. Anderson, “Flawed forensics: Statistical failings of microscopic hair analysis,” *Significance* 13, no. 2 (April 2016): 26–29 (DOI: 10.1111/j.1740-9713.2016.00897.x); and H. James Norton and George Divine, “Simpson’s paradox ... and how to avoid it,” *Significance* 12, no. 4 (August 2015): 40–43.

Will Brazil's economic, political crisis affect Rio Games?

Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/sports/ci_29816038/will-brazils-economic-political-crisis-affect-rio-games

100

Apr 26 – **The 100-day countdown to the Summer Olympics will arrive Wednesday with Brazil dealing with the worst financial crisis since the Depression and President Dilma Rousseff facing possible impeachment in an action that she has described as a coup attempt.**

The national crisis has relegated Olympic host city Rio de Janeiro to a sidelight even as organizers scramble to control the Zika outbreak, complete sports facilities and transportation links for the games Aug. 5-21.

However, this might be just the break an overstressed city needs to finish the job without the usual scrutiny that comes in the final Olympic build-up.



"The real equation is the political mayhem, plus the economic catastrophe equals a twisted Olympic godsend," said political scientist Jules Boykoff, who spent last year in Rio as a Fulbright fellow.

While outside stakeholders sweat Rio's last-gasp efforts to have its house ready in time, veteran Olympians such as U.S. water polo star Tony Azevedo shrug off concerns. After all, they have heard all of the predictions of doom before.

Athens had cost overruns and construction delays in 2004. Beijing had terrible smog. London suffered from traffic and terrorism concerns whereas Sochi spent \$50 billion, but barely had the infrastructure completed for the 2014 Winter Olympics.

Past experiences have left most athletes putting their faith in Brazilian organizers to have everything in order by the time the Opening Ceremony begins at Maracana Stadium.

But few could have predicted the unfortunate intersection of a crashing economy and political turmoil in the final lap of Olympic preparations.

The country has gone from booming economic growth to perhaps its worst crisis since the 1930s as the Brazilian currency has lost 40 percent of its value against the dollar in the past two years.

The disgruntled citizenship also has witnessed a mushrooming corruption scandal that led police to raid the home of former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

A watchdog group reported that half of the lawmakers who voted to pursue impeachment

of Rousseff as part of the scandal are under investigation themselves.

"They are using this Olympics to find a way to start making people accountable, like the president," said Azevedo, who studied international relations at Stanford. "This could go down as the changing point in the history of Brazil."

Rousseff has tried using the games to her advantage, saying this year that "if we are capable of organizing the Olympics and the Paralympics, we are also capable of returning our country to growth."

Pacific University's Boykoff, author of "Power Games: A Political History of the Olympics," agreed the Rio Games could be the catalyst for something positive. But ...

"The flip side could be you have a lot of people primed up, politically amped, battled tested" that could lead to "huge street protests against the Olympics," he said.

Thousands went to the streets in protest two years ago before the World Cup, which ultimately was declared a rousing success.

But soccer, or futebol, is Brazil's national game. So far, the signs don't look promising as Rio officials have failed to fulfill a string of promises they made when winning the bid over Chicago, Madrid and Tokyo with a compelling narrative of how the Olympics would transform the city.

"Rio illuminates some of the sharp-edged contradictions of this big spectacle that many of us have come to appreciate in terms of athletics," said Boykoff, a former U.S. soccer player. "If we don't recognize those contradictions we've had a missed opportunity.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: I strongly believe that next Olympic Games should be either deleted or dramatically change! Modern Olympics have nothing to do with the original idea behind Ancient Greece Olympiads that focused on athletic competition, cultural interactions, peace and promotion of a healthy body in a healthy mind. Modern Olympics are dominated by money earning (athletes; sponsors), money spending (defense industry) and tourism promotion (organizer). Due to these facts it is impossible to support the idea for Olympics to return back to Greece and been organized there in a permanent basis (despite the fact that cost will be greatly reduced. Therefore the only solution could be the obligatory dual use of Olympic venues depending on societal needs. This will provide a different more human face for this mega event and a good reason for the continuation of the Games. Think as a lay person and ask yourself: "Do you really care about who is the fastest man on Earth? Who can jump over a building of 5m high? Who can throw something over 30m or sent the javelin over 100m? Do you really care if your national basketball team will get the gold medal or if your swimmers swim faster than others? Do you all suspect that existing results are biased by modern doping technologies that we discover even after years of initial usage? Do you really favor the message "invest in sports because money are huge and fame global?" that affects instead of inspiring your children? Have you forgotten something called



Olympic Truce” that it was the most important message of Ancient Olympics? Do you love to see the logos of beverages and sport equipment next to the five Olympic circles? Do you love to see the glamorous venues not to be properly used (with some exceptions) after the games and become ghost areas the moment that money spend could be used to fill existing gaps in your own countries? I am sure you will answer no to all the above questions. This expensive show must either change or be stopped! Sports and exercise are wonderful and a healthy body is an asset for doing things in life. Therefore governments should provide all assets to materialize this all year round and promote the idea of merging athletics with daily activities. That is all! But when doing this ignoring populace needs then it is just a waste of money and a means for promoting disruption of social web. This applies for both rich and strong nations and less rich and strong countries the same. So let us all support the idea of change and stop this type of global entertainment every four years.

As for Rio 2016, the only thing to be done is to pray that games will go on without incidents of any kind. But even so we have to keep in mind that Basil should have not nominated for the organizing the games. It was an international political decision that deliberately ignored existing data on what was and still is going on in this country aiming only to future profits. We are all aware on what is happening behind closed doors whether it is about Olympics or FIFA or whatever international sports body. So let's stop this as well and help athletics to return to their roots instead of being a product on the selves. Those who decided for Rio2016 should stay awake at night sincerely praying that their decision will not be connected with a failure or something worse than just a failure.

Rio Seeing ‘Surge’ in Police Killings Ahead of Olympics: Amnesty

Source: <http://europe.newsweek.com/rio-olympics-police-killings-amnesty-453007?rm=eu>

Apr 27 – **Nearly a dozen people have been killed by police since the start of April in Rio, where the Olympic Games are set to begin in 100 days.**

The figures were published this week by international human rights group Amnesty International, which said the “surge” in police killings has sparked fear in marginalized areas ahead of Rio’s Olympic Games. Last year, 307 people were killed by police in the state, and during 2014, the year Brazil hosted the World Cup, 580 were killed by police.

Many in Brazil are now “living in terror” ahead of the Games, Amnesty said; the majority of victims of police violence are young black men from favelas and other marginalized areas. Brazil’s government is also [cracking down](#) on homeless children on the streets of Copacabana and Maracanã, both of which will host Olympic events this summer.

A 5-year-old boy is among the 11 people killed by police this month. He was killed and two others were injured during a military police operation in Magé, north of the city of Rio de Janeiro. Five people were killed on April 4 in the favela of Acari, in the northern part of the city, while another man was killed by police in the Manguinhos favela on the same day.

Amnesty points out that “it is not possible to link this rise in police killings directly to the preparations for the Olympic Games,” but the statistics show an increase in excessive use of force and impunity in the state that will host the Games. Between January and March, there was a 10 percent rise in police killings in favelas compared to the same period last year, according to Amnesty International.

“Until now, killings by police have for the most part not been investigated, rigorous training and clear operational guidelines for the use of ‘less-lethal’ weapons have not been established and the authorities still treat protesters like a ‘public enemy’,” Atila Roque, executive director of Amnesty International Brazil, said in a statement.

“Over the next 100 days, there is a lot that the authorities and the organizing bodies of Rio 2016 can and must do to ensure that any public security operations will not violate human rights,” said Roque. “We expect Rio’s police forces to take a precautionary and consultative approach to public security instead of continuing with their ‘shoot first, ask questions later’ strategy.”



Concerns over Brazil's preparedness for the Olympics were raised once again last week after a [bicycle path](#) in Rio collapsed, killing two people. The path was built in preparation for the Olympics, although no official events were scheduled to take place on it.

Rio isn't the only city to crack down on disadvantaged residents ahead of its Olympic Games. Before China hosted the 2008 Olympic Games, some [1.5 million people](#) were reportedly evicted from their homes in Beijing, according to the Center on Housing Rights and Evictions, a Geneva-based group. However, China's foreign ministry provided a much lower Olympic-related eviction estimate: 6,037 people since 2002.

Ahead of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, many residents of Sochi, the host city in southwest Russia, were also evicted from their homes to make way for Olympic construction. There were also reports of Sochi authorities rounding up and killing the city's stray dogs ahead of the event.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Lives of people vs. temporary good image! Who gives a s... when Olympic business are in progress. Were IOC Olympians aware of these facts (Basil, China, Sochi)? Of course they were! But instead they gave the green light to go on!

Married migrant who raped a ten-year-old boy at a swimming pool because he had not had sex for four months and it was 'a sexual emergency' pleads guilty in Austrian court

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3561786/Married-migrant-raped-ten-year-old-boy-swimming-pool-not-sex-four-months-sexual-emergency-pleads-guilty-Austrian-court.html>

Apr 27 – **An Iraqi asylum seeker has admitted to raping a 10-year-old boy at a public swimming pool because he was having a 'sexual emergency' after being separated from his wife for four months.**

The 20-year-old, who has a child of his own, reportedly grabbed the youngster and dragged him into a changing cabin before assaulting him at the pools in Vienna.

Afterwards, the man identified only by his first name and initial, Amir A, had carried on with his swim and was practising on the diving board as if nothing had happened when police arrived.

The badly injured youngster however had raised the alarm with a lifeguard, who had in turn called the police and the boy's mother.

After he was arrested, he initially claimed that the teenager who had been acting as a translator for him had encouraged him to have sex with the boy and had told him it was okay. He also claimed not to know how old his victim really was, Kurier reported.

He reportedly faces 10 years in jail, but the court case was adjourned after it was revealed that the schoolboy was suffering serious psychological problems.

The psychiatric report is now being prepared, and if the serious psychological consequences are confirmed, then the possible jail sentence could be increased to 15 years on a charge of aggravated GBH.

During the court hearing the man said that he still wanted to bring his young wife and child to Austria, even though he was now facing jail and his asylum application had not been granted.

Asked why he had come to Vienna, he admitted it was because he wanted to improve his economic situation.

When the case reopens after the reports have been prepared, it will take place behind closed doors after a request from both the prosecution and the defence.

Prosecutors said they wanted spare details being revealed that might embarrass the victim, while the defence said they wanted to avoid a public debate over their client's sexual orientation.

Since his arrest, Amir A. has been held in solitary confinement and under tight security in Vienna's Josefstadt jail, so as to protect him from other prisoners.



Local media have also reported police looked into his asylum claim and discovered he was the son of a wealthy businessman who had come to Europe because he had heard there was a better life in Sweden.

However, he was unable to get any further than Munich, and after deciding that the conditions in Austria were better, he returned and applied for asylum once he arrived in Vienna.

The court heard his father had booked him a flight from Baghdad to Istanbul, and he

had then boarded a ship from Turkey to Greece.

Upon arriving, he had taken a taxi to a refugee centre and then followed the masses heading northwards into Europe.

He said that on the entire journey to Austria he had not been stopped or checked once, even on the Austrian Hungarian border. He told the court: 'I wanted to build a future for my family. I decided for one week to the next that I would go.'

Despite the Latest \$255 Million Budget Cut, Brazil Looks Well Prepared to Host the 2016 Olympic Games

Source: <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20160428005234/en/Latest-255-Million-Budget-Cut-Brazil-Prepared>

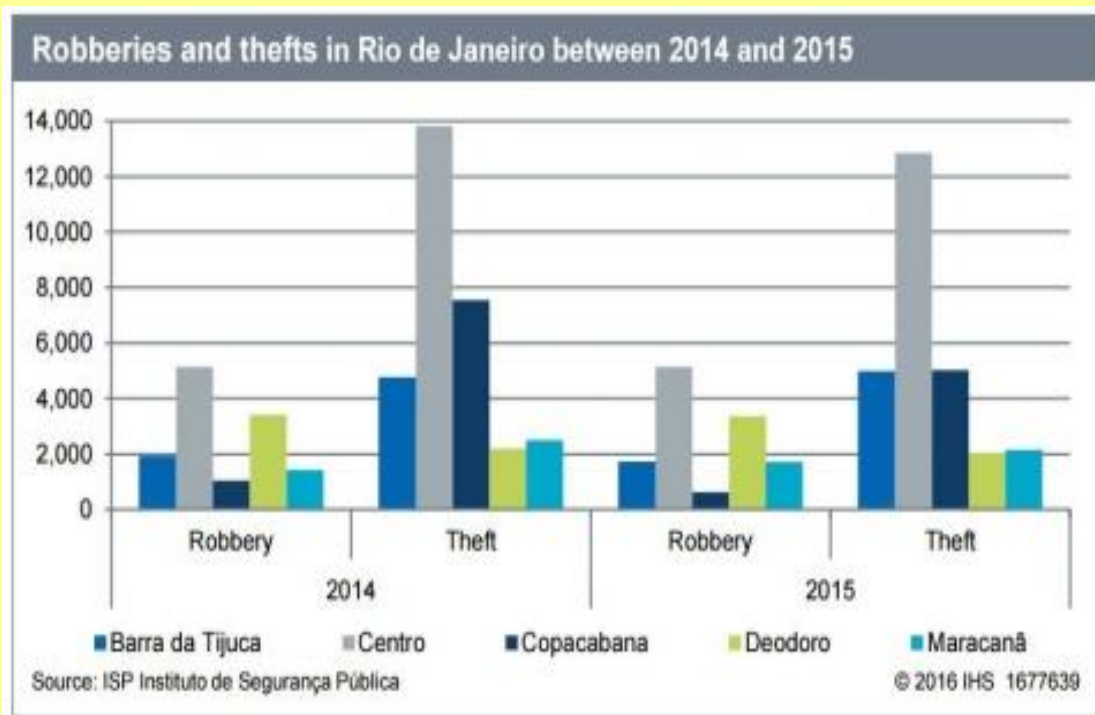
Apr 28 – With the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympics just a little less than four months away, the city is facing several pressing issues such as crime, civil unrest and counter-terrorism. Also, questions continue to swirl around Rio's health-service readiness, due to the Zika virus. However, in the latest [special report](#) focused on the city's readiness, business information provider IHS Inc. (NYSE: IHS) believes Rio remains well-prepared for the big event.

"The pacification of the favelas (slums) has improved security and reduced no-go zones within the city"

Crime and pacification of the favelas

With crime rates down in Rio over the last year

crime in the area, of the five Olympic sites, downtown Rio poses the biggest threat. These



and murder rates in 2015 at their lowest level in 24 years, the main threat for visitors will be street robberies and theft. Even with declining

crimes of opportunity usually entail an assailant taking wallets, jewelry, mobile phones and purses, sometimes with the threat



or use of violence, with women and seniors as the most common targets.

“The pacification of the favelas (slums) has improved security and reduced no-go zones within the city,” said Carlos Caicedo, senior principal analyst for Latin America at IHS Country Risk and one of the report’s authors. “This pacification program with the Pacifying Police Unit (UPP), particularly those close to hotel areas, has contributed to improvements in safety and reduction of Rio’s murder rate to its current relative low mark.”

Civil unrest and possible terrorist activity

Protests in Brazil are not considered criminal behavior. Still the government has temporarily introduced exceptional measures for the duration of the games in lieu of frequent and spontaneous protests between pro- and anti-government supporters of embattled president, Dilma Rousseff. While the impeachment process is under way, if Rousseff remains in power in August, violence is likely to escalate. “In that event, tensions are likely to be taken to the streets, as demonstrators attempt to garner international attention,” said Carla Selman, Latin American analyst at IHS Country Risk. “Protest hotspots are close to some of the Olympic sites, particularly Copacabana and Rio’s city center.”

To reduce crime and deter violence, the federal government will deploy 85,000 military and security personnel - double the numbers employed during the London 2012 Olympics. Saturation of security forces’ presence, together with coordinated intelligence, as with the 2014 World Cup, will help to reduce crime and physical threats to foreign visitors.

With no presence of domestic terrorist groups, the risk of a large-scale terrorist attack remains low, IHS says. Though there is a precedent of terrorist attacks at sporting events, there are no foreign terrorist groups maintaining a domestic presence in Brazil, keeping the threat level low.

Rio’s financially stressed healthcare system and the Zika virus

The outbreak of the mosquito-borne Zika virus has attracted many headlines, with more than 5,000 cases detected in Brazil since October 2015. However, the actual level of the threat

remains unclear. The main geographical focus of the virus is located in the northeast of the country rather than Rio. There are well-equipped hospitals in Rio, located close to the main Olympic structures in Barra; there are also private hospitals near Maracanã.

The government has responded to the virus with a focus on prevention, in the absence of a vaccine, by controlling mosquito populations. Despite the financial difficulties faced by Rio’s healthcare system, and the fact that some hospitals will struggle to provide a full service during the Olympics, Rio possesses health infrastructure at both the public and private levels that can offer primary and secondary care for patients who might require assistance during the games. Additionally, the federal government has agreed to provide the city with more funding, following the Zika-related health emergency declared by the state governor in early January.

Economic crisis and budget cuts affect infrastructure

Major works on Olympic venues are likely to finish on schedule, but the new metro rail line is unlikely to be completed. There have also been delays in the construction of venues due to the country’s economic downturn, and to corruption investigations affecting major construction companies in Brazil.

If the metro link to the main Olympic site is not completed in time, visitors will face long journeys from the Zona Sul to Barra, IHS says. Transport by road is likely to be slower than normal, with some journeys taking up to two hours, including from Zona Sul to Barra or to Deodoro. Traffic will slow even further if extra buses are deployed. In addition, the constant movement of delegations of athletes and officials between Olympic locations and hotels is likely to cause further transport delays.

Because of Brazil’s economic crisis, a USD255.36 million budget cut was announced by the government to the Olympic Committee in March 2016 – a 12 percent cut from the total USD2.09 billion to be invested in Rio for the Olympics. These cuts affect water sports and the proposed construction of temporary, de-scalable structures.



How Islam Erases Christianity from History

By Raymond Ibrahim

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/5970/how-islam-erases-christianity-from-history>

Apr 21 – While Christianity continues to be physically erased from the Middle East, lesser known is that its [historical role and presence](#) is also being expunged from memory.



An ISIS video released last month shows members of its religious police in Mosul, Iraq, burning hundreds of Christian books it deems blasphemous.

Last month a video emerged showing Islamic State members tossing hundreds of Christian textbooks, many of them emblazoned with crosses, into a large bonfire. As one report [put](#) it, ISIS was "burning Christian textbooks in an attempt to erase all traces of" Christianity from the ancient region of Mosul, where Christianity once thrived for centuries before the rise of Islam."

As usual, ISIS is ultimately an extreme example of Islam's normative approach. This was confirmed during a recent conference in Amman, Jordan, hosted by the Jerusalem Center for Political Studies. While presenting, Dr. Hanna Kildani, a Christian, [said](#) that "there is a complete cancelation of Arab Christian history in the pre-Islamic era," "many historical mistakes," and "unjustifiable historic leaps in our Jordanian curriculum." "Tenth grade textbooks omit any mention of any Christian or church history in the region." Wherever Christianity is mentioned, omissions and mischaracterizations proliferate, including the

portrayal of Christianity as a Western (that is, "foreign") source of colonization, said Kildani.

Of course, Christian minorities throughout the Middle East—not just in Jordan—have long maintained that the history taught in public classrooms habitually suppresses the region's Christian heritage while magnifying (including by lying about) Islam.

"It sounds absurd, but Muslims more or less know nothing about Christians, even though they make up a large part of the population and are in fact the original Egyptians," said Kamal Mougheeth, a retired teacher in Egypt. "Egypt was Christian for six or seven centuries [before the Muslim invasion around 640]. The sad thing is that for many years the history books skipped from Cleopatra to the Muslim conquest of Egypt. The Christian era was gone. Disappeared. An enormous black whole."

This agrees perfectly with what I recall my parents, Christians from Egypt, telling me of their classroom experiences from more than half a century ago: there was virtually no mention of Hellenism, Christianity, or the Coptic Church—one thousand years of Egypt's pre-Islamic history. History began with the pharaohs before jumping to the seventh century when Arabian Muslims "opened" Egypt to Islam. (Wherever Muslims conquer non-Muslim territories, Islamic hagiography euphemistically refers to it as an "opening," *fath*, never a "conquest.")

Sharara Yousif Zara, an influential politician involved in the Iraqi Ministry of Education agrees: "It's the same situation in Iraq. There's almost nothing about us [Christians] in our history books, and what there is, is totally wrong. There's nothing about us being here before Islam. The only Christians mentioned are from the West. Many Iraqis believe we



moved here. From the West. That we are guests in this country."

Zara might be surprised to learn that similar ignorance and historical revisionism predominates in the West. Although Christians are in fact the most indigenous inhabitants of most of the Arab world, I am often asked, by educated people, why Christians "choose" to go and live in the Middle East among Muslims, if the latter treat them badly.

At any rate, the Mideast's pseudo historical approach to Christianity has for generations successfully indoctrinated Muslim students to suspect and hate Christianity, which is regularly seen as a non-organic parasitic remnant left by Western colonialists (though as mentioned, Christianity precedes Islam in the region by some six centuries).

This also explains one of Islam's bitterest ironies: a great many of today's Middle East Christians are being persecuted by Muslims — including of the ISIS variety — whose own ancestors were persecuted Christians who converted to Islam to end their suffering. In other words, Muslim descendants of persecuted Christians are today slaughtering their Christian cousins. Christians are seen as "foreign traitors" in part because many Muslims do not know of their own Christian ancestry.

Raymond Ibrahim is a Judith Friedman Rosen fellow at the Middle East Forum and a Shillman fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center.

Terrorism Fears And Travel Bans Shake Tourism In Turkey

Source: <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/04/28/474983311/terrorism-fears-and-travel-bans-shake-tourism-in-turkey>

Apr 28 – Two years ago in Istanbul, I dragged Selcuk Altun, a Turkish author and lover of all things Byzantine, to the Hagia Sophia, a 6th century church that's now a museum. But we couldn't even get close. Altun took one look at the mass of sweating humanity blocking the entrance and decided to do the interview outside. But this year, the change is astonishing.

The square in front of the Hagia Sophia is almost empty – a lonely seller of roasted chestnuts and corn calls it the worst he's seen. Tourism contributes some \$30 billion per year, about 4 percent of Turkey's economy. But Turks say tourism revenue will be down sharply

Due to such entrenched revisionism, Muslim "scholars" are able to disseminate highly dubious and ahistorical theses, as seen in Dr. Fadel Soliman's 2011 book, [Copts: Muslims Before Muhammad](#). It claims that, at the time of the Muslim conquest of Egypt, the vast majority of Egyptians were not, as Muslim and Western history has long taught, Christians, but rather prototypical Muslims, or *muwahidin*, who were being oppressed by European Christians: hence, the Islamic invasion of Egypt was *really* about "liberating" fellow Muslims.

Needless to say, no *real* historian has ever suggested that Muslims invaded Egypt to liberate "proto-Muslims." Rather, the Muslim chroniclers who wrote our primary sources on Islam, candidly and refreshingly present the "openings" as they were—*conquests*, replete with massacres, enslavement, and displacement of Christians and the destruction of thousands of churches.

In short, Islam's attacks on Christianity are not, as some in the West know, limited to the physical, but for long have involved intellectual attacks dedicated to undermining its heritage -- dedicated to erasing Christianity's history in the very region of its birth.

this year, and possibly next year, too. A massive, ongoing migrant crisis, a bitter feud with Russia and, perhaps most damaging of all, a series of deadly terrorist attacks — including one in January, right here in the heart of Istanbul's Old City — have seen visitor numbers plummeting.

A few are still coming, including Australian Amanda O'Callaghan and her family. She can laugh about it now, but says they seriously considered canceling after the most recent suicide bombings.

But "we'd already paid most of our money, and we weren't going to get it back," she says with a



laugh. Now that she's here, "Oh, yes, of course, it's fantastic," she says. "Something

I've wanted to do for 20 years."



Normally crowded, Istanbul's Hagia Sophia now sees barely a trickle of tourists (Peter Kenyon/NPR)

The O'Callaghans wander off among colorful beds of flowers, as musicians celebrating the annual tulip festival strike up a tune. The band is lucky to have the gig. All around them, idle tour guides, bus drivers and waiters on extended cigarette breaks wonder how close they are to being laid off.

Several major cruise lines have altered their itineraries to avoid Istanbul. That means several thousand visitors a day are going elsewhere. Turkish media report that hundreds of hotels, possibly more than 1,000, are up for sale — especially along the Aegean coast, where a Russian ban on holidays in Turkey is taking a heavy toll. The ban was imposed after Turkey shot down a Russian warplane in November.

Signs of the slowdown are everywhere at the historic Istanbul market known as the heart of the Turkish economy since Ottoman times — the Grand Bazaar. The bazaar is a maze of galleries, cafes and shops offering everything from cheap bric-a-brac to rare antiques and

artisanal treasures from Anatolia, Central Asia and beyond.

At the Adnan and Hasan carpet shop, longtime rug seller Erol Avci says sure, he'll answer a few questions — if he can quiz the reporter too:

"We can ask you questions also?" he says.

"Yes — would I like to buy something?" I joke.

He laughs. "No," he says. "Can we come to America and sell carpets there?"

He's not joking. "This is the new thing now," he says.

Avci knows dealers who spent the entire winter in America, bringing their wares to folks unwilling to come to Turkey. He may hit the road himself. This shop has been here for nearly 40 years, and he's never seen things so bad.

That's not the salesman in him talking, he insists. "It is a custom for a vendor to cry all the time, 'No business!' You know, if you make a million-dollar turnover that month, you say, 'Okay, no complaints, but...'"



He laughs and says, "But this is really to cry. Yes. Yes. Now we come to the real thing." Like farmers anxiously searching the sky for rain clouds, these Turks are wondering how

long this tourist drought will last – and whether they can hang on until it's over.

STR Analyses Impact of Terrorism on Hotel Industry in Europe

Source: <http://hotelnewsresource.mobi/?p=89076>

May 05 – STR analyzed four instances in which a major European market was attacked by terrorists, beginning with the 2004 train bombings in Madrid, Spain. Other markets included in the analysis were London, England; Paris, France; and Brussels, Belgium.

On average, European hotel markets experience stabilized performance results within approximately three months following a terror attack, according to data and analysis from STR.

STR analyzed four instances in which a major European market was attacked by terrorists, beginning with the 2004 train bombings in Madrid, Spain. Other markets included in the analysis were London, England; Paris, France; and Brussels, Belgium.

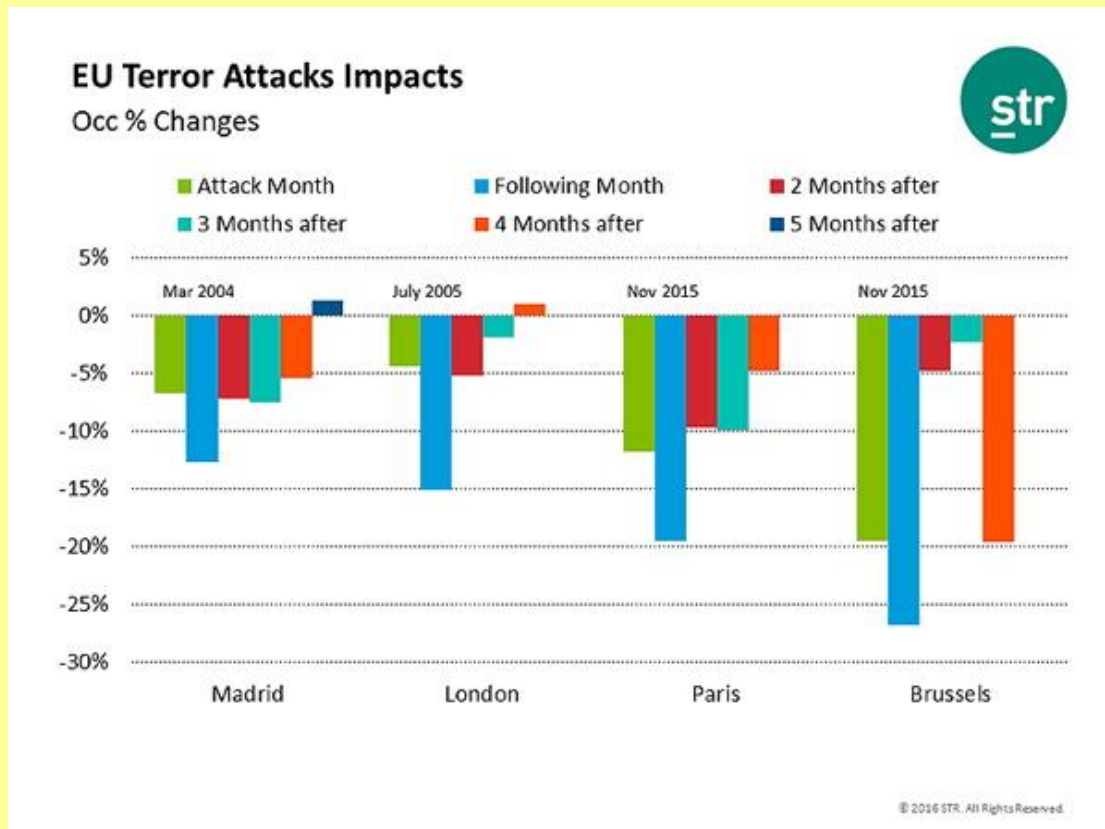
Terror attacks in those markets also were found to have a greater impact on occupancy

levels than on average daily rate (ADR).

The best example came in London in 2005. Hotels experienced average year-over-year rate growth of 3.2% in the three months following the 7 July attacks on the city's transit system. Occupancy, on the other hand, dropped 15.1%, 5.2% and 1.9% in the subsequent months before rising 1.0% in November.

According to STR analysts, hoteliers typically do not attempt to recapture occupancy levels with lower rates following a terror attack as tourists are likely to avoid the market regardless of price.

After the March 2004 train bombings in **Madrid**, the market's occupancy fell 12.7% in April in comparison with the same month the previous year. May and June then resulted in



decreases of 7.2% and 7.5%, respectively. The trend began to shift in July when occupancy was down 5.5%. The market's ADR trended in the opposite direction with a 7.4% decrease in April followed by an average decrease of 13.5% over the following three months.

The three-month recovery pattern for occupancy repeated in **Paris** following the November 2015 attacks. After three months of decreases averaging 13.1%, March 2016 produced an absolute occupancy level of 71.7%, which was just a 4.8% decrease from the same month in 2015. Paris' ADR fell 1.8% on average between December and February before climbing back to nearly flat performance (-0.4%) in March. The occupancy and ADR combination led to a 5.2% year-over-year decline in revenue per available room (RevPAR). This was the slightest RevPAR decline Paris has experienced since November 2015, indicating that Paris' hotel market may be in the early stages of recovery.

STR analysts note that in the case of **Brussels** it is too early to draw a full analysis from the attacks in March. However, Brussels was also heavily affected by the November attacks in

Paris, so data through February may indicate this market's recovery patterns. Following the lockdown the Brussels government enacted from 21-25 November, Brussels' occupancy declined by double digits for 16 consecutive days, falling by as much as 62.6%. Between November and January, Brussels posted an average monthly occupancy decline of 17.0%. Then in February, occupancy was down just 2.3%. ADR during this time fluctuated but grew in year-over-year comparisons for three of four months.

After the attacks on 22 March, Brussels' occupancy levels dropped 19.6% to 57.7% for the entire month, a sharp decline from the market's average March occupancy level of 68.7% (based on historic data spanning 2000 to 2015). ADR, however, remained positive (+1.1% to EUR121.65) and in line with historic levels. STR's daily data showed that on 28 March, the Monday after Easter, Brussels experienced its lowest absolute occupancy level (-72.6% to 19.5%) of any day following the attack. ADR for the day was down 18.2% to EUR94.98.

E.U. forcing refugees into “concentration camps” as economic crisis fuels far-right, warns Greek ex-finance minister

Source: http://www.salon.com/2016/04/29/e_u_forcing_refugees_into_concentration_camps_as_economic_crisis_fuels_far_right_warns_greek_ex_finance_minister/

May 01 – Greece's outspoken former finance minister says the European Union is putting refugees in what are essentially “concentration camps,” and warns the festering economic crisis is exacerbating the xenophobia, fueling the rise of far-right movements.

In the past two years, hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants have landed in Greece, hoping to find asylum in Europe.

Yanis Varoufakis, the ex-minister and longtime economics professor, said in an interview on Democracy Now this week that the E.U. has been exerting “tremendous” pressure on Greece, forcing it “to, effectively, intern the refugees.”

Meanwhile, the far-right is on the rise “everywhere in Europe,” and there are chilling signs of the return of fascist '30s-era politics, Varoufakis cautioned.

Many of the refugees and migrants trying to enter Europe are fleeing war, violence or repression in the Middle East and South Asia. Most are coming from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The E.U. has been overwhelmingly hostile to their arrival, even while it fuels and intervenes in some of the conflicts they are fleeing.

Europe has setup “hotspot” registration centers for refugees in Greece. Varoufakis says, **“When you see the word ‘hotspots,’ just translate it to ‘concentration camps.’ It's very simple.”**

“George Orwell would be very, very proud of Europe and our capacity for doublespeak and creating new terms by which to hide the awful reality,” he added.



“Instead of treating them like human beings in need of support, in need of food, in need of medicine, in need of psychological assistance, they are going to be treated, according to Brussels, as illegals, aliens, that are going to be enclosed in those hotspots, concentration camps,” Varoufakis said in the interview.

“The Greek government, which is, of course, fiscally completely and utterly impecunious, is being told, ‘The only way you are going to get money is if you intern them. So if you let them free and loose, even within Greece, you’re getting not a penny in order to help feed them.’” Varoufakis also blasted the “ponzi austerity” scheme he says the E.U. and International Monetary Fund are imposing on Greece, while banks rake in billions and the Greek people suffer.

The former finance minister says this “cruel, self-defeating, irrational, inefficient, mind-blowingly inane austerity” is also preventing the Greek government from helping refugees.

While he applauded the “magnificent array of NGOs and volunteers who are looking after the refugees,” Varoufakis noted the “Greek state is in a state of disarray, because it just can’t afford even to look after the Greeks, who are suffering a seven year-long great depression.”

“The Greek state is trying to do something, but is being pushed by Europe to treat inhumanely those refugees,” he said.

Earlier this month, the E.U. began to deport refugees and migrants en masse to Turkey, in a plan that human rights experts say likely violates international law.

NATO also announced a new plan this week to impose a blockade on Libya, five years after bombing the country and essentially destroying the government in the oil-rich North African nation, in order to prevent refugees and migrants from entering Europe. A Human Rights Watch official told Salon this plan also likely violates international law.

In the meantime, far-right groups like Greece’s neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party are growing in popularity.

And “it’s not just Golden Dawn,” Varoufakis warned. “It’s everywhere in Europe.”

“We have a neofascist government in Hungary. We have Marine Le Pen, who’s going to top the presidential race next year in France. I mean, you just have to state this to panic,” he said.

“You have UKIP, the United Kingdom Independence Party, in Britain. You’ve got Austria; in Vienna, the beautiful city of Vienna, 42 percent voted for a neofascist party in the last municipal election,” Varoufakis continued.

He said the reasons behind the rise are “very simple: Great Depression, national humiliation—put them together, like in the 1920s and ’30s in Germany, and you end up with the serpent’s egg hatching.”

Varoufakis argues there is an alternative to these detention camps, mass deportations and blockades, but Europe is not willing to take it.

“This should not be a problem. Europe is large enough. It is rich enough. We should be able to handle this refugee crisis humanely, efficiently, without this even being something we discuss,” he said on Democracy Now.

After the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, Varoufakis pointed out that Greece, a country of 10 million people, accepted 1 million refugees within a few months.

“Do you know what happened?” he asked. “Nothing. It was all fine. They still live there. Their kids come to the university where I teach. They are amongst some of my best students.”

“Greece has become enriched. Our culture has become stronger. Our food has become even better,” Varoufakis added.

“And if a small, middle-, lower-middle-income country like Greece can accept a 10 percent influx of refugees in a few months and do quite well out of it and actually be stronger as a result of that, Europe, which is aging pathetically, should accept these refugees, like Angela Merkel initially said in September, October.”

Varoufakis concluded the interview warning that Europe is seeing the terrifying signs of a resurgence of fascism.

“The European Union is disintegrating under its postmodern 1930s,” he said. “This is what we’ve been experiencing the last 10 years due to the economic crisis.”

EDITOR’S COMMENT: A failed minister of a failing country in a failed Europe – the perfect combination! Plus the intentional misuse of the terminology used to support failure!



EU backs visa-free travel for Turkish citizens to EU zone

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160504-eu-backs-visafree-travel-for-turkish-citizens-to-eu-zone>

May 04 – **The European Commission earlier today (Wednesday) recommended that Turkish citizens who wanted to travel to any of the EU member states for short holidays or business trips would be allowed into the EU zone without a visa.**

The lifting of the visa requirement, however, would go into effect only if Turkey meets the remaining conditions set by the EC.

EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager tweeted a picture of the Commission statement, which said: “The European Commission is today proposing to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament to lift the visa requirements for the citizens of Turkey, under the understanding that the Turkish authorities will fulfill, as a matter of urgency and as they committed to do so on March 18, 2016, the outstanding benchmarks of its Visa Liberalization Roadmap.”

RT reports that following the expected approval by the European Council and Parliament, the EC recommendation will have to be approved by the national parliaments of each EU member state.

The rule is tentatively scheduled to come into effect by 30 June.

There are seventy-two conditions the EC set and which Turkey must meet before visa-free access to the EU is granted to Turkish citizens. Turkey met the first conditions on Tuesday when it waived visa requirements for citizens

from all of the EU’s twenty-eight member states, including Cyprus, the government of which Turkey refuses to recognize.

Turkey made clear on Tuesday that waiving the visa requirement for Cypriots did not mean Turkey was recognizing the Cypriot government.

Among the other conditions Turkey must meet are the issuing biometric travel documents for all Turks, improved border controls and surveillance, cooperation with the EU on crime, and human rights issues linked to anti-terror and discrimination laws.

“There is still work to be done as a matter of urgency but if Turkey sustains the progress made, they can meet the remaining benchmarks,” European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans told journalists in Brussels, saying Turkey was yet to meet five of the seventy-two criteria.

The lifting of visa requirements for Turkey’s eighty million citizens has been a subject of intense debate among EU member states. Turkey threatened that if the EU and its member states failed to approve the visa deal, Turkey would withdraw from the refugee agreement it had reached with the EU in March. That agreement, which is already being implemented, calls on Turkey to take all Syrian refugees arriving in the U zone illegally – in exchange for the EU take one refugee from Turkish camps for every migrant returned to Turkey from mainland Europe.

EU cannot identify, track visa overstays

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160504-eu-cannot-identify-track-visa-overstays>

May 04 – **Critics of the plan to give Turkish citizen visa-free access to the EU zone say the measure could allow these travelers to disappear because the European Union does not have a system to detect visitors who overstay their visas.**

The critics say that the problem is compounded by plans to grant vis-free travel to the fifty-two million people from Ukraine, Kosovo, and Georgia. The citizens of these four countries

will be able to access the Schengen zone, which does not include Britain, for ninety days for tourism and for 180 days on business.

The *Telegraph* notes that the EU has a visa waiver agreement with more than sixty countries around the world – but that EU officials admit they have no way of systematically identifying and tracking the estimated 250,000 people a



year who overstay their visas in Europe. The reason: In many countries the entry into the Schengen free-travel zone is still logged with only a rubber stamp on a passport. The twenty-six countries which are members of the Schengen Zone agreement do not operate or share a centralized database. Some countries maintain national databases, but these data bases cannot be used for identifying and tracking visa overstays, because people can move freely around the continent. Analysts told the *Telegraph* that in normal times, visa overstays account for the majority of illegal migrants in Europe.

The lack of a centralized tracking system leaves Europe vulnerable to terrorists, organized crime, and people trafficking, EU's internal documents say.

Four years ago, the European Commission has proposed the creation of a digital "Entry Exit System" to log entries and exits of non-EU visitors into the EU zone. National governments have blocked the plans, however, and a new proposal was formulated last month. Critics say it will take years to implement – assuming national governments even accept the new proposal — which will be too late

for the deal with Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia, and Kosovo.

The *Telegraph* reports that an EU impact assessment about the current system of managing legal migrants said it was "error prone," adding that the EU "cannot report and identify overstayers systematically, easily and in a reliable manner, resulting in a lack of reliable information on irregular immigration." In its forecasting, the EC assumes that one in 1,000 visitors overstays by more than seven days.

Timothy Kirkhope, a former immigration minister and Conservative MEP, said proper entry and exit checks should be in place before the Turkey deal comes into force.

"Getting a system in place where there is order and discipline is absolutely essential. Unless you have a system in place to check in and out, it's not possible to run any kind of sensible immigration system at all.

"It sounds very reasonable to say it is just for 90 days, but how the hell do you know it is just 90 days, and how at the end of 90 days do you locate and remove them?"

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Turks will enter EU freely while Greeks in a flight from Athens to Paris (May 06) were asked to go for passport control! If you have such friends who needs enemies?



AP Interview: Rio security head says cuts impact Olympics

By Mauricio Savarase and Stephen Wade (Associated Press)

Source: <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/business/article76082862.html>

May 06 – **Rio de Janeiro's state security secretary acknowledges that cuts of \$550 million to his budget pose a risk to the Olympics when they open in three months.**



"If I said the cuts won't impact anything, I wouldn't be accurate," Jose Mariano Beltrame

told The Associated Press during a sit-down interview this week. "I wish I could have more policemen. I wish they could work twice as much on the streets."

Security sits at the top of a long list of worries for South America's first games: Zika virus, polluted water in venues for sailing and rowing, slow ticket sales, and political and economic turmoil as President Dilma Rousseff fights against impeachment.

Beltrame said Rio will deploy about 65,000 policemen and up to 20,000 soldiers to guard the games, the largest contingent in Brazilian history. The number is about twice as large as London's force four years ago. Some of that effort is aimed at keeping gangs



from hillside favelas from reaching Olympic venues.

The military is expected to protect the venues as the police work the rest of the city, guarding subway lines, bus routes and busy streets.

Beltrame is expecting protests, and said police will draw on experience from the 2014 World Cup and the Confederations Cup the year before.



"In any event of this size they happen," he said. Beltrame said the cuts, which come to a little less than a fifth of security's operating budget, will reduce bonuses, overtime pay, and keep him from hiring more police. He called new equipment, technology, and integration the legacy of the Olympics.



Fewer police could mean slower response time, and hurt team spirit.

"The morale issue does affect people," Beltrame said. "But the institutions are not going to stop."

The cuts have disheartened many policemen. More than 300 retired in the first two months of this year to avoid cuts to their pensions. The average retirement rate is about 30 per month. Police in Rio earn about \$500 monthly, and many rely on yearly bonuses that have ranged from \$1,200 to \$3,700. Those will be cut this year to between \$400 and \$800.

Rio's financial problems stem partly from the slump in the oil and gas industry, which accounts for a third of the state government's

revenues. At the same time that oil prices have slumped, Brazil's state-run oil giant Petrobras is at the center of a \$3 billion corruption investigation, and the country is buried in its deepest recession in decades.

Beltrame was asked about preparations for the risk of a terrorist attack during the Olympics.

"We didn't have to do anything extra since the World Cup in 2014," he said. "Since 2007 we have terrorism as our No. 1 concern, regardless of what happened in France, Belgium or in the Middle East in the last few years."

Rio's policing tactics have been strongly criticized.

Amnesty International said in a statement last week that at least 11 people have been killed in police shootings in Rio's impoverished favelas since the beginning of April. It said at least 307 people were killed by police last year, accounting for 20 percent of the homicides in the city.



"Despite the promised legacy of a safe city for hosting the Olympic Games, killings by the police have been steadily increasing over the past few years in Rio," Amnesty said.



Former state public security secretary Luiz Eduardo Soares was even more worried than Beltrame, calling the budget cuts "a disaster."

"We have serious problems in our day-to-day work, but we have



adapted well to exceptional situations like the World Cup in 2014 and the visit of Pope Francis in 2013," Soares said. "But the cuts will affect morale. Officers are underpaid, they fear delays in being paid, and their working hours are not respected."

Rio will use both military and civil police, but most of the hands-on work goes to the military police.

"If they weren't military police, they would go on strike," Soares said.

Soares said Rio has one policeman for every 300 residents in wealthy areas like Copacabana and Ipanema. Poor areas have about one for every 2,000 residents.

He expects the imbalance to grow during the games.

"In an economic crisis like this, the situation tends to be radicalized," Soares said. "This is a political decision to show the city as an attractive place to foreigners. The price of the cuts will be paid by the underprivileged."

EDITOR'S COMMENT: As we approach the Games the blur picture on security is becoming clearer. The military will guard the venues; the police will guard the city. The military will deal with CBRN events; the rest will pray that nothing will happen – especially the medical people that are totally underprepared to receive contaminated casualties. Protests are expected; huge policing in Rio will lead to crime rise in the rest of the country. Plus political turmoil, Zika scare and unhappy security personnel create an explosive mixture that is terroristic by itself. Visit Brazil for the Olympiad? NO THANKS! Watching television is the only safe alternative to watch Security Olympics. End of story!

Israel to open permanent mission at NATO HQ

Source: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20160505-israel-to-open-permanent-mission-at-nato-hq/>

NATO has allowed Israel to open a permanent mission at its HQ after Turkey lifted its veto on Israeli activity within the bloc, *AlKhaleejonline.com* reported.



NATO said in a statement that Israel's Ambassador to the European Union David Walzer would now also head its mission at alliance headquarters.

The foreign ministry of Israel, which is not a NATO member but has partner status as a participant in the alliance's Mediterranean

Dialogue programs, welcomed the move.

In 2011, Turkey vetoed Israel's demand for representation at NATO's HQ. Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* reported Israeli officials saying Turkey's lifting of the veto reflects a desire to normalise relations with Israel.

Germany, Italy strongly oppose Austria's border fence scheme

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160506-germany-italy-strongly-oppose-austria-s-border-fence-scheme>

May 06 – Germany and Italy on Thursday expressed strong objections to what the leaders of the two countries described as the "unjustified" proposal from **Austria to erect a fence at Austria's alpine border with Italy to stem the flow of migrants into the country.**

"We expressed our total opposition to, and, in some ways, our shock over the position that has been taken by our Austrian friends," said Prime Minister Matteo Renzi at a joint press conference with Chancellor Angela Merkel in Rome, calling the plan "mistaken" and "anachronistic."

"I will do all that is possible so that problems are solved in ways other than through border closures," the chancellor added.





DW reports that the narrow Brenner Pass has become a point of contention between Italy and Austria, with Italy complaining that some states in northern Europe were allowing southern European nations to bear most of the burden of sheltering and taking care of asylum-seekers.

On Thursday, far-right Austrian presidential candidate Norbert Hofer, speaking to prestigious Italian daily *La Repubblica*, exacerbated the situation by comparing Merkel and Renzi to migrant smugglers bringing people over the Mediterranean in shoddy, overcrowded boats.

"It is a shameful remark that many respectable people in Austria should reflect on," Renzi responded.

In the first three months of 2016, 14,500 people had crossed from Libya to Italy, according to the UN refugee agency. The Italian authorities worry that the wave of refugees will only increase as the weather improves.

Hofer is facing a run-off election for the Austrian presidency, a largely ceremonial post, against Alexander Van der Bellen, a Green party politician. The popularity of Hofer's far-right Freedom Party of Austria has increased with the rise of the refugee crisis.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Although not very much in favor of Austrian politicians and their attitude against Greece, I must confess that I agree with all measures taken to protect own citizens. May be because we cannot erect fences inside the sea! May be because we are tired of trying to please everybody but the Greeks! May be because Europe is just a continent and not a union of same minded countries...

How safe is your holiday?

Source: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/how-safe-your-holiday-european-7792430>

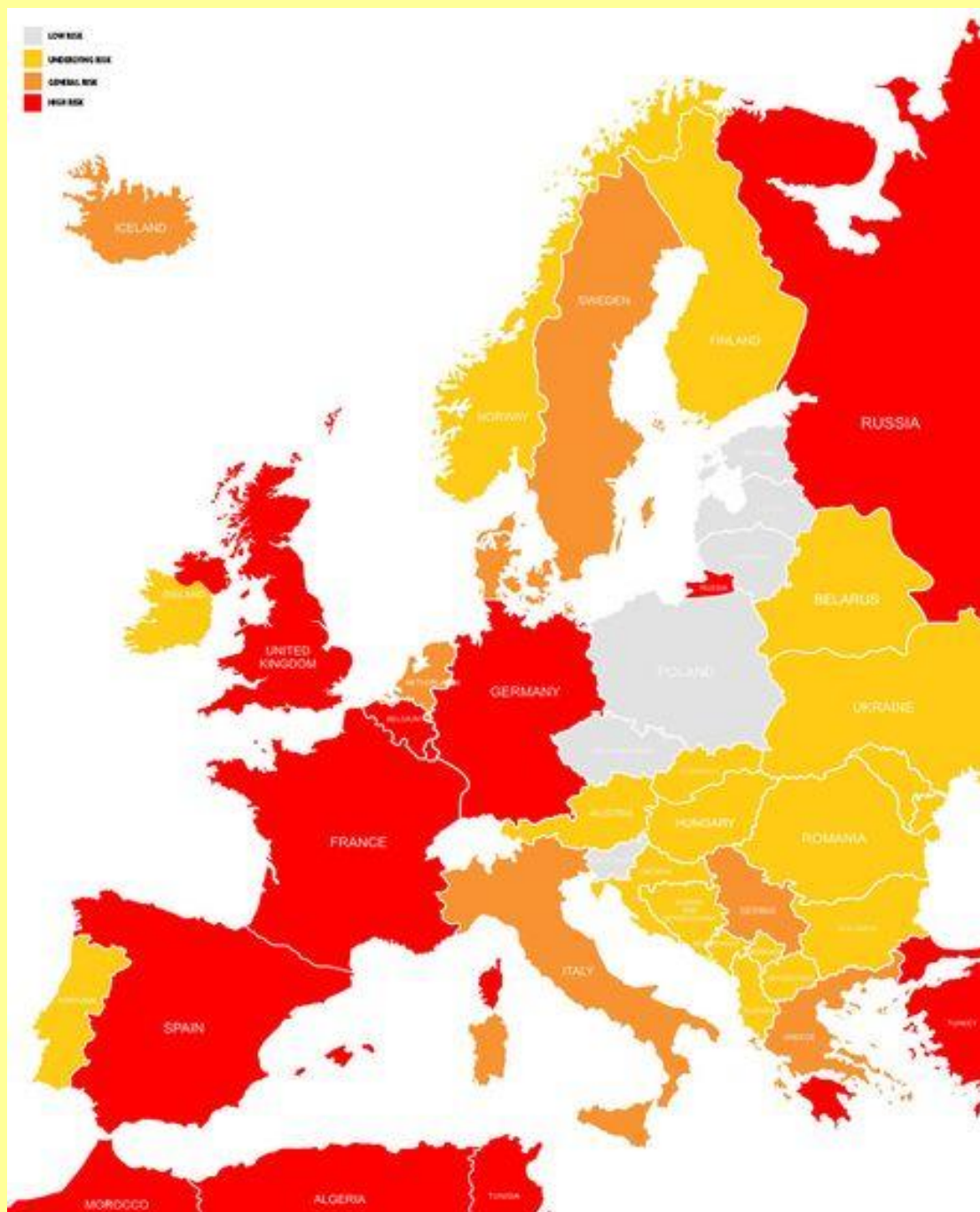
Every year, millions of Britons flock to European holiday hotspots for a bit of sun and relaxation. But now, some are choosing avoiding the continent altogether, with many destinations at a 'high' risk of terrorism.

UK military chiefs have warned there is a 'serious and direct threat to holiday resorts across Europe' from groups like ISIS.



CBRNE-TERRORISM NEWSLETTER – May 2016

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office (FCO) says 'there is considered to be a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria'.



The countries in red are at 'high' risk of terrorist attacks, while those in orange are at 'general' risk. In recent months, an array of terrorist attacks have taken place across the continent, including suicide bombings in Belgium and France.

And yesterday, a German newspaper reported that Islamic terrorists are plotting to kill tourists by placing bombs under sunbeds on foreign beaches.

So, how safe is your holiday destination? Here, we provide a guide to the most at risk hotspots, according to the FCO.



Spain

Risk level: High

More than 12million Brits visit Spain every year, with many heading to the beautiful, sandy beaches of Menorca, Ibiza, Majorca and the Costa Del Sol.



Despite suffering from terrorist attacks in the past, the country has recently managed to avoid the troubles of other Mediterranean countries.

More than 12million Brits visit Spain every year, with some heading to Cantabria (pictured)

However, the FCO still deems the terror threat in Spain 'high', with a suspected ISIS collaborator arrested by police in Majorca just hours ago.

The Moroccan-born man - who was detained by officers in Palma this morning - is accused of promoting terror attacks in Europe. The FCO also warns tourists to look out for street thieves and to not take 'unnecessary risks', particularly when 'under the influence of drink or drugs'.

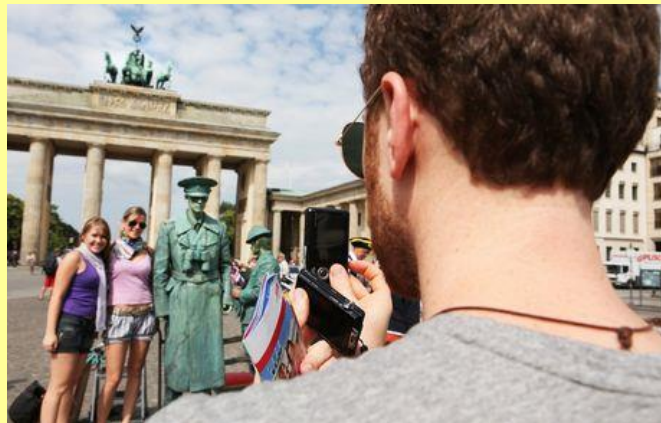
Germany

Risk level: High

Germany is the latest European country to have its terrorism risk rating upgraded to 'high' by the FCO. Around two million Brits visit the nation every year, with many heading to Berlin to visit historic sites and the iconic Brandenburg Gate.

But now, increased security has been put in place at German transport hubs, public buildings and major events 'as a precaution'.

Berlin's landmark Brandenburg Gate is popular with British holidaymakers



The FCO says on its website: "There's no requirement to carry your passport with you, but the police are currently carrying out more frequent ID checks.

"If you're asked to show your passport and you don't have it with you, the police may escort you to wherever your passport is being kept so that you can show it to them."

Belgium

Risk level: High

Following the recent bombings at a Brussels airport and metro station, Belgium's terrorism risk rating remains at 'high'.

The explosions, which were the deadliest act of terrorism in the country's history, claimed the lives of 32 victims.

A further 300 people were injured in the attacks, which occurred at Zaventem Airport and Maalbeek metro station on March 22.

The FCO warns on its website that terrorists could target Belgium indiscriminately.





Carnage at the check-in desk at Brussels airport following last month's suicide bombing

It adds that attacks could take place 'on public transport and transport hubs and in other places visited by foreigners'.

"Police operations are ongoing and there have been a number of arrests relating to the recent terrorist attacks," it says.

"You should remain vigilant, stay away from crowded places and follow the instructions of the Belgian authorities."

France

Risk level: High

France was also recently targeted by terrorists.

A staggering 130 people were killed when suicide bombers and gunmen carried out a series of horrific attacks in Paris last November.

During the massacre, the attackers struck the capital's Bataclan theatre, cafés and restaurants, injuring a further 368 people.



At the time, France was already on a 'high' alert following the shooting at the Charlie Hebdo offices in January last year.

Floral tributes are left to the victims of the Paris massacre last November

The nation remains at a 'high' risk of terrorism.

The FCO says on its website: "Due to ongoing threats to France by Islamist terrorist groups, and

recent French military intervention against Daesh (formerly referred to as ISIL), the French government has warned the public to be especially vigilant and has reinforced its security measures."

It also warns that there has recently been 'occasional disruption to cross channel services due to strike action and migrant activity in and around Calais'.

Italy

Risk level: General

A popular destination with Brits, Italy has a 'general' threat from terrorism.

However, the FCO says most attacks are carried out against 'official Italian targets'.

It writes on its website: "There are isolated cases of domestic terrorism.

"Attacks carried out by the extreme left-wing and secessionist groups have generally been aimed at official Italian targets, mainly in the form of small bombs and incendiary devices.



Denmark***Risk level: General***

Last February, two civilians were killed in two shootings in the Østerbro and Krystalgade areas of Copenhagen.

Five cops were also wounded in the shocking attacks, which are both thought to have been linked and 'terrorist-related'.

The country is ranked as having a 'general' threat from terrorism.

"You should be vigilant at this time," the FCO says on its website.

Greece***Risk level: General***

There is a 'general' threat from terrorism in Greece, with Brits warned that attacks could happen in tourist hotspots.

The FCO says: "British nationals aren't normally considered a specific target, but attacks could happen in places visited by foreigners."



In recent years, there have been a number of explosions and shootings at Greek shopping malls, public buildings and government offices.

Croatia***Risk level: General***

Like Italy, Denmark and Greece, Croatia has been given a 'general' terrorism risk rating.

Portugal***Risk level: Underlying***

More than two million Brits visit Portugal every year, with most trips 'trouble-free'.

However, the FCO warns there is an 'underlying' risk of terrorism.



It also advises holidaymakers to be aware of street thieves looking to steal money and passports.



More than two million Brits visit Portugal every year, with most trips 'trouble-free'

And outside of Europe...

Egypt

Risk level: High

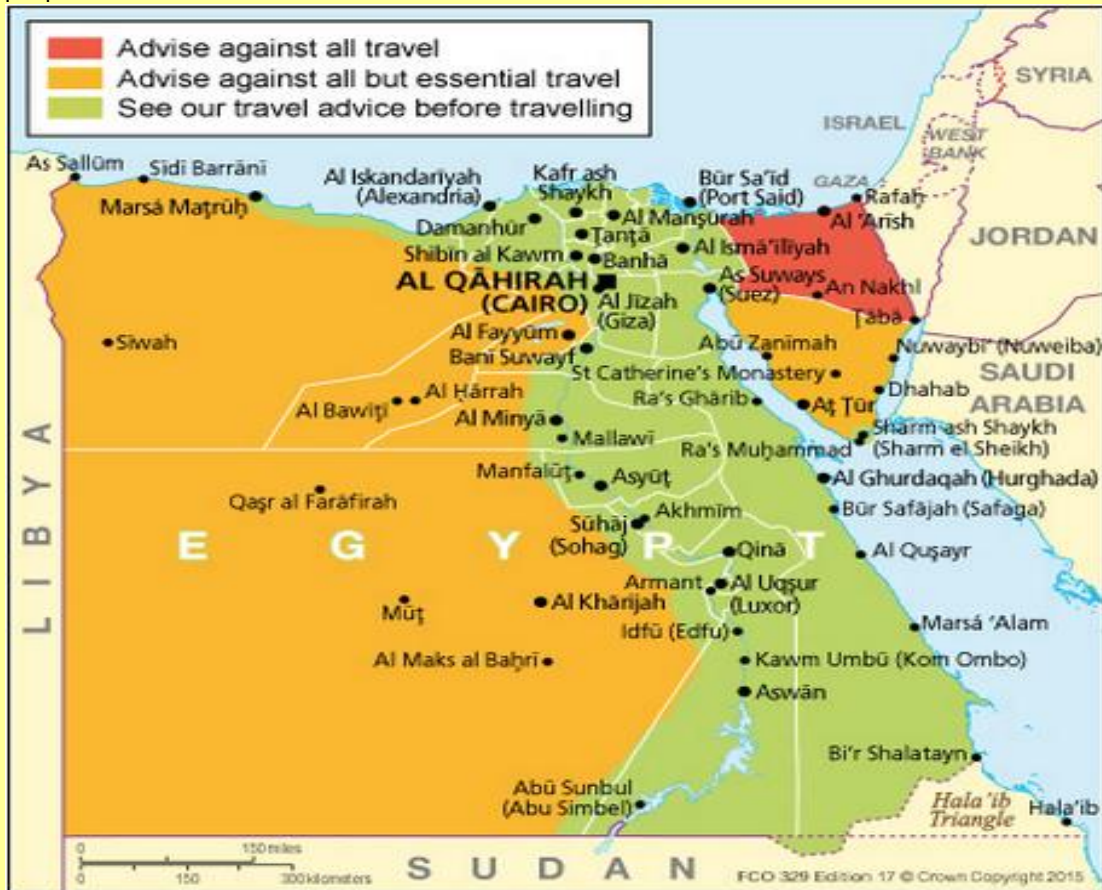
Officials believe terrorists are planning further attacks in Egypt, home to the popular tourist resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

Foreigners have been targeted in previous

attacks, with an ongoing threat of kidnapping, especially in remote areas.

Last summer, a Croatian man was kidnapped and murdered in the country. Terrorists later claimed responsibility for his killing.

And six months ago, a Russian plane from Sharm el-Sheikh crashed in the Sinai desert, killing all 224 people onboard.



Officials confirmed in November that the aircraft had been destroyed by a terrorist bomb.

The FCO warns: "Attacks could be indiscriminate and occur without prior warning."

The most active terrorist group in Egypt is Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis.

Tunisia

Risk level: High

A state of emergency is currently in effect in Tunisia following a suicide attack on a police bus in November.



There was also a terrorist shooting at a hotel in the tourist resort of Port El Kantaoui, near Suisse, last June, killing 38 people



Thirty of the victims were British.

A terrorist shooting at a hotel in the tourist resort of Port El Kantaoui last June killed 38 people - including 30 Brits

The FCO advises against all travel to the Chaambi Mountain National Park area, the Tunisia-Algeria border crossing points at Ghardimaou, Hazoua and Sakiet Sidi

Youssef, the militarized zone south of, but not including, the towns of El Borma and Dhehiba, and within 5km of the Libya border area.

It also advises against all but essential travel to the rest of the country.



Turkey

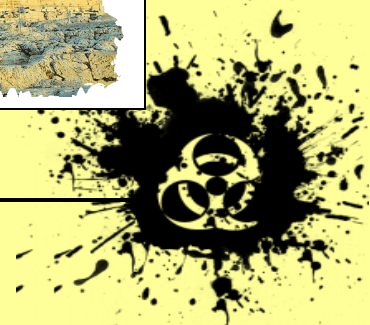
Risk level: High

There is also a 'high' threat from terrorism in Turkey - although some terrorists are more interested in targeting the Turkish state than Western tourists.

Tourists are advised to avoid demonstrations and large gatherings.

Turkey - would you risk it?

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Just another British article with hidden messages: (1) The map: why Peloponnese on Greece is "red" implying high risk of terrorism? Do they know something that we Greeks are unaware of? Even the refugees' count in this part of Greece is minimal. Perhaps because it is one of the most beautiful area of the country? (2) Greece: While in all countries landmarks' photos or attractive holidays areas where chosen, in Greece there is a photo of a UNHCR man patrolling on a boat for refugees and illegal immigrants? Remember Parthenon – one of the world's seven wonders? (Sorry that we did not have any bloodshed to show). To make a long story short: Choose Greece for your summer holidays. Despite the fact that we live our own financial adventure that our friends submitted us, we should provide the best philoxenia (=love of strangers) in the planet in one of the most beautiful parts of the galaxy!





Police in Vienna Tell Woman: Dye Your Blond Hair Dark

Source: <https://www.clarionproject.org/news/police-vienna-tell-woman-dye-your-blond-hair-dark>

May 08 – A young woman in Vienna, who was brutally attacked by a gang of men from Afghanistan as she was waiting for a train, was shocked when she was told by police to dye her blond hair dark and change her way of dressing so that she was not “provocative.”



The woman, identified only by her first name Sabina, said the police further told her that women should not be alone on the streets after 8 p.m.

"At first I was scared, but now I'm more angry than anything," she said. "Indirectly that means I was partly to blame for what happened to me. That is a massive insult."

The 20-year-old woman ended up being treated in a local hospital for bruises to her head, shoulder, elbow, spine and hips.

Editor's Comment

"I had been standing on the platform waiting for the train when a man came up to me and spoke to me in a foreign language," she related. "He then started putting his hands

through my hair and made it clear that in his cultural background there were hardly any blonde women. I told him to go away, and for a short while he really did go away. But it was only to get his pals and a bit later he came back with three others."

After stealing Sabina's purse and credit cards, the gang bashed her to the ground before running off. **No one bothered to help her as she lay on the platform in agony.**

From the language the men were speaking, Sabina realized the men were from Afghanistan.

"The police told me that attacks are now a daily routine. And it's going to get worse," she said.

Stupidity is a
personal
achievement
which
transcends
national
boundaries.

Albert Einstein

Kenya says it will shut world's biggest refugee camp at Dadaab

Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/11/kenya-close-worlds-biggest-refugee-camp-dadaab>

May 11 – Kenya has vowed to close the world's biggest refugee camp within a year and



send hundreds of thousands of Somalis back

to their war-torn homeland or on to other countries, a plan decried by aid and human rights groups as dangerous, illegal and impractical.

Kenya says it needs to close the sprawling Dadaab camp, home to 330,000 mostly Somali refugees, to protect the country's security after a string of terror attacks by al-Shabaab.

The Somalia-based militant group was behind the massacre of nearly 150 students at a university last summer and the Westgate mall siege in Nairobi in 2013, as well as other deadly attacks.





The Kenyan interior minister, Joseph Nkaissery, said al-Shabaab fighters used the camp as a base for smuggling weapons.

“For reasons of pressing national security that speak to the safety of Kenyans in a context of terrorist and criminal activities, the government of the Republic of Kenya has commenced the exercise of closing Dadaab refugee complex,” he said at a news conference in Nairobi.

“The refugees will be repatriated to their countries of origin or to third-party countries for resettlement.”

Kenya’s second-biggest camp, in Kakuma,

which largely houses refugees from South Sudan, appears to have been spared for now, although earlier government announcements had said all refugees would be told to leave. Those at Dadaab have been given until the end of May 2017 to depart Kenya.

The United Nations and aid groups have said the closure of

one or both camps could be devastating, and said that even if Kenya tries to push ahead, it may not be possible to force large numbers of people over the border into a country where a war is still raging.

William Swing, director general of the International Organization for Migration, said: “It’s very difficult to send people back to Somalia. We’ve done some returns there, [people] who wanted to go back, but there are only certain areas they can go back to.”

When asked if there was a precedent for forcibly removing refugees on such an immense scale as from Dadaab, he said: “I haven’t seen large numbers.”

Human Rights Watch said it feared that a government desperate to empty the camps might resort to abuse and violence. Gerry Simpson, a senior researcher and advocate for the refugee programme, said such tactics were used three years ago when the Kenyan government decided to move refugees from scattered lives in cities into camps.

“Do they have buses to take 350,000 people across the border? No, so I think the aim of sowing fear though abuses and harassment is likely to be the strategy,” he said. Simpson cited rape, extortion, fear, beatings and arbitrary detention among the abuses that pushed Somalis to flee the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

“Back in 2013, that strategy was pretty successful – thousands of Somalis left because of the



overall level of abuse against the community,” he added.

It is questionable whether there will be any security improvements. The border is porous and people pushed back across it might return again to Kenya. Without food or shelter, they could be easier recruits for extremist groups in both countries.

“Refugees in the country have fled the very violence the authorities say they are trying to combat,” said Kate Allen, the director of Amnesty International UK. “If the closure of the camps goes ahead, it will have devastating consequences for the hundreds of thousands of refugees.

“Forcing them back to violence and persecution is as immoral as it is unlawful, and risks increasing instability and displacement in the region.”

More than a dozen aid groups who work in the camps, including Oxfam, Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee, have called on the Kenyan government to reconsider the move.

“Shutting down the refugee camps will mean increased protection risks for the thousands of refugees and asylum seekers – [the] majority of who are women, children and unaccompanied minors,” they said in a joint statement.

“The current humanitarian situation in Somalia and South Sudan remains dire and fragile. [Somalia](#) is faced with drought and other security risks that are likely to see an increase in displacement and vulnerability.”

Kenya has [previously threatened to close its camps, but has always backed down.](#) This time, however, the government appears to be more serious, having set a timeline and

budget, and disbanded the Department of Refugee Affairs.

That has left refugees and the humanitarian organisations that work with them in administrative limbo, unable to get travel passes that they need to move around Kenya for studies or urgent medical treatment.

Kenya may be willing to back away from the plans if it receives more international support, aid groups say. The government has been increasingly frustrated by what it sees as tepid backing for a voluntary resettlement programme returning refugees to Somalia.

The refugee population has decreased, but not quickly enough for the Kenyan government, which is worried that militant violence has sown fear and damaged the economy, perhaps especially so with an election on the horizon.

Aid organisations and the IOM are calling for greater support for Kenya and neighbouring countries that have provided refuge to hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the conflicts in Somalia, South Sudan and other parts of the region.

Swing said: “The refugee camp situation in Kenya is complicated because, like many of its neighbours in east [Africa] and the Horn of Africa, Kenya has looked after large numbers of refugees and is host to the largest refugee camp in the world.”

Europe’s refugee crisis and the fallout from the war in Syria are absorbing so much aid and international attention that other emergencies are being neglected, he suggested. “These countries which carry the burden of hosting refugees on a scale far higher and for far longer than anything experienced in Europe today must not be left in the lurch.”

Largest refugees camps in the world

1. **Dadaab, Kenya** (a complex of five camps hosts 402,361 people, mostly from neighboring Somalia);
2. **Dollo Ado, Ethiopia** (a complex of five camps hosts 198,462 people, mostly Somalis);
3. **Kakuma, Kenya** (124,814 Somali and Sudanese refugees);
4. **Al Zaatri, Jordan** (hosts about 122,723 Syrian refugees);
5. **Jabalia, Gaza Strip** (nearly 110,000 Palestinians);
6. **Mbera, Mauritania** (a total 75,261 refugees, mostly fleeing the conflict in northern Mali);
7. **Yida, South Sudan** (a total 70,095 people mostly from Sudan);
8. **Nakivale, Uganda** (a total 68,996 refugees);
9. **Nyarugusu, Tanzania** (a total 68,197 people, mostly Burundians and Congolese);
10. **Tamil Nadu state, India** (some 66,700 Sri Lankan refugees live in more than a hundred camps on the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. About 34,000 more live outside the camps).



Copenhagen's bar owners ask government to prevent local Muslims from imposing "Sharia zone"

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160513-copenhagen-s-bar-owners-ask-government-to-prevent-local-muslims-from-imposing-sharia-zone>

May 13 – Bar owners in the Nørrebro suburb of Copenhagen say they are being harassed by Muslim youth activists in the area, many of them immigrants, who are trying to impose a "Sharia zone" in the neighborhood.



The bar owners have asked for government help.

The bar owners say they have received demands for money, and that stones have been thrown through the bars' windows.

"Recently some young men came into the bar and shouted that all guests should leave," Heidi Dyrnesli from Cafe Heimdal told Radio24syv.

"They shouted that the site belongs to them and that Nørrebro is a Sharia zone, so there is no drinking alcohol."

RT reports that the bar owners charge that so far, the local police have failed to intervene, and that this is why they were calling on the government to take action.

Minister for Integration Inger Stoejberg to visit the neighborhood on Wednesday. Denmark's *BT* tabloid reported that Stoejberg spoke with local youths. Muslim community leaders accused her of coming to the neighborhood in an effort to gain support for the government's anti-immigration policies.

Stoejberg replied that the community leaders should have helped to tackle the youths: "There is a group of young people here who do

not behave properly, and we have powerless tavern owners. If you are resourceful, I think you should help with that and can help solve the problem so people in Nørrebro can live a normal life."

Two young Muslim women were detained by

police after shouting "fascist" and "Nazi" at the minister. Danish laws ban insults against public officials, so the two women are facing fines or short prison terms.

Stoejberg used her Facebook page to address the youths: "You live, and live in the greatest country in the world. Opportunities are right in front of you. So stop your rampage, threats and yelling!" Stoejberg wrote on Facebook. "No I can guarantee you that it is not [a Sharia zone] and will never be! And you're kinda pretty lucky that this is not a Sharia zone, as you get a fair trial when the police get a hold of you."

The anti-immigrant Danish People's Party emerged from last year's elections as the second-largest in Denmark, and used its position in the coalition to introduce several anti-immigrant measures.

Stoejberg is a member of the governing center-right Venstre party.

BLA!
BLA!



2015: 28 million people forcibly displaced by conflict, 19 million displaced by disaster

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160511-2015-28-million-people-forcibly-displaced-by-conflict-19-million-displaced-by-disaster>



Disasters

May 11 – **Conflict, violence, and disasters internally displaced 27.8 million people in 2015, subjecting a record number of men, women, and children to the trauma and upheaval of being forcibly displaced within their own country.**

“This is the equivalent of the combined populations of New York City, London, Paris and Cairo grabbing what they can carry, often in a state of panic, and setting out on a journey filled with uncertainty,” said Jan Egeland, the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). “Put another way, around 66,000 people abandoned their homes every day of 2015.”

Today (Tuesday), NRC’s Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) publishes its new [Global Report of Internal Displacement](#) (GRID-2016). The IDMC says that the report synthesizes all of IDMC reporting on global internal displacement into one report. This will be supported by a new Global Data Platform which will continually update the figures online. “By reporting on all situations of internal displacement, regardless of their cause, our intention is to provide an ever more holistic picture of what has truly become a global crisis,” said Alexandra Bilak, director of IDMC.



The report covers internal displacement caused by conflict and sudden-onset disasters, on which IDMC has been the global authority for years. In addition, it now also explores displacement currently “off the grid,” such as that caused by criminal and gang violence, slow-onset disasters like drought, and development projects. It also takes the reader “inside the grid” and presents some of the methodological and conceptual challenges faced in trying to paint as complete a picture as possible.

“Having comprehensive and accurate figures is essential to efforts to alleviate the suffering and needs of tens of millions of highly vulnerable people. National governments have primary responsibility for collecting this data, and for protecting and assisting internally displaced people. Sadly, this responsibility is not fulfilled in many contexts,” Bilak said.

The report makes sobering reading. Some 8.6 million new displacements associated with conflict and violence were recorded in 2015, and as of the end of the year the total including those who fled in previous years stood at 40.8 million. “This is the highest figure ever recorded, and twice the number of refugees worldwide,” Egeland said.

The Middle East and North Africa bore the brunt of new conflict-related displacement in 2015, with 4.8 million people internally displaced, with Syria, Yemen, and Iraq accounting for over half of all new conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

Of the ten countries with the highest number of people internally displaced by conflict, **five** —

Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, South Sudan, and Sudan — have been on the list every year since 2003. “This is further evidence that in the absence of the help IDPs need, displacement tends to drag on for years and even decades,” Bilak said.

As if this were not enough, the number of people internally displaced by disasters in 2015 was 19.2 million in 113 countries. Over the past eight years, a total of 203.4 million disaster-related displacements have been recorded. As in previous years, south and east Asia were worst-affected, with India, China, and Nepal accounting for 3.7 million, 3.6 million, and 2.6 million people displaced, respectively.

The vast majority of displacement associated with disasters is triggered by weather-related hazards such as storms and floods, but the earthquakes in Nepal were a stark reminder of the potential of geophysical hazards.

Additionally, preliminary estimates of internal displacement by other causes suggest at least a million people were forcibly displaced by criminal violence in Mexico and Central America, and tens of millions more by development projects such as dams, urban renewal projects, and mega sporting events.

“This report illustrates the many challenges to addressing this global crisis of internal displacement. It also highlights the glaring absence of political solutions to address displacement, and constitutes an important wake-up call to national governments and global policy-makers alike.” Bilak said.

Orlando City execs say Rio Olympics will be 'beautiful'

Source: <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/sports/orlando-city-lions/os-rio-olympics-brazil-safety-0515-20160514-story.html>

May 14 – Orlando City execs say Rio Olympics will be 'beautiful'

Brazil's ability to provide a safe environment during the 2016 Summer Olympic Games has been questioned since Rio de Janeiro was announced as the host.

Will the water be clean enough for athletes to swim in and tourists to drink? Does the country have the infrastructure necessary to host so many people? Will it be safe? And what about Zika virus?

Political unrest in recent months made many worry even more as the country faced its worst economic crisis in decades amid deep government corruption.

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, the country's first female president, was ousted by the Senate Thursday and replaced by vice president Michel Temer. Rousseff was accused of manipulating the budget to cover



up Brazil's economic issues, among other violations.

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Orlando City's ties to the country run deep, with majority owner Flávio Augusta da Silva, chief executive officer Alex Leitão, vice president of communications Diogo Kotscho and, of course, team captain Kaká, all hailing from Brazil.

"We have to move forward," Leitão said. "[Rio] will be the safest place in the world. 1992, we did the [Earth Summit,] with more than 30 chiefs of staff, presidents of all countries. It was the most safe place in the world in that period. Then the [2014] World Cup, and now the Olympics.

"So, in terms of safety — we don't have terrorism, which is good, because this is not the type of thing you can predict and fight against, it just happens — the problems that we have, we've been having forever.

People know how to deal with it and make sure everything is going to happen in the right way. I think it's going to be beautiful."

If soccer fans were unaware of the turmoil before, it was brought to their attention last week when former Brazilian star Rivaldo took to social media, asking people to boycott the Olympics because the country was too dangerous. He posted a photo of a girl he claimed was a 17-year-old murdered the day before.

"This is the type of tweet that is political, I think," Kotscho said. "All the Brazilian army will

be there, all the police. Anything that can happen, can happen in New York, can happen in Chicago, can happen in Paris — happened in Paris. The former government, they weren't doing well economically, and this changed everything. They cut the country down the middle. Some people were against, some next to them. This started fighting, but it's over now . . . and I think everything will calm down."

Orlando City president and co-founder Phil Rawlins, who is from England, said he visited Rio for the World Cup, along with Kotscho and Leitão, and never felt in danger.

Zika is a legitimate concern,

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention list Brazil at "alert level 2," which means travelers should take advanced precautions to prevent mosquito bites. The CDC recommends covering exposed skin with long sleeves and pants, using mosquito repellent and staying where there is air conditioning and screens on windows and doors, among other precautions.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: This is the answer to all my questions! They do not have terrorism! The whole planet Earth loves Brazil!

One positive: the population of mosquitoes that carry the virus will reach its lowest points in Brazil's winter months, when the Olympics will be held. But, the mosquitoes bite year round as temperature still reach into the 70s during the day, according to a CNN report on the topic.

So what advice would the Brazilian-born Orlando City executives give to anyone weighing the pros and cons of traveling to Rio for the Olympics?

"I'd say, if you ask me, if you're going to a big city, cosmopolitan city, it's the same thing," Leitão said. "I'm not from New York City, but I'd tell people, 'Stay in midtown, don't go in some areas.' It's pretty much the same thing. Stay where the Olympics are going to take place and go where people usually go, stay and enjoy."



Three months before the Summer Olympics, Brazil is a mess

By Vincent Bevins

Source: <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/nationworld/ct-three-months-brazil-olympics-20160514-story.html>

The XXXI Olympiad begins in less than three months and the host country is facing a devastating recession, a Zika epidemic and more political turbulence now that the president has been suspended and replaced by a right-wing government.

Brazil has a lot to resolve before it puts on the competition it promised the world back in 2009, when the booming country beat out President Obama (and Oprah!)-backed Chicago to host the games in Rio de Janeiro.

But with some luck, athletes and experts are hoping that Latin America's largest country will be able to pull off an event that goes mostly fine for fans and competitors, even if locals see promises for long-term improvements broken by their politicians, and travelers run the risk of contributing to the global spread of Zika.



CBRN First Responders?

NO! Health workers in Brazil's Sambadrome spray insecticide to combat mosquitoes that transmit the Zika virus in Rio de Janeiro. The virus is just one of the problems facing Brazil before the Olympic Games. (Leo Correa / AP)

"In terms of the venues and preparations for the Olympics, themselves, Brazil is not so far off where most countries historically are at this point," says Jules Boykoff, author of "Power Games: A Political History of the Olympics" and professor of political science at Pacific University in Oregon. "What is unique in the recent history of the Olympics is the political mayhem that is gyrating in Brazil right now."

Promoted stories from PoliticsChatter.com

It is not, however, the kind of political mayhem that would likely affect the Olympiad itself.

Organizers say 98% of the Olympic Park itself is finished, but the velodrome, used for bicycle competitions, and a major subway extension remain incomplete.

It's not clear who will be president when the opening ceremony takes place on Aug. 5, but Rio de Janeiro is not depending on the federal government to make the Games happen. And the tumult in Brazil pales in comparison to the 1968 Games in Mexico City, which were preceded by a massacre of protesters by just 10 days before the Games started.



Brazil's warring political factions are more likely to use the spotlight of the Olympics to battle for international legitimacy, with opponents of the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff seeking to paint interim President Michel Temer as the leader of a treacherous coup. He, meanwhile, will try to establish that he is the rightful leader of the nation, Boykoff says.

Ticket sales have been slow so far, but for those who do make it to Rio, it's quite possible the political tumult won't directly affect their experiences. Protesters during the 2014 World Cup went out of their way to not punish visitors for their own problems, and most tourists gave Brazilians rave reviews for their hospitality.

For the people of the suffering city of Rio, however, the legacy of the Games will likely be quite different. Most obviously, there's no chance the city will clean up polluted Guanabara Bay in time for the Games, as was guaranteed, and crucial upgrades to public works have often been lacking.

"They've delivered practically nothing so far. The public projects have got in the way of our lives, but it seems we won't be able to enjoy their fruits — that's for those who are coming. Then there's the bike path," says Carol Gomes, 27, who works at an advertising agency in Rio, referring to the new structure which collapsed last month, killing two. "The World Cup was fine, and I imagine this will be fine too, but they missed an opportunity to make a long-term difference."

Authorities announced Thursday that a special subway extension will only be open for the Olympics, then will close immediately for more work.

The bike path has been linked to Brazil's sprawling corruption problem, and the suspicion, voiced by hundreds of thousands of protesters in 2013 and 2014, that the construction of World Cup stadiums was tainted by graft. That suspicion was later proven correct by enterprising investigators.

Political crisis, corruption and recession are not new for Brazil, but the country has been thrown a curveball by the explosion of the epidemic of the Zika virus, which has been linked to an outbreak of infant microcephaly.

August is winter in Rio, when mosquitoes are less active. But Zika can also be spread

sexually, and an article recently published in the Harvard Public Health Review argued that the Rio Olympics should not proceed, as just a small number of infections could cause Zika to spread around the world.

"It cannot possibly help when an estimated 500,000 foreign tourists flock into Rio for the Games, potentially becoming infected, and returning to their homes," it said. "A few viral introductions ... in a few countries, or maybe continents, would make a full-blown global health disaster.

But major changes are unlikely this close to the event, and organizers said they will take special precautions to prevent the spread of the virus.

"The Olympic and Paralympic venues will be inspected on a daily basis during the Rio 2016 Games. ... We will continue to monitor the issue closely and follow guidance from the Brazilian Ministry of Health," said a spokesman for the Rio 2016 Organizing Committee. "Now it is time to focus on fine-tuning the operation of the Games."

The World Health Organization is urging athletes and visitors to protect themselves from mosquito bites by using insect repellent and wearing clothing, preferably light-colored, that covers as much of the body as possible. The organization also recommends choosing air-conditioned accommodation, avoiding impoverished and overcrowded areas with no piped water and poor sanitation, and practicing safe sex while in Brazil and for at least four weeks after their return.

Pregnant women are being advised not to visit areas with ongoing Zika transmission, including Rio.

But the recent turmoil and the concerns have not changed how one Olympian views the games.

"The last thing on my mind is Brazil's politics," said Tony Azevedo, captain of the U.S. water polo team, who was born in Rio and grew up in Long Beach. "Both I and my Brazilian friends are looking forward to these Games as a momentous occasion for the country. Corruption is finally being held to account, and South America will be able to host the Olympics for the first time."



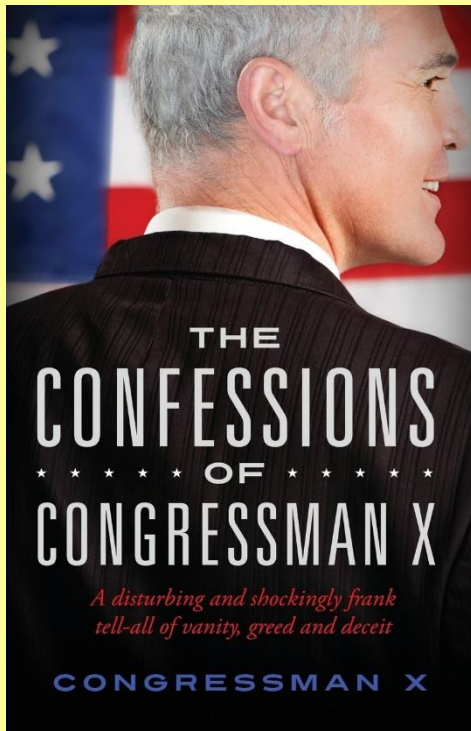
Bevins is a Los Angeles Times special correspondent.



The Confessions of Congressman X Paperback

May 24, 2016

Source: <http://www.amazon.com/Confessions-Congressman-X/dp/1634139739>



A devastating inside look at the dark side of Congress as revealed by one of its own! No wonder Congressman X wants to remain anonymous for fear of retribution. His admissions are deeply disturbing:

"Most of my colleagues are dishonest career politicians who revel in the power and special-interest money that's lavished upon them."

"My main job is to keep my job, to get reelected. It takes precedence over everything."

"Voters are incredibly ignorant and know little about our form of government and how it works."

"It's far easier than you think to manipulate a nation of naive, self-absorbed sheep who crave instant gratification."

"Fundraising is so time consuming I seldom read any bills I vote on. Like many of my colleagues, I don't know how the legislation will be implemented, or what it'll cost."

"We spend money we don't have and blithely mortgage the future with a wink and a nod. Screw the next generation. It's about getting credit now, lookin' good for the upcoming election."

Now hundreds of migrants from the Caribbean fly 6,000 miles to Turkey in bid to enter Europe while posing as being from Somalia

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3591893/Now-hundreds-migrants-Caribbean-fly-6-000-miles-Turkey-bid-enter-Europe-posing-Somalia.html>

May 15 – **Hundreds of migrants from the Caribbean are travelling more than 6,000 miles to enter the European Union through Greece**, the Mail can reveal.

Instead of trying to get into the United States a few hundred miles to the north, many are making the journey across the Atlantic to Istanbul in Turkey.

From there, they travel along the coast to join thousands of refugees on the perilous crossing of the Aegean to the Greek islands.

On arrival some claim to be from Somalia or even from Syria or Afghanistan in an attempt to gain asylum and get free travel across most of the EU.

Last year almost 400 migrants came to Greece from the Caribbean, the vast majority from the Dominican Republic. And a further 150 have arrived from the Dominican Republic in the first three months of this year.

It confirms suspicions that economic migrants are using the European refugee crisis to enter the continent. More than a million people tried to enter the EU by sea last year, with many making the boat crossing from Turkey to Greek islands such as Lesbos.



EU border guard Anna Smigielska, whose job is to interview migrants arriving on Lesbos to identify their nationality, said: 'For us it seems strange, but they say it's one of the easiest ways to get into Europe. I asked some of them, how is it you are coming this route?

'They say there are cheap flights and they don't need visas for Turkey, so it is not so hard.'

In one case, she said, a migrant from Haiti – on the same Caribbean island as the Dominican Republic – claimed to be from Syria.

She said: 'We kept saying, "You don't speak Arabic and, frankly, you don't look like you are from Syria," but he kept insisting he was. Finally, we said, "You really have to say you are from somewhere other than Syria." He replied, "OK, I'm from Afghanistan." Only after a long time did he admit to being from Haiti.'

They fly from the holiday resort of Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic to Schiphol airport in Amsterdam and transfer for a flight to Istanbul, where they are believed to pay smuggling gangs to organise passage over sea to Greece.

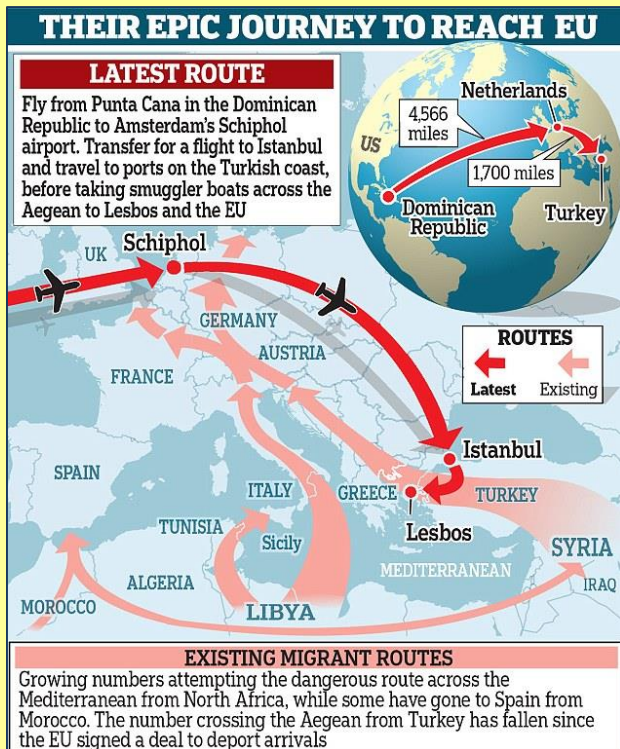
A spokesman for EU border agency Frontex said: 'Although geographically it is an extreme form of travel to go from the Dominican Republic, once a route is established by genuine refugees other economic migrants tend to follow because they know it is a way.'

Similarly, many migrants from Morocco travel through Greece rather than crossing the Mediterranean to Spain. Concerns about Caribbean migrants entering Europe through Turkey were first raised five years ago by Dutch officials.

It was sparked by Dutch carrier KLM noting the high number of 'no shows' on return flights from Istanbul to the Dominican Republic via Amsterdam, which travellers from the island are required to book before entering Turkey.

And Frontex said in 2012 a group arrived on a land border between Greece and Turkey, refusing to speak other than to say that they were from Somalia. Only when a translator spoke to them in their native Spanish did they realise they were from the Dominican Republic.

The majority arriving on the Greek islands are from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. But last year, the Greek coastguard also registered 351 migrants from the Dominican Republic, eight from Haiti, two Cubans, one Jamaican, two from Honduras and two from Colombia.



EDITOR'S COMMENT: With monthly income less than \$200 USD and travel costs ~\$1,200 USD (to Turkey) plus traffickers' and survival expenses where do they get the money abling them to travel 6,000 miles (plus the fact that it is not sure that they will make it to EU)?

Smugglers made 5-6 billion dollars off migrants to Europe in 2015, Interpol says

Source: <http://www.ekathimerini.com/208724/article/ekathimerini/news/smugglers-made-5-6-billion-dollars-off-migrants-to-europe-in-2015-interpol-says>

May 17 – People smugglers made over 5 billion dollars from the wave of migration into southern Europe last year, a report by international crime-fighting agencies Interpol and Europol said on Tuesday.



Nine out of 10 migrants and refugees entering the European Union in 2015 relied on "facilitation services", mainly loose networks of criminals along the routes, and the proportion was likely to be even higher this year, the report said.



About 1 million migrants entered the EU in 2015. Most paid 3,000-6,000 euros (3,400-6,800 dollars), so the average turnover was likely between 5 billion and 6 billion dollars, the report said.

To launder the money and integrate it into the legitimate economy, couriers carried large amounts of cash over borders, and smugglers ran their proceeds through car dealerships, grocery stores, restaurants or transport companies.

The main organizers came from the same countries as the migrants, but often had EU residence permits or passports.

"The basic structure of migrant smuggling networks includes leaders who coordinate activities along a given route, organizers who manage activities locally through personal contacts, and opportunistic low-level facilitators who mostly assist organizers and may assist in recruitment activities," the report said.

Corrupt officials may let vehicles through border checks or release ships for bribes, as there was so much money in the trafficking trade.

About 250 smuggling "hotspots", often at railway stations, airports or coach stations, had been identified along the routes - 170 inside the EU and 80 outside.

The report's authors found no evidence of fighting between criminal groups, but larger criminal networks slowly took over smaller opportunistic ones, leading to an oligopoly.

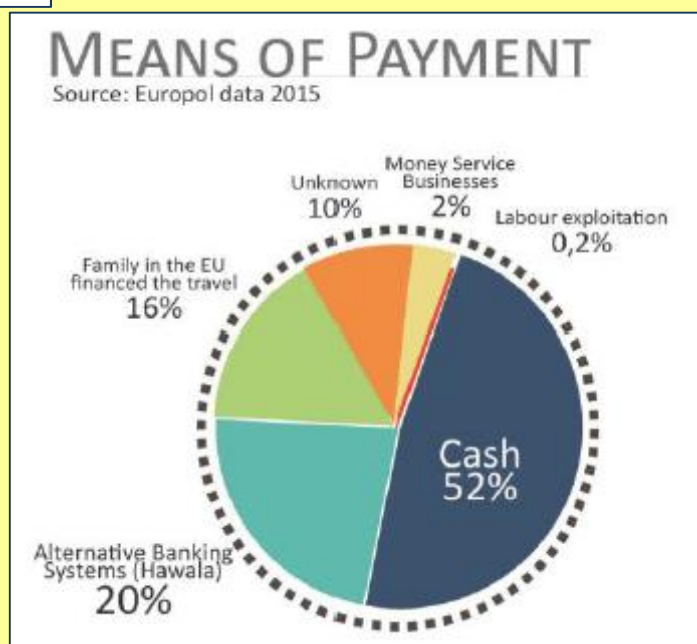
In 2015, the vast majority of migrants made risky boat trips in boats across the Mediterranean from Turkey or Libya, and then traveled on by road. Around 800,000

were still in Libya waiting to travel to the EU, the report said.

But increasing border controls mean air travel is likely to become more attractive, with fraudulent documents rented out to migrants and then taken back by an accompanying facilitator, the report said.

Migrant smuggling routes could be used to smuggle drugs or guns, and there was growing concern that radicalized foreign fighters could also use them to enter the EU, it said.

But there was no concrete data yet to suggest militant groups consistently relied on or cooperated with organized crime groups, it added.



► Read the report at: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/category/press-release-category/reports>



GERMANY – Sexual education for illegal immigrants and refugees

Source: <http://www.zanzu.de/en/themes/sexuality>

The screenshot shows the Zanzu website's 'Sexuality' section. The header includes the Zanzu logo, the tagline 'My body in words and images', and a search bar. The main content area is titled 'Sexuality' and features six icons representing different topics: Sex, Body and sex, Sexual pleasure, Virginity, First-time sex, and Sex during and after pregnancy. Each icon is accompanied by a small speaker icon, indicating audio content.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Explore the site if it does not insult your aesthetics and wonder about the current status of our famous Western way of life (with and without newcomers and transgender toilets/[legal cannabis policy](#) [US – for “medical” use])...

The Crimean Tatars and the Politics of Eurovision

Source: <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=63598>











May 17 – The final of the 2016 [Eurovision Song Contest](#) on May 14 marked a rare occasion in the history of this annual spectacle: it anchored a historical date in the minds of the over 200 million viewers across Europe and beyond who watched the event live—and of many more who must have heard or read about it by now.

Ukraine's winning entry, the song “1944” by jazz singer [Jamala](#), recalls the experience of the deportation of the Crimean Tatar people from Crimea to Central Asia masterminded by Joseph Stalin in 1944. In view of Russia's annexation of [Crimea](#) in 2014, Russia's repression of Crimean



Tatar organizations and their leaders, and the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine, the song strongly resonates in Ukraine, Russia, and Europe. Its victory is as much a political message as a vote on musical taste.

However, the contest's second powerful message was that the public across Eurovision lands also cast a big vote for the Russian entry. In many countries this was not an either-or

 UKRAINE	534	 ISRAEL	
 AUSTRALIA	511	 LATVIA	
 361 RUSSIA	491	 ITALY	
 BULGARIA	307	 AZERBAIJDAN	
 SWEDEN	261	 SERBIA	
 FRANCE	257	 HUNGARY	
 ARMENIA	249	 GEORGIA	



choice but rather a double endorsement at the higher end of the Eurovision points scale, which runs from one to twelve. Thus, the wider European public has adopted less of a “new Cold War” rhetoric than the political elites—and this can only be a good thing. Even the Russian voting public awarded the Ukrainian singer ten points; and Russian singer [Sergey Lazarev](#) received twelve points from the Ukrainian [Eurovision electorate](#).

Sung in a mixture of English and Crimean Tatar, Jamala's song is about both the personal story of her great-grandmother and the defining element of the Crimean Tatar national memory. The song builds on the storytelling traditions that transmitted the memory of the deportation from generation to generation and provided a powerful momentum for the Tatars' return to the Crimean Peninsula after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This memory also remained the unifying factor in mobilizing the Crimean Tatars as an effective political force in Crimea and Ukraine as a whole.

The [Crimean Tatars](#), who accounted for about 12 percent of the Crimean population prior to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, have long campaigned for their recognition as an indigenous people with legally guaranteed rights. Since the annexation, the most prominent Crimean Tatar leaders, Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov, have been

declared *personae non gratae*, local Crimean Tatar politicians have been arrested, and the Crimean Tatar radio station has been closed down and now broadcasts from Kyiv. The main representative body of the Crimean Tatars, the Mejlis, has been declared illegal, and an estimated 40,000–60,000 Crimean Tatars have once again [left their homes](#)—this time primarily to western Ukraine and Kyiv.

Whatever one thinks of the antics of the Eurovision Song Contest, which was created in 1956 by the European Broadcasting Union as a means of cultural rapprochement in the aftermath of World War II, the competition has always had political underpinnings. [Seven countries](#) competed in 1956; this year, there were [42 entries](#). The definition of Europe reaches even beyond the EU's or the Council of Europe's definitions, with Israel and Australia among the participating countries.

Being members of the Eurovision club added weight to the European aspirations of Eastern European countries in the 1990s and early 2000s. In turn, the many Eastern European countries are now shaping the look and voting dynamics of the event. Regional blocs based on neighborhood, similar languages, imperial legacy, and share of immigrants have always dominated the public vote in the participating countries.

These familiar voting patterns were shaken up this year by a new electoral mechanism that filtered the reverberations of the Russia-Ukraine war. The voting innovation split each country's national jury vote from the public vote. (In previous years, the results of the two votes were combined and presented together.) The national jury votes clearly reflected political divisions over the Russia-Ukraine war and its repercussions. The



juries from the Eastern European and post-Soviet countries that have experienced conflict since the collapse of Communism by and large gave their twelve points to Ukraine, signaling a sense of political solidarity. Australia featured repeatedly as a safe jury option to sidestep the choice between Ukraine and Russia. By comparison, the overall public vote put Ukraine in the lead, followed by Russia, [Poland](#), and [Australia](#).

On closer inspection, nothing is as apolitical as critics of this year's Ukrainian song (mostly, but not only, from Russia) claim when they remind us of the contest's rule that the lyrics should not be political. This point had already been raised ahead of this year's competition. The green light for Jamala's song was justified by a reference to the lyrics referring to "[a historical fact](#)," not contemporary politics. This justification is of course a cop-out—as the

contemporary relevance of a reminder of the Crimean Tatar fate is all too obvious. It would have been more genuine of the Eurovision organizers to admit openly that the guiding principle of the separation of culture and politics is a myth.

In 2016, the flashy Eurovision Song Contest took on the role of an alternative opinion poll. It sent out three powerful messages that deserve to be heard at a time when Ukraine and especially the Crimean Tatars tend to drop out of sight. First, the [Crimean Tatars](#) were and still are being repressed. Second, through the Crimean Tatars in particular, the issue of Crimea's annexation by Russia stays alive. And third, the populations of wider Europe—including those of Russia and Ukraine—distinguish between national politics and the people and cultures behind them.

Remember 1976?

Two years after Turkish invasion of Cyprus, Greece participated in Eurovision (1976) with the song

"Panagia mou" ("My Madonna" – singer: Mariza Koch) making reference to the burned homeland left behind. EBU asked Greece to remove the song being afraid that Turkey will respond. When Greece denied to comply, they allowed the singer to participate at her own risk (there were rumors that a Turkish sniper has been targeted Koch).

During the day of the competition, Turkish TV interrupted its transmission and was expelled by EBU until 1979. **EBU then decided that "political" songs will not be allowed to participate.**

Κι αν δείτε ερείπια γκρεμισμένα, όι όι, μάνα μου!
Δε θα `ναι απ' άλλες, απ' άλλες εποχές
Από ναπάλμ θα `ναι καμένα, όι όι, μάνα μου!
Θα `ναι τα μύρια χαλάσματα του χτες

Κι αν δείτε γη φρεσκοσκασμένη, όι όι, μάνα μου!
Δε θα `ναι κάμπος, `ναι κάμπος καρπερός
Σταυροί θα είναι φυτεμένοι, όι όι, μάνα μου!
Που τους σαπίζει, σαπίζει ο καιρός

Prison population can be reduced substantially without endangering public safety: Study

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160517-prison-population-can-be-reduced-substantially-without-endangering-public-safety-study>

May 17 – A paper published in the journal *Criminology & Public Policy* addresses one of the most important crime policy questions in America: **Can prison populations be reduced without endangering the public?**

That question was examined by researchers who tested the impact on public safety of California's dramatic efforts to comply with court-mandated targets to reduce prison overcrowding.



Indiana University reports that the results showed that California's Realignment Act, passed in 2011, had no effect on aggregate violent or property crime rates in 2012, 2013, or 2014. When crime types were disaggregated, a moderately large, statistically significant association between realignment and auto theft



comparable level of public safety to that previously achieved by state prisons. This is a far cry from what was believed in the mid-1970s, when the U.S. prison population began a steady climb that continued until 2010, the first time in 30 years the number of inmates declined.

The prison buildup was based on the premise that incarceration improves public safety, the researchers wrote in the paper. As the buildup began, some argued that the nation had a clear choice — build more prisons or tolerate higher rates of violent crime.

California prisoners in crowded quarters

Confidence in the utility of incarceration was so great that policies to increase sentence lengths and punish a range of

rates was observed in 2012. By 2014, however, this effect had decayed, and auto theft rates returned to pre-realignment levels.

"The results provide evidence that large reductions in the size of the prison population can be made without endangering the overall safety of the public," said Jody Sundt, associate dean and associate professor at the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

"Three years after the passage of the Realignment Act, California crime rates remained at levels comparable to what we would predict if the prison population had remained at 2010 levels."

According to the paper, within fifteen months of its passage, realignment reduced the total prison population by 27,527 inmates and saved \$453 million.

Realignment substantially reduced the size of the prison population by shifting responsibility for certain groups of offenders to local jurisdictions.

The researchers found that with a mixture of jail use, community correction, law enforcement and other preventive efforts, California counties have provided a

comparable level of public safety to that previously achieved by every jurisdiction in the United States, the researchers wrote.

"This issue is complicated, but I think the safety effects of prison have been oversold," Sundt said. "Many of the estimates of the effectiveness of incarceration were based on a comparison to doing nothing. The estimates tend to be too optimistic because they are not really comparing the preventive effect of prison to other options that are available for addressing crime."

The research study did not address the best ways to reduce prison populations, but Sundt said, "If we want to reduce the size of the prison population, we should think about who we are currently sending to prison and whether we can supervise them as effectively or perhaps more effectively in the community."

Another consideration, Sundt said, would be to consider "how we can reduce the length of stay in a way that balances the public safety and accountability desires of the public with the economic and social costs of prison. We can reduce sentences in ways that are rational and recognize the risk that offenders pose."



“For the first time in decades, it appears that a window of opportunity for justice reform is opening to allow for a reevaluation of the

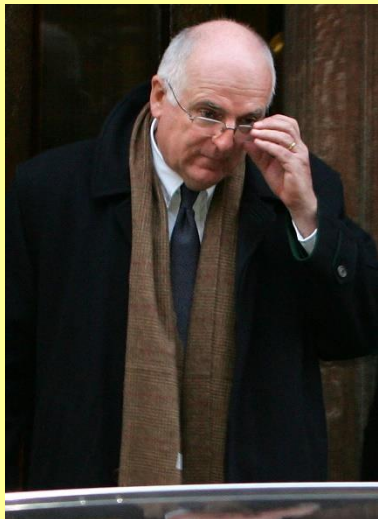
effectiveness and wisdom of policies that have created the largest prison population in the world,” the researchers wrote.

— *Read more in Jody Sundt et al., “Is Downsizing Prisons Dangerous? The Effect of California’s Realignment Act on Public Safety,” Criminology & Public Policy (9 March 2016).*

Giving Turks visa-free access to EU would be “storing gasoline next to the fire”: Ex-MI6 chief

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160517-giving-turks-visafree-access-to-eu-would-be-storing-gasoline-next-to-the-fire-exmi6-chief>

May 17 – **Sir Richard Dearlove, the former head of MI6, has said that for the EU to offer visa-free access to the EU zone to millions of Turks would be like “storing gasoline next to the fire.”**



Discussing migration issues on the BBC’s World on the Move day, Dearlove did not mince words expressing his concerns.

He said that “shutting the door on migration is not an option” and that the number of immigrants coming to Europe over the next five years could run into millions.

“For the EU, however, to offer visa-free access to 75 million Turks to stem the flow of migrants across the Aegean seems perverse, like storing gasoline next to the fire one is trying to extinguish,” he said.

The *Financial Times* reports that Dearlove the 1.6 million migrants arriving in Europe last year, once established within the EU, will have complete freedom of movement among the twenty-eight EU member countries.

The mass migration to the continent has far-reaching social and political consequences, he said. **“The geopolitical impact is set to reshape Europe’s political landscape as those citizens who**

feel, rationally or not, that their interests and cultural identity are threatened assert their influence,” said Dearlove. “This has already happened in Austria with the resurgence of the defunct Freedom Party. Other extreme right populist parties in other European countries will follow.”

He said the rise of extremist populist rightwing movements suggests voters are disillusioned at the failure to control the number of immigrants. He added that Europe’s current migration crisis is “more serious” than that of postwar 1945 because it is “global in nature.”

Dearlove said **that the impact of mass migration is “eating away at the willingness of EU states to act together.”** He added that this is making the EU “impotent in the face of the most serious social and humanitarian problem” it has had to face.

He added: “Europe’s leading politicians, each caught up with their own problems, show little common determination to break out of this cycle of deterioration.”

He also said that the failure by the “present configuration of twenty-eight vastly differing national interests” to meet the challenge of migration may well be an indication that the EU has outlived its historical role.

He added: “The steady rise of extremist populist rightwing movements in many European states suggests that many voters share this sense of disillusionment. The failure to control inward migration is the common denominator which explains their growth.

“Their rejection of the postwar European dream may not yet be of sufficient strength to break the EU apart and Europe’s conventional parties may yet be able to hold the line if improved control of migration can be achieved.



“However if a politician like Marine le Pen of the Front National can command the support of one in four, perhaps even one in three, French voters this does represent a sea change in the continent’s politics.”

Will Brazil be able to overcome domestic turmoil ahead of the Olympic Games?

By Leonardo Jose Mataruna-Dos-Santos

Source: <http://theconversation.com/will-brazil-be-able-to-overcome-domestic-turmoil-ahead-of-the-olympic-games-59326>

May 18 – When Dilma Rousseff received the Olympic Flame in Brasilia at the beginning of May, her



intention was to attend the opening ceremony of the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games as Brazil’s head of state. Now, the nation’s first democratically elected woman president has been suspended pending an investigation into allegations that she intentionally concealed the size of the country’s budget deficit.

This is only the second time that an impeachment has been sought against a Brazilian president, and its legality has been contested by representatives from

Rousseff’s government. The topic has divided the country, and millions of citizens have taken to the streets – either to call for Rousseff’s resignation, or to rally against her impeachment. In some cases, violence has reportedly broken out between civilians and the police, and it seems likely that more protests will follow.

Meanwhile, the nation continues to struggle with its deepest recession since the 1930s – not to mention outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases such as Zika Virus, dengue fever and Chikungunya and the ongoing Petrobras corruption scandal. With fewer than 100 days to go until the opening of the games, **some are starting to question whether Brazil is still in a position to host the sporting mega-event.**

In his first speech since becoming interim president, Michel Temer appealed to Brazilians to “trust him” as he attempts to restore peace and prosperity. He assured citizens that recovery measures as deleting nine ministry in the government body, reviewing the social security and other conservative shifts will not be affected by preparations for the games. He said: “Billions of people will watch the games, and journalists from different countries will be here to report on the host nation ... we know that beyond sports, they will also focus on the political and economic conditions of the country.”

The giant has woken

This isn’t the first time that Brazil has experienced civil unrest while standing in the international spotlight. In 2013, protests against the rising cost of bus fares were met by police close to Maracanã Stadium, where the Confederations Cup was taking place. But on the whole, well-organised security operations have usually ensured that such events have gone ahead without a hitch: neither the 2011 World Military Games, nor the 2014 FIFA World Cup, experienced any major incidents.

Strategies to ensure the smooth running of the Olympic Games have been developed since last year, when it was declared that **the military would be responsible for security throughout the event.** More than 704m Brazilian reals (US\$169m) have been invested to this end since the FIFA 2014 Cup.

Brazilian armed forces have been training with other specialist military bodies from around the world, to avert terrorist threats like those seen ahead of the FIFA



2010 World Cup and the London 2012 Summer Olympics. The Brazilian military will also provide a fallback security service, in case of strikes or understaffing by private security firms, to avoid the issues seen in South Africa 2010 and London 2012. The security forces are on high alert after ISIS mentioned that the next target is Brazil.

Open areas such as the cultural festival, the country houses (spaces where competing countries promote their image) and major sporting venues will be key zones in the up and coming competition. Emergency plans have been developed for regions throughout Brazil, in case local police and security forces have trouble maintaining control. And the military will monitor social media and political groups, to produce a map of future protests planned



around the whole country, as they did for the 2014 FIFA CUP.

This may sound excessive, but in reality authorities will be cautious about using force against protesters. The new government will want to reassure citizens – for whom the memory of Brazil's former military dictatorship looms large – that the country is still a democracy, and that every military intervention will be made with proper oversight.

The price of the games

As well as the social and political unrest, the new government will also need to address Brazil's economic collapse. The games have exposed the fault lines between rich and poor in Brazilian society. For less wealthy citizens, the impacts of the nation's worst economic crisis since the 1930s have overshadowed the dazzle of the Olympics. Tickets and merchandise for the games are only really

affordable for foreign visitors and the Brazilian upper classes: ordinary Londoners were likewise excluded from the 2012 games.

What's more, most Brazilians do not expect the games to afford them any significant economic legacies. Indeed, the high cost of hosting the games is enough to put many cities off. For instance, **Montreal struggled to pay off its 1976 Olympic bill for 30 years after the event, while costly infrastructure from previous games in Athens (2004) and Beijing (2008) has since been abandoned.**

And Brazil has had bad experiences in the past: the 2007 Pan-American Games, held in Rio, left little aside from abandoned infrastructure and unfulfilled promises. Many of these public spaces were later privatised, to reduce the cost of maintaining them. Yet the

government has sought to reassure citizens of Rio that Olympic investment will contribute to the public good, by opening spaces such as **Madureira Park** (photo); a 90,000m² site in one of the city's less affluent neighbourhoods, which has become a hub for families and friends who meet there to dance, play sport or simply enjoy the park.

The organising committee for the Olympics has promised to open the gates of the Olympic Park cluster after one year. This will mean that the 1.8m square metres of Olympic infrastructure is open to the public, including new transport links, a training centre, sports infrastructure for locals and an experimental Olympic school dedicated to delivering a mix of sports education and high quality teaching quality for over 850 students.

Will everything be okay?

The interim government is also arranging its affairs to ensure the smooth running of the games. As well as appointing a new cabinet, interim president Michel Temer has introduced Leonardo Picciani as the new minister for sport (which makes him the third person hold the role in 2016) – despite a reported conflict of interest.

But former minister for sport Ricardo Leyser – who has been with the ministry since 2003 – is



likely to remain on the scene, to support the Rio 2016 Organising Committee, ensure continuity and help to maintain connections between the government, the organising committee and the International Olympic and Paralympic committees.

We know that Brazil has the capacity to host successful mega-events: it's been doing so since the beginning of the 20th century. Hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games will be the nation's biggest responsibility yet, but there are strategies in place to ensure that everything proceeds without incident.

Yet there are no such guarantees when it comes to restoring peace, growing the economy, addressing public health crises and fighting inequality.

There's a popular proverb among the locals of Rio de Janeiro: **"Everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end."**

And while everything might be okay for the Olympics, it is certainly not the end of Brazil's political and economic struggles.

Leonardo Jose Mataruna-Dos-Santos is Associate Research Fellow, Coventry University. He is also Visiting Lecturer at Advanced Programme of Contemporary Culture of Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and Visiting Professor at Universidad de Occidente in Mexico. He receives funding to investigate the legacies of mega events from Marie Curie Research Initiatives - CARNIVAL Project of European Union's Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013/under REA grant agreement n° 612614.

Sweden – Spring Parade 2016

In the Swedish Protestant Eskilstuna church in Kloster homosexual artist Elisabeth Ohlson Wallins interprets Jesus crucifixion for the celebration of Spring Parade 2016.



EDITOR'S COMMENT: Europeans are afraid that the illegal immigrants and refugees' tsunami will alter the nature of their culture and ethics. Same fears are expressed for accepting 80 mil Turks in the EU. What culture and what ethics? Day after day it is proven that too much freedom and democracy in Europe is bad for the mental health of its citizens.



Greece – an offending statue...



According to local media, Hellenic Police is guarding the statue of King Leonidas in the area of Lamia (Thermopylea – central Greece) due to fears that Muslim illegal immigrants and refugees hosted in local hospitality camp will destroy the “anatomy” of the naked statue since it offends their religious beliefs.



Towards Rio2016



EDITOR'S COMMENT: One of the rare photos of CBRN preparedness towards Rio2016. Solely depending on the military (photo: Members of the Brazilian army and navy train for a possible terrorist attack during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Photo: Agence France-Presse/Getty Images), it seems that the civil sector is not adequately prepared to deal with the new emerging threats – or not prepared at all (especially hospitals). If you have additional (opposite) info please contact the Editor by email.

Here's how the U.N. is working to stop terrorists from getting weapons of mass destruction

By Bryan R. Early and Mark T. Nance

Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/05/03/heres-how-the-u-n-is-working-to-stop-terrorists-from-getting-weapons-of-mass-destruction/>



The past year's national security news has been dominated once again by terrorism. Terrorist attacks in Paris, Mogadishu, Istanbul and Brussels — to name just a few — have been carried out by increasingly violent groups like Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and the Islamic State. While those attacks have been horrific, security experts fear the fallout we'd see if any of those groups were to carry out a major attack using nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons.

It is possible. We already know that ambitious, violent groups and individuals – like the Islamic State and al-Qaeda and its offshoots – are trying to find the materials they need for an attack using weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

Preventing them from doing so is challenging. It's not just a matter of strong domestic controls over those technologies. Groups could acquire the materials necessary for an



attack using WMDs in one country and launch attacks in another. The Islamic State reportedly has already done this, using chemical weapons in an attack on a town near Kirkuk in northern Iraq. Nor can any single government seal its borders securely against such an attack. Preventing a WMD attack will require global cooperation. And while efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and terrorism through processes like the Nuclear Security Summit are high profile, the United Nations has worked below the radar for some time on an arguably more ambitious effort to prevent the full range of WMD terrorism.

The world's only universal non-proliferation agreement

These efforts started in 2004, when the [U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 1540](#), which obligated all nations for the first time to adopt policies and practices that would keep the financing, technologies and materials needed to create WMDs out of the hands of “non-State actors.” There were already agreements in place that aimed to control the spread of WMDs among states, of course. UNSCR 1540 sought to address threats posed by terrorist groups, a.k.a. non-state actors.

In effect, the resolution obligates the world's nations to police their own corporations, commerce and citizens, preventing them from financing, selling or giving the elements of such weapons to non-state actors and mandating “appropriate effective” trade controls on international commerce. Because it was passed under the Security Council's Chapter VII powers, Resolution 1540 became a binding international legal obligation for all U.N. member states.

This also makes UNSCR 1540 the world's only universal non-proliferation agreement.

UNSCR 1540 was controversial when it passed. On one hand, it came after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and public revelations that the Pakistani nuclear weapons scientist AQ Khan had used a network of private companies to evade non-proliferation controls and sell nuclear technologies to Pakistan. On the other hand, the U.S. had invaded Iraq the year before on the pretext that Saddam Hussein had been developing WMDs. So while growing concerns about WMD terrorism lent the effort a lot of political will, the U.S. invasion of Iraq also bolstered fears that the Security Council would seek to punish non-compliance in some serious way. UNSCR 1540 also meant the U.N. was touching on vital issues of national security. Still others objected because the obligations set by 1540 would be costly and

difficult. In general, UNSCR 1540 represented a substantial expansion of the Security Council's Ch. VII authority, and states not involved in the decision-making pushed back.

Since that rocky start, however, the vast majority of the world's states have come around to supporting and engaging it. That's in part because supporters have not pushed for enforcing 1540 through threats or sanctions, but have relied on sharing expertise and providing support in meeting the standards for countries that need it, as we'll explain below. As a result, UNSCR 1540 is changing how states confront a major threat to global security.

UNSCR 1540 has these three unique assets in keeping terrorists from getting WMDs

There's obviously no way to quash all violent extremists. Groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State are resilient. New groups can form almost anywhere in the world. Fortunately, most such extremists have no interest in WMD terrorism. Those that do (such as Aum Shinrikiyo in the 1990s or al-Qaeda and Islamic State today) have had little success when they've tried.

The challenge is to make sure it remains difficult to get the materials, technologies, and knowledge needed to build, deliver and use those weapons, even as they become more economical and more available on global markets.

That's what UNSCR 1540 aims to do, in three main ways.

1. UNSCR 1540 is comprehensive, bringing many different weapons under one rule.

Before UNSCR 1540, arms control efforts were piecemeal and uneven, with different agreements restricting specific categories of weapons. The UNSCR 1540 approach subjects all WMDs to the same standard. Additionally, its “bow to stern”



approach covers not just the weapons themselves but also the financing, manufacturing, production and transport of any WMD element.

2. UNSCR 1540 is a global mandate, binding everywhere, unlike previous non-proliferation treaties and conventions.

UNSCR 1540 is a global standard, requiring all to adopt policies to prevent WMD proliferation. That's not true for any other non-proliferation instrument, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and the biological or chemical weapons conventions. Many countries — North Korea, India, Pakistan and Israel, to name a few — have avoided signing or ratifying some of those agreements. They are required to comply with UNSCR 1540, which gives UNSCR 1540 substantial potential to influence global non-proliferation efforts.

3. UNSCR 1540 encourages compliance rather than imposing punishments.

The Security Council's Chapter VII powers allow the body to impose a full range of measures, such as sanctions, to enforce 1540's obligations. But instead of relying on imposing costs for non-compliance, the Security Council formed the 1540 Committee and a Group of Experts to help coordinate and promote global compliance efforts.

The Committee includes Security Council member representatives and is responsible for monitoring implementation, matching assistance providers with requests for assistance, and reporting on overall progress. The Group of Experts reaches out to governments, educates them about their nonproliferation responsibilities and advises them on effective policies and measures.

Tellingly, the U.N. Security Council over the years has passed continuing resolutions that broaden the 1540 Committee's mandate and emphasize such creative engagement – over coercive enforcement. Experts with whom we've spoken say they use the obligation created by UNSCR 1540 to encourage states to act.

So is it making a difference?

Yes, although its final effectiveness at preventing WMD proliferation is impossible to judge at this point. While UNSCR 1540 isn't

fully implemented, supporters have been remarkably successful at getting states to accept the resolution's obligations as legitimate.

For example, governments no longer question the validity of the resolution, although they disagree about how broad the mandate is and how quickly they must meet the obligations. And while less than a third of the U.N.'s member states bothered to submit the required initial reports in the first year, today more than 90 percent of the world's governments have met their reporting requirements and worked with the Committee on implementation.

Of course, reporting is not the same as actually preventing the spread of dangerous materials – but without the initial report, little else can be done. Many states are reporting more than they have to. Early opponents like South Africa and Malaysia are now leaders in lagging regions, encouraging other governments to do their part and funding outreach. Global non-proliferation experts now talk about 1540 as central to global security efforts.

What's more, UNSCR 1540 seems to be affecting policy and practice. Four avenues stand out. **First**, to implement the mandate, many governments are using standards, rules, and procedures gleaned from other nonproliferation efforts, like that of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Missile Technology Control Regime. This increases the number of states working to meet the high standards for non-proliferation that those important agreements set.

Second, the nuclear deal negotiated with Iran last summer uses UNSCR 1540's "bow to stern" wording as the standard for Iran's re-entry into the global economy. This is a strong indication that the 1540 approach is becoming a common non-proliferation framework.

Third, because UNSCR 1540 groups all WMDs together, experts can learn from the experience of other fields. They have come to realize, for example, that biological hazards aren't as well-monitored or controlled as are nuclear and chemical weapons, and are working to catch up.

Finally, governments since UNSCR 1540 have been passing more comprehensive laws to regulate trade in WMD-related



technologies. In passing those new laws — laws designed to make it harder for violent non-state actors to acquire the materials, technologies, and knowledge needed to create WMDs — they often cite their UNSCR 1540 obligations.

In other words, UNSCR 1540 has raised the standards for how governments become “good non-proliferation citizens,” and governments are working to meet those standards.

The work has just gotten started

The work has really just started. It will be years before the mandate is fully implemented worldwide. And it's hard to evaluate success; we'll never know what WMD attacks (if any) might have happened without the resolution's efforts.

Nevertheless, the 1540 Committee, the global non-proliferation community, civil society, and academics are working to assess effectiveness. Currently, the 1540 Committee is conducting a comprehensive review of the resolution's performance, to understand its strengths and weaknesses. That has included civil society fora soliciting feedback and suggestions from nonproliferation experts and concerned groups.

The committee will host [another forum](#) — with nations, international organizations, and civil society — at the United Nations June 20-22, 2016.

UNSCR 1540 in some ways rewrites the non-proliferation rule book. Our political leaders, technical experts, academics and civil society have a stake in remaining engaged in the debate over its future.

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Mark T. Nance is an assistant professor of political science in North Carolina State University's School of Public & International Affairs and co-director of the Energy & Security Initiative.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Perhaps the above two professors feel safe with UNSCR 1540 – well, I am NOT! Perhaps UN meant to be for a civilized world – but we are not living in such a world! And existing problems are not resolved verbally! And as far as I can recall, UN never solved a “real” problem – e.g. the long ongoing occupation of Northern Cyprus by Turkish armed forces. Why should we believe that they will manage to effectively control weapons of mass disruption or destruction?

New drug to combat the effects of nerve agents

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160504-new-drug-to-combat-the-effects-of-nerve-agents>

May 04 – The nerve agent sarin causes a deadly overstimulation of the nervous system that can be stopped if treated with an antidote within minutes of poisoning. A ground-breaking study has been published in *PNAS*, which describes in detail how such a drug works. Researchers at the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI), Umeå University, and in Germany are behind the study.

Umeå University reports that the study describes a model which shows how sarin and HI-6 are positioned in the protein acetylcholinesterase just before HI-6 removes sarin and restores the function of the protein. The model was developed by a combination of X-ray crystallography and quantum chemical calculations. Sarin in magenta, HI6 in green, oxygen in red, phosphorus in orange, and nitrogen in blue.

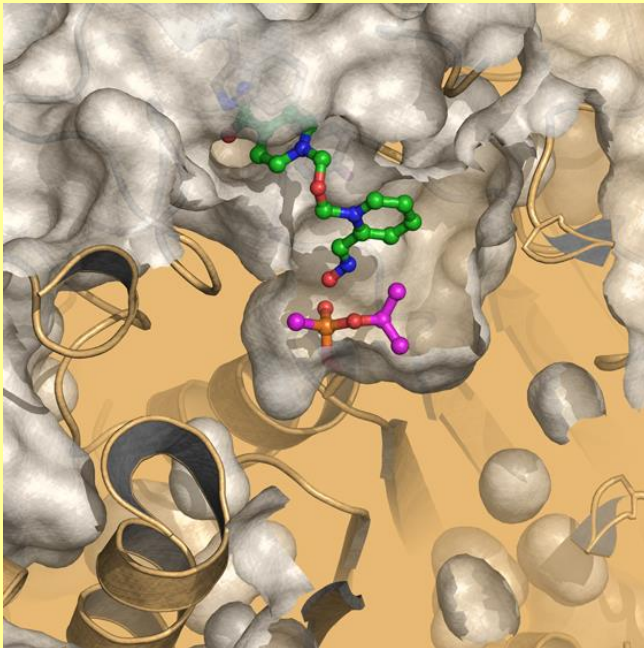
Sarin is a colorless, odorless liquid fatal even at very low concentrations. Serious sarin poisoning causes visual disturbance, vomiting, breathing difficulties and, finally, death.

“Nerve agents are dreadful weapons, and our hope is for these results to lead to improved drugs against them,” says Anders Allgardsson, Biochemist at the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI).



Nerve agents destroy the function of a very important protein in the nervous system called acetylcholinesterase. As long as the nerve agent is bound to the protein, the breakdown of an important signal substance is prevented. The antidote HI-6 removes the nerve agent and restores the function of the nervous system. Drugs against nerve agent poisoning have been used for a long time, still it has been unclear how they actually work.

After years of hard work, chemists from FOI and Umeå University are now presenting a three-dimensional structure that depicts the HI-6 moments before the bond between the nerve agent and the protein is broken. The structure gives a high-resolution image that, in detail, describes the individual positions of atoms and provides an understanding of how the bond breaks.



The scientific breakthrough was enabled by combining three-dimensional structural depictions with advanced calculations and biochemical experiments.

A model of how sarin and HI-6 are positioned in the protein acetylcholinesterase just before HI-6 removes sarin and restores the function of the protein. The model was developed by a combination of X-ray crystallography and quantum chemical calculations. Sarin in magenta, HI6 in green, oxygen in red, phosphorus in orange and nitrogen in blue. Source: FOI

“With the help of X-ray crystallography, we could see weak traces of the signal we were looking for. As the signal was weak, we decided to integrate the data with quantum chemical methods. After demanding calculations on the supercomputer at the High Performance Computing Center North (HPC2N) at Umeå University, we finally succeeded,” says Anna Linusson, Professor at the Department of Chemistry at

Umeå University.

The calculations supported the theory that the weak signal in the X-ray crystallography data actually came from HI-6 and sarin. Important knowledge also fell into place after experiments where the system was disturbed by mutating the protein or by introducing isotopes.

“After seven years of work using many different techniques, we have finally been able to bring this to a successful close and can show a uniform picture of how HI-6 approaches sarin. It opens up for new opportunities in finding antidotes to sarin and other nerve agents by structure-based molecular design,” says Anders Allgardsson.

— *Read more in Anders Allgardsson et al., “Structure of a prereaction complex between the nerve agent sarin, its biological target acetylcholinesterase, and the antidote HI-6,” PNAS (29 March 2016).*

A New Capability for Hazmat, EOD and Law Enforcement

Source: <https://www.coballight.com/products/resolve/>

Enabling Faster, Safer Critical Decision-Making

- Detect through coloured and opaque plastic & glass, paper, cardboard, sacks and fabrics
- Safe - No need to open or disturb containers
- Fast - Accurate ID of chemicals and mixtures in about 1 minute (or less in some modes of operation), with no sample preparation or consumables
- Rugged - Built to withstand tough user environments
- User-friendly - Large buttons, simple interface, designed for use in protective gear



Handheld *Through-Barrier* ID

Resolve is the world's only handheld Raman system for true *through-barrier* identification of hazardous or contraband materials. Resolve rapidly detects and identifies materials from comprehensive libraries, with Cobalt's unique handheld [SORS™](#) technology enabling positive identification *through* a wide range of sealed non-metallic containers, barriers and packaging.

**A New Capability in CBRNE Detection**

Resolve differs from conventional handheld Raman ID systems, which are typically limited to line-of-sight measurements. Resolve operates in three principal modes:



Through-barrier - Detects through non-metallic, sealed containers such as coloured and opaque plastics, glass, paper, wrapping, sacks and fabrics



Surface scan - Line-of-sight measurements, similar to conventional Raman ID systems



Vial holder - Quickly identifies materials contained within glass vials in a custom holder. A 'non-contact' mode is also available for both surface scan and *through-barrier* measurements.

Flexible On-board Libraries

Configure your own libraries from 1,000's of chemicals:

- ✔ Explosives and precursors
- ✔ Hazardous and toxic materials
- ✔ Chemical agents
- ✔ Narcotics & new psychoactive substances
- ✔ Household products and less commonly-used chemicals
- ✔ Create and deploy your own libraries

True Through-Barrier Detection & Identification

Resolve's *through-barrier* capability removes the need to open containers - hazards remain contained & evidence is preserved - enabling response teams to identify container contents early in an operation, prior to escalation. This allows information about the situation to be gathered quickly and efficiently enabling better critical decision making.

COMMAND™

Resolve systems are centrally managed using Cobalt's Command software. Command allows operational managers to:

- Manage passwords and default system settings
- Create, manage and deploy libraries
- Centrally store and analyse scan data
- Manage Resolve software updates



**Through-Barrier Mode**

Identifies *through* non-metallic, sealed containers such as coloured and opaque plastics, glass, paper, wrapping, sacks and fabrics.

Surface Scan Mode

Line-of-sight measurements, similar to conventional Raman ID systems. Analyse surfaces, exposed materials and samples in clear glass vials or clear plastic bags.

**Vial Holder Mode**

Quickly identifies materials contained within glass vials in a custom holder.

Non-Contact Mode

Resolve can be used for either *through-barrier* or surface scan measurements (16mm from the container or sample), by removing the nose cone and using 'non-contact' mode.





Built to Withstand Tough Environments

Resolve combines a tough handheld unit with a simple, user-friendly interface. Ruggedized and hardened, the system is built to withstand harsh environments and usage scenarios. The software interface is extremely simple to use and requires only 7 large buttons, which are ideal for gloved use (in all forms of protective gear).

Resolve Hardware Features

- ✓ Removable nose cone for contact and non-contact scan modes. In-field calibration and performance check is built into a protective nose cap
- ✓ Large 4.7 inch display - clear, high contrast graphics for use in all light conditions
- ✓ Large buttons with positive feedback - designed for gloved use
- ✓ Li ion battery pack for approx. 4 hours continuous use



ISIS manufacturing chemical weapons: UN watchdog

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160509-isis-manufacturing-chemical-weapons-un-watchdog>

Apr 09 – **A team of investigators at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) said that there is “worrying” evidence ISIS is making its own chemical weapons.**

An OPCW team of investigators said they had found evidence of the use of homemade sulphur mustard in attacks in Syria and Iraq.

“The suspicions are that (ISIS) may have produced it themselves, which is extremely worrying,” Ahmet Uzumcu, the head of OPCW, said Friday. “It proves that they have the technology, know-how and also access to the materials which might be used for the production of chemical weapons.”

India Times reports that ISIS is believed to have set up a special unit for chemical weapons research made up of Iraqi scientists who worked on weapons programs under Saddam Hussein. The unit also employs foreign experts.

The Telegraph reports that leaked Isis files seen by the newspaper showed a number of senior foreign fighters with chemical engineering degrees, and others with lengthy experience in the field back home.

Earlier this year an American Special Forces raided facilities operated by the special chemical unit, finding evidence that ISIS had been manufacturing chlorine and a low-grade sulphur mustard.

ISIS has weaponized the agents by using the large number of empty chemical weapons shells it has seized in Iraqi and Syrian military bases, which the Islamists captured during the course of the war.

ISIS has already used chemical weapons in an attack on the Iraqi town of Taza, south of Kirkuk, in March. The militants have previously used mustard and chlorine gas in weapons fired at Kurdish forces in northern Iraq and Syria.

“The international community should be very vigilant to such threats and cooperate further to prevent such attacks from occurring elsewhere,” Uzumcu said.

618 SARIN ATTACK

Okumura et al. • TOKYO SUBWAY SARIN ATTACK, PART 2

The Tokyo Subway Sarin Attack: Disaster Management, Part 2: Hospital Response*

TETSU OKUMURA, MD, KOUICHIRO SUZUKI, MD, ATSUHIRO FUKUDA, MD,
AKITSUGU KOHAMA, MD, NOBUKATSU TAKASU, MD,
SHINICHI ISHIMATSU, MD, SHIGEAKI HINOHARA, MD

Abstract. The Tokyo subway sarin attack was the second documented incident of nerve gas poisoning in Japan. The authors report how St. Luke's Hospital dealt with this disaster from the viewpoint of disaster management. Recommendations derived from the experience include the following: Each hospital in Japan should prepare an emergent decontamination area and have available chemical-resistant suits and masks. Ventilation in the ED and main treatment areas should be well planned at the time a hospital is designed. Hospital disaster planning must include

guidance in mass casualties, an emergency staff call-up system, and an efficient emergency medical chart system. Hospitals should establish an information network during routine practice so that it can be called upon at the time of a disaster. The long-term effects of sarin should be monitored, with such investigation ideally organized and integrated by the Japanese government. **Key words:** sarin; disaster medicine; chemical warfare agents; emergency medical services; EMS; international medicine. **ACADEMIC EMERGENCY MEDICINE** 1998; 5:618–624

Source: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1553-2712.1998.tb02471.x/epdf>





Evacuation after chemical leak at Stockholm lab

Source: <http://www.thelocal.se/20160512/evacuation-after-chemical-leak-at-karolinska>

May 12 – **UPDATED:** Five hundred people were escorted from a building near the Karolinska Institute following a chemical leak.



Eleven people were cared for by ambulance staff after experiencing dizziness and facial numbness, said police.

The affected premises in Solna municipality in Stockholm county house both the Karolinska Institute and the Royal Institute of Technology as well as several privately-owned companies, wrote Aftonbladet.



The Swedish tabloid reported that the leak was believed to have started on the seventh floor of the building in a laboratory area used by a biochemical company which also is located in the building. "There has been a discharge of gas in this room. **It is probably the chemical toluene.** In concentrated form it constitutes a fire and explosion hazard," police spokesperson Sven-Erik Olsson told the newspaper.

Police and emergency services examined the building, which was cordoned off between 1pm and 3pm. One of the individuals affected by the incident was Sci Life Lab safety officer, Erik Malm.

"It's OK now, it was something chemical," he told news agency TT. "There was a strong chemical smell on a couple of floors, but we haven't been able to locate a source," he added.

Police later said that there was no longer any risk of explosion and no suspicion of any criminal activity. "An unknown person had spilled or thrown the substance in a bin. A cleaner had then brought the substance into the room," confirmed police spokesperson Albin Näverberg to TT.

Spanish tyre dump fire triggers evacuation of 9,000 people

Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/13/spanish-tyre-dump-fire-triggers-evacuation-of-9000-people>



May 13 – Spanish officials have ordered the evacuation of 9,000 people living in a sprawling apartment complex close to a raging tyre dump fire in a town near Madrid.



The massive fire broke out before dawn at the vast tyre dump, located south of the Spanish capital, sending a spectacular billowing **cloud of thick black smoke into the air that was visible for at least 20 miles (30km).**

The Castilla-La Mancha regional government tweeted on Friday night that about 8,000 apartment residents in the town of Seseña had already left their homes.

The government said ambulances were being sent to the complex to evacuate residents with health problems who could not leave on their own.

Earlier, 10 teams of firefighters were sent to try to put out the blaze, but it was still raging more than 12 hours after it started.



The regional government said it had activated an emergency action plan as it believed the fire might last for days.



Firefighters and helicopters were working to extinguish the blaze, which produced a “toxic cloud ... that could affect part of the (nearby) town of Seseña” with its 20,000 residents, the regional government added in a statement.



The dump stretches over some 10 hectares (25 acres), the equivalent of 10 rugby fields, straddling the Castilla-La Mancha and Madrid regions. By late morning, three-quarters of the site had gone up in flames, the Spanish capital’s emergency services tweeted.

Authorities had urged residents nearby to close their doors and windows, and to try and stay away from the smoke, before the evacuation order was made.

“Everything points to the fact that this disaster was deliberate,” the mayor of Seseña, Carlos Velazquez, told Spanish radio, pointing out that the area had been rained on for several days, which makes an accidental ignition unlikely.

The massive pile of tyres started to form in the 1990s when a company began using the site as a temporary depot for old tyres due to be recycled.



But over the years these started to accumulate, resulting in 3m (10ft) high piles. Environmentalists have for years warned that the dump poses a health hazard, and the town of Seseña has lived in fear of the rubber heap catching fire.

These types of blazes are notoriously difficult to put out and have been known to go on for months and even years, as tyres often continue to burn inside even if they are extinguished from the outside, and easily reignite.

Emiliano García-Page, president of Castilla-La Mancha, warned that the fire could last for several days. In a video posted on Twitter by the emergency services, Luis Villarroel, an official at Madrid's firefighting department who was on site, said it was gradually coming under control. "It's confined to a few zones," he said, adding that the smoke was less intense than it had been.

The cloud emanating from the blaze appeared to be moving south over the day, sparing Madrid and its international airport, according to Vicente Garcia, a spokesman for environmental group Ecologists in Action. But he criticised authorities in Madrid and Castilla-La Mancha for years of inaction.

At the end of 2015, both regions decided to organise a call for bids to empty the dump and destroy the tyres, but that has yet to start.

Russia Used a Video Game to 'Prove' Chemical Weapons Claims

By David Axe

Source: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/05/12/russia-used-a-video-game-to-prove-chemical-weapons-claims.html>

The Russian government just made a bullshit claim about chemical weapons in Syria—and used some bullshit graphics from an old video game to help make its argument.

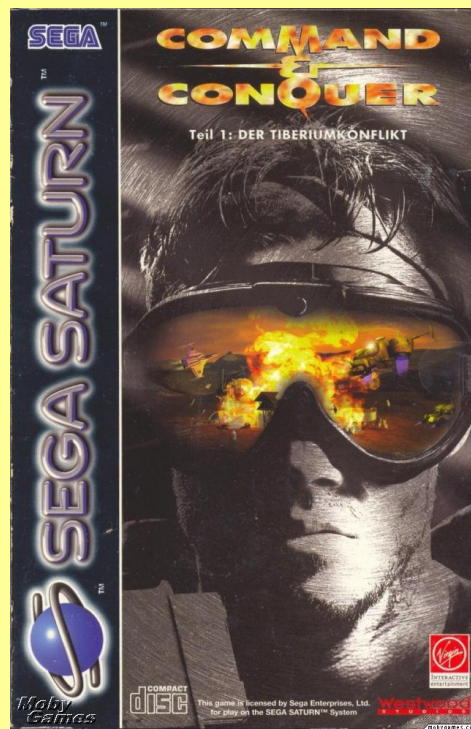


"Several trucks with improvised munitions fitted with chemical warfare agents based on chlorine have arrived in northern territories of Aleppo, which had been controlled by Jabhat Al Nusra terrorists, from the Idlib province," the Russian defense ministry reported on May 11.

The Russian embassy in the United Kingdom

helpfully [tweeted the defense ministry's claim](#)—and included a CGI image of munitions-laden trucks along with the disclaimer that the image was "for illustration purposes only."

But that image was a screenshot from the popular 1995 video game Command and Conquer. Freelance journalist Kelsey Atherton was the first to notice the embassy's rip-



off. “Shout-out to the Russian intern who googled ‘bomb truck,’ found a picture from a video game, slapped on ‘illustration only’ & ran with it,” Atherton tweeted.

Russia’s claims about chemical weapons are as dubious as the artwork. Yes, it’s true that Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria have used chlorine gas. On April 19, Kurdish authorities reported that a mortar round apparently containing a chemical agent struck Peshmerga troops in the town of Makmour in northern Iraq—the second such attack in just a week’s time.

On the same day as that alleged April attack, Turkey’s foreign ministry claimed that Ankara Polatli State Hospital was treating 68 Iraqi Turkmen from the town of Tuz Khurmato in northern Iraq after the men were apparently exposed to chlorine gas.

And the State Department believes that ISIS was responsible for several small-scale sulfur mustard attacks in Iraq and Syria, including on in the Syrian town of Marea in August 2015.

“Given the ISIL interest and intent in weapons of mass destruction capabilities, the United States has been working proactively to disrupt and deny ISIL’s (and other non-state actors’) WMD capabilities,” Elizabeth Trudeau, a State Department spokesperson, told *The Daily Beast*, using an alternate acronym for the militant group. “ISIL’s resorting to chemical warfare and apparent interest in other WMD is a continuation of its barbarism and contempt for international norms and values.”

Even the Russian government has acknowledged attacks by terrorist groups, but has tried to deflect attention from other culprits. “Chemical weapons are spread by terrorists whereas some states turn blind eye on that & go on blaming ‘Assad regime’ for everything,” the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs tweeted on May 7.

In fact, the regime of Syrian president Bashar Al Assad has been responsible for more—and more devastating—chemical attacks in Syria. The regime copped to possessing chemical weapons in July 2012. The following December, an apparent regime gas attack killed seven people in the rebel-held city of Homs.

In early 2013, there were additional gas attacks—again, apparently launched by the regime. In June that year, Ben Rhodes, the U.S. deputy national security adviser for strategic communications, said that President Obama had “high confidence” that the Al Assad regime was behind the chemical assaults. Rhodes claimed U.S. officials had based their assessment on several physiological samples from multiple sources.

The worst chemical attack occurred on Aug. 21, 2013, when thousands of people fell ill and as many as 1,400 died in Ghouta on the outskirts of Damascus, where Syrian forces were locked in bloody combat with rebel forces.

Al Assad denied his forces were responsible for the Ghouta gassing. But on Aug. 30, the White House again said it had “high confidence” that the regime was behind the attack. A French intelligence report backed up the Obama administration’s assertion.

But Russia came to Al Assad’s defense. “It was not the Syrian government that was using chemical weapons,” said Vitaly Churkin, Russia’s ambassador to the United Nations.

Nevertheless, in October 2013 Syria agreed to hand over its *declared* chemical weapons stockpile—a process that was largely complete by the end of 2014. But chemical attacks continued. “Evidence strongly suggests that Syrian government helicopters dropped barrel bombs embedded with cylinders of chlorine gas on three towns in northern Syria in mid-April 2014,” [Human Rights Watch reported](#).

The international Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirmed three more chemical attacks, involving helicopters deploying chlorine gas, in September 2014. While the OPCW did not assign blame, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said the presence of helicopters “strongly points” to the regime, as rebel groups do not possess helicopters.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq continued into 2015 and 2016, with Islamic State and other militant groups including Jaysh Al Islam deploying chlorine gas. Russia seized on the militants’ chemical attacks as “confirmation” that, in fact, the rebels had been responsible for all the gasings.

“The use of chlorine by Jaysh Al Islam fighters in Aleppo is yet further confirmation of what we have been saying all along,” said Maria Zakharova, a Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman said, “that while it has been alleged and widely reported by the



Western media that Damascus used chlorine for military purposes, including against civilians, these attacks were actually perpetrated by terrorist groups.”

That's clearly not true. Both the Syrian regime and militant groups have used chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria. Russia's most recent round of propaganda, complete with the bizarre repurposing of video game graphics, does nothing to change the facts.

David Axe is a reporter, graphic novelist, and author. He runs [War Is Boring](#), a collective of national security reporters. His most recent book is [Shadow Wars: Chasing Conflict in an Era of Peace](#).

Study: **Disrobing** Is Vital Decontamination Method

Source: <http://www.emsworld.com/news/12206333/study-disrobing-is-vital-decontamination-method>



May 01 – **Ninety-nine percent of chemical contamination can be removed by carefully removing clothes and wiping skin with a paper towel or dry wipe,** according to new scientific studies of decontamination methods sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR).

Funded by ASPR's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), researchers from the University of Hertfordshire in England and Public Health England, an agency of the United Kingdom's Department of Health, found that **removing clothes removes up to 90% of chemical contamination and wiping exposed skin**

with a paper towel or wipe removes another 9% of chemical contamination.

After disrobing and wiping with a dry cloth, showering and drying off with a towel or cloth provides additional decontamination, bringing contamination levels down 99.9%.

“Whether we're facing a chemical terrorism attack or an industrial accident, **every minute counts** in protecting health after chemical exposure,” says Dr. Richard Hatchett, BARDA acting director. “This study provides critical scientific evidence of effective actions emergency responders and community partners should consider in their emergency plan.” Based on the evidence-based recommendations called Primary



Response Incident Scene Management or [PRISM](#) for mass patient decontamination, community planners can build scientifically sound actions into emergency response plans. These considerations include places for people to disrobe privately, providing paper towels or wipes, ways to dispose of the contaminated towels, and working with community partners to provide clean clothes or robes after these initial decontamination steps.

The findings also suggest the need to avoid the common practice of using high-pressure water from fire engines to shower clothed patients as the first and primary method of decontamination.

Having people disrobe after chemical exposure before using low-pressure water to shower is part of current standard operating procedures and was emphasized in [national planning guidance](#) issued in 2014 for patient decontamination in mass chemical exposure incidents. Yet researchers found that in actual practice people were not always required to disrobe before showering.

The study results provide scientific evidence that showering in contaminated clothing washes chemicals through to the skin, actually increasing contamination, whereas removing the contaminated clothing prior to showering better protects the skin.

Typically mass patient decontamination takes place at the scene of the incident using firefighting equipment. The studies examined a wide range of variations in this approach to mass patient decontamination—including using various water temperatures, adding the use of soap, and having patients

disrobe before showering—to determine which practices were the most effective in removing chemical contaminants.

The findings also provide new evidence and specific recommendations that enhance the 2014 national planning guidance. That planning guidance addressed a community-wide response to a mass exposure incident with general principles based on the limited scientific evidence available at the time.

Mass patient decontamination at the scene of an incident is one component of the whole community response to a mass exposure chemical incident covered in the 2014 guidance. Prior to the national planning guidance, first responders and emergency medical providers used the past experience of their own agencies and colleagues as the basis for deciding the best decontamination methods.

The guidance and the [PRISM](#) recommendations are part of BARDA's advanced research and development portfolio of medical countermeasures needed in emergencies including medical products to diagnose, prevent, treat, and protect health against chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear threats.

ASPR leads HHS in preparing the nation to respond to and recover from adverse health effects of emergencies, supporting communities' ability to withstand adversity, strengthening health and response systems, and enhancing national health security. HHS is the principal federal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves.

Buying firefighter SCBA for a CBRN world

Source: <http://www.firechief.com/2016/05/11/buying-firefighter-scba-for-a-cbrn-world/>

May 2016 – In a simpler time, buying respiratory protection for your department meant finding the best price for SCBA units that would provide breathable air for firefighters when exposed to the smoke and fire gases of ordinary (Class A) combustibles.

Today, fire chiefs and their staffs have to look at providing respiratory protection for a far greater number of hazards. Those hazards can range from burning plastics and other carbon-based synthetic materials to the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats from terrorists.

There are a host of respiratory products on the market today — SCBA, Air Purifying Respirators (APR) and Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPR) — that meet or exceed the equally large host of applicable rules, regulations, standards and guidelines that manufacturers have to comply with.



But how familiar are you and your staff with those requirements that can have an effect on your purchasing decisions? If your answer is "not very," you're not alone. So here's a look at how to make



sense of the rules of the road for respiratory protection.

HAZWOPER

The **Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard (HAZWOPER), Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1910.120** was the first global document that outlined proper emergency response to hazardous material release incidents.

Personal protective equipment guidelines, including those for respiratory protection, were first defined in Appendix B of the HAZWOPER standard as OSHA/EPA Protection Levels A, B and C.

- Level A: Use where the hazards are unknown or unquantifiable or when the greatest level of skin, respiratory and eye protection is required.
- Level B: Use where the highest level of respiratory protection is necessary, but a lesser level of skin protection is needed.
- Level C: Use where the concentrations and types of airborne substances are known and the criteria for using APR/PAPR are met.

Using these general levels of protection does not ensure that the wearer is adequately protected from CBRN-specific hazards. The HAZWOPER standard itself states that the generic descriptions of the equipment do not fully address the performance of PPE in relationship to specific needs.

Relying solely on PPE being marketed on the basis of OSHA/EPA PPE levels could result in exposure levels above acceptable limits, or an unnecessary reduction in operational effectiveness through lack of mobility, decreased dexterity or reduced work duration.

Currently, no single ensemble can protect the wearer from exposure to all hazards. It is important that the appropriate combination of respirator, protective ensemble and other equipment be selected based on a conclusive hazard assessment at the scene.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health developed seven performance-appropriate standards and test procedures for all classes of respirators that will provide respiratory protection from CBRN agents.

The following also provides comparison information to assist in transitioning from OSHA/EPA Levels A, B, and C to standards-based terminology. Because the OSHA/EPA levels are expressed in general terms, it is not possible to map the levels to specific



standards. However, it is possible to look at specific standards-based ensembles and establish their level based on the standards defined below.

1. NIOSH Statement of Standard for CBRN Open-Circuit SCBA

The purpose of this standard is to specify minimum requirements to determine the effectiveness of open-circuit, positive-pressure SCBA used during entry into a CBRN atmospheres at or above immediately dangerous to life or health, or entry into unknown atmospheres.

- Approval under NIOSH 42 CFR Part 84, Respiratory Protective Devices, Subpart H.
- Compliance with NFPA 1981 Standard on Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for Emergency Services Special Tests under NIOSH 42 CFR 84.63(c).
- Chemical Agent Permeation and Penetration Resistance Against Distilled 1. Sulfur Mustard (HD) and Sarin (GB) Laboratory Respirator Protection Level 2.

2. NIOSH Statement of Standard for CBRN Full Facepiece Air-Purifying Respirator

The purpose of this standard is to specify minimum requirements to determine the effectiveness of full facepiece APR and PAPR used during entry into non-IDLH CBRN atmospheres.

3. NIOSH Statement of Standard for CBRN Power Air-Purifying Respirators

The purpose of this standard is to specify minimum requirements to determine the effectiveness of tight-fitting and loose-fitting PAPR used during entry into a non-IDLH CBRN atmosphere. NIOSH, under the authorization of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, provides a testing approval and certification program assuring commercial availability of safe respiratory protective devices.

4. NFPA 1991 Standard on Vapor-Protective Ensembles for Hazardous Materials Emergencies, 2016 Edition

The purpose of this standard is to establish a minimum level of protection for emergency responders against adverse vapor, liquid-splash and particulate environments during hazardous materials incidents and from specific chemical and biological terrorism agents in vapor, liquid-splash and particulate environments during CBRN terrorism incidents.

This standard matches OSHA/EPA Level A.

5. NFPA 1994 Standard on Protective Ensembles for First Responders to CBRN Terrorism Incidents, 2012 Edition

NFPA 1994 sets performance requirements for protective full-body ensembles used in response to CBRN terrorism incidents.

The standard defines three classes of ensembles — Class 2, 3 and 4 — based on the protection required for different hazard types (vapors, liquids and particulates) and airborne contaminant levels.

- A Class 2 CBRN ensemble protects responders from a vapor or liquid hazard where the concentrations are at or above the IDLH level and require the use of SCBA. This standard matches OSHA/EPA Level B.
- A Class 3 CBRN ensemble protects responders from low levels of vapor or liquid hazard where the concentrations are below the IDLH, permitting the use of CBRN-rated APR or PAPR. This standard matches OSHA/EPA Level C.
- A Class 4 ensemble protects responders from biological hazards or radiological particulate concentrations are below the IDLH permitting the use of CBRN-rated APR or PAPR. The CBRN requirements do not include chemical hazards, but only applies to biological agents and radiological particulates. This standard matches OSHA/EPA Level C.

6. NFPA 1951 Standard on Protective Ensembles for Technical Rescue Operations, 2013 Edition



The NFPA 1951, 2007 Edition contains performance requirements for a CBRN technical rescue protective ensemble for use during entry into non-IDLH CBRN atmospheres. This standard matches OSHA/EPA Level C.

This ensemble category defines limited protection requirements where exposure to physical, thermal, liquid and body fluid-borne pathogen hazards and CBRN agents in vapor, liquid-splash and particulate forms could be encountered.

7. NFPA 1971 Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting, 2013 Edition

NFPA 1971 includes optional protection from CBRN hazards. Only complete ensembles certified as compliant with these additional optional requirements provide this specified level of CBRN protection.

The protection levels set in the NFPA 1971 CBRN option are based on the Class 2 requirements contained in NFPA 1994. This standard matches OSHA/EPA Level B.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: I am not quite sure if now you can choose the right PPE for your people. What I sure of is that lot of studying is required depending on the job description where you are going to use them. And here is another question not yet answered (at least for me): The military goes to war with Level-C PPE. The firefighters goes to war with Level-A. Is war supposed to be an equally opportunity (to survive) job? And another one: In CBRN drills civilian first responder (almost) always enter the Hot Zone in Level A gear. Since WWI – with some minor exceptions – weapons of mass disruption have not changed and their properties are well known. So why Level-A and the operational disadvantages that go with that type of PPE? Only exception are confined spaces with below 30% oxygen levels (SCBA is required), Level-A are very attractive to mass media and populace but what about the first responders inside them?



Spanish tyre dump fire triggers evacuation of 9,000 people

Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/13/spanish-tyre-dump-fire-triggers-evacuation-of-9000-people>

May 13 – Spanish officials have ordered the evacuation of 9,000 people living in a sprawling apartment complex close to a raging tyre dump fire in a town near Madrid.



The massive fire broke out before dawn at the vast tyre



dump, located south of the Spanish capital, sending a spectacular billowing cloud of thick black smoke into

the air that was visible for at least 20 miles (30km).

The Castilla-La Mancha regional government tweeted on Friday night that about 8,000 apartment residents in the town of Seseña had already left their homes.

The government said ambulances were being sent to the complex to evacuate residents with health problems who could not leave on their own.



Earlier, 10 teams of firefighters were sent to try to put out the blaze, but it was still raging more than 12 hours after it started.

The regional government said it had activated an emergency action plan as it believed the fire might last for days.



Firefighters and helicopters were working to extinguish the blaze, which produced a “toxic cloud ... that could affect part of the (nearby) town of Seseña” with its 20,000 residents, the regional government added in a statement.



The dump stretches over some 10 hectares (25 acres), the equivalent of 10 rugby fields, straddling the Castilla-La Mancha and Madrid regions. By late morning, three-quarters of the site had gone up in flames, the Spanish capital’s emergency services tweeted.

Authorities had urged residents nearby to close their doors and windows, and to try and stay away from the smoke, before the evacuation order was made.

“Everything points to the fact that this disaster was deliberate,” the mayor of Seseña, Carlos Velazquez, told Spanish radio, pointing out that the area had been rained on for several days, which makes an accidental ignition unlikely.



The massive pile of tyres started to form in the 1990s when a company began using the site as a temporary depot for old tyres due to be recycled.

But over the years these started to accumulate, resulting in 3m (10ft) high piles. Environmentalists have for years warned that the dump poses a health hazard, and the town of Seseña has lived in fear of the rubber heap catching fire.

These types of blazes are notoriously difficult to put out and have been known to go on for months and even years, as tyres often continue to burn inside even if they are extinguished from the outside, and easily reignite.

Emiliano García-Page, president of Castilla-La Mancha, warned that the fire could last for several days. In a video posted on Twitter by the emergency services, Luis Villarroel, an official at Madrid's firefighting department who was on site, said it was gradually coming under control. "It's confined to a few zones," he said, adding that the smoke was less intense than it had been.

The cloud emanating from the blaze appeared to be moving south over the day, sparing Madrid and its international airport, according to Vicente Garcia, a spokesman for environmental group Ecologists in Action. But he criticised authorities in Madrid and Castilla-La Mancha for years of inaction.

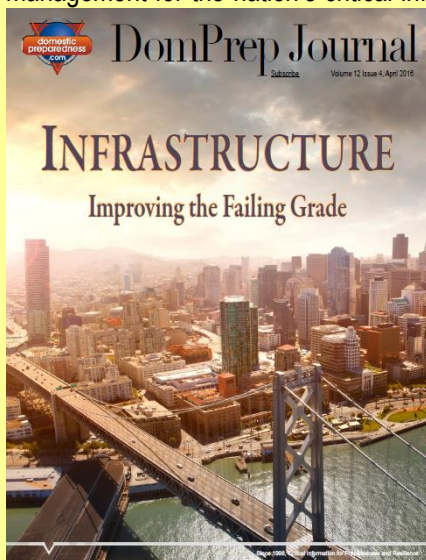
At the end of 2015, both regions decided to organise a call for bids to empty the dump and destroy the tyres, but that has yet to start.

Revisiting PROTECT

By Ian Schaefer

Source: <http://www.domesticpreparedness.com/pub/docs/DPJApril2016.pdf>

Two decades of federally funded research and development culminate in a real-time chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) system for detection, surveillance, and crisis management for the nation's critical infrastructure. Argonne National Laboratory continues to tailor this system for various transit and other critical infrastructure environments.



...

Anatomy of PROTECT

The PROTECT program was designed as an automated hardware and software system to provide both early warning and response management in the event of an incident. By integrating an array of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) sensors, PROTECT provides onsite personnel and emergency responders with accurate information about airborne attacks in large, complex public indoor spaces. Command, control, and communications are coordinated through Argonne-developed software, Chemical Biological Emergency Management Information System (CB-EMIS), which integrates sensor data, mapping, train location,

and atmospheric data to provide comprehensive, real-time situational awareness. The software is also equipped with advanced dispersion modeling capabilities, which provide facility authorities and responders with critical information on potential consequences of airborne threats both above- and below-ground. When an alarm is triggered, the system provides responders with recommended actions based on a complex set of conditions.

► Read the full paper at source's URL.

Ian Schaefer is director of marketing for KD Analytical, a company that provides threat assessment, system engineering, technical support, maintenance



management, and training to critical infrastructure protection and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) response teams at local, state, and federal levels. He serves as product manager for the company's CBRNE maintenance management software-as-a-service, ReadiTrak™, and as a technical lead on projects with mission-critical software components. KD Analytical currently manages maintenance of the detection equipment in one of the PROTECT mass transit installations, and is the exclusive licensee of Argonne National Laboratory's CB-EMIS Software.



DECONTAMINATION GUIDANCE FOR CHEMICAL INCIDENTS

Source: <https://www.medicalcountermeasures.gov/barda/cbrn/decontamination-guidance-for-chemical-incident/>

The **Primary Response Incident Scene Management (PRISM)** series was written to provide authoritative, evidence-based guidance on mass casualty disrobe and decontamination during a chemical incident. The PRISM documentation comprises three volumes:

Volume 1: Strategic Guidance (PDF 2.83MB) - Presents a review of best practices, collates available evidence and identifies areas that require further investigation. The document is relevant to senior incident responders (e.g. Chief Officers) and those responsible for emergency planning and civil contingencies, as it describes the supporting technical information which underpins the rationale for each stage of disrobe and decontamination and highlights potential challenges.

Volume 2: Tactical Guidance (PDF 1.70 MB) - The second volume provides an overview of the processes involved in mass casualty disrobe and decontamination and the rationale which underpins each process. The document does not include supporting technical information or potential challenges. Volume 2 has particular application in the training and exercising of first responders and officials involved with domestic preparedness and emergency management.

Volume 3: Operational Guidance (PDF 1.29 MB) - The salient features of mass casualty disrobe and decontamination are presented in Volume 3. The purpose of Volume 3 is to provide all Federal, State or Tribal first responders with a simple and readily accessible guide to the critical aspects of the initial incident response process

The Islamic State Chemical Weapon Threat in Iraq

Source: <http://www.ww-cts.com/en/news-events/the-islamic-state-chemical-weapon-threat-in-iraq/>

Worldwide Counter Threat Solutions (formerly Allen Vanguard Counter-Threat Solutions) have been monitoring terrorist activity with an emphasis on improvised weapons since the year 2000. This has also included the terrorist use of improvised chemical weapons.

That the Islamic State (IS) are using chemical weapons (both mustard and chlorine gas) in Iraq has been scientifically proven but what is of current concern is their seemingly increasing use which appears to be matched by higher levels of Coalition counter activity against the chemical weapon infrastructure.

Islamic State Expertise

Terrorist chemical weapons are nothing new in Iraq with the predecessors to IS, Al Qaeda in Iraq, launching a number of chlorine gas attacks using VBIEDs (car bombs) over the period 2006 – 2007. However, in late 2015, a report for the European Parliament claimed IS had recruited experts with chemistry, physics and computer science degrees to develop weapons of mass destruction. As a counter to this



increasing threat U.S. and Iraqi special forces captured, 'Dawood Al Bakaar' suspected head of the IS chemical warfare unit in Tal Afar, Ninawa province during February 2016. 'Al Bakaar' has formerly worked for Saddam Hussein developing chemical and biological weapons.

From the chemical agent perspective IS have so far successfully deployed:

- **Mustard Gas:** this is a heavier than air, persistent blister agent, which forms a yellow-brown gas cloud with an odour resembling mustard plants.
- **Chlorine Gas:** this is a heavier than air, non persistent choking agent that forms a yellow-green gas cloud.

Coalition sources however, consider the mustard agent produced as 'low-grade'. Its first noted use by IS was in Syria in August 2015. Chlorine appears to have been first used by the group in Iraq in October 2014.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) claimed that either IS can manufacture their own chemical weapons or they had come across an undeclared stockpile left over from the previous Saddam Hussein regime.

However, according to the CIA director, John Brennan, IS has the ability to manufacture small amounts of chlorine and mustard gas.

In general the delivery methods used by IS are crude and appear to fail to deliver the concentrations required to inflict fatalities on a notable scale. It is not just the delivery technology that dictates a successful attack as dissemination is highly dependent on atmospheric conditions. Thus, weather observations and forecasting are essential to optimize weapon delivery.

IS weapon chemical systems rely on explosive dissemination. They consist of a mortar bomb or rocket that contains a chemical agent and possibly a central "burst" charge that when activated, the agent is expelled laterally. However, this system has its failings as a percentage of the agent is lost by incineration in the initial explosion and by being forced onto the ground.

Recent Chemical Weapon Attack in Iraq

IS carried out two indirect fire attacks targeting the Kurdish town of Taza in Kirkuk province

over the period of 09 and 12 March 2016. In both attacks there were reports of injuries consistent with the use of a blistering agent such as mustard gas. While IS has previously utilised chemical weapons in mortar attacks against both security forces and civilians in Iraq, the number of reported casualties from the recent attacks, at least one child killed and, it is claimed, up to 600 people injured, suggests an increased capability and/or intensity.

The indirect fire attacks against Taza, in which more than 40 rockets were reportedly launched



over the period, represent a possible increase in the capability of IS to manufacture, deploy and deliver an effective mustard gas bombardment. It is unclear whether all of the rockets contained the blistering agent, however the number of casualties reported suggests a degree of dispersion. The use of rockets,



An image (above) of blisters allegedly inflicted upon a Kurdish person in Taza after a rocket attack (Twitter)

as opposed to mortars, would enable IS to attack targets with a salvo effect potentially over a short duration of seconds increasing the chance of both surprise and concentration of the agent.



However, reporting does not confirm this occurred at Taza.

Islamic State Capability

As a comparison to the attack on Taza, the first alleged use of the chemical agent sarin (GB) in a rocket attack, was conducted by pro-Assad forces in the Ghouta district of Damascus, Syria in August 2013. This single attack killed at least 350 people. IS has so far been unable to get even close to replicating the lethality of such weapons though the terror spread and media interest is frequently out of all proportion to the number killed.

It is perhaps because of the very limited casualty results of their chemical weapon programme, despite them targeting predominately Kurdish fighters and civilians who usually have little or no protection from such weapons, that they fail to issue any claims of responsibility for such attacks.

However, the fact that the U.S. were prepared to risk sending in special forces to capture 'Al Bakaar' to gather intelligence rather than kill him in an air strike is a clear indicator that the latest threat from IS is taken very seriously.

Post his capture the U.S. have claimed to have "disrupted and degraded" IS's ability to produce chemical weapons by launching multiple airstrikes in Iraq based on information provided by 'Al Bakaar'. But this activity is likely to merely delay productivity and development rather than prevent it.

Despite the activity of Coalition forces IS will continue to pursue chemical weapons and use both Iraq and Syria as testing grounds to develop this capability from both a technical and tactical standpoint. While currently their efforts have only produced a very limited chemical weapon system IS realise that they require a weapon of mass destruction capability to bring about a global caliphate and will therefore continue to pursue chemical agents as merely one option.

From a western perspective there is a real concern that such technology and capability will continue to be developed by IS and be disseminated outside of the current Middle East conflict zone to be used against western targets to spread terror both at home and abroad.

Assad's forces use sarin gas for first time since 2013 killing of 1,400 civilians

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160518-assads-forces-use-sarin-gas-for-first-time-since-2013-killing-of-1-400-civilians>

May 18 – The Assad regime has used sarin gas for the first time since 2013, dropping a sarin-filled bombs on ISIS fighters outside Damascus, a senior Israeli official has said.

On 21 August 2013 the Syrian military used sarin and VX to kill 1,400 Sunni civilians in a rebel-held suburb of Damascus.

In the wake of the attack — the last of numerous, smaller sarin attacks by the Syrian military against Sunni civilians — Russia and the United States pressured Assad to give up his chemical weapons arsenal and dismantle Syria's chemical weapons manufacturing capabilities.

Western intelligence services have maintained all along that despite Assad's disarmament pledge, the Syrian regime has stashed away large quantities of sarin, and that the latest attack showed that the Assad regime has retained the ability to use the agent.

The *Telegraph* [reports](#) that since June 2014, when Syria's chemical weapons arsenal and manufacturing capability were supposed to have been completely dismantled, Assad's forces [have used](#) relatively unsophisticated chlorine gas on several dozen occasions. The regime refrained, however, from employing sarin until the latest incident.

Israeli officials said that the Syrian air force dropped the bombs filled with sarin just over three weeks ago, aiming to prevent ISIS from [seizing](#) two airbases located north-east of Damascus.

Scores of ISIS fighters were killed, but the exact number is uncertain.

An Israeli official told the *Telegraph* that Assad had concealed a significant proportion of his chemical arsenal. In



particular, he kept some of his sarin gas. “They deceived and they still have it [sarin],” said the official. “Recently, they have decided to use it again. Once a taboo is broken, it becomes a standard weapon that you use. There are no red lines and it [sarin] becomes a standard kind of weapon.”

Syria’s chemical arsenal, the world’s largest, included 1,300 tons of mustard, VX, and sarin gas. **Israel believes that Assad likely disposed of his mustard and VX, in accordance with the deal, but that he chose to keep the sarin, the most lethal agent at his disposal.**

Syria’s chemical disarmament was supervised by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Even before the latest report of Assad’s use of sarin, Ahmet Uzumcu, the OPCW’s director general, had questioned whether Syria was genuinely disarmed in full. “We are not yet there,” he said on at the beginning of the month.

“There are still questions. I am not able to say whether Syria has declared everything or whether Syria continues to possess some chemical weapons or some munitions. I hope that we will be able to clarify the remaining questions.”



IS said to experiment on prisoners with chemical weapons

Source: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/is-said-to-experiment-on-prisoners-with-chemical-weapons/>

May 23 – **The Islamic State terror group is reportedly testing out chemical weapons on prisoners and has moved operations to residential areas.**

According to residents of the IS-held Iraqi city of Mosul, who spoke with the UK’s Telegraph, the terror group set up laboratories in the heart of population centers to avoid being targeted in air strikes by coalition forces.

According to the report, **the Islamic State has a special chemical weapons unit made up of Iraqi scientists who worked under Saddam Hussein.** The head of the unit was captured earlier this year and has reportedly been sharing information with the US-led coalition against the Islamic State.

The new head, according to a citizen journalists group called [Sound and Picture](#),



also a scientist who worked under Hussein’s rule, moved the group’s operations away from the University of Mosul to populated residential areas.

The group says a number of homes were taken over by IS terrorists and residents reported

seeing **a high number of dead animals in trash bins, in a suggested indication of chemical testing.**

The group also says prisoners of IS have been the subjects of testing of such weapons, namely chlorine and mustard gas.

According to the report, **residents living near an IS prison in al-Andalus, have reported breathing difficulties and severe rashes among children, which may indicate exposure to the substances.**

The terror group is believed to have large quantities of chlorine and has been experimenting with mustard gas.

The group has already used chemical weapons in attacks against Syrian state troops and Kurdish Peshmerga forces.

Last month, the group mounted a deadly gas attack against Syrian troops at a besieged eastern airbase outside the divided eastern city of Deir el-Zour, state news agency SANA said.

SANA did not say precisely how many soldiers had been killed in the attack.

“Daesh (IS) terrorists attacked Deir el-Zour military airport with rockets carrying mustard gas, causing some people to suffocate,” it reported late Monday.

On March 9, a suspected IS gas attack on the Iraqi town of Taza, south of Kirkuk, killed three children and wounded some 1,500 people, with injuries ranging from



burns to rashes and respiratory problems.

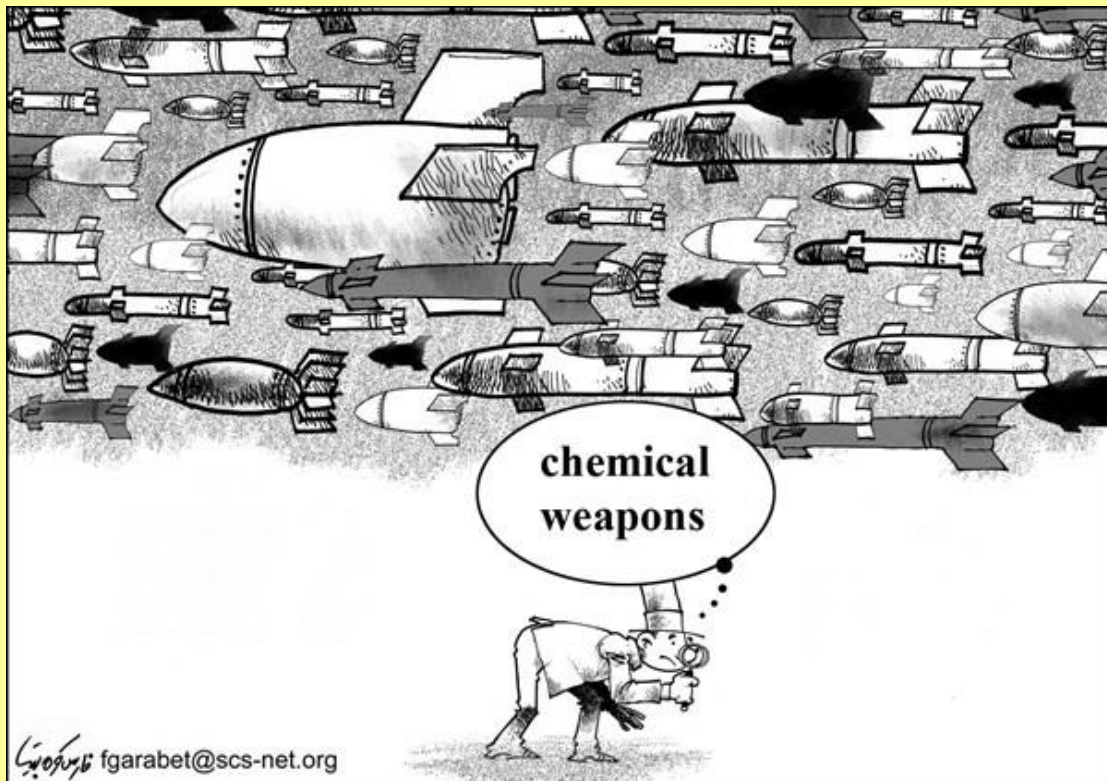
While the chemical agents allegedly used by IS so far have been among their least effective weapons, the psychological impact on civilians is considerable.

A total of 25,000 people fled their homes in and around Taza last month, fearing another attack. Deir el-Zour province is vital for Islamic State because it lies between its de facto Syrian and Iraqi capitals Raqqa and Mosul.

The reporter of “Sound and Picture” obtained information from private sources within ISIS that they used rabbits and dogs in experiments to find out the proportion of the toxic materials, that were needed to kill a dog, to use it as a signal for evacuation. The source also pointed out that ISIS got special devices that determine the amount of radiation due to the fear of the lives of their members.

These sightings were not made in the agricultural neighborhood only, but also in the neighborhoods of Almohandseen and Alba’ath, which feature luxury houses that are large and detached. Most of the inhabitants were adherents of the Christian religion and have been displaced to dominate the neighborhood and turn some of the houses into headquarters and distribute the other houses to the families of the members.

In the neighborhood of Almohandseen nearly seven closed cars, “pick-ups” and a large truck have been monitored driving to a house at night. Barking dogs could be heard in the house, which was characterized by the absence of any ISIS logo on it or even guards. Also in the Alba’ath neighborhood three fully covered medium trucks were seen and odors started to emit from the house after ISIS members have entered it for one week.



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Infectious outbreaks must be combatted strategically: Experts

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160425-infectious-outbreaks-must-be-combatted-strategically-experts>

Apr 25 – **New funding is not enough to guarantee success against emerging infectious diseases around the world. Rather, good governance, a long-term technology investment strategy, and strong product management skills are essential,** say a Dartmouth College researcher and her co-author. Their article appears in the journal *Nature Biotechnology*.

Kendall Hoyt, an assistant professor at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth and an expert in biosecurity, and Richard Hatchett, the acting director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, propose a new way to develop countermeasures for Ebola, Zika, and other emerging infectious diseases. Dartmouth College reports that as momentum builds for an international effort to develop drugs and vaccines for emerging infectious diseases, the duo examined U.S. biodefense programs to understand approaches that might work and developed a global strategy for countermeasure development.

“As infectious outbreaks such as SARS, MERS, Ebola, and Zika become the new norm, there is growing recognition that governments

and philanthropic organizations need to pool funds to develop countermeasures for these diseases,” Hoyt says. “Money is not enough, however. Without strong governance, a clear technology strategy and good product management, precious public funds will be wasted and we will continue to battle public health emergencies of international concern without the aid of medical countermeasures.”

In February, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Zika virus a public health emergency, setting a now familiar scenario into motion. As with previous infectious disease outbreaks — HIV/AIDS, severe acute respiratory stress (SARS) disorder, pandemic flu, and most recently Ebola — Zika will spark an international race to develop new vaccines.

“The problem is that vaccines can take over a decade to develop,” Hoyt says. “The development of new biomedical countermeasures — vaccines, therapies and diagnostic — requires the coordination of a wide number of institutional and industry actors to succeed. We argue that international efforts to develop countermeasures for emerging infectious diseases should build on lessons learned from U.S. programs to develop closely related biodefense products.”

— *Read more in Kendall Hoyt and Richard Hatchett, “Preparing for the next Zika,” [Nature Biotechnology](#) 34, no. 4 (2016): 384-86.*

Tech researcher gets national award for bioterrorism-related work

Source: <http://lubbockonline.com/filed-online/2016-04-25/tech-researcher-gets-national-award-bioterrorism-related-work#.Vx80dXowogV>



Apr 25 – A Texas Tech researcher will be honored Tuesday for her work in ensuring protection from bioterrorism.

Dr. Annette Sobel, the executive for Critical Infrastructure Protection and Health Security Initiatives at Tech, will receive the honor 2015 Henry L. Taylor Founder’s Award at a luncheon in Atlantic City, New Jersey, according to a news release from Tech.



“The award, presented by the Aerospace Human Factors Association, recognizes the work of outstanding individuals in the field of aerospace human factors,” the release states.

Sobel, a former major general in the Arizona Air National Guard, joined Tech in 2014 and is currently an associate professor in the department of medical education and graduate school of Biomedical Sciences at Tech’s Health Sciences Center.

“Dr. Sobel has an impressive background in medicine and research of the human condition, which lends to her credibility in receiving this honor,” Tech interim president John Opperman said. “The diversity of her experiences has been a wonderful asset to Texas Tech University and the Health Sciences Center, and I congratulate her on achieving this award.”

Italian research reveals new disaster response opportunities provided by a military-designed anti shock drug

By Francesco Frezzetti

Source: <https://www.crisis-response.com/comment/blogpost.php?post=217>



A white blood cell engulfing a bacteria. The new drug, TCS10, has been shown to block a cytokine storm during deep haemorrhagic shock and surgical trauma (photo: 123rf/Sebastian Kaulitzki)

Feb 2016 – Italian military research, conducted by the framework convention composed by the Defence Ministry and the university spin-off Health Ricerca e Sviluppo (HR&S, Italy) within the National Plan of Military Research, has recently tested the clinical lifesaving anti-shock effects of a melanocortin-based drug. This drug’s main mechanism of action is related to a peculiar antagonist of Systemic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (SIRS),

complication that plays a major role in acute mortality rate and delayed-onset lethal complications in the shock-affected person.

According to the phase III of the clinical trial, **this drug, named TCS10, showed safety and effectiveness in treatment of critically ill patients with very high survival rate and low delivery of blood transfusion.** Such clinical outcome was associated with blocking a cytokine storm during deep haemorrhagic shock and surgical trauma, without any notable side effect.

Cytokine storm is the layman’s term for a cytokine cascade or hypercytokinemia, essentially an overactive immune response. This is when a body detects foreign micro-organisms indicating an infection and responds by over-protecting the site of infection, producing and sending so many antibodies to the site that they collect in a cytokine storm. The primary symptoms of cytokine storm are high fever, redness, extreme fatigue and nausea; in some cases the immune reaction may be fatal.

TCS10 is currently undergoing final market procedures under the control of the Regulatory Affairs by the Defence Agency Industries.



The drug shows promise for treating medical conditions such as ‘crush syndrome’ caused by entrapment in rubble after an earthquake (photo: Ratindra Khatri, Nepal earthquake)



Despite the fact this research was conducted for clinical dual-use purposes – military and civilian – the effectiveness of TCS10 prompted the exploration of new potential for **a first-strike drug in all settings in which tactical combat casualty care is applied, including disaster scenarios where different kinds of shock can frequently be observed.**

As highlighted in the 2012 guidelines of the International Search And Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), medical conditions such as ‘Crush Syndrome’, caused by entrapment under rubble after an earthquake or other type of sudden onset disaster, can easily lead to shock and lethal delayed complications if not promptly treated.

Considering the capacity of TCS10 to expand the time window in which first medical care can be successfully provided in case of oncoming shock, HR&S researchers designed a new track- and-trigger- system and right- setting- first time by estimating and analysing the gaming scenario during a mass-casualty event. Data modelling showed the high life-saving impact of the drug applying different logistic solutions to existing policies both of ‘stay and play’ and ‘scoop and run’.

But cytokine storm is observed not only in the case of trauma-related sudden-onset disasters; this type of complication is also typical of severe infections and diseases such as Ebola and other kinds of haemorrhagic fevers.

The first months of 2014 signalled the beginning of the worst outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) or, indeed, of any haemorrhagic fever in history. During this epidemic, over 11,300 people died, mostly in West Africa, from haemorrhage, shock, and multiple organ failure resulting from cytokine storms being the major cause of death.

Being aware of the characteristics of TCS10, HR&S, the Defence Agency Industries, and the Ministry of Defence agreed to start using TCS10 as life-saving medicine in Sierra Leone. On November 20, a 50-year-old male physician started showing the first symptoms of EVD contracted while working with Emergency in Sierra Leone. He was promptly repatriated and hospitalised at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (INMI) ‘Lazzaro Spallanzani’, a Scientific Research and Health Care Institute (IRCCS) in Rome, the Minister of Health and the Italian Pharmaceutical Agency authorised the use of melanocortin in the treatment of EVD, in order to control the cytokine storm.

Initially the patient’s immunological condition was critical; however, on day five a steady improvement of his immune system was recorded, likely due to the administration of the melanocortin. The results were presented in a public lecture by Prof. Ippolito, the Scientific Director of INMI Lazzaro Spallanzani.

Although preliminary, the results so far obtained with the use of TCS10 highlighted potential new applications and scenarios in the field of disaster response. However, further applied research is needed to ensure that context-specific and resource-based constraints are accounted for, allowing for the definition of new models and games in the field of health in emergencies.

Francesco Frezetti is Disaster Management specialist, Master of Disaster Management from University of Copenhagen.

Clinical trial for experimental Ebola drug publishes results

Source: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/309334.php>

Apr 20 – Results of the Wellcome Trust funded trial of the experimental anti-Ebola drug TKM-130803 have been published April 19 in *PLOS Medicine*. Using a novel approach designed to get rapid indications of a drug's effectiveness, the trial showed that at the dose given the drug did not improve survival compared to historic controls.

TKM-130803 interferes with the production of two essential Ebola virus proteins and has been shown to improve survival when given to monkeys experimentally infected with Ebola virus.

Scientists from the University of Oxford and Sierra Leone worked with the humanitarian organisation GOAL Global, the World Health Organisation, and collaborators from a number of other institutions to test whether TKM-130803 could improve survival in adults with Ebola infection.



The researchers used a new approach to generate early evidence of effectiveness or ineffectiveness. This method can be used as a tool to screen potential therapies and determine the need for further studies (including randomised controlled trials) during an epidemic. The approach meant that the study was quickly able to reach a pre-defined point to stop the trial.

The study took place at the GOAL Ebola Treatment Centre in Port Loko, Sierra Leone between 11 March and 15 June 2015. Patients with laboratory-confirmed Ebola who volunteered to participate in the trial were given a once daily infusion of TKM-130803 for up to seven days. After 14 patients had received TKM-130803 the pre-specified statistical endpoint was reached and the trial was stopped. Out of twelve patients given TKM-130803 who survived the first 48 hours, nine died and three survived. However, most of the patients entering the Ebola Treatment Centre at the time the study was enrolling, which included those given TKM-130803, had very severe Ebola disease, so further studies are needed to assess if the drug might provide a benefit in patients with less severe disease.

Professor Peter Horby, Chief Investigator of the study, said: 'Thanks to the tremendous efforts of everyone involved we now have a much clearer picture of the potential of this drug. We are obviously disappointed that it does not seem to offer a benefit to patients with severe Ebola but it remains to be seen if the drug will help those with less severe illness. The drug was well tolerated by all of the patients and we've learnt a lot about giving the drug to patients with Ebola. Once we get the results of on-going tests of the drug concentration in the patients' blood we will have a better understanding of the optimal dose for any further studies.'

Cellphone-sized device detects the Ebola virus quickly

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160428-cellphonesized-device-detects-the-ebola-virus-quickly>

Apr 28 – The worst of the recent Ebola epidemic is over, but the threat of future outbreaks lingers. Monitoring the virus requires laboratories with trained personnel, which limits how rapidly tests can be done. Now scientists report in ACS' journal *Analytical Chemistry* a handheld instrument that detects



Ebola quickly and could be used in remote locations.

The ACS says that the gold standard method for identifying the Ebola virus in a blood sample requires packaging samples in cooled containers and sending them to specialized

laboratories, often far away from where patients live. Lab personnel use a method called reverse-transcription polymerase chain reaction, or RT-PCR, to check for the virus. The prolonged testing process delays detection, treatment and real-time monitoring of viral loads in body fluids that can harbor the virus even after it's no longer detected in blood. To make reliable and fast Ebola detection more accessible, Pavel Neuzil and colleagues developed a cellphone-sized device, which they reported in a previous paper.

In their latest study, the researchers designed and tested the instrument, which could simultaneously perform four



RT-PCRs that included two controls and two patient blood samples. Conventional tests require several hours to more than a day for results to come in. The new process took less than 37 minutes, and the amount of blood required was minute and could potentially come from just a finger prick. The device successfully detected the Ebola RNA. In addition to diagnosing the illness, the test also yielded information about how many RNA copies each sample contained. In addition to diagnosing the illness, they say that the tool could also potentially help health care workers track patients' viral loads in semen, breast milk and eye fluids after recovery.

— Read more in Christian D. Ahrberg et al., “Palm-Sized Device for Point-of-Care Ebola Detection,” *Analytical Chemistry*, Article ASAP (11 April 2016).

India to Set-up Specialised Laboratories to Tackle Bio Terrorism

Source: <http://pragativadi.com/site/details?nid=656>



Apr 29 – As risk of bio-terrorism looms large on the world following several terror outfits—ISIS being at the forefront—it seems India has started preparation on its own to tackle it. According to a recent report, preparations are already on the part of the Central Government to set up a pan Indian network of laboratories to deal with the menace.

If to go by the recent statement of Union minister of state for Health and Family Welfare Shripad Yesso Naik, these laboratories to be named as Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDL) would be equipped with hi-tech diagnosis equipments to detect 30-35 types of viruses. With enhanced diagnostic capabilities to deal with surveillance and outbreaks of high risk group viral pathogens causing viral hemorrhagic fevers and respiratory infections, these laboratories would be proved crucial to deal with any biological attack. **The possible victimisation of bioterrorism—which is**

always there for India--could well be tackled by a chain of 160 laboratories planned to be erected under this proposal, spreading across the country.

The most significant part of VRDL proposal is that, no help of any foreign agency would be taken for it. It would be an cent per cent indigenous initiative. The VRDLs would be a three-tiered national network of laboratories developed on the basis of the department of health research's ongoing research scheme, Establishment of network of Laboratories for Managing Epidemics and Natural Calamities.

Brazilian study links Zika virus to more neurological disorders

Source: <http://www.shanghaidaily.com/world/Brazilian-study-links-Zika-virus-to-more-neurological-disorders/shdaily.shtml>

Apr 30 – **Brazilian medical study reveals a link between the mosquito-borne virus Zika and acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM), a condition often misdiagnosed as multiple sclerosis (MS).**

The study, the findings of which was released on Friday, was carried out by a hospital in Recife, capital of the northeastern Pernambuco state worst affected by the Zika epidemic.

The Zika epidemic has swept through Brazil and much of Latin America in the past two years. Pernambuco has seen a sharp rise in the number of microcephaly cases, babies born with abnormally small heads, leading health authorities to believe that it is Zika-related, though there has as yet been no definite scientific proof.

Brazilian news network Globo reported on Friday that doctors at the hospital's department of neurology tested samples taken from 180 patients infected with the Zika virus and

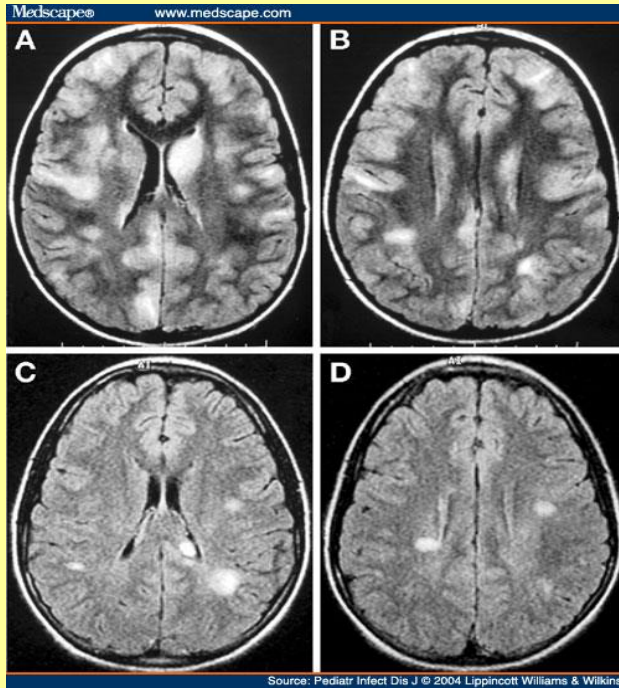


showing neurological symptoms, and found 30 of them had developed ADEM, encephalitis or myelitis. Another 60 patients came down with Guillain-Barre syndrome, a disorder previously associated with Zika that causes the immune system to mistakenly attack the nervous system, leading to muscle weakness and paralysis.

"Without a doubt there is a link between the diseases and the Zika virus," Lucia Brito, head of the medical team, told the news agency.

Brito said that ADEM is a more complicated condition in which "the patient's level of consciousness can change. In other words, they can enter into a coma."

Of those with ADEM, two continue to suffer with symptoms almost a year after the onset of the disease, including "a boy with motor deficit and an adult with motor difficulty and impaired vision," Brito said.



A and B, ADEM. Axial FLAIR spin-echo MR scan shows multifocal subcortical hyperintense foci with confluent white matter disease in basal ganglia.

C and D, MS. Axial FLAIR spin-echo MR scans show high signal foci similar to ADEM. MS lesions were more likely enhancing, ovoid, periventricular and perpendicular to the long axis of the ventricles than ADEM lesions

attack of inflammation (swelling) in the brain and spinal cord and occasionally the optic nerves that damages the brain's myelin (the white coating of nerve fibers)."

Unlike MS, which is gradual, ADEM appears rapidly and is passing, though it can leave permanent damage. Common symptoms include rapid onset fever, weakness and loss of vision, and in extreme cases, coma.

Mosquitos that carries the Zika virus also transmit dengue and chikungunya.

Brazil has reported 31,616 confirmed cases of Zika and over 90,000 suspected cases, with three deaths caused by the disease.

On Feb. 1, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared "the cluster of microcephaly cases and other neurological disorders a health emergency" and called for concerted efforts to curb the spread of Zika



The Flu Pandemic Game

Source: <http://www.continuitycentral.com/flu-pandemic-game.pdf>



The Flu Pandemic Game is a business continuity game for 3 to 60 players. The aim of the game is to help players appreciate the impact of a possible influenza pandemic on their own businesses. The Game simulates the effects of a flu pandemic on staffing in an imaginary group of small businesses.

The Game can be adapted easily to make it specific to your own



organisation. You can use it to raise general awareness of business continuity planning, to help your organisation or teams within your organisation identify business continuity issues for their own planning, or as a simulation exercise to test how your business continuity plan would work in practice.

Who can play the Flu Pandemic Game?

Anyone can play – you don't need any special prior knowledge or expertise. Players play the game in groups of between three and six so people with disabilities or learning difficulties can be supported.

What do you need to play?

- 3 to 12 players (teams may be formed if there are more participants)
- The Flu Pandemic Game resource pack
- dice – at least one per team and preferably one per person
- pens or pencils

How long does the game take?

With a typical group of players the game usually lasts between 45 minutes and 1 hour, but most players appreciate having an additional half hour for discussion afterwards.

Kenya police 'foil anthrax attack' by 'IS-linked group'

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-36198561>

May 04 – **Kenyan police say they have foiled a "large-scale" biological attack using anthrax, by a terror group with links to so-called Islamic State (IS).**



A man, his wife and another woman have been arrested. Rewards have been offered for two other men.

Police did not name the network, but said it stretches across the country and outside its borders, including to Somalia, Libya and Syria.

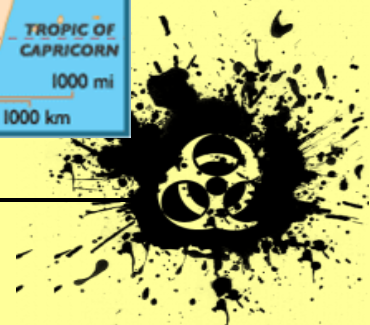
There was no immediate independent confirmation.

In a statement, the police said **Mohammed Abdi Ali, a medical intern at a Kenyan hospital,** was in charge of a "terror network... planning large-scale attacks akin to the Westgate Mall attack" in which 67 people were killed in 2013 in Kenya's capital, Nairobi.

They say he was also "engaged in the active radicalisation" of students and helped recruit Kenyans "to join terror groups in Libya and Syria".

The statement says Mr Ali's network included medical experts who could help organise a biological attack using anthrax.

His wife, Nuseiba Mohammed Haji, a medical student, was also arrested, in Uganda, as was a friend, Fatuma Mohammed Hanshi.



The police said accomplices of Mr Ali had gone in to hiding, including Ahmed Hish and Farah Dagane, who are medical interns.

Police described them as "armed and dangerous" and offered two million Kenyan shillings (£14,000; \$20,000) for information leading to their apprehension.

Analysis: Alastair Leithead, BBC News, Africa correspondent

The statement from Kenya's police chief Joseph Boinnet described the arrests as being linked to "a terror plot by an East African terror group network that has links to Isil (Islamic State)".

But there is no detail as to the group's name, nor evidence for its affiliation to IS. A group calling itself **Jahba East Africa** has recently emerged and pledged allegiance to IS, but it is not known if they are connected to the "foiled terror plot", as police described it.

There is a split within the Somalia-based militant Islamist group al-Shabab over allegiance to either al-Qaeda or IS.

While there are thought to be some IS-linked militants fighting in Somalia, Emmanuel Kisiangani from the Institute for Security Studies in Nairobi believes it is unlikely they would target Kenya.

"I cannot discount the idea they would be recruiting for Syria, but in targeting Kenya I don't see any connection, even remotely," he said.

Mustafa Ali, an expert in conflict resolution and violent extremism in Kenya, said an anthrax attack in Kenya was "less likely, but then it was less likely the US would be attacked in that way in 2001", referring to a series of attacks that left five people dead.

He said the aim of IS is to create terror anywhere they are able to carry out attacks.

Is the man with mouse poison a bioterrorist or prankster?

Source: <http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2016/05/is-man-with-mouse-poison-sprayer-a-bioterrorism-or-a-wanna-be/#.Vy2RI3owogU>

May 05 – The man taken into custody by the FBI on Tuesday was arraigned today in Michigan's 15th District Court in Ann Arbor on two counts of poisoning food, drink, medicine or water supply, causing property damages and two counts poisoning drink, medicine or water supply.

The state charges were brought against 29-year-old Kyle Andrew Bessemer of Ann Arbor. A \$250,000



cash bond was set and should Bessemer manage to post it, he will be subject to house arrest. According to the complaint, the defendant has a history of mental illness and may have thought someone wanted to poison him. His probable cause hearing is scheduled for May 12. When someone sets out to intentionally poison food, the dividing line between bioterrorism and just a prank or malicious mischief comes down to motive

and, more importantly, whether anyone was sickened or worse.

The motive of the man the FBI has in custody for spraying a mixture that included mouse poison on unpackaged foods at grocery stores in the Ann Arbor, MI, area isn't yet known. Michigan health officials say they don't know of anyone who was sickened.

The man, though not yet charged or identified, is said to have mixed alcohol-based hand-sanitizer, water, and mouse poison. Then he went to three Ann Arbor grocery stores and sprayed it on fresh produce and open food bars. He admitted to spraying the poison



mixture at Whole Foods Market, 990 W. Eisenhower Parkway; Meijer, 3145 Ann Arbor-Saline Road; and Plum Market; 375 North Maple Road.

Officials report he may have repeated the routine at stores in the Saginaw and Midland. Jennifer Eisner, spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, said there hasn't been an uptick in poison control reports or specific illnesses.

The health officials figure that since the man sprayed fresh foods, they've probably been consumed. If so, the threat is passed.

The intentional adulteration of food in interstate commerce is one possible federal felony charge that could be filed against the man who was arrested Tuesday. His image was captured by in-store video cameras.

State and local health officials, along with local police in the cities involved, are working with the FBI on the ongoing investigation.

Incidents of bioterrorism are rare and only one has involved food in the U.S. in the last 32 years. That came in the Oregon town along the Columbia River known as The Dalles.

In September 1984 followers of the cult leader Baghran Shree Rajneesh sought to sway a county election by poisoning the salad bars at ten local restaurants. The cult succeeded in sickening 751 area residents, sending 45 to area hospitals.

The poison used was salmonella and for a time there was doubt about whether it was an intentional act. An Oregon State Police-FBI task force cracked the case by finding the outbreak strain of salmonella inside a Rajneeshpuram medical laboratory. Two top cult officials were convicted on charges of attempted murder and served 29 months in a federal prison.

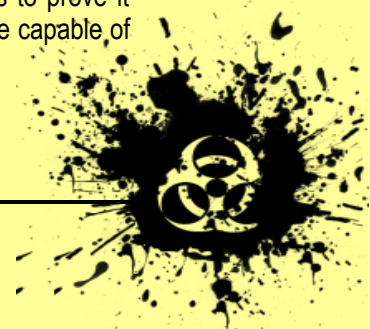
At the time, the Rajneesh followers had moved into the town of Antelope, OR, and by sickening so many residents of The Dalles around election day, they had hoped to win a county office.

Need to survive a bio-terrorist attack? Jump into a Tesla

Source: <http://www.neowin.net/news/need-to-survive-a-bio-terrorist-attack-jump-into-a-tesla>



May 04 – Elon Musk is changing the world around him. From the upcoming affordable Tesla 3 electric vehicle to Powerwall that can store energy for your home to run on, Musk's Tesla is building products that were once thought as part of a distant future. The future is now and Tesla continues to prove it through demonstrations of its most interesting features - one of which was just proven to be capable of saving lives in the most extreme situations.

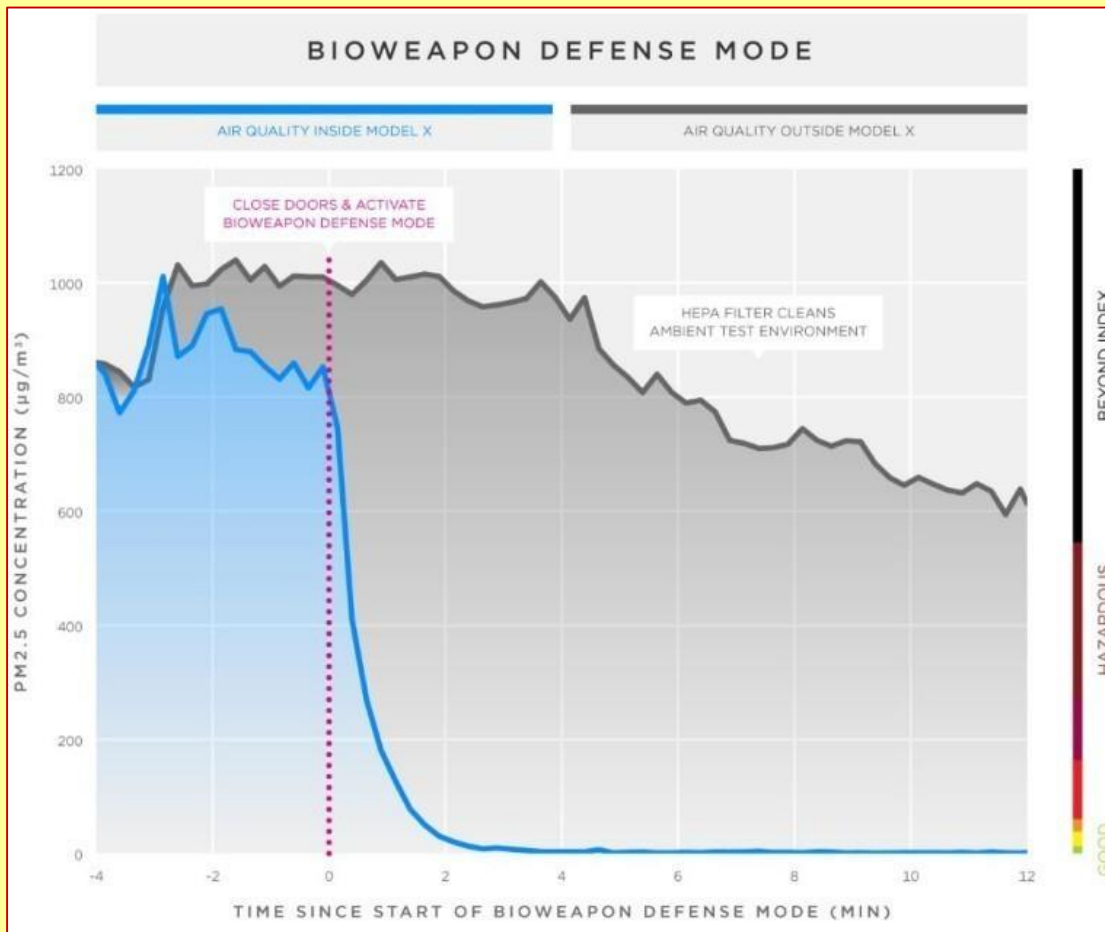




Tesla's "Bioweapon Defense Mode" debuted with the Model X, the company's EV SUV. The mode engages HEPA filters to scrub the air inside of the cabin of a Tesla vehicle when air quality deteriorates to sub-standard levels. **Recently, Tesla wanted to prove its Bioweapon Defense Mode was the real deal, so the company put it through the most extreme situations to see how it held up.** The

results are impressive.

A Tesla Model X was surrounded by a bubble that would hold an extremely-harmful environment inside of it, guaranteeing anything that lived/breathed inside of it would surely die from the lethal pollutants in the air. The pollution levels were pushed up to 1,000 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ PM2.5 (Particulate Matter that is 2.5 micrometers in diameter - small enough to breathe in and pass through some air filter systems). For those that aren't aware of how bad the air is at that point, "good" quality air is rated at a maximum of 12 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Breathing air that had a pollutant rating of 1,000 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ is considered a "military grade bio attack".



Once the environment inside the bubble was set, the Tesla X Bioweapon Defense Mode was engaged. In the 12 minutes following the filtration system being engaged, the pollutants inside the cabin, which initially matched those outside of the car, were lowered so far that pollutants were undetectable inside the Model X. Even better, as the air inside of the Tesla X began to become safe to breath, the air outside of the Tesla X also



improved. **According to Tesla's findings, the air outside of the Tesla X that had reached 1,000 µg/m3 of PM2.5 was scrubbed of 40% of pollutants - still very harmful but a dramatic decrease given the primary intended use of the Bioweapon Defense Mode.** Tesla says that the filtration system will scrub harmful particles in the air such as gaseous pollutants, bacteria, viruses, pollen and mold spores.

So, in the event you need to escape harmful or deadly pollutants in the air, jump into a nearby Tesla Model X or Model S and engage Bioweapon Defense Mode. It may sound like an over-hyped button in a video game but Tesla has proven it could potentially save your life. Or at least make it a little easier to breathe

Homeland Security to release harmless gas in NYC subway system for bioterrorism drill

Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/dhs-release-harmless-gas-nyc-subway-bioterrorism-drill-article-1.2628119>

May 06 – Don't hold your breath, it's only a test.

The Department of Homeland Security will release “harmless particle materials” in the city’s subway system next week.

The “non-toxic, safe gas material” will be released at subway stations in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens in order to understand where hazardous material would travel in the event of a biological terrorist attack.



“This is important information to

help local authorities to enhance their emergency preparedness,” DHS Program Manager Dr. Donald Bansleben said Friday.

Officials said there is currently no credible threat against either New York City or the subway system.

Zika Virus Map Shows a United States Outbreak is Up Next

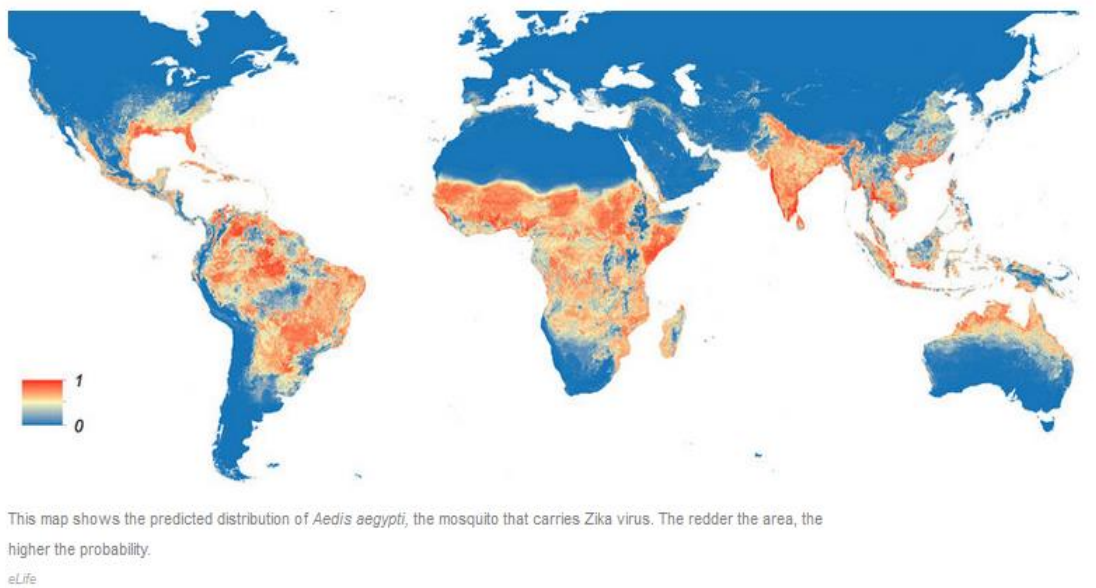
By Glynn Cosker (Managing Editor, In Homeland Security)

Source: <http://inhomeandsecurity.com/zika-virus-map-shows-america-next/>

Earlier this week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) finally, unequivocally confirmed that the [Zika virus causes microcephaly in infants](#) – confirming what most scientists had long known. However, the story doesn't end there because – in a new development – the Zika virus is also now known to cause [autoimmune diseases in adults](#) too. There is also alarming evidence that the virus can [cause the deadly brain ailments](#) meningitis and encephalitis in people of all ages.

What was a South American issue six months ago is soon to become a North American issue with an outbreak in the U.S. this summer almost inevitable, according to health officials. The virus is already infecting people in Puerto Rico and Mexico and – when one looks at the Zika virus map below – it's easy to see why America is next. The map shows the likelihood of an outbreak.





The CDC is also on record for stating that the number of disease-carrying mosquitoes (named *Aedes aegypti*) is much higher than previous estimates, and health officials have confirmed that the virus doesn't need the nasty little insect to spread; it's also a sexually-transmitted disease with the [first confirmed case of male-to-male sexual transmittal](#) announced Friday in Texas; a man recently returned from a trip became sick with classic Zika virus symptoms and infected his partner of 10 years who soon came down with the same symptoms. Blood tests confirmed that both men had the Zika virus.

What does all of this mean for the general American public, and how contagious is the Zika virus? Last week, some scientists estimated the impact by calculating the reproduction number, or "R0" (that's an R followed by a zero). In layman terms, it's a scientific equation that predicts the average number of people who will catch a disease from another infected person during an outbreak.

For instance, as reported by NPR, the nation of Colombia shows that Zika's R0 was around four, i.e., each individual who contracted the virus, subsequently spread it to about four other people during the current Colombian outbreak. To give that R0 number some context, the R0 figure for the West African outbreak of Ebola in 2014 was around 1.75. However, Ebola is not spread by mosquitoes, while Zika is.

"An R0 of four tells you that you need to move fast, early on in an outbreak, to break transmission," Dr. Scott Lillibridge told NPR. Dr. Lillibridge is an epidemiologist at the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Public Health. "Obviously, we're going to do mosquito control here in the U.S. So we're going to interrupt Zika transmission."

Prevention is the key to keeping the impact lower in the United States – simple placement of screen doors and sensible clothing goes a long way to prevent mosquito bites. That said, millions of people are bitten every summer in America, especially in southern states where the Zika virus is predicted to be most prevalent. What is Zika's R0 in America? Experts believe it's similar to a devastating disease that affects the Western Hemisphere but rarely affects the Eastern Hemisphere: Dengue Fever. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) recently tweeted:

Dengue infects millions of people in Asia and the rest of the Western Hemisphere each year, including a recent outbreak on Hawaii's Big Island.

Given that the WHO states that the risk of catching Dengue correlates to the risk of catching Zika – and given the devastating effects the latter disease has on newborns – the Zika virus map above becomes more ominous.



Ebola persistence in semen

Source: <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2016/05/ebola-scan-may-05-2016>

A study of Ebola virus disease survivors in Guinea has added to previous evidence that the virus can persist for as long as 9 months in the semen of survivors, reinforcing the concern about a risk of sexual transmission for months after recovery.

An international team of researchers tested 98 semen samples from 68 Ebola survivors in Conakry and Macenta, Guinea, from March through October 2015, according to their May 3 report in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases*. Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) results for Ebola RNA were positive for 10 samples collected from eight men up to 276 days (9 months) after their first symptoms.

The proportion of specimens that tested positive decreased over time, with positive results for 28.6% of specimens (4 of 14) obtained between 1 and 3 months after disease onset, 16.7% (3 of 18) collected at 4 to 6 months, and 6.5% (2 of 31) obtained at 7 to 9 months, the report says.

The researchers did not determine whether the samples contained infectious virus. "Semen probably does not remain infectious during the whole period, and viral isolation and sequencing will soon be performed . . . to determine the infectivity of samples," they wrote.

In a study published in October 2015, Ebola RNA was found in the semen of 11 of 43 Ebola survivors who were tested between 7 and 9 months after their illness. And reports published in 2015 suggested that an Ebola case in a Liberian woman was probably caused by sexual transmission from her husband, an Ebola survivor.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended that Ebola survivors abstain from sex or use condoms for up to 6 months after Ebola infection if semen testing is unavailable.

Ebola virus can reside in a survivor's semen up to 12 months, study finds

Source: <http://www.africanews.com/2016/05/05/ebola-virus-can-reside-in-a-survivor-s-semen-up-to-12-months-study-finds/>

May 05 – A new study carried out in Guinea confirms that the Ebola virus may remain in a survivor's semen up to one year.

The new report validates the one conducted in October 2015 in Sierra Leone.

Countries affected by the disease, and which had attracted attention believe that fragments of the virus could remain permanently in the body of survivors and constitute a danger for their spouses .

The French and Guinean researchers who have followed the 450 healed patients have performed 98 levels of sperm test on 68 men. The Ebola virus has been detected on 8 of them 9 months after they were healed.

The researchers also noted that the persistence of the virus in the seminal fluid decreased with time.

According to them, the virus was present in 28.5% of samples collected between 1 and 3 months. Between the 10th and the 12th month, it was estimated to be 3.5% in the samples before disappearing completely at the end of one year.

Prior to the outbreak, Ebola virus had only been detected in the semen of a few male survivors by cell culture (maximum duration 82 days after disease onset).

According to the Institute of Research for Development based in Guinea in collaboration with other agencies, these results "put the emphasis on the need to recommend, at the international level, the use of condoms by survivors in the months following their healing".

More than 25, 000 people have been infected and 11, 000 others killed as a result of the spread of the virus by the end of 2013 in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.



Ebola Virus RNA in the Semen of Male Survivors of Ebola Virus Disease: The Uncertain Gravitas of a Privileged Persistence

By Ian Croziera (Infectious Diseases Institute, Kampala, Uganda)

Source: <http://jid.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2016/05/03/infdis.jiw079.full>

The 2014–2016 outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in West Africa has been devastating in scope and severity, resulting in >11 000 deaths and leaving in its wake >10 000 EVD survivors [1]. A steep learning curve over this time has included a growing understanding of the survivor's predicament, as grateful emergence from Ebola treatment units (ETUs) is tempered by the realization of EVD's aftermath [1–5]. The recognition that Ebola virus may persist long after clearance from the blood, particularly in immune-privileged tissues, has been a key aspect of this ongoing tutorial. Reports of uveitis [6] and meningoencephalitis (Michael Jacobs, personal email communication) associated with viral persistence suggest that organ- or tissue-specific inflammatory syndromes may be of consequence to the individual survivor. In what we hope is the last mile of this outbreak, the public health consequence and the residual risk of sexual transmission of persistent virus in the semen of male EVD survivors are increasingly under the microscope [7].

Prior to this outbreak, Ebola virus had only been detected in the semen of a few male survivors by cell culture (maximum duration 82 days after disease onset) [8] and by detection of viral RNA by reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR; maximum duration, 101 days after disease onset) [9]. The clinical and epidemiologic gravitas of these limited findings was uncertain, and no cases of sexual transmission of Ebola virus had been clearly documented. That changed when Mate et al provided the first compelling molecular evidence of human-to-human sexual transmission from a Liberian EVD survivor with EBOV RNA detectable in semen 199 days after disease onset [10, 11]. Virus was not detected by cell culture in semen specimens from this survivor. In a coincident first lesson, Deen et al reported the persistence of Ebola virus RNA in initial semen samples from 9 of 9 Sierra Leonean survivors (100%) 2–3 months after disease onset, 26 of 40 (65%) 4–6 months

after onset, and 11 of 43 (26%) 7–9 months after onset [12]. These findings and their implications for sexual transmission have recently been comprehensively reviewed [13, 14].

There are many more than 1200 EVD survivors in Guinea. In this issue of *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, Sow et al provide the first reports of viral RNA persistence in 68 male survivors of EVD from Conakry and Macenta, Guinea, in whom 8 of 68 men (11.8%) representing 10 of 98 semen samples (10.2%) had detectable Ebola virus RNA in semen. The prevalence of positive RT-PCR results for all samples appeared to decrease over time, with positive results for 4 of 14 specimens (28.5%) collected at 1–3 months, 3 of 18 (16.5%) collected at 4–6 months, 2 of 31 (6.5%) collected at 7–9 months, 1 of 29 (3.5%) collected at 10–12 months, and 0 of 6 (0%) collected at >12 months. One subject with longitudinal follow-up testing showed increasing cycle threshold values over time. Otherwise, the data reported are initial single samples. The authors acknowledge limitations, including the lack of data from viral culture and from genomic sequencing, noting that both are pending. In addition, the use of different PCR methods makes direct comparison between the Conakry and Macenta findings difficult, particularly among small numbers of patients. Nonetheless, these data confirm in Guinean EVD survivors the persistence of viral RNA in the semen. As is typical of the last 2 years, more questions than answers remain.

First, what is the true prevalence of persistent viral RNA in EVD survivors? In this study, far fewer Guinean men had detectable RNA in semen when compared to Sierra Leonean survivors at similar time points (28.5% vs 100% at 1–3 months and 16.5% vs 65% at 4–6 months, respectively). This could be a true biological difference or related to sampling selection, sample handling, and variable sensitivity of the particular PCR



targets. Understanding of the characteristics of EBOV-specific RT-PCR as applied to semen specimens is limited but undergoing more-careful characterization [15, 16]. We will learn more from ongoing research in all 3 countries, as well as from operational data that emerge from country-wide semen testing programs now offered to EVD survivors outside of study settings. If these findings reflect a biological difference between these populations, interesting questions about the predictors and pathogenesis of semen persistence remain (discussed below).

Second, what are the implications of persistent viral RNA for semen infectivity? The relationship between the detection of viral RNA, the isolation of virus in cell culture, and the risk of sexual transmission is yet to be determined. Pending characterization by semen culture, results in these Guinean men and the referenced Sierra Leonean survivors should help clarify infectivity, at least by that standard. There is a cautionary hint of principle offered by the Liberian transmission [10, 11] that culture negativity may not rule out the possibility of transmission. In at least one EVD survivor tested at multiple time points, viral RNA was detected for many months after results of semen culture were negative (unpublished clinical data), suggesting ongoing viral replication. Perhaps viral isolation in cell culture is not a sensitive enough gold standard to rule out viability and infectivity. Additional downstream investigations that could inform this uncertainty include the detection of ongoing viral replication by (1) assessing EBOV messenger RNA expression in semen samples; (2) assessing sequential virus evolution in semen, using comparative whole-genome sequencing; or (3) performing in vivo infectivity assays that involve inoculation of samples into susceptible immunodeficient animal models.

Third, what are the public health consequences for human-to-human sexual transmission and the re-ignition of outbreaks? Both research studies and national programs are currently attending to this potential reservoir in male EVD survivors. There is room for equipoise as we assess, manage, and mitigate this risk. While a few other sexual transmission events have been suspected (although not confirmed),

they have been rare events. In the Kenema and Kailahun eastern districts that were once ground zero for the Sierra Leone outbreak, there have not been suspected sexual transmission events related to persistent virus in the semen of a male survivor, despite a large potential reservoir [17]. The absence of documented sexual transmission in prior outbreaks (admittedly, rare events may have been missed) suggests the same. Nonetheless, the last year has included repeated reminders that these rare events are consequential and that staying at zero transmissions in the last mile requires a careful attention to an uncertain residual risk [18].

Fourth, are there clinical consequences of semen virus persistence for the individual EVD survivor, and is semen persistence associated with either organ-specific or systemic inflammation? Testicular pain [4] and orchitis [19] have been reported in this and prior outbreaks; thus far, any connection between semen persistence and organ-specific clinical syndromes (orchitis, epididymitis, and infertility) in this outbreak remains unclear. In the semen or other compartments, the relationship between viral persistence, immune activation, and systemic inflammation also may inform understanding of the pathogenesis of common post-EVD clinical sequelae.

Fifth, how does the host-pathogen interaction determine the immunopathogenesis and clinical predictors of viral persistence? These questions reflect broader unknowns about the persistence of pathogens in immune-privileged sanctuary sites. Immune privilege in the testis is a complex, multifactorial phenomenon only partially explained by the geographic segregation of the blood-testis barrier. Layered structural, cellular, and molecular mechanisms outside the scope of this piece underlie the relative privilege of this and other viral sanctuaries [20, 21]. These observations in EVD survivors beg a new look at the host-pathogen interaction on these immunologic playing fields, with questions to be asked of the host, of the virus, and of their initial interaction during acute EVD. With regard to the host, do qualitative or quantitative aspects of the host immune response during acute EVD determine whether, how



much, and for how long Ebola virus persists? Are there host genetic factors that contribute to persistence? With regard to the virus, is there something unique about the virus that seeds and then persists in these sites? How is the virus evolving in this space? Comparison of blood specimens, initial semen specimens, and EBOV whole-genome sequences over time might be informative, although they are only available from a few survivors. With regard to the acute infection, could known factors that determine the outcome of acute EVD (age, viral load, and severity of organ dysfunction) [22, 23] also predict the prevalence and kinetics of viral persistence? Do therapeutic interventions during acute EVD influence these same factors? Details of acute illnesses in these survivors are not provided, but correlation to viral loads or nadir cycle threshold values and whether these patients received experimental interventional therapy during acute EVD is of great interest, especially in a Guinean setting in which some patients may have received oral antivirals as part of standard ETU care [24]. Furthermore, during

convalescence, can and should the semen be cleared by therapeutic intervention in men with persistently EBOV RNA-positive semen?

This study confirms the standard persistence of EBOV RNA in the semen of Guinean survivors and reveals that much remains to be understood. Ongoing research and programmatic data from all 3 countries will clarify public health and individual consequences. From Liberia, the National Institutes of Health PREVAIL (Partnership on Research in Ebola Virus in Liberia) III study will provide a first controlled, longitudinal look at the natural history of survival after EVD and an important clinical and immunologic context. While we stay tuned, an informed and respectful attention to safe sex practices [25] in EVD survivors remains one of their many urgent and important care needs. As well, a vigilant and nimble capacity in all three countries to rapidly detect and effectively respond to further flare-ups of EVD related to sexual transmission from a survivor remains critical.

Anthrax kills 53 in Koraput in 15 yrs

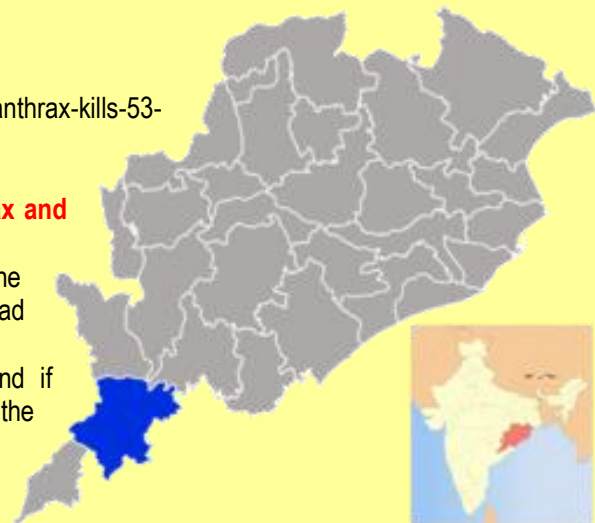
Source: <http://www.dailypioneer.com/state-editions/bhubaneswar/anthrax-kills-53-in-koraput-in-15-yrs.html>

May 07 – **As many as 673 people had been affected by anthrax and 53 of them died since the year 2000 in Koraput district.**

Health Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak informed this in the Assembly in response to a question of Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati on Friday.

The disease **spread by animals** is transmitted to humans, and if treatment is done at initial stages, the patients get cured fully, the Minister said.

The Chief District Medical Officers (CDMOs) of anthrax-affected districts have been provided guidelines for treatment and prevention of the disease. They have been asked to send doctors' teams to the affected areas and provide treatment and medicines free of cost, the Minister said.



Yellow fever epidemic threatens new global health emergency

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160510-yellow-fever-epidemic-threatens-new-global-health-emergency>

May 10 – **Evidence is mounting that the current outbreak of yellow fever is becoming the latest global health emergency,** say two Georgetown University professors who call on the World Health Organization (WHO) to convene an emergency committee under the International Health Regulations. In addition, with frequent emerging epidemics, they call



for the creation of a “standing emergency committee” to be prepared for future health emergencies. In their *JAMA* Viewpoint published online 9 May, Daniel Lucey and Lawrence O. Gostin of the O’Neill



Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown, explain that the ongoing spread, and potential future spread, of yellow fever coupled with a limited vaccine supply should compel the WHO to “urgently convene an emergency committee to mobilize funds, coordinate an international response, and spearhead a surge in vaccine production.”

GUMC says that an epidemic of yellow fever, first reported in January, has been spreading rapidly in Angola. As of last month, the country had 2,023 suspected yellow fever cases and 258 deaths. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) declared an epidemiological alert on 22 April for yellow fever in Latin America, where the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito vector is also actively transmitting Zika and dengue viruses.

Vaccine “supply shortages could spark a health security crisis,” say the professors, pointing out that spread of yellow fever has already taken place in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where efforts to vaccinate two million people are planned.

“Acting proactively to address the evolving yellow fever epidemic is imperative,” they say.

Gostin and Lucey point out that an emergency committee meeting would allow its members to advise the Director-General on the epidemic and trigger discussions about a surge in vaccine production even if a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) is not declared.

Finally, the professors say time has come to consider a more efficient way to manage potential public health emergencies.

“The complexities and apparent increased frequency of emerging infectious disease threats, and the catastrophic consequences of delays in the international response, make it no longer tenable to place sole responsibility and authority with the Director-General to convene currently ad hoc emergency committees,” Lucey and Gostin write.

Instead, they support establishing a “standing emergency committee” that would meet regularly to advise the Director-General.

— *Read more in Daniel Lucey and Lawrence O. Gostin, “A Yellow Fever Epidemic: A New Global Health Emergency?” [JAMA](#) (9 May 2016).*

Towards a pan-ebolavirus treatment

Source: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/309991.php>

May 05 – In 2014, the alarm for the Zaire Ebola virus was sounded around the world - but there are other deadly ebolaviruses that cause identical symptoms, and they have even fewer treatment options. In a study publishing in *Cell Reports*, researchers from Integrated

BioTherapeutics (IBT) describe and test an antibody cocktail, created with components from ZMapp™ and a new antibody called FVM04, that brings researchers a step closer to an effective and efficient



pan-ebolavirus treatment. This was a large collaborative project between IBT and researchers at the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, Stanford University, Mapp Biopharmaceutical Inc, Public Health Agency of Canada, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Integral Molecular Inc., and The Scripps Research Institute.

The new cocktail targeted and protected against infection caused by both the Zaire and Sudan ebolavirus strains in mice and guinea pigs.

"We don't know which type of ebolavirus might cause a future outbreak," says M. Javad Aman, President and CSO at Integrated BioTherapeutics and senior author on the study. "My immediate reaction in 2014 was that whatever we'd been doing so far, we needed to speed it up. We want to have a treatment that is broadly useful. If you have to stockpile three different drugs to be prepared for all kinds of ebolaviruses, it would take three times the resources."

Aman's team had previously identified a series of antibodies in monkeys that could fight different ebolaviruses, and have now plucked out the most effective: FVM04. The antibody targets a region, shared among all ebolaviruses, on top of the virus's outer shell. When FVM04 binds to this region, it prevents the virus from entering cells.

In experiments with mice infected with the Zaire or Sudan ebolaviruses, FVM04 protected against the virus when injected up to two days post-infection. In guinea pigs, FVM04 protected fully against Sudan ebolavirus, but only a third of the Zaire-infected animals survived. To

create a more potent treatment, the researchers had to combine FVM04 with other antibodies.

Working with Mapp Biopharmaceutical, the team pulled apart the ZMapp™ cocktail, which is made up of three antibodies - one targeting the cap of the viral package and two others that target the base. The researchers removed one of the base-targeting antibodies and replaced it with FVM04.

"We sort of developed ZMapp™ 2.0," says Katie Howell, a postdoc at Integrated BioTherapeutics and first author on the study. "It was really exciting." The new cocktail retained FVM04's efficiency in protecting against the Sudan ebolavirus, while also protecting guinea pigs infected with the Zaire strain at levels comparable to ZMapp™ in similar studies.

This study is the team's first step to demonstrating that ZMapp™ can be modified and moved towards a broad reactivity. Going forward, Integrated BioTherapeutics and its collaborators are reviewing a range of antibodies to nail down the most effective cocktail, with an eye towards further development and clinical testing.

"In 2014, experimental drugs like ZMapp™ were made available for clinical evaluation," says Aman. "But what if it had been a Sudan outbreak? Then we would have had absolutely nothing. It's motivated us to focus on other types of ebolaviruses and on a broad treatment that would be effective against all of them. We want to make sure we've turned over every rock."

Article: [Antibody treatment of Ebola and Sudan virus infection via a uniquely exposed epitope within the glycoprotein receptor-binding site, Howell et al., Cell Reports, doi: 10.1016/j.celrep.2016.04.026, published 5 May 2016.](#)



IBM Creates A Molecule That Could Destroy **All** Viruses

Source: <http://www.popsci.com/macromolecule-developed-by-ibm-could-fight-multiple-viruses-at-once>

May 13 – Finding a cure for viruses like Ebola, Zika, or even the flu is a challenging task. Viruses are vastly different from one another, and even the same strain of a virus can mutate and change--that's why doctors give out a different flu vaccine each year. But a group of researchers at IBM and the Institute of

Bioengineering and Nanotechnology in Singapore sought to understand what makes all viruses alike. Using that knowledge, they've come up with **a macromolecule that may have the potential to treat multiple types of viruses and prevent**



them from infecting us. The work was published recently in the journal [Macromolecules](#).

For their study, the researchers ignored the viruses' RNA and DNA, which could be key areas to target, but because they change from virus to virus and also mutate, it's very difficult to target them successfully.

Instead, the researchers focused on glycoproteins, which sit on the outside of all viruses and attach to cells in the body, allowing the viruses to do their dirty work by infecting cells and making us sick. Using that knowledge, the researchers created a macromolecule, which is basically one giant molecule made of smaller subunits. **This macromolecule has key factors that are crucial in fighting viruses. First, it's able to attract viruses towards itself using electrostatic charges. Once the virus is close, the macromolecule attaches to the virus and makes the virus unable to attach to healthy cells. Then it neutralizes the virus' acidity levels, which makes it less**

able to replicate. As an alternative way to fight, the macromolecule also contains a sugar called mannose. This sugar attaches to healthy immune cells and forces them closer to the virus so that the viral infection can be eradicated more easily.

The researchers tested out this treatment in the lab on a few viruses, including Ebola and dengue, and they found that the molecule did work as they thought it would: According to the paper, the molecules bound to the glycoproteins on the viruses' surfaces and reduced the number of viruses. Further, the mannose successfully prevented the virus from infecting immune cells.

This all sounds promising, but the treatment still has a ways to go before it could be used as a disinfectant or even as a potential pill that we could take to prevent and treat viral infections. But it does represent a step in the right direction for treating viruses: figuring out what is similar about all viruses to create a broad spectrum antiviral treatment.

A new paper-based test for the Zika virus

By Anne Trafton

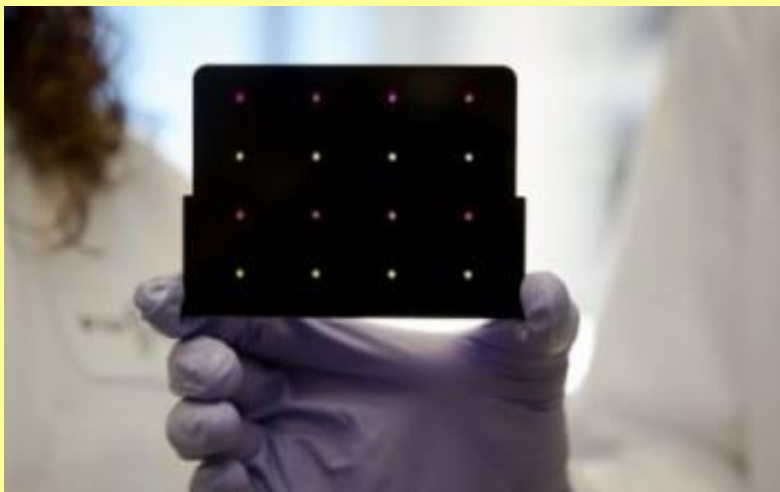
Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160512-a-new-paperbased-test-for-the-zika-virus>

May 12 – **A new paper-based test developed at MIT and other institutions can diagnose Zika virus infection within a few hours. The test, which distinguishes Zika from the very similar dengue virus, can be stored at room temperature and read with a simple electronic reader, making it potentially practical for widespread use.**

"We have a system that could be widely distributed and used in the field with low cost and very few resources," [says](#) James Collins, the Termeer Professor of Medical Engineering and Science in MIT's Department of Biological Engineering and Institute for Medical Engineering and Science (IMES) and the leader of the research team.

An outbreak of the Zika virus that began in Brazil in

April 2015 has been linked to a birth defect known as microcephaly. Many infected people experience no symptoms, and when symptoms do appear they are very similar to those of related viruses such as dengue and chikungunya.



Currently, patients are diagnosed by testing whether they have antibodies against Zika in their bloodstream, or by looking for pieces of the viral genome in a patient's blood sample, using a test known as polymerase chain reaction (PCR). However, these tests can take

former Wyss Institute postdoc; and Guillaume Lambert, a visiting scholar at the Wyss Institute.

Paper-based detection

The new device is based on technology that Collins and colleagues previously developed to detect the Ebola virus. In October 2014, the researchers demonstrated that they could create synthetic gene networks and embed them on small discs of paper. These gene networks can be programmed to detect a particular genetic sequence, which causes the paper to change color. Upon learning about the Zika outbreak, the researchers decided to try adapting their device to diagnose Zika, which has spread to other parts of South and North America since the outbreak began in Brazil.

"In a small number of weeks, we developed and validated a relatively rapid, inexpensive Zika diagnostic platform," says Collins, who is also a member of the Wyss Institute.

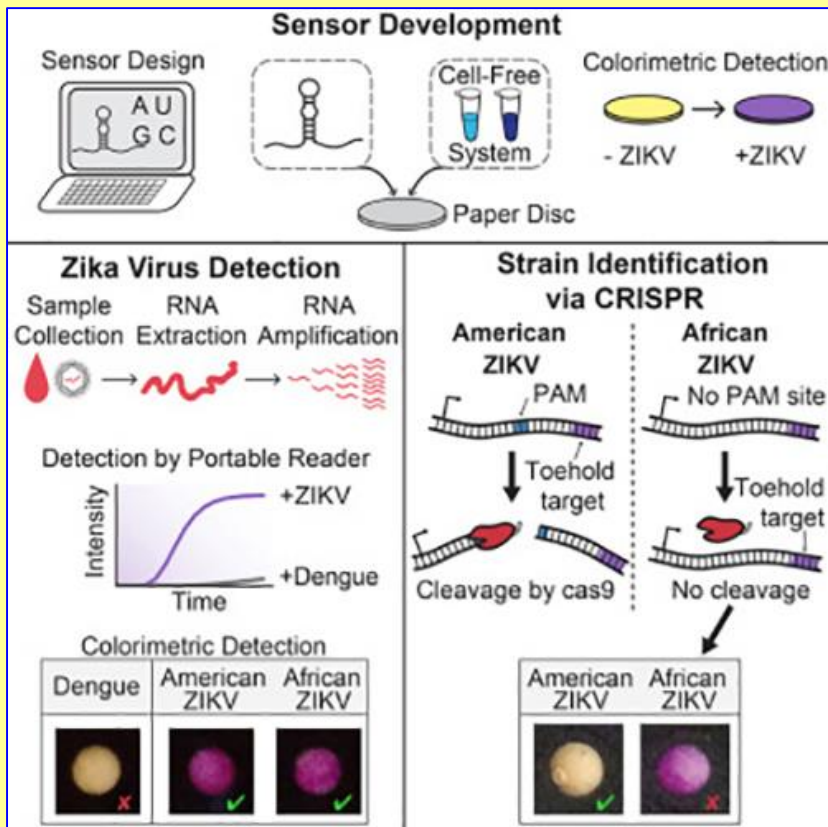
Collins and his colleagues developed sensors, embedded in the paper discs, that can detect 24 different RNA sequences found in the Zika viral genome, which, like that of many viruses, is composed of RNA instead of DNA.

When the target RNA sequence is present, it initiates a series of interactions that turns the paper from yellow to purple.

This color change can be seen with the naked eye, but the researchers also developed an electronic reader that makes it easier to quantify the change, especially in cases where the sensor is detecting more than one RNA sequence.

All of the cellular components necessary for this process — including proteins, nucleic acids, and ribosomes — can be extracted from living cells and freeze-dried onto paper. These paper discs can be stored at room temperature, making it easy to ship them to any location. Once rehydrated, all of the components function just as they would inside a living cell.

The researchers also incorporated a step that boosts



days or weeks to yield results, and the antibody test cannot discriminate accurately between Zika and dengue.

"One of the key problems in the field is being able to distinguish what these patients have in areas where these viruses are co-circulating," says Lee Gehrke, the Hermann L.F. von Helmholtz Professor in IMES and an author of the paper.

Collins, Gehrke, and colleagues from Harvard University's Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering and other institutions described the new device in the May 6 online edition of *Cell*. The paper's lead authors are Melissa Takahashi, an IMES postdoc; Dana Braff, an MIT graduate student; Keith Pardee, an assistant professor at the University of Toronto and former Wyss Institute research scientist; Alexander Green, an assistant professor at Arizona State University and



the amount of viral RNA in the blood sample before exposing it to the sensor, using a system called NASBA (nucleic acid sequence based amplification). This amplification step, which takes one to two hours, increases the test's sensitivity 1 million-fold.

Julius Lucks, an assistant professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at Cornell University, says that this demonstration of rapidly customizable molecular sensors represents a huge leap for the field of synthetic biology.

"What's really exciting here is you can leverage all this expertise that synthetic biologists are gaining in constructing genetic networks and use it in a real-world application that is important and can potentially transform how we do diagnostics," says Lucks, who was not involved in the research.

Distinguishing viruses

The team tested the new device using synthesized RNA sequences corresponding to the Zika genome, which were then added to human blood serum. The researchers showed that the device could detect very low

viral RNA concentrations in those samples and could also distinguish Zika from dengue.

The researchers then tested the device with samples taken from monkeys infected with the Zika virus. (Samples from human patients affected by the current Zika outbreak are very difficult to obtain.) They found that in these samples, the device could detect viral RNA concentrations as low as 2 or 3 parts per quadrillion.

The researchers envision that this approach could also be adapted to other viruses that may emerge in the future. Collins now hopes to team up with other scientists to further develop the technology for diagnosing Zika.

"Here we've done a nice proof-of-principle demonstration, but more work and additional testing would be needed to ensure safety and efficacy before actual deployment," he says. "We're not far off."

The research was funded by the Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering, MIT's Center for Microbiome Informatics and Therapeutics, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Israeli tech ready to take on Zika-carrying mosquito

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20160512-israeli-tech-ready-to-take-on-zikacarrying-mosquito>

May 12 – The mosquito-borne Zika virus, according to new reports, is even more dangerous than first believed. While better information about prevention has helped slow the rate of infection in some areas, the health community is still urgently searching for a vaccine or drug treatment.

The "green" Israeli company Biofeed, specializing in the development and production of environmentally friendly pesticide solutions since 2005, believes the focus should be on eliminating the primary factor: the mosquito.

"Biofeed's groundbreaking approach can control any mosquito-borne disease," CEO Nimrod Israely tells ISRAEL21c.

"Everybody is looking for a vaccination against Zika virus but we should keep in mind that the same mosquito that transmits Zika is also

transmitting other viruses as well. What we're aiming to do is to control a vector, the mosquito itself."

Biofeed's Slow Fluid Release (SFR) technology employs a liquid mixture of lures and additives to manipulate insect behavior by attract-and-kill or attract-and-feed methods.

"We have for many years recognized the great potential in harnessing the world of insect smells for the benefit of humans. Evolution has given insects an elaborate sense of smell, which they utilize to find mates, food, egg-laying sites and more," explains Israely, a world-renowned fruit-fly ecologist with a PhD from the Hebrew University.

"The company has developed a liquid formula that 'knows' how to tie different kinds of smells to other materials, as the need arises. The result is a special 'decoy' that draws the target insect through smell. The



decoy is slow-released from a hanging device over the course of a year. The insect is drawn to the decoy, feeds off it and is eliminated.”

Long in use on farms for fruit-fly control, for example, the same technology could be tweaked to target the Zika-carrying *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito as well as flies, moths and other types of mosquitos, such as those transferring malaria.

“We have the platform and knowhow; we need to do the development and testing. But it’s only a question of some time and money,” says Israely.

SFR keeps an area pest-free for any required period of time up to 365 days. The Biofeed team is now working on extending its effectiveness to three years.

Grand Challenges winner

Biofeed was recently chosen as a winner by the Grand Challenges (Israel) program for creating a technological solution to health challenges in developing countries.

As part of the program, Israel’s chief scientist and Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ international

development agency, MASHAV, pledged grant money to help Biofeed develop new methods of no-spray pesticide application for India.

“This unique program reflects Israel’s determination to continue helping developing countries with relevant problems and constitutes the meeting point between diplomacy and Israeli technological innovation,” said MASHAV Director Gil Haskel.

Israely says 50 percent of India’s crop is lost to pests and that “many companies have tried to solve this problem with spraying and without spraying.”

By bringing the pest to the lethal substance and eliminating it without spraying, Biofeed’s chemical-free method leaves the environment clean and safe, says Israely.

The technology has been fully tested and successfully implemented for years in Israel.

“Israel is a perfect place to develop the Biofeed technology because we have all kinds of weather within one or two hours from where we’re located, we have 30 different crops that we run trials on, and farmers that are open-

minded and ready to participate and try new things all the time,” he says.

“We need to study in the lab but most importantly in the field, under field conditions,” he adds. “We also have great research and development here and this is very important.”

Benefiting billions

Chief Scientist Avi Hasson noted that much of the world’s population is suffering from lack of food, access to



clean water and exposure to diseases.

The International Grand Challenges program and Israel’s Etgar Program, which supports development of tech solutions relevant to world health in developing nations, “bring to the fore Israel’s capabilities in technological innovation together with the well-known Israeli entrepreneurial spirit.”

“We call on Israeli entrepreneurs to develop technologies that will improve the quality of life for billions around the world,” Hasson said.

While the whole world of agriculture could benefit from Biofeed’s product, the company specifically chooses to help developing countries.

“We target Africa, Asia, China, India and other developing countries because we see the future of agriculture over there. We want to bring something that is extremely easy to use; you don’t need tractors, you don’t need to remember to spray once a week, you don’t need to put yourself in danger with sprays, there’s no safety equipment. This is something that can make a dramatic change in



agriculture and human health,” says Israely.

“And this is for a better future.”

Inferno trailer is out: Watch Tom Hanks and Irrfan Khan tangled in the mystery of bioterrorism

Source: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/watch-tom-hanks-and-irrfan-khan-in-the-first-trailer-of-inferno/1/664358.html>



May 10 – Tom Hanks is back on big screen as Robert Langdon in Inferno. The upcoming film is based on the fourth Dan Brown's novel of the same name.

Directed by Ron Howard, Inferno is the sequel to The Da Vinci Code (2006) and Angels And Demons (2009).

Langdon, the famous symbologist wakes up in a hospital room in Florence, Italy, with short term amnesia as he does not remember what transpired in past few days. With the help of Dr. Sienna Brooks aka Felicity Jones he has to stop Dr Bertrand Zobrist (Ben Foster) from releasing deadly virus to solve over-population problem.

Bollywood actor Irrfan Khan essays the role of Harry "The Provost" Sims, who is the head of The Consortium and is helping Zobrist in his accomplishing his mission.

In the released trailer, Langdon is considered "humanities final hope."

He has to solve the mystery related to "Dante's Inferno" which has been defined as a "modern conception of hell 700 years ago."

"Why Dante. Why now this map of hell?," viewers are left intrigued with these questions.

Developing new anthrax vaccine

Source: <https://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/texas-ciadm-new-anthrax-vaccine-development/>

May 11 – The Texas A&M Center for Innovation in Advanced Development and Manufacturing (CIADM) will produce **an intranasal anthrax vaccine** candidate under a task order issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This is the first task order issued to the Texas A&M center and will enhance protection from anthrax disease. Texas A&M says that under the 18-month, \$10.49 million task order from HHS'

Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), the Texas A&M CIADM, located in College Station, Texas, will begin advanced development and manufacturing activities for Altimmune's NasoShield vaccine candidate, a third generation anthrax vaccine.

"Texas A&M has a long tradition of dedicated service to our state and nation," said John Sharp,



chancellor of The Texas A&M University System. “Ultimately, efforts at Texas A&M, including our work on an anthrax vaccine, build upon that tradition and put Texas A&M at the forefront of biosecurity and preparedness, leading the way to a safer future for all.”

The Texas A&M facility is one of three CIADMs — and the only academically-based center — established as public-private partnerships with BARDA in 2012 to enhance the nation’s emergency preparedness against emerging infectious diseases, including pandemic influenza, and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats. The CIADM is founded on a \$285.6 million public-private partnership, including \$176.6 million in funding from HHS, with the remainder cost-shared by commercial and academic partners, as well as \$40 million from the state of Texas Emerging Technology Fund.

“Texas A&M is committed to achieving global health security and improving the nation’s biodefense,” said Gerald Parker, associate vice president for public health preparedness at Texas A&M Health Science Center. “Forging novel partnerships with the federal government and leveraging expertise of world-leading, innovation-driven commercial partners is one example of Texas A&M’s leadership in service for public health preparedness.”

Texas A&M says that under the task order, the center will partner with Altimune and engage its subcontractor FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies Texas, LLC (FDBT) to produce Altimune’s NasoShield vaccine candidate for use in Phase I clinical trials. This vaccine uses Altimune’s RespirVec technology, which utilizes a replication-deficient adenovirus to

engage the immune system in an innovative way to give protection against anthrax.

“Unlike the only current Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved anthrax vaccine that requires several injections and yearly boosters to maintain its protective efficacy, the NasoShield vaccine candidate is being developed because it offers the potential to provide rapid protection against the disease after a single, intranasal dose,” said Scot Roberts, chief scientific officer at Altimune.

“The potential to have two anthrax vaccines available for the nation’s strategic stockpile, and one based on a novel platform that provides rapid protection after only one dose, will equip public health authorities with new planning options, significantly augmenting biodefense preparedness,” Parker said.

Over the last four years, the Texas A&M center has been designing and building the necessary physical infrastructure, including facilities and manufacturing lines, to provide near-immediate response to support development and manufacturing of life-saving vaccine and medications for the next global public health threat.

“The threat of bioterrorism — one of the most insidious forms of a weapon of mass destruction — is very real and something we as a nation need to be prepared to face so that we can mitigate potential damage and save lives,” Parker said. “As a leading academic institution with a history of dedicated national service, Texas A&M is highly motivated to serve as the bridge between laboratory discovery of anthrax countermeasures and delivery to communities in need of medical tools to fight the infectious disease.”

MERS-CoV in Saudi Arabia (2016)

Source: <http://www.moh.gov.sa/en/CCC/PressReleases/Pages/default.aspx>

As of noon today [15 May 2016], there have been a total of:

1383 laboratory confirmed cases of MERS-CoV infection, including

- 592 deaths [reported case fatality rate 42.8%]
- 788 recoveries, and
- 3 currently active cases.



American Bioweaponry

Source: http://www.pravdareport.com/opinion/columnists/13-05-2016/134413-american_bioweaponry-0/



The Zika mutant was the kick off. 99 US government viral constructs on their way to break out.

The US government has a vast arsenal of biological weapons of mass destruction and plans to let loose. Much was written before on various themes that relate, directly or indirectly, to the US bioweapons program in [book chapters](#) authored and co-authored with scientists from the Ivy League, the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the US Department of Energy plus in articles co-authored in journals like Nature, the Journal of Molecular Biology and the Journal of Biological Chemistry about research done at Columbia University and at Department of Energy special life sciences research facilities (e.g. Brookhaven National Labs, Argonne National Labs).

The Department of Energy (DoE) is the agency primarily tasked with making weapons of mass destruction for the US government (e.g. nuclear weapons of mass destruction, biological weapons of mass destruction). Biological weapons are life forms that cause illness or death. Examples of bioweaponry include viruses, bacteria, fungus, parasites and prions. Most American bioweapons are de novo viruses. de novo means 'of new.' Never before existed in nature.

Although some bioweapons can be classified within families such as Arenaviruses, Astroviruses, Bornoviruses, Bunyaviruses, Caliciviruses, Enteroviruses, Flaviviruses, Filoviruses, Hepadnaviruses, Herpesviruses, Nidovirales, Orthomyxoviruses, Papillomaviruses, Paramyxoviruses, Parvoviruses, Picornaviruses, Polyomaviruses, Poxviruses, Reoviruses, Retroviruses, Rhabdoviruses, Rhinoviruses, Togaviruses, Adeno and Adeno-Associated Viruses, Hepatitis A like viruses, Hepatitis D like viruses, Hepatitis E like viruses or prions; most US government bioweaponry cannot be classified into any natural virus family. Because they're de novo - unnatural man-made viruses.

With 1536 well plates, armies of life sciences synthesizers, robots (e.g. liquid handling robots) pipetting away, analyzing away, aspirating away and so forth - in the dark (robots don't need the lights on) - millions of new DNA oligomers can be synthesized and tested within days.

Much of the technology which led to thousands of de novo viruses being synthesized, tested, validated, propagated and scored for pathogenicity may sound futuristic to those not familiar with "Beowulf" clusters, armies of synthesizers and bots working in tandem followed by robotic cell culture testing on several cell types in a seemingly countless number of wells, sterile room conditions, robotic replenishing of cell culture media, continuous analysis for contamination (e.g. bacterial, fungal, cross-cell) and for effects on various cell types by de novo constructs.

Animal facilities where legions of rodents have been tested in parallel, simultaneously per week. (Incinerators have minimized landfill space needed post-experimentation.) Followed by testing the 'hits' on rabbits and dogs. Followed by testing 'top hits' on monkeys.

Most de novo constructs are not quick kill "zombie apocalypse" type viruses depicted in Hollywood shows. **De novo constructs include:**



* slow, society damaging (e.g. Zika mutants) which can affect many people, causing high costs, but few deaths

* slow kill viruses (e.g. Hepatitis C mutants) that slowly debilitate then slowly kill within a few decades

* medium kill viruses (e.g. certain retroviral chimeras, HIV-1 like mutants) which debilitate then kill within a decade, losses build up over time

* fast kill viruses (e.g. Ebolapox) which are highly contagious and kill hosts within weeks, some with kill rates in excess of 50%

(Rodents live 2 years on average, so 1 rodent year equals 40 human years, allowing for rapid experimental estimates of 'kill times' and 'kill rates' on people from rodent studies.)

Although many bacteria (fungus, parasites, etc.) have larger genomes than many viruses, the same system of battalions of synthesizers and bots working in parallel, 1536 well plates, can mutate each nucleotide in every known fungi, bacteria, parasite (automated "site directed mutagenesis" aka "directed evolution"); do genomic deletions or insertions (e.g. certain viral constructs) resulting in mutant, chimeric or de novo fungus, bacteria, parasites, etc.

Such studies have been done too, although viruses have been the primary focus due to lower costs (of money and time) involved in mutating viruses, mixing and matching viruses, synthesizing de novo viruses, embedded or not embedded in larger organisms (e.g. bacteria, parasites).

Oligos of every possible nucleotide combination were made past 50,000mers (which can easily be stitched together to make 100,000mers, 200,000mers and so forth, bringing new meaning to phrases like "large scale biology," "big biology" and "directed evolution"). Large oligos, like synthetic genes, are technically 100mers stitched together to make larger size oligos, then size exclusion purified and sequenced for validation. PCR'd as needed for amplification.

(Oligo is short for oligonucleotide, a chain of two or more nucleotides (i.e. A, T, C, G).)

It was more challenging for them to figure out barcoding (barcodes freeze over at -80°), storage and database construction for the 6×10^{18} constructs than to computationally and robotically synthesize, purify and sequence them.

Robotic operations on -80° floors (corridors, rooms and freezers), robots freezing up, were challenges to them as were robots dropping things on rare occasions.

6×10^{18} is 6 quintillion.

Money is the limiting factor. How many countries have had the budget for supplies for quintillions of experiments to make every possible DNA combo in oligos, 50,000+ nucleotides long, then testing on cell types and mammals to assess pathogenicity or the technical expertise for programming and maintaining bots, databases, bar codes, synthesizers, computer programming and so forth.

Thousands of viruses (e.g. mutant, chimeric, de novo) - classified as slow/society damaging, slow kill, medium kill or fast kill - were extensively tested, validated and re-validated. Criteria for a short list of 100 viruses included whether or not both vaccines and medicines could be developed.

Vaccines were made and tested for over 1,000 mutant, chimeric and de novo viruses.

Drug screening - also in parallel with 1536 well plates, armies of bots - was done to discover back-up medicines (in the event of vaccine failure which typically occurs in a minority of people vaccinated). The best back-up medicines and vaccines were validated in cell culture, four animal types and human subjects (e.g. prisoners).

A set of the 100 most effective vaccines and back-up medicines were chosen along with their respective viruses.

(Chain inhibitors, like AZT, a broad spectrum anti-viral drug, are good to personally stockpile as they slow down viral replication and in some circumstances prevent viral infections, when taken early enough in large enough doses.)

Vaccine doses and back-up medicines were made for 100,000 people. A short list of 100,000 names was written. Most people (more than 99.9% of Americans, 100% of everyone else) are not on their list for vaccines. The vaccination sequence: time zero, plus 3 months, plus 6 months and booster shots every 5 years. The 100,000 received their first three shots already.



The American government signed and ratified the Biological Weapons Convention, an update to the Geneva Conventions. The US government, however, refused to sign the Compliance Protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention which would have meant compliance and inspections of US bioweaponry facilities.

The US government cannot acknowledge having bioweapons without acknowledging they broke yet another treaty. Clever euphemisms were devised by US government lawyers for bioweapons like life sciences research materials. mechanism of action studies, biodefense research, etc.

For example, the US government also signed and ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, but refused to sign enforcement mechanisms like the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. US government lawyers devised euphemisms like "extraordinary rendition" for kidnapping and "enhanced interrogation" for torture. Clever huh?

Sign treaties to outlaw things like torture and bioweapons, but refuse to sign enforcement agreements, so that what's signed by US government officials is on an "honor system" which depends on US government people telling the truth and being honorable.

US government people, however, are not truthful people. They're not honorable people either.

US government officials devise word definitions as if day is night and night is day and a dog is a cat and a cat is a dog. But. Day is day just as night is night. Day is not night and night is not day. A dog is a dog just as a cat is a cat. A dog is not a cat and a cat is not a dog.

Torture is torture just as bioweapons are bioweapons.

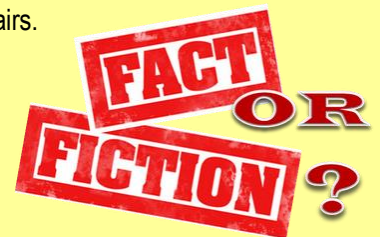
But, according to US government officials, torture is not torture and bioweapons are not bioweapons. The US government's abuse of the English language makes it all the more of a compelling imperative for immediate independent inspections of their bioweaponry facilities.

In the USA, social unrest is building. Street demonstrations, riots and uprisings (e.g. the Ferguson Uprising, the Baltimore Uprising) are growing. Political instability is intensifying. Drug abuse and suicide rates are higher than ever. Crime is escalating hand-in-hand with the deadliest ever illicit drug epidemic, the epidemic of Afghan heroin. The Texas secession movement is gaining traction as is the movement for the reunification of California with Mexico. The USA may soon shatter.

Do top US government people seem like they care? They care about musical chairs.

Getting to a chair in a bunker in the nick of time when the music stops playing.

The US government owes over \$46 trillion (e.g. debts, unfunded liabilities). Do US government "leaders" seem like they care about their financial obligations? They don't care. They never planned on paying that \$46 trillion or so in money that they owe. They have a different plan.



Timeline

I don't know the day and the hour. Could be 2030. More likely, it'll be closer to 2020, when the US government is tapped out, maxed out on credit and cannot borrow any more money. Debt collapse American style plus escalating social unrest, riots, and political instability in the USA. For some time now, top un-elected 'leaders' of the US government have had a plan for that.

Bunkers. They're already vaccinated. Booster shots, back-up medicines, seven year supply of food, water, ammo, weapons (and more) awaits them in their bunkers like Raven Rock (Site R) near Fort Richie, Maryland (now administered by Fort Detrick), Camp David's bunker is a few miles from Raven Rock, Greenbriar WV for Congresspeople (most of whom are not on the vaccine list), Mount Weather (Presidential bunker) in Virginia (near the Appalachian Trail), Warrenton Training Center in Virginia (45 miles from DC), Olney Support Center near Laytonville MD, Mount Pony near Culpeper VA (reportedly mothballed in the 1990s along with the Greenbriar bunker), Lams Knoll near Middletown MD, underneath the Pentagon, underneath the White House, underneath Fort Meade, Peter's Mountain, 15 miles east of Charlottesville, there are thousands of bunkers (public and private) in many places, many states.

Bunker building activity has been at it's highest level ever in the USA since 2001. Many of the 100,000 on the list have private bunkers where they prefer to go (rather than public bunkers) during the final phases.



Most of the 100,000 on the list don't have a "need to know" most things. A few don't even know they're on the list, they were told to get shots and they obeyed. No questions asked. (Some other people were "vaccinated" with sterile saline water, but told they were being vaccinated with real vaccines, long story.) Is it all doom and gloom? No. Do we just wait until they say it's time to let loose lethal viruses, they go to their bunkers and most everyone else drops dead? Doesn't have to be that way.

They're almost all "Yankee White" which means it's unlikely they'll go outside of 5 Anglo countries (USA, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand). It's also unlikely they have contact with anyone outside these 5 nations.

No one from Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the UK is on the list. Interestingly, most spouses, children, siblings and parents (of those on the list) are not on the list. How do they feel about their vaccinated "loved ones" ready to take off to a bunker without them?

The 100,000 on the list have circulating antibodies to the viruses they have only just begun to let loose. The beginning, slow societally debilitating viral attacks, have already begun with Zika mutants which are anticipated to result in Zika babies who will live, but with societal costs of approximately \$50,000 per year per Zika baby, about \$1 billion in public health costs in year 1, about \$2 billion in added costs in year 2, etc.

As the Zika babies spread to every state, every county, every town, people will be reminded more frequently of mutant viruses (and "newly discovered" viruses) coming about, one way or another, in the environment.

The first series of viruses will make many infected people and their families more dependent on government for health care assistance (certain elements within the US government want to force 'learned helplessness' and 'formed dependency' onto people to try to get more power over people's lives). It's also a part of a divide and conquer strategy to pit the families of the infected vs. non-infected families (who may

not want to pay as taxes escalate, virus after virus).

Pitting the infected vs. the uninfected will be for the US government what the Colosseum games were to the Roman government way back when.

The 100,000 on the list have antibodies to the 100 viruses on their hit list. Blood samples from them will provide samples of these antibodies which can be reversed engineered. Several blood samples may be necessary depending on titer levels.

Most lab workers are not on the list for vaccines (or were "vaccinated" with sterile saline water and told they were vaccinated with real vaccines).

A short list of places most likely to hold the bioweapon stockpiles: DoE labs, DoD labs and black op laboratories. People deemed to have a 'need to know' know exact locations. Most of the 100,000 on the list don't have a 'need to know' this info.

There has never been, imho, a more compelling imperative for the continued existence of the human race as we know it, than now, to do inspections to find these stocks (bioweaponry, vaccine and medicine stockpiles), to get samples and to get the list. And to get people on the list. Anybody on the list is continually making antibodies to mutant Zika (a verification that they are indeed on the list) and 99 other viruses planned for release.

With the slow societally debilitating viral attack phase already in progress, there's no telling when the lethal viral attacks will commence. This could take years. Or. Things could spiral out of control at any time, prompting them to more rapidly execute all phases, in an accelerated fashion.

If locations of bioweaponry stockpiles can be ascertained, then rest assured that a high heat (e.g. from thermonuclear heat sources) can annihilate these bioweapon stockpiles subject to such intense heat. Be sure as well, it will take a tremendous amount of heat to solve this US government bioweapons problem.

Get the locations of their stockpiles, get samples, get the list, get to some of the people on the list, and you can save hundreds of millions of American lives and billions of lives globally. Fail to get locations, samples, some of the people on the list, then prepare for the Apocalypse. Godspeed.

FACT
OR
FICTION?



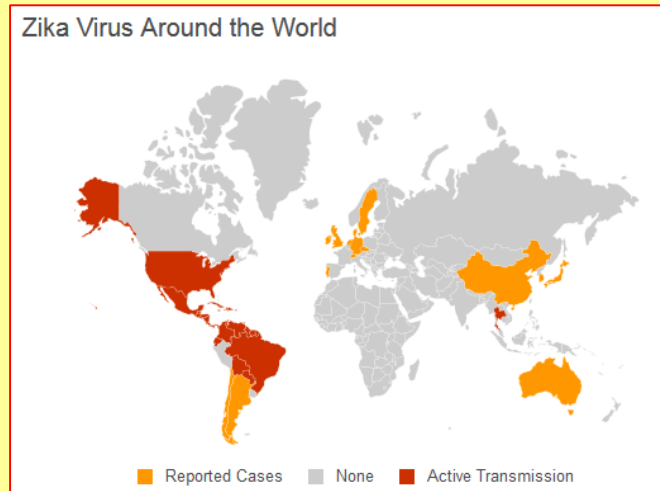


Australia's Starpharma, Ansell to supply **anti-Zika condoms for Olympics**

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/health/2016/05/16/australias-starpharma-ansell-to-supply-anti-zika-condoms-for-olympics.html>

May 16 – Australian pharmaceutical company Starpharma Holdings Ltd said it is teaming up with world No. 2 condom maker Ansell Ltd to supply Zika virus-proof condoms to the Australian Olympic team ahead of the 2016 Rio de Janeiro games.

Starpharma said it is giving the Australian athletes Ansell



"Dual Protect" condoms lubricated with Starpharma's VivaGel product, which it recently said showed near-total antiviral protection against Zika and other viruses in laboratory studies.

"Given sexual transmission of Zika virus is of increasing importance, the potent activity of Starpharma's VivaGel against Zika could prove very significant," said Starpharma Chief Executive Officer Jackie Fairley in a statement.

The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) said the Starpharma condoms would be in addition to condoms already shipped to the Olympic village, which will also have free dispensing machines on every block supplying 350,000 male condoms and 100,000 female condoms to athletes.

Burkha-clad Pakistani woman calls Polio vaccine poisonous, says its a conspiracy to destroy Muslims

Source: http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/watch-burkha-clad-pakistani-woman-calls-polio-vaccine-poisonous-says-its-a-conspiracy-to-destroy-muslims_1885119.html

May 14 – At a time when the world is highly concerned about eradicating Polio from the planet completely, **a Pakistani woman believes it is a conspiracy by Jewish and Christian communities against Muslims.**

In a video that has gone viral on social media, a burkha-clad woman says that Polio and other vaccine is a dajjali conspiracy so that the Muslim children are unable to join the forces of Imam Mehdi against the forces of dajjal (the false messiah).

Since the woman, who has been identified as Dr Umme-e-Muhammad, has spoken in Urdu, here is the English transcript of what she says:

(The excerpts are taken from the blog of Carol Anne Grayson)



"Assalaam Alaikum my fellow countrymen. In our country there has been a constant reign of forceful and brutal martial law. Now these rulers have crossed even the brutalities of the pharaohs. Now the countrymen are not facing the army martial law but medical martial law. If you do not give your innocent infants the poison drops then your daily life will be curtailed. There is no guarantee that in the very near future your infants will be taken from you and given to the Jewish and Christian NGOs. The pharaohs used to kill innocent children openly but these worshipers of money on the promises of giving life are



selling poison drops and injections. I am not saying these things in this forum on verbal information but on the basis of my personal experience and research.

In the near future the enemies of Muslims are developing such viruses which will be sprayed onto Muslim population so that whole of the inhabitants will become numb.

Polio vaccine and similar

vaccines are a part of the same chain. Allah has warned us about the nefarious designs of the Zionists and Christians.

Polio and other vaccine is a dajjali conspiracy so that our children are unable to join the forces of Imam Mehdi against the forces of dajjal. I appeal to the doctors, nurses and health workers that do not become a cause for the race elimination and destruction of Muslims. Do not spoil your afterlife for a few rupees. O my Muslims mothers how can you expose your loved ones to the poisoned drops and injections. Now the reality is that to get gas and electricity facilities you have to make your children mentally and physically disabled."



THE MILITARY'S NEW BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

