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NEWSLET **TERRORISM**



September 2017



A new threat?

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CBRNE-Terrorism Newsletter – 2017[©]

September 2017

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EDITOR'S CORNER



**Editorial****Brig Gen (ret'd) Ioannis Galatas, MD, MA, MC***Editor-in-Chief*

CBRNE-Terrorism Newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

September was not a quiet month but at least it was not marked with dead innocent people. On 15 September 2017, during rush hour (around 8:20 am), an explosion occurred on a District line train at Parsons Green tube station, in London, England. Thirty people were treated in hospital or an urgent care centre, mostly for flash burn injuries and crash injuries. The incident is being treated by the Metropolitan Police as a terrorist attack. The bomb contained the triacetone triperoxide explosive (TATP), the same explosive used in the 2005 London Underground bombings and the November 2015 Paris attacks. The explosive is known to be very unstable, which may have led to critical errors in the construction of the bomb, such that it only partially exploded. According to Chip Chapman, former head of counter-terrorism at the Ministry of Defence, "This absolutely didn't function properly because... 1 ounce (30 g) of TATP is enough to blow car doors off".

What else in September?

- A coming threat: train attacks! Can be conducted anywhere and derailment will surely produce a good score of casualties.
- A second threat: commercial drones stuffed with radioactive materials – flying RDDs.
- A third threat: poisoning of shopping malls or acid attacks.
- EU top security expert warned for 50,000 militant Islamists existing in Europe.
- Al Qaeda is still strong 16 years after 9/11 – mainly because they form alliances and sustain them over time and under pressure. Now that Daesh lost more than 70% of their territories it seems that AQ will be soon back, perhaps with a spectacular attack this time under Hamza bin Laden.
- Amazing Finnish gov will provide apartments and benefits to fellow Daesh fighters who returned back home!
- Islamic State encourages attacks on US hurricane Harvey/Irma/Maria relief centers...
- Two shipments of CWAs from N Korea to Syria were intercepted...
- A warning: Beware of CBRN far-right terrorists!
- Big debate on gene editing techniques (CRISPR) and their potential – hope that wisdom will prevail evil ambitions and sick minds.

Finally, we get used to the nuclear USA-NK *bra de fer*; havoc will come one day and people will think it is BS as usual – but it will not!

You do realize that the global turbulence is still spinning if not accelerating. So, be alert and prepared First Responders because you will be the first to fight the beast!

The Editor-in-Chief

African Muslim paedophile who attacked a 13-year-old girl gets the crap beat out of him by her uncle

Source: <http://shoebat.com/2015/10/12/italy-african-muslim-paedophile-who-attacked-a-13-year-old-girl-gets-the-crap-beat-out-of-him-by-her-uncle/>

October 2015 – PONTECAGNANO, SICILY: Muslim invader from Senegal tried to molest a 13-year-old girl while she was waiting at the bus stop. The paedophile approached her, started talking, then grabbed her violently by the arm and tried to pull her away.



Across the street, at The Bar Primavera, the girl's paternal uncle saw what was happening to his niece and accompanied by a friend, rushed out to help her. According to witnesses, the two men started beating up the African, punching and kicking him until he collapsed, then continued to kick him in the genitals.

Afterwards, the Senegalese child rapist, while still lying on the ground, called the police, reporting the incident, after which they came and arrested the uncle. After 4 hours the uncle was released with a charge of wilful personal injury that does not require incarceration. No information on how they will charge the attacker.

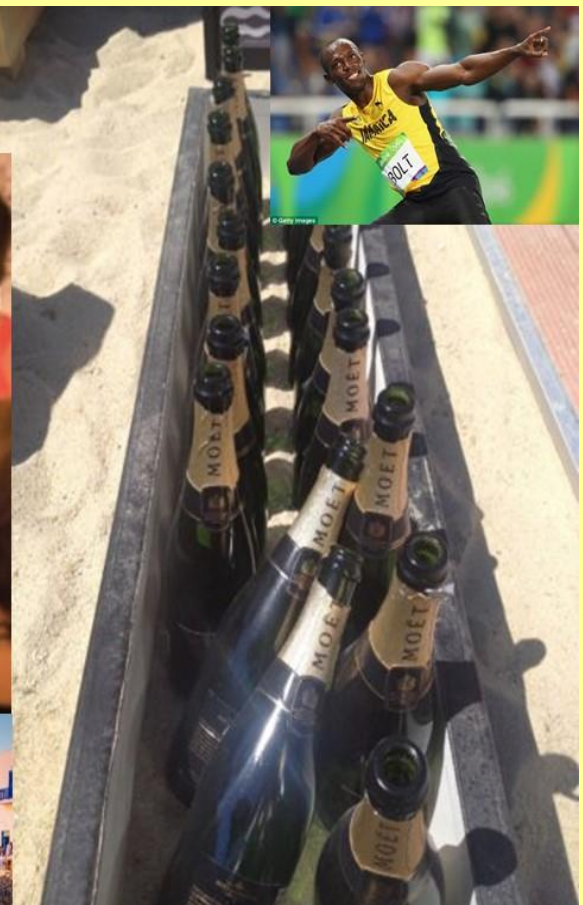


USAIN BOLT
Mykonos Island, Greece 2017
Profession: Fast runner



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1,8	WAFIA AUSTRALIAN	575,00
1	BABY CHICKEN	32,00
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How Many Americans Would Pass an Immigration Test Endorsed by Trump?

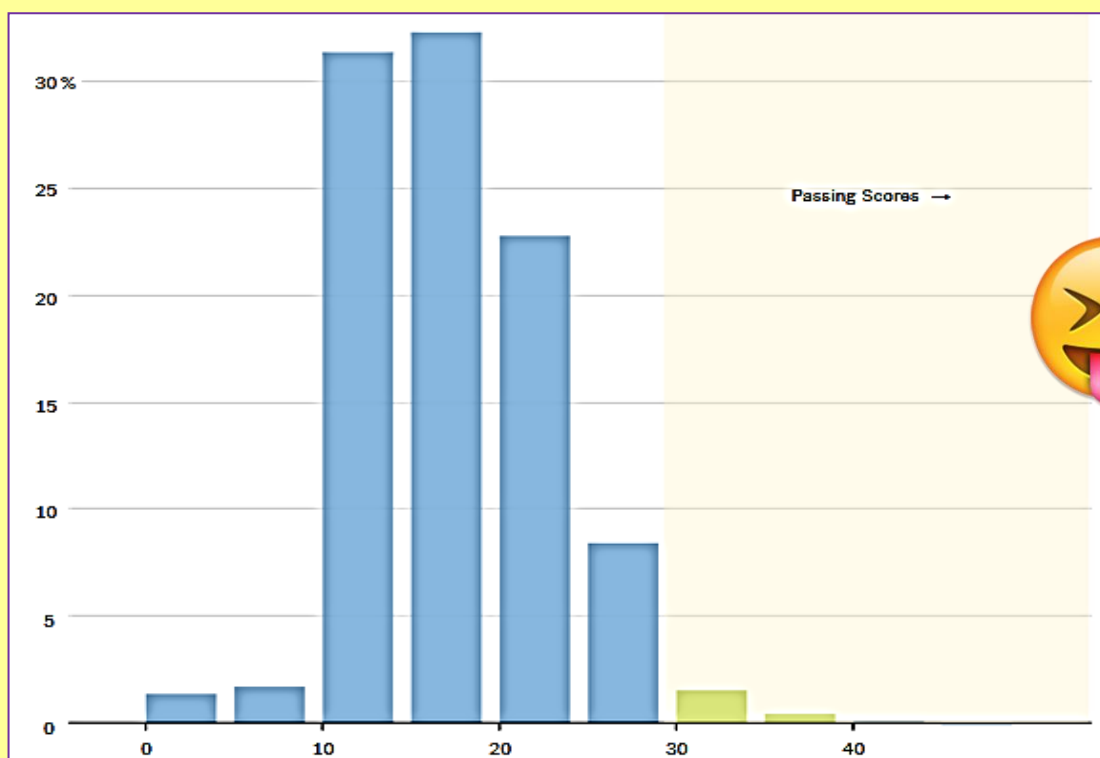
Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/23/upshot/immigration-quiz-raise-act-trump.html>

Aug 23 – President Trump this month endorsed legislation that would effectively cut immigration to the United States by half. The bill, known as the [Raise Act](#), would sharply reduce the share of people admitted through family ties and create a skills-based system that scores applicants on factors including age, education, income, job prospects and proficiency in English.

The Senate sponsors of the bill say their system, modeled on merit systems used by Canada and Australia, would make the United States more competitive. If passed — and immigration overhaul has defied decades of attempts — it would replace standards largely established in the Johnson administration.

How Would Americans Score Under the RAISE Act?

Only about two percent of American citizens would pass the test. Most would fall far below the cut off of 30.



Does not include points awarded for extraordinary achievement (such as earning a Nobel Prize) or significant investments (investments of more than \$1.3 million). Source: American Community Survey

This raises the question: How well would Americans do if put to this merit-based test? Ernie Tedeschi, an economist, calculated that about [2 percent](#) of American citizens 18 or older would rack up the 30 points needed to be considered for a visa. Here's what the score of an American like you might look like, assuming you don't have \$1.35 million to invest and haven't won a Nobel Prize or Olympic medal.



Would You Pass? Answer These Five Questions

A passing score is 30 points or more →

Would You Pass? Answer These Five Questions

1. How old are you?

18 to 21
22 to 25
26 to 30
31 to 35
36 to 40
41 to 45
46 to 50
Older than 50

2. What best describes your education?

Less than High School
High School
College or Higher
Masters Degree in STEM
Professional Degree or Doctorate in STEM

3. How well do you speak English, compared with non-native speakers?

Top 10 percent
80th percentile
70th percentile
Better than most
Bottom half

4. How much do you earn?

\$0 - \$39k
\$40k - \$79k
\$80k - \$119k
\$120k - \$159k
\$160k - \$199k
\$200k - \$239k
\$240k - \$279k
\$280k+

5. Which state do you live in?

In what state?

There are some limits to the level of detail that the census can provide. And we have to take some liberties with how the questions asked in the census apply to the actual criteria set in the Raise Act. However, census data was able to answer all the major questions in the point system that don't involve winning medals or investing large sums of money.

Why would so few Americans pass? Let's look at each point category.

AGE The act rewards a narrow age range. It awards 10 points — the maximum — for people ages 26 to 30, with people younger and older than that scoring fewer points. Anyone older than 50 gets zero.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY The Raise Act requires a top score in an English proficiency exam, either in the [TOEFL](#) or [IELTS](#). We simply awarded maximum points to Americans who said that English was their only language. This means the vast majority of Americans would get the top score, 12 points.

EDUCATION The maximum points, 13, are awarded to people with a professional or doctoral degree in a STEM field — and only 1 percent of Americans qualify. Still, a college graduate in any field would get 6 points.

INCOME In contrast with the systems Australia and Canada use, the Raise Act would place a particularly heavy weight on high incomes. The proposal gives the maximum points in this

category, 13, to applicants who have jobs that pay 300 percent of median household income in the state that they are moving to. (Household incomes are typically composed of multiple incomes, so this is a higher bar than if the Raise Act were to compare the applicant's personal income to median personal income.)

EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENT The Raise act also awards significant points for extraordinary achievement. People can get 25 points for having won a [Nobel Prize](#) or another comparable award — but only “in a field of scientific or social scientific study.” An Olympic medal is worth 15 points.

INVESTMENT Applicants can receive 6 points by making an investment of \$1.35 million that stays within U.S. borders for longer than three years. Additionally, the investor must play an “active role” in the investment, perhaps to avoid the possibility of an immigration-as-money-laundering scheme. An investor



making an investment of \$1.8 million receives 12 points.

To be clear, a passing score doesn't guarantee entry. The act stipulates a cap of 140,000 people to be allowed via the points system.

The sponsors of the bill, Senators Tom Cotton and David Perdue, say that a point-based system would help push America toward a more economically oriented immigration policy. Right now it is largely family-oriented. In 2015, 64 percent of new green-card holders were either immediate relatives or family sponsors, [according to the Migration Policy Institute](#). Only 14 percent of those green-card holders were sponsored by an employer. The rest were refugees and green-card lottery winners.

It would also make it easier for the government to tweak the dials according to the kind of skills and jobs it thinks the economy needs.

"The keys to these systems are that they're very flexible; you can admit people in their early 30s but with not that much work experience," said Kate Hooper, policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute. "But you can also admit someone who is in their late 50s but has very relevant work experience."

There is some debate over how effective a pure point system can be in supplying the work force.

Entry does not equal employment. And there's no guarantee that highly skilled new workers would immediately find jobs that match their level of talent — "brain waste," as immigration experts put it. The [Migration Policy Institute](#) estimates that almost a quarter of college-educated immigrants are either unemployed or underemployed.

Employee sponsorship solves some of these problems. But a system based exclusively on employee sponsorship ties new immigrants very closely to their employer, making it harder for them to negotiate for higher wages or better working conditions.

Canada and Australia have integrated a points-based system with employer sponsorship, awarding high scores for merit but also for applicants with a job offer from domestic employer.

But in Canada, which in 1967 became the first country to adopt a points-based immigration system, only [about a quarter of immigrants](#) entered through merit-based points in 2015, a reminder of the lasting influence of blood ties. So adopting a point system doesn't necessarily guarantee a big pivot to more economically oriented immigration.

'Natasha' of Mass Destruction: How Moscow and NATO Nickname Russian Weapons

Source: <https://sputniknews.com/military/201708261056814529-russia-military-equipment-nato-nicknames/>

Aug 26 – The tradition of giving the North American Treaty Organization (NATO) reporting names to Russian warplanes goes back to the beginning of the Cold War. Sputnik looks into how other Russian military hardware is nicknamed by the alliance and in Russia.

Traditionally, any kind of weapon in Russia, including a tank, a pistol or an aircraft, is given an official alphabetic or alphanumeric designation.

But in everyday life, the country's designers and the military refer to Russian weaponry by official and unofficial nicknames, something that is also the case with NATO representatives.

In this vein, it is worth pointing to a systemic approach related to the nicknames of some kinds of weapons.

The most vivid example is the "flower" series of Soviet and Russian self-propelled cannons, howitzers and mortars: "Vasilyok" (Cornflower), "Gvozdika" (Carnation), "Akatsiya" (Acacia), "Pion" (Peony) and "Tyulpan" (Tulip).

The multiple launch rocket systems, capable of destroying a whole settlement in a minute, are traditionally named in honor of destructive natural phenomena: "Grad" (Hail), "Uragan" (Hurricane), "Smerch" (Twist) and "Tornado."

The names of rivers are typically given to Russian air defense systems, such as "Shilka," "Tunguska," "Dvina," "Neva," "Pechora" and "Angara."



An array of Russian self-propelled and towed artillery systems also gets such nicknames, including "Msta," "Khosta" and "Kama."

Many types of Russian military hardware receive nicknames related to their individual characteristics. It suffices to mention the heaviest Russian intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) R-36M2 nicknamed "Voevoda" (Warchief).



Heavy flamethrower system TOS-1 "Buratino" during demonstration firing conducted at the 10th Russia Arms Expo international exhibition's opening

"This 'general of all ICBMs' is capable of delivering as many as 10 combat blocks with a capacity of up to a megaton each to the enemy's territory," according to RIA Novosti expert Andrey Kots.

"The attack helicopter Mi-28 'Night Hunter,' as you might guess, is specifically designed for operating in the dark. As for the high-speed missile torpedo 'Shkval' (Squall), it is the absolute record holder in its class in terms of speed," he explained.

According to him, the overwhelming majority of Soviet and Russian weapons were nicknamed in line with the "try to guess what it means" principle.

A Mil Mi-28-NE Havoc [Night Hunter] attack helicopter

Certainly, it's hard to understand why the prototype automatic grenade launcher TKB-0134 was nicknamed "Kozlik" (Kid), not to mention the heavy flamethrower system TOS-1 "Buratino" (Pinocchio) and the "Gepard" (Cheetah)-class frigates.

"Separately, we should mention the nicknames of various munitions, which were apparently coined by those with a poetic attitude of mind," Kots pointed out, citing the Grad system's 122 mm missile 9M22K "Ukrasheniye" (Decoration), a 240 mm missile MS-24 with a chemical warhead "Laska" (Caress) and a 220 mm leaflet shell "Paragraf" (Paragraph).

Also, it is worth mentioning the air target detection station "Fantasmagoria" (Phantasmagoria), the 30 mm



air gun "Balerinka" (Small Ballerina) and the Soviet tactical atomic bomb "Natasha."

8U49 nuclear bomb "Natasha"

As far as NATO reporting names are concerned, "an ordinary Russia will certainly scratch his head trying to understand why the strategic Tu-160 bomber is called Blackjack by US media," according



to Kots who also referred to the MiG-29 "Fulcrum" fighter and the Ka-25 "Hormone" antisubmarine helicopter.

But strange as it may seem, "NATO's code classification of aircraft and helicopters with the Russian Aerospace Forces is based on a very simple principle," Kots added.

He explained that the first letters of NATO reporting names correspond to the type of Russian warplane or helicopter.

"For example, fighters get nicknames, which have the first letter F," Kots said citing the Su-27 "Flanker" fighter jet, the MiG-31 "Foxhound" supersonic interceptor aircraft and the Su-34 "Fullback" fighter-bomber. This principle also pertains to Russian bombers, such as the Tu-95 "Bear," the Tu-22 "Blinder" and the Tu-22M "Backfire."

The letter M (miscellaneous) in the NATO classification denotes all other types of Russian aircraft, including reconnaissance, training and long-range radar detection planes.

These include the Yak-130 "Mitten" trainer, the A-50 "Mainstay" airborne early warning and control aircraft and the Il-78 "Midas" aerial refueling tanker.

Russian transport aircraft nicknames start with the letter C (cargo). They include the Il-76 "Candid," the An-124 "Condor" and the An-12 "Cub."

The NATO reporting names for Russian helicopters include the first letter H (helicopter): the Mi-24 "Hind," the Mi-28 "Havoc" and the Mi-26 "Hoodlum."

"With many reporting names picked up by NATO rather aptly, one will certainly wonder why the Su-25 ground attack aircraft is nicknamed 'Frogfoot,'" Kots concluded.

A Turkish-EU Opera Buffa

By Burak Bekdil

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/6873/a-turkish-eu-opera-buffa>

Aug 17 – When Turkey officially applied to become a full member of the European Union (EU), cell phones looked like bricks, Red Bull and *The Simpsons* had just made their debuts, President Ronald Reagan made his famous "Tear down this wall!" speech in West Berlin, the world population was five billion, Colonel Qaddafi in Libya was playing godfather to terrorists, Margaret Thatcher was the prime minister of



Britain, Gestapo boss Klaus Barbie was sentenced to life in prison for crimes against humanity, the first intifada was launched, and sports superstars Lionel Messi and Maria Sharapova were newborn babies.

Turkey says it wants to join the EU, but has no intention of complying with membership rules. The EU says it wants Turkey to join, but is fully aware that it does not qualify.

It was 1987. The mere opening of accession negotiations with Turkey would take another 18 years. Another

12 years after that, everyone in Brussels and Ankara knows full well that Turkish membership in the EU is an impossibility for the foreseeable future.

Nevertheless, the Turks think that 1) their country deserves full membership and 2) the only reason the EU has not granted them membership is because they are Muslim. Few diagnoses could be as inaccurate as this.

Three decades after Turkey formally applied for membership, it stands at position 146 on the Global Peace Index and position 155 on the World Press Freedom Index.



...

Against this unpleasant backdrop, the European Parliament has called for Turkey's accession talks to be suspended if Ankara fully implements plans to expand Erdoğan's powers, which he [narrowly won](#) in a referendum on April 16. Although the parliament's vote is not binding, it illustrates the gulf that has grown between Ankara and Brussels.

The resolution passed by the parliament in Strasbourg "calls on the Commission and the member states ... to formally suspend the accession negotiations with Turkey without delay if the constitutional reform package is implemented unchanged."

If the object of the resolution was to rein Erdoğan in, it didn't work. He remains defiant. He said the majority of Turks did not "want the EU anymore", and the EU is not indispensable for Turkey.

For decades, Turkey and the EU have been the lead actors in a strange, not very amusing opera buffa. Turkey says it wants to join the club with no obligation to comply with membership rules. The club says it wants Turkey, although it knows full well that the applicant does not qualify. Turkey hopes the club rules will change; the club hopes the applicant will change. Neither will happen.

But both know that formally calling off the show will not benefit either party. In the curtains-down scenario, Turkey suffers economically and the EU faces an officially hostile Turkey (as opposed to today's unofficially hostile one). It could find itself suffering from Turkey's "nuisance value" (remember Turkish threats last year to "open the doors and send millions of immigrants to Europe.")

Regardless, the tedious rounds of mutual pretension are growing less sustainable by the day.

Burak Bekdil is an Ankara-based political analyst and a fellow at the Middle East Forum.

All The Countries America Has Invaded... in One Map

Source: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/all-the-countries-america-has-invaded-in-one-map/5606068>

From Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli, the **US has had a military presence across the world**, from almost day one of its independence. For those who have ever wanted a **clearer picture of the true reach of the United States military – both historically and currently** – but shied away due to the sheer volume of research required to find an answer, [The Anti Media points out](#) that a crew at the [Independent](#) just made things a whole lot simpler.

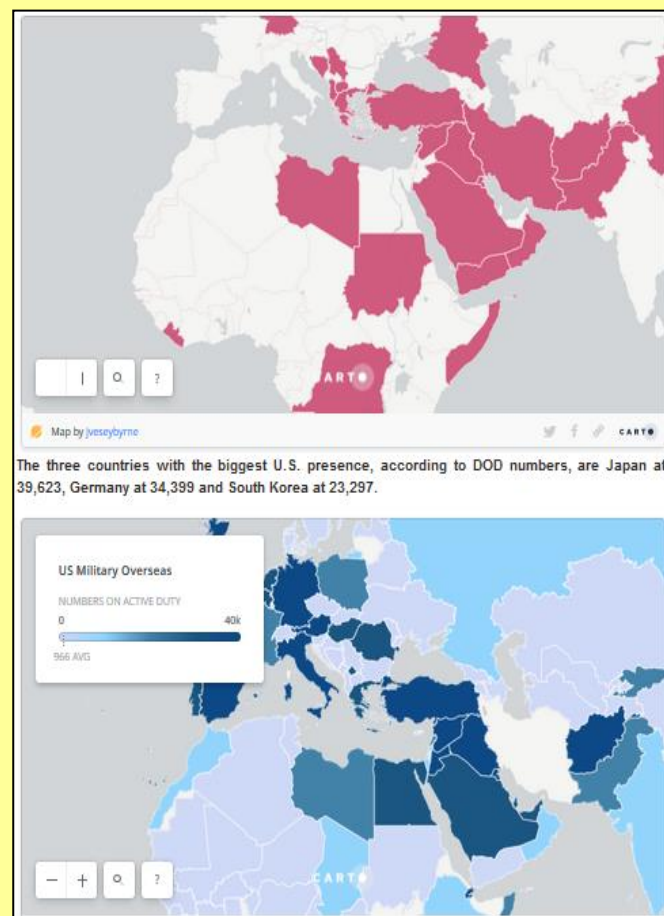
The maps are interactive – click on source's URL for more details

Using data compiled by a Geography and Native Studies [professor](#) from Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, he *indy100* team [created](#) an **interactive map of U.S. military incursions outside its own borders from Argentina in 1890 to Syria in 2014.**

To avoid confusion, *indy100* laid out its prerequisites for what constitutes an invasion:

"Deployment of the military to evacuate American citizens, covert military actions by US intelligence, providing military support to an internal opposition group, providing military support in one side of a conflict, use of the army in drug enforcement actions."

[But indy100 didn't stop there.](#) To put all that history into context, using [data](#) from the Department of Defense (DOD), the team also put together a map to display all the countries in which nearly 200,000 active members of the U.S. military are now stationed.



Ottoman time Tekbir to replace Chopin's piece at funerals of fallen Turkish soldiers

Source: <https://stockholmcf.org/ottoman-time-tekbir-to-replace-chopins-piece-at-funerals-of-fallen-turkish-soldiers/>

Sept 13 – The **Turkish Interior Ministry has ordered governors to play Ottoman-era composer Itri's piece with lyrics from Qur'an verses instead of Frédéric François Chopin's "Marche Funèbre" during the funeral processions of fallen soldiers**, reported by Turkish media on Wednesday.

"The honoring procession during martyrs' funerals will be done with Itri's 'Segah Tekbir,' which is in accordance with the morals of the martyr and its place in the hearts of our nation. The same procedures and principles will be applied for the members of the Interior Ministry when they pass away," the Interior Ministry said in a written statement on Tuesday. No trumpet will be played during the funerals of soldiers and silence would be observed without any music instruments, the ministry added.



"Our responsibility for the bravery of our martyrs, their families and our nation is eternal. The suitability of the ceremonies according to our national and moral values and the roots of our civilization is the main issue of this responsibility and its importance," it said.

According to a report by Hurriyet Daily News, the discussions had started after a soldier's funeral where the friends of the soldier silenced the band playing the funeral march with loud shouts of "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) in the southeastern province of Hakkari's Yüksekova district on April 3, 2016.

After the incident, Turkey's War Veterans Foundation head Lokman Aylar announced that they started a campaign to use Itri's "Tekbir" in the funerals instead. "A foreigner's death march doesn't suit our martyrs," Aylar said on April 12.

Turkey's Directorate General of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) head Mehmet Görmez offered replacing the funeral march with the 17th century Ottoman composer's "Tekbir" on April 15, 2016. Itri's "Segah Tekbir" was for the first time performed on Aug. 29 during the funeral procession of Martyr Gendarmerie Specialist Corporal Muhammed Meriç by the band of the General Gendarmerie Command.



The world-renowned Turkish pianist Fazıl Say's father and composer-music critic Ahmet Say and Presidential Symphony Orchestra General Music Director and Maestro Rengim Gökmen said in April that Chopin's funeral march is recognized universally and changing it would break away from the international tradition.



The first atomic bomb in the war against Russia, to fall over in Greece

Source: <https://el-gr.facebook.com/TheAustralianGreekNews/posts/691650354209754>

March 2014 – Thursday, March 20, 2014

DECLARATION OF SEXY Sarah Palin AGAINST GREECE> The first atomic bomb in the war against Russia, to fall over in Greece

The former Republican candidate for the vice presidency Sarah Palin: The first atomic bomb in the war against Russia, to fall over from Greece!

- Mrs Palin, a few days ago called openly for the use of nuclear weapons to resolve the crisis in Ukraine. Continue to support your position?

Of course I support it. I am a politician with brains, firm and steadfast. The nuclear weapon designed to be used like any other weapon. Russian President Putin, without fear of any threat, settled in Crimea. The action must be tempered with the appropriate response, if we do not, someone else will do it for us. Unfortunately today we have a gentle and conciliatory nation, something that was not so in our recent history, just take the example of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

- And where do you think should preferably be a nuclear strike, you have an idea?

I have! The first atomic bomb in the war against Russia will be dropped in Greece and then in the capital Athens.

- Excuse me, wait a minute, we are from Greece. Want to burn us, and we are members of the European Union and NATO? Must be some mistake!

How dare you! Am I wrong? There is no mistake. I have studied the history of Europe and I know very well what is Greece. The Ellada is a "Trojan horse" of Russia in Europe and therefore the destruction will be a clear message to Putin, what awaits him.

Can be adopted by the European Union and NATO, the area, but not your nation. The Greeks are parasites and it is clear even in kindergartens of America. What other people can tolerate to live about five hundred years under the yoke, and who knows how many more will you tolerate if you had not been released, unfortunately, from Russia. The Greeks can survive under all circumstances, in every empire. You are parasites and never offer anything for the welfare of those with whom you are connected. With your loss, the European Union and NATO will not be lost, and the profits from the disaster will be stopping Putinikis Russia not to restore its influence in Europe, but also to facilitate the use of your soil the implementation of our strategic objectives.

- But you will die elderly, mothers, children!

In Hiroshima and Nagasaki were elderly, mothers and children, but that did not stop anyone. As I said, the Greeks are unnecessary and parasitic race, which existence through majority were under slavery, so I do not see anyone really ignore you in the future. The release of

 **George Kostopoulos** ▶ The Australian Greek News
25 Μαρτίου 2014 · Αθήνα, Αττική · 🌐

Thursday, March 20, 2014

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- And where do you think should preferably be a nuclear strike, you have an idea?



atomic bomb over Athens will show clearly that there is no joke on our part. That we have no desire to sit idle with the diabolical plans of Russia to undermine the Euro-Atlantic orientation of the planet, through the stimulation of rosofilon in Europe.

- But have you ever thought about how such an act will affect people in Ukraine who now want to join you what will they think when they see that you sacrifice your members?

I'm sure you understand correctly this act. I repeat, we are destroying the "Trojan horse" of Russia in Europe. The ground is already connected with us, will simply get rid of the pro-Russian elements. Do not wait to throw atomic bombs on those simply seeking desperately to join us. If you bomb the Crimea, then how can we hope that those people wishing to join NATO and the EU? No. The only right decision is the first atomic bomb dropped over Athens.

- And that in Greece there are many people who sincerely want to be Europeans and who wholeheartedly participate profess and preach the Euro-Atlantic values? Such bombing would not be unfair to them?

I honestly do not lypamai. Chosame much money in their pockets, but they failed to do what they did Ukrainians our partners in Kiev with so little money. With such generous donations, the only reasonable explanation for the failure is that they sincerely believe what Strive, but only drag things to pluck more money. Come on, I'm not stupid and I know the nature of the Greeks.

These Greeks were actually pro-Western orientation, migrated. Thus, the Greek Western values is already with us. However, I want to console those who are still in Greece, where together with our money, and still fighting for our cause, for them and all the other victims, after the defeat of Russia will Poutinikis erected a monument. And if there are any honest, faithful to the Euro-Atlantic values, still living in Greece, be aware that there is nothing higher than the fall victims in the name of democracy and European integration. All of you will be a monument - in memory of the victims of Poutinikis Russia, and all your names will be written in golden letters - black marble! Even I can tell you that as we announce this project, we have approved a contract for the construction of the monument. Thank you.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Fake news? Real news? Stupid news? A political cork? Hidden reality? Just a satirical peace of shit on Facebook? Given the language used (English/Greeklisch) most probably this post is not real. Some people have a sick sense of humor ... on NOT?

Human organ trafficking in Turkey?

Source 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1W5cy3nAhDk>

Source 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogiatvOk_ck



SHAME on you
Finland!



Finnish FOX farms



U.S. Muslims Open to Multiple Interpretations of Islam: Poll

Source: <https://clarionproject.org/u-s-muslims-open-to-multiple-interpretations-of-islam-new-poll/>

Aug 29 – A majority of Muslims in the U.S. say there is more than one way to interpret Islam and believe traditional understandings of Islam must be reinterpreted to reflect contemporary issues, according to a [new Pew Research Center poll](#).

The poll also surprisingly suggests that being highly religious does not necessarily indicate acceptance of traditional notions of Islam.

In addition, the poll indicates that attendance levels of U.S. Muslims at mosques are comparable to attendance levels of Christians at church services. Also comparable are the percentages of Muslims who say religion is very important in their lives versus the percentage of Christians who say the same thing. The percentages of U.S. Muslims and Christians who believe there is more than one way to interpret their respective religions is also similar.

Specifically, the poll, found:

- ◆ 43% of U.S. Muslims say they attend mosque at least once a week (compared to 47% of U.S. Christians who say they attend church services at least once a week)
- ◆ 65% of U.S. Muslims say religion is very important in their lives (68% of U.S. Christians say the same)
- ◆ 64% of U.S. Muslims say there is room for multiple interpretations of the teachings of Islam (60% of U.S. Christians say the same thing about Christianity). Of note is that even among Muslims who say that religion is very important in their life, 59% say there is more than one way to interpret the faith.

In addition, a majority of U.S. Muslims polled (52%) say traditional understandings of Islam must be reinterpreted to reflect contemporary issues (versus 38% who maintain that traditional understandings are all that is needed). Even among Muslims who say that religion is very important in their lives, 43% say traditional understandings should be reinterpreted (while 46% say not).

The results of this poll should be heartwarming to Muslim reformers who are oftentimes bullied out of the conversation by vocal and well-funded Muslim Brotherhood-linked (Islamist) front groups like the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and their popular shills like sharia-apologist Linda Sarsour, who has become a darling of the far left and feminists.

Even more importantly, government agencies – including the State Department — which seem to have an open-door policy for Islamist groups (while closing the door to reformers), would be wise to realize that reform-minded and open Muslims would make better partners in the fight for freedom and democracy and security in the homeland.

Muslim ‘Mediator’ Defends Gang Rape After Attack: ‘Enjoyed Like Normal Intercourse When Woman Calms’

Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2017/08/30/rimini-attack-muslim-cultural-mediator-says-rape-can-enjoyed-like-normal-intercourse-woman-becomes-calm/>

Aug 30 – **A so-called ‘cultural mediator’ at a migrant reception centre in Italy has caused outrage with his comments on rape following attacks on tourists from Poland and Peru in Rimini, Italy.**

Abid Jee wrote that rape was “a worse act, but only at the beginning, when the willy goes in, then the woman becomes calm and you enjoy it like normal intercourse” on Facebook after a Polish couple and a Peruvian transsexual were attacked by four men thought to be North African migrants, [according](#) to the Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata (ANSA) wire service.

The news agency says Jee’s post “caused a stir despite being quickly removed”, with many calling for him to be sacked.

The attack saw two 26-year-old Poles subjected to a “brutal and bestial” attack in the popular tourist destination on the Adriatic coast.



Jack Montgomery @JackBMontgomery

Muslim 'cultural mediator' on Rimini attacks: rape "can be enjoyed like normal intercourse after woman becomes calm"
breitbart.com/london/2017/08...
 8:12 μ.μ. - 30 Aug 2017



Muslim 'Mediator' Defends Gang Rape After Attack: 'Enjoyed Li...
 Abid Jee said rape was "a worse act, but only at the beginning, when the willy goes in, then the woman becomes calm and you enjoy it like
breitbart.com

The male was struck on the head with a bottle and beaten unconscious before his girlfriend was repeatedly raped in front of him and thrown into the sea. Both were hospitalised following the attack, and the male will likely require facial surgery.

A transsexual person from Peru was also raped by the gang, either before the attack on the Polish couple or shortly afterwards, according to [conflicting accounts](#).

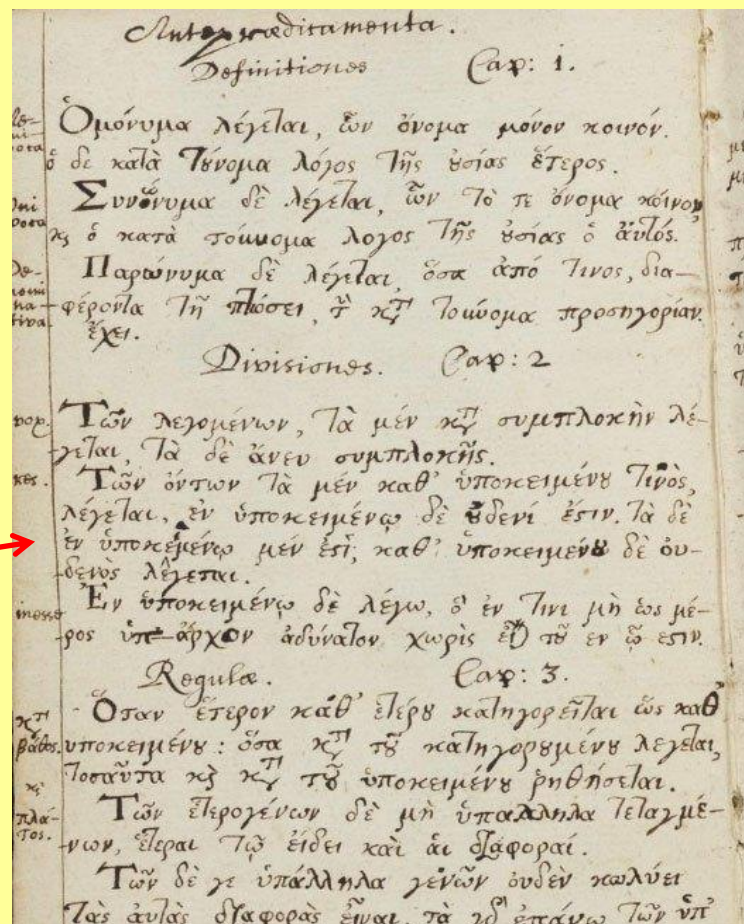
The case has caused alarm in Italy and considerable anger in Poland, which is sending its own investigators to help apprehend the suspects.

Giorgia Meloni, who leads the conservative Brothers of Italy party, said law and order in the country had eroded during the migrant crisis, and that it was beginning to resemble "the worst favelas of South America"

in places.

Matteo Salvini, who leads Italy's populist Northern League, has said "prison is not enough" for the perpetrators, and reiterated previous calls for migrant sex attackers to be chemically castrated.

Poland's Deputy Justice Minister Patryk Jaki went even further in an impassioned Twitter post, [writing](#) "for these bastards should be the death penalty, although for this particular case I would also restore torture".



Neuton's notebook

Do you recognize the language?

▶▶ See the complete notebook [here](#).

The Fall 2017 Issue of Middle East Quarterly

Sep 1, 2017



[The Vatican Joins the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#)

Throughout most of Israel's history, the Vatican abided strictly by its obligation under the 1929 Lateran treaty to remain outside of temporal conflicts, focusing its attention mainly on protecting its property interests and holy sites in Israel. Since the 2013 ascension of Pope Francis, however, the Vatican "is proving a more engaged political actor, tackling such issues as climate change, migration, refugees, and homosexuality," writes **Leonard Hammer**, a lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Rothberg International School.

Whereas in 1993 the Vatican had used the term "disputed territories and unsettled borders" to describe contested areas under Israeli control (not unlike language used by Israel's foreign ministry), in 2015 the Vatican abandoned neutrality by recognizing the non-existent "State of Palestine" and calling Israel's reunification of Jerusalem "unacceptable." The intent "seems to be a desire by the Vatican to wrest Christian holy sites from the control of Muslim and Jewish governing authorities with a view toward internationalization."

[The Islamic State's Virtual Caliphate](#)

Although the territorial collapse of the Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria is now a foregone conclusion, the group is likely to persist as a global terror threat for years to come, argues **Mina Hamblet**, an international relations student at the University of Virginia. ISIS has become "the foremost purveyor of jihadist indoctrination in the West," creating what she calls a "virtual caliphate" that is easily accessible and attractive to diverse audiences "in a manner al-Qaeda was never able to achieve."

[Are Returning Jihadists a Major Threat?](#)

As the ISIS Caliphate in Syria and Iraq crumbles, the group's surviving foreign fighters (tens of thousands joined) are desperately seeking to escape, many to return home. **Thomas R. McCabe**, a retired U.S. Air Force reserve lieutenant colonel and former Defense Department analyst, argues that most of the returnees, having "willingly joined an *openly* murderous organization," cannot be rehabilitated into society. Governments should therefore prevent their return by suspending their passports and, where possible, revoking their citizenship. Unfortunately, he says, they haven't done enough to identify and build profiles on citizens who travelled to the Middle East to fight with ISIS.



[Is the Western Wall Judaism's Holiest Site?](#)

F. M. Loewenberg, a professor emeritus at Bar-Ilan University, examines the history of the Western Wall's sacredness in Judaism, a "relatively late development" dating back to the capture of the Jerusalem by Ottoman ruler Suleiman the Magnificent in 1517. While the Temple Mount itself was widely venerated by Jews for centuries, there is little mention of the Western Wall as a sacred site in the historical record until Suleiman announced that Jews had the right to pray there. Thereafter it became a focus of Jewish pilgrimages. While "there is no ancient Jewish tradition that designates the Western Wall as a sacred site," concludes Loewenberg, "it has become sanctified over time as Jews have increasingly utilized it for prayer."

[Brief Reviews](#)

Seven reviews of new books about the Middle East and related topics.

Awareness Trainings and Detecting Jihadists among Asylum Seekers: A Case Study from The Netherlands

By Joris van Wijk and Maarten P. Bolhuis

Perspectives of terrorism; Vol 11(4) 2017

Source: <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/621/html>

Since the end of 2014, a broad political debate has emerged in Europe about asylum-seeking migration and jihadism-related risks. Where national security agencies and other experts initially expressed themselves in cautious terms about the risk that jihadists would make use of the migratory flows to enter Europe, this changed after the attacks in Paris in November 2015.[1] The subsequent knife attack by an Afghan asylum seeker in a German train in the summer of 2016,[2] the lorry attack by a Tunisian asylum seeker in Berlin later that same year[3] and a lorry attack by an Uzbek asylum seeker in Stockholm in 2017[4] only strengthened interest in the 'asylum-jihadism-nexus'. Currently, security experts acknowledge at least three risks:

- (i) jihadists travelling with the migratory flows into Europe (and applying for asylum);
- (ii) recruitment with jihadi intent amongst asylum seeker populations and
- (iii) the radicalization of asylum applicants during their stay at reception centres.[5]

There is a longstanding and rich societal and academic debate on how (non-)government actors in the margin of their normal line of duties can assist in preventing terrorism.[6] A recent questionnaire by the European Migration Network (EMN)[7] demonstrates that many European countries have been introducing initiatives to train frontline professionals working with asylum seekers in detecting possible jihadists amongst incoming migrants. These workers are somehow expected to 'spot' jihadists or processes of radicalization. Yet is this possible? The academic literature argues that it is challenging, if not impossible, to identify terrorists on the basis of their expressions, appearance and/or behaviour.[8]

This article discusses a variety of challenges related to training frontline professionals in detecting jihadism amongst asylum seekers. Taking the Netherlands as a case study, it discusses:

- 1) the structural setup of the information exchange relating to jihadism in the immigration process;
- 2) how Dutch frontline professionals working with asylum seekers are trained and/or equipped to identify possible indications of jihadism;
- 3) how the trainings and tools translate into actual practice;
- 4) to what extent the alerts that frontline professionals share are deemed relevant by the Dutch General and Military Intelligence and Security Services (AIVD and MIVD respectively (hereafter referred to as 'Security Services')); and
- 5) whether or not Security Services can and should store all alerts they receive.

The findings of this study are not only relevant for academics and professionals working in the field of migration, but also in relation to other sectors where frontline professionals receive awareness trainings on jihadism. As many other European countries currently develop or work with comparable awareness trainings, this contribution caters to an



international audience. The article concludes that frontline professionals working with asylum seekers receive complex, but ambiguous and multi-interpretable advice on how to detect signs of jihadist convictions, and finds that it is yet unknown to what extent existing trainings and tools are useful, effective, and/or efficient. It is imperative to perform empirical and evidence-based studies that evaluate the effects and pros and cons of trainings and tools that aim to create awareness about jihadism amongst frontline professionals.

Methodology

Being aware of the many different definitions and interpretations of the concepts 'jihadism' and 'radicalization',^[9] this study follows the definitions by the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV, hereafter referred to as 'National Coordinator'). 'Jihadism' is understood to be "an ideological movement within political Islam based on a specific interpretation of the Salafist doctrine and on the ideas of Sayyid Qutb striving, by means of armed struggle (jihad), to gain global domination of Islam and the re-establishment of the Islamic state (caliphate)".^[10] 'Radicalization' is defined as "the (active) pursuit and/or support of radical changes in society, which may endanger (the existence of) the democratic order (target), possibly with the use of undemocratic methods (means) which may prejudice the functioning of the democratic order (effect)".^[11] Processes of radicalization and recruitment are considered to be interlinked. Recruitment processes are regarded to be a form of directing individuals towards radicalization, with the aim of developing this radicalization in a violent direction.^[12]

The data presented in this article was gathered in the context of a study carried out at the request of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice. The report, which discusses how frontline professionals try to detect jihadism in the Dutch immigration process, was published in November 2016 and is available in the Dutch language only.^[13] Apart from an analysis of relevant academic literature, policy documents, and training material, the main source of data stems from semi-structured interviews with 49 respondents working for organizations involved in the immigration process. This includes interviews with policy makers as well as practitioners. In the context of this article, we focus in particular on the information provided by one respondent working for the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV), six respondents working for the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND - hereafter referred to as 'Immigration Services'), twelve respondents working for the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA - hereafter referred to as 'Reception Agency') and two respondents working for the AIVD and MIVD.

The respondents were recruited through snowball sampling, based on availability. We started interviewing a limited number of policy makers and subsequently were brought into contact with frontline workers. Interviews lasted between one and three hours, took place at the offices of the respondents and were not taped. Instead, we made notes and shared interview reports with the respondents for approval. During the interviews, we used a topic list; the interviews had a semi-structured character. All respondents were guaranteed anonymity.

The context in which the research was conducted can be characterized as dynamic. During and since the period of data gathering, Europe has witnessed several more terrorist attacks. For this reason, it is important to place the findings of this study into context. It cannot be ruled out that respondents would by now express themselves differently or that the described practice has in the meantime been subject to some changes.

The fact that we selected the respondents by means of a convenience sample and the fact that we only interviewed a limited number of respondents means that the study is not representative and should therefore be considered exploratory in nature. The views and opinions expressed by respondents are not necessarily representative of the main perspectives within these organizations, but are nonetheless useful as they do illustrate the types of challenges associated with training frontline professionals in detecting jihadism amongst asylum seekers.

The Organizational Arrangements for Sharing Information

The Netherlands does not have a single integrated design for the identification of jihadism in the immigration process. Instead, over the years, various measures and methods were



adopted and introduced with the aim of improving and facilitating the identification of national security-related matters, jihadism being one of those. Over the past years, agreements were made and covenants drawn up to facilitate information exchange between the Immigration Services, the Reception Agency, and the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V, hereafter referred to as 'Repatriation Service') on the one hand, and the Security Services on the other hand. Between the Immigration Services, the Reception Agency, and the Repatriation Service, a 'reporting structure' was set up for matters related to national security, including possible signs relating to jihadism. Signs identified by professionals working within these three organizations can, by means of an alert, be sent to liaison officers of the Immigration Services who can refer these alerts to the Security Services. Employees of the Reception Agency are required to also share signs with the local police.

Identifying Jihadism: Passive Detection and the Use of Indicators

Frontline professionals working with asylum seekers are expected to engage in, what Schuurman et al. refer to as, the 'passive detection' of terrorism.[14] Whereas 'active detection' takes place by law enforcement or intelligence services during ongoing criminal or intelligence investigations, passive detection is done by (non-)government actors in the margin of their normal line of duties. A quick scan of academic literature shows that differentiating possible terrorists from non-terrorists in the context of passive detection is challenging. As Rae indicates, "the most prevalent method of attempting to achieve distinction between these two groups is to establish a set of psychological, socio-economic, physical, and/or racial attributes that mark one from the other." [15] Ideally, actors engaged in passive detection can be provided with a list of characteristics of terrorists – what they look like, where they come from, what kind of personality they have – which would allow them to make an assessment of which cases are relevant to bring to the attention of Security Services. Yet, many authors highlight that it is extremely complex to identify terrorists or jihadists on the basis of expressions, appearance, and/or behaviour and that there are other ethical and societal problems associated with profiling such as criminalising specific populations and racial stereotyping.[16]

As Sageman points out: "There's really no profile, just similar trajectories to joining the jihad." [17] And even with respect to the possibility of identifying or detecting such trajectories, reservations have been expressed. Radicalization processes are not always linear and deterministic in nature and factors that may indicate radicalization should always be assessed interdependently.[18] Persons who 'flirt' with radicalization do not irrevocably radicalize, while people who radicalize do not necessarily engage in violence.[19] The use of indicators to promote passive detection of possible jihadists or radicalization is therefore controversial. The efficiency and effectiveness of such indicators are questioned, as well as the extent to which the potential benefits of detection of certain indications outweigh possible adverse consequences, such as over-reporting or stigmatization. When individuals who follow a conservative interpretation of Islam experience negative consequences from being labelled possible jihadists, this can – potentially fuelled or promoted by extremist groups – even contribute to actual radicalization.[20]

The Dilemma

With the increased influx of asylum seekers from the Middle East, in November 2014 the Immigration Services and the Reception Agency started an 'awareness tour' to inform frontline professionals working with asylum seekers about issues of national security, with a specific focus on jihadism. Our study indicates that those responsible for developing awareness trainings and tools to help frontline professionals identify jihadism were – and still are – confronted with a dilemma. On the one hand, dominant actors in the security domain indicate that there are inherent limitations to 'checklists' or 'lists of indicators' as tools for identifying a possible jihadist mind-set. Respondents representing the National Coordinator as well as the Security Services (AIVD and MIVD) expressed serious reservations to using indicators as tools for passive detection (R7, R11, R51). They pointed out that jihadism comes in many forms and shapes and that it is unlikely that someone who comes to Europe with the aim to carry out an attack would be 'recognizable' by means of his/her expressions, appearance, and/or behaviour. They further acknowledge that the use of indicators could



lead to an increase of irrelevant alerts (false positives) and further stigmatization of particular groups. On the other hand, politicians and society at large expect organizations working with asylum seekers to act as a 'first line of defence' against the threat of terrorism and to actively try to identify possible jihadists. During periods of a large influx of asylum seekers, the frontline professionals working for these organizations are first and foremost occupied with their primary tasks, namely the processing of asylum claims (Immigration Services) and counselling and supervising asylum seekers during their stay in an asylum centre (Reception Agency). If, on top of that, they are also expected to engage in passive detection of jihadism, they should, ideally, be provided with concrete tools, such as indicators, which can give them guidance in detecting possible jihadism. Concrete tools on 'how to recognize a jihadist' are desired in particular by frontline professionals who, due to the nature of their work, only have a short time with asylum seekers, such as staff members of the Immigration Services who interview asylum seekers to assess the validity of their claims.

The Compromise

The result of this dilemma is a compromise, if not a contradiction. Frontline professionals in the Netherlands are given a complex, ambiguous, and multi-interpretable message. For example, with the proviso that there is no single list of indicators or profile on the basis of which a possible jihadist can be recognized, during awareness training and on the intranet, staff of the Immigration Services are provided with a list of indicators which 'require alertness'. Reference is made to certain types of behaviour (e.g. denying shaking a female staff member's hand, avoiding eye contact), specific language (Salafist jargon), or specific characteristics with regard to appearance (certain types of clothing, tattoos) which may give away that someone is a jihadist. On the intranet and during trainings, it is at the same time emphasized that all these factors should be seen in conjunction (interdependently) and that these may 'of course' also be an indication of something other than jihadism or terrorism. Staff members are furthermore advised to trust their 'professional intuition' or their 'gut feelings', to discuss suspicions with their colleagues, and to make their suspicions as concrete as possible before issuing an alert (R3).

A similar message is conveyed during trainings for staff of the Reception Agency (R5). These trainings, however, focus more explicitly on factors which can possibly indicate processes of radicalization, rather than identifying incoming jihadists as such (which is more the focus of trainings provided by the Immigration Services). It is, for example, emphasized that people who radicalize may stop drinking alcohol, isolate themselves, and/or start working out their bodies very actively. Unlike the Immigration Services, the Reception Agency does not provide a list of indicators on its intranet.

Staff members of the Immigration Services as well as the Reception Agency are explicitly told that in case of doubt they should always issue an alert. They are told that they themselves are not expected to assess whether something they deem remarkable or suspicious could be relevant in the context of detecting jihadists, or other issues such as human trafficking or an asylum seeker's possible involvement in war crimes. As one representative of the Bureau for Security and Integrity of the Reception Agency said, staff members are expected to issue an alert, while the determination of whether or not the alert is relevant for national security is the responsibility of other parties (R5).

Passive Detection in Actual Practice

Various respondents indicated that the information provided during the awareness trainings was useful and provided them with a 'perspective for action' (RF 42, RF43). The statements of some other respondents, however, illustrate that they had at times difficulties in translating the complex message they received during the training into actual practice. One staff member of a reception facility remembers that shortly after a training session many colleagues were extremely wary:

"We were told that if someone suddenly starts to work out very often, this could possibly be an indication of something. The result was that the everyone in the team was on edge when a resident started exercising." (RF30)

The above suggests that these frontline professionals may have had difficulties in actually utilizing the ambiguous messages delivered during trainings. The comments by another staff



member, who took part in another training session, indicate that trainings were in some instances seen as being too nuanced or ambiguous:

“Last year we had a training, when it was all really in the news, when that video of Jihadi John was published. (...) In the morning we were shown short videos, for example of a man waving an Islamic State flag inside an asylum centre, the afternoon session consisted of the instructors asking us ‘what do you think you can do to detect certain possible signs’ (...), while everyone was thinking ‘I want to hear what we need to do’. (...) Finally, we had to come up with solutions ourselves... But I actually also don’t know if there is much more to be said about it (...). After the training, the conclusion basically was that you cannot detect it. Everyone had questions and came for answers, but the overall conclusion was, you cannot see it. Someone may have a beard or wear a djellabah, but it doesn’t mean anything. Afterwards everyone felt like, ‘it was a nice training, but no answers...’” (RF42)

In the context of this study we have not been in a position to do a systematic analysis of the different types of signs that have over the years been forwarded to liaison officers as such information is confidential. But since various respondents provided illustrations of signs they had been given we do have some anecdotal information which gives an idea of the wide variety of the content of these signs. For example, when asked what type of signs (s)he would share, a representative of the Immigration Services who has a coordinating role in identifying threats to national security agencies and in that capacity screens social media profiles of asylum seekers, stated:

“For instance, you see a picture of a man holding hands with his lover. On another picture you see the same man with a Kalashnikov in his hand and in army fatigues. That’s a sign we will forward.” (RF33)

A colleague added:

“Or if someone ‘likes’ video clips of decapitations on Facebook or shares such clips.” (RF35)

An employee of the Reception Agency mentioned:

“We noticed that some people often gathered at a certain caravan [the type of housing at that asylum centre]. (...) When you entered the caravan you noticed they were watching a clip on an iPad and then suddenly stopped. If they would be watching some sort of TV show, you’d not expect them to stop watching. So if they suddenly stop the clip, you get the feeling ‘something is not right here’ (...) Another example: Last year I received a message from someone living in the village next to the centre. He had noted that someone from the reception centre often went to the fitness centre in army fatigues and told me the man was exercising very intensively, almost every day. I reported this.” (RF28)

Staff members working at another reception facility remembered that they were approached by a resident who told them that a group of other residents came together each evening to watch video clips. The staff members themselves already thought these residents were behaving awkwardly and started to monitor them more closely:

“It occasionally happened that those residents gathered at the square, or were hanging around in front of the reception. They had an awkward way of acting, distancing themselves from us. They were checking out staff of the reception centre, rather than the other way around.” (RF43)

“One of them was always standing outside, on the balcony. We at times do general inspections of the rooms and ... we also wanted to check his apartment. (...) They were not happy with this. One quickly ran to another room to do something. That is very awkward, these are all possible signs.” (RF42)

Examples of signs that, according to our respondents, relate to possible recruitment activities at reception centres include a report that residents were transported with minivans from a reception centre to a mosque in the south of the country which is known to be very conservative (R5). In 2015 an employee of a reception centre reported that asylum seekers were told that they could get on a bus to Paris to demonstrate against the Iranian government for five Euros. For the Bureau of Security and Integrity of the Reception Agency, this report was a reason to inform the liaison officer:

“I said ‘those people can be bombarded with whatever message for five hours’. My grandmother was once foisted a far too expensive anti-rheumatic blanket in a similar vein. I thought: ‘this might be a strategy.’ That message has eventually been shared with all the other organisations involved in the immigration process.” (R5)



Relevance of the Alerts

The above examples illustrate that the liaison officers of the Dutch Immigration Services receive a potpourri of alerts, ranging from hearsay information that an asylum seeker has started exercising intensively, the presence or approval of certain pictures on asylum applicants' social media profiles, to information about organized transports to conservative mosques. Based on their professional experience, liaison officers may decide not to forward a given alert to the Security Services, but instead forward it to other relevant bodies, such as a specific unit dealing with identifying possible war criminals, to exclude them from refugee protection.[21] Yet, since late 2014 the liaison officers do not take too much risk in this regard and in principle refer all alerts that are possibly related to jihadism to the Security Services (R3).

The number of alerts that the liaison officers referred to the Security Services has, over the past three years, increased significantly. In 2015, there was almost a four-fold increase compared to 2014 and an almost six-fold increase compared to 2013.[22] This could be explained by either the increase in the number of asylum seekers, or the increased awareness on matters of national security amongst frontline professionals – or by a combination of these factors. Whether, and to what extent, these alerts are of any use to the Security Services is difficult to assess. For the time being, the increased number of alerts has, according to the liaison officer of the Immigration Services (R3), not led to a significant increase of individual official notices (individuele ambtsberichten) by the Security Services.[23] Such adverse security assessments, based on alerts from frontline professionals working with asylum seekers are, as a respondent of the AIVD mentioned, 'the odd one out' (R11). Providing an individual official notice is typically only possible if such alerts can be combined with other tangible intelligence, and as asylum seekers are new to the Netherlands, information from the alerts often cannot be linked to any existing intelligence. It is furthermore often not allowed, or not possible, to request additional information about asylum seekers from foreign services, such as the country of origin. For this reason, alerts from frontline professionals working with asylum seekers often do not give the Security Services much perspective to act directly (R11).

However, the number of negative security assessments is certainly not the only criterion to 'measure' the usefulness of alerts. The Security Services indicate that they definitely do appreciate receiving these alerts, as these are stored for future reference. A respondent of the AIVD noted that alerts from staff members of the Reception Agency are generally regarded more useful than alerts received from frontline professionals working at the Immigration Services, as asylum interviews take place in a formal setting in which applicants are more likely to provide politically correct answers. Professionals working in reception centres have contact with asylum seekers over a longer period of time and more often get in touch with them when they are 'off guard' (R11).

Can and Should all Alerts be Stored?

Although the Security Services indicated that they welcome alerts as these can be stored for future reference, it is questionable to what extent they are always allowed to do so. On the basis of the Law on the Intelligence and Security Services (WIV), information relating to someone's religion may only be stored in addition to other data, and only in so far as it is inevitable for the purpose of the data processing.[24] The Security Services acknowledged that they are not allowed to store an alert which exclusively refers to someone's religious beliefs, but interpret the WIV in such a way that they do feel free to store indications that someone holds a radical conservative interpretation of Islam, e.g. combined with the fact that he comes from Syria and has travelled with a false passport (R11). A question that is open to debate, is where to draw the line in this respect. How much or what type of additional information 'suffices' to store information about someone's religion? As described above, some alerts (merely) refer to the fact that asylum seekers are transported to a mosque which is known for propagating a conservative interpretation of Islam. If an asylum seeker from Syria makes use of such transport, would that fact alone be sufficient to be registered and stored in the systems of the Security Services? And what if the asylum seeker originates from, say, Afghanistan or Tunisia (countries the attackers in the two most recent attacks in Germany originated from)? With the widely differing profiles of people involved in recent attacks,[25] answering such questions is increasingly difficult.



Whether or not this issue is specific to the Dutch context we do not know. However, we can hardly imagine this is not a point for discussion in other jurisdictions.

Apart from the question whether the Security Services can store information from alerts, it is also debatable whether the Security Services actually should store all information they receive, even if they are allowed to do so. There is an intrinsic tension in weighing public safety interests against the privacy of the person concerned and the potentially negative consequences counter terrorism measures may have.[26] What exactly are the implications when the Security Services store someone's details for future reference? How exactly could that affect his or her future legal proceedings or perhaps his or her career? If frontline professionals working with asylum seekers are told that in case of doubt they should always issue an alert, one could argue the Security Services have an extra responsibility to treat information from those alerts with great caution. If a well-meaning frontline professional reports that asylum seeker X is acting 'awkwardly' because he goes to the gym every day, the possibly positive consequences of storing such information for the Security Services' information position should be weighed against the possibly negative consequences for the individual's career. As of yet, it is unclear whether and how such a balancing test is carried out. An additional repercussion of enhanced information storing is that it may also have negative consequences for the Security Services themselves. With that, it becomes more likely that perpetrators of future attacks are to be found in one or another database, without having been closely monitored. Should an attack take place and it turns out the attacker 'was known to the Security Services', this might lead to a damaged reputation and loss of trust in the Security Services.

Conclusion

Taking the Netherlands as a case study, this article discussed some of the challenges raised by training frontline professionals working with asylum seekers to detect jihadists or processes of radicalization. On the one hand, politicians and society at large expect frontline professionals to proactively identify possible jihadists. As these professionals often only have short contacts with asylum seekers, providing them with concrete tools such as indicators on how to identify a possible jihadist appears to make good sense. On the other hand, experts in the security domain – including those developing such trainings – are well aware of the limitations and risks associated with the use of such tools, namely an increase of false positives and stigmatization.

The result is that frontline professionals are given complex, but ambiguous and multi-interpretable messages. Caseworkers of the Immigration Services, for example, are provided with concrete indicators of possible jihadism related to specific behaviour or appearances, but are also made aware of the limitations of these indicators. In addition, it is emphasized that they should trust their professional intuition or 'gut feeling', discuss suspicions with colleagues and that, in case of doubt, they should always issue an alert. Although this study could not make a systematic analysis of the type of information which is in actual practice shared with the Security Services, anecdotal information by our respondents indicates that there is wide variation in the content of the alerts.

Beyond the Netherlands, the jihadism-asylum nexus will undoubtedly continue to feature prominently in discussions on counter-terrorism policies. The EMN-questionnaire referred to earlier, illustrates that various European countries seek to train frontline professionals in detecting possible jihadists hiding among bona fide incoming migrants. Measures typically include awareness-raising campaigns (e.g. United Kingdom, Belgium) and specialised trainings for frontline professionals to identify potential threats (e.g. Belgium, Finland, Germany, Norway).[27] However, as this article demonstrates, developing appropriate tools and training is far from easy. Providing such trainings should only be done if it is useful, effective, and/or efficient. There is a potential for conflict and confusion amongst relevant actors regarding the usefulness, necessity, and desirability of providing (concrete) indicators to frontline professionals as guidance in identifying possible jihadism.

Having assessed the Dutch situation, we have no doubt that all parties involved – from those developing the training programmes to the frontline professionals issuing the alerts, all the way to the Security Services who are tasked to interpret the alerts – sincerely and seriously try to find a balance between the importance of detecting possible jihadists on the one hand and the risk of stigmatizing (certain) asylum seekers on the other hand. Yet precisely



because the issue is so complex, it is striking to note that so far very few empirical and/or comparative studies have been undertaken to properly evaluate the effects, benefits and costs of the available training offered and tools provided.[28] This is not exceptional. Eijkman & Roodnat recently argued that countering terrorism as well as countering (violent) extremism has been the subject of thorough empirical research to a very limited extent.[29]

To improve the effectiveness of awareness trainings on the detection of jihadism - in the Netherlands, but certainly also in other countries - it is imperative to engage in more empirical research which can answer, amongst others, the following questions:

What type of signs do frontline professionals typically share with intelligence and security services?

How do these alerts relate to the information provided during trainings or in tools such as indicator lists?

Are there situations of 'over-reporting' and what consequences does this have?

What type of alerts have proven – or are considered by the Security Services – to be the most relevant?

How often is information from alerts not stored and for what reasons?

Are there any concrete examples of alerts having led to stigmatization or other negative consequences?

Such questions are not only relevant in relation to the asylum-jihadism nexus, but could indeed also be asked with respect to awareness programmes for teachers, social workers, or probation officers. To our knowledge, empirically grounded evaluation studies of awareness trainings on jihadism and/or radicalization that seek to answer such questions do not, or hardly, exist. Illustrative in this regard is that the two available evaluation studies in the Netherlands on awareness training elaborate the content of the trainings and participants' reflections on the trainings (whether they believe the training is useful), but are silent about the actual effects and pros and cons of the trainings themselves.[30]

We are aware of the tremendous complexities connected to a study into the questions raised above. First and foremost, all the relevant information that needs to be analysed is, for various legitimate reasons, strictly confidential. If not carefully edited, a publicly available publication on this issue could have serious security implications and such a study is politically highly sensitive indeed. Defining the relevant concepts will be challenging: when, for example, can an alert be considered to be a form of 'over-reporting' or a 'false alarm'? Yet such complexities should be no excuse for not engaging in such a study altogether. Whatever the set-up of such a study and whoever will perform it – perhaps insiders who already have a security clearance are even better positioned than external researchers – empirical and evidence-based studies that evaluate the effects of available training programs and toolkits are direly needed. Hundreds, if not thousands, of frontline professionals currently receive training on how to identify jihadism, but we know little about the results. Only sound evaluations allow us to learn lessons for more finely-tuned approaches in the future.

►► References are available at source's URL.

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Christian Beaten to Death by Muslim Classmates

Source: <https://clarionproject.org/christian-teenager-beaten-death-muslim-classmates/>

Sept 03 – A 17-year old Christian boy in Pakistan was [beaten to death](#) in Pakistan by his fellow Muslim students in their classroom, reported the British Pakistani Christian Association.

A gifted intellect and head of his class, Sharoon Masih was the only Christian student in his grade. He had faced isolation and bullying from

the first day he entered the school in Verahi District in Punjab.

His mother said he was warned from the beginning not to mix with the Muslims at school, with one fellow classmate saying, "You're a Christian. Don't dare sit with us if you want to live."



Repeated attempts were made to convert Sharoon, but he refused. His family reported that he used his isolation to concentrate on his studies and reached the top of his class – a position which infuriated his fellow students even more.



“Sharoon and I cried every night as he described the daily torture he was subjected to,” related his mother. “He only told me about the abuse and violence he was facing. He did not want to upset his father because he had such a caring heart for others.”

Sharoon’s father, a laborer at a brick kiln had saved money to send his gifted son to the best school in the area.

While the instigator of the beating was been arrested, many other boys took part in the murder remain at large as witnesses to the horrific beating refuse to come forward.

There are varying reports about why no teachers stopped the fight. Initial reports out of the classroom allege the teacher ignored the fight. Others say it occurred between classes when the teacher was not present. Still, there was no teacher at the school that responded to the noise of the melee.

The headmaster of the school was dismissed, but to date, all the teachers remain in their positions.

“Christians are despised and detested in Pakistan they are a constant target for persecution,” said Wilson Chowdhry, chair of the British Pakistani Christian Association.

“This killing of a young Christian teenager at school serves only to remind us that hatred towards religious minorities is bred into the majority population at a young age, through cultural norms and a biased national curriculum. However by no means is such treatment an anomaly – it is an expectation that Christians will face abuse and violence during the years in the educational system.”

Choudary charged that culpability for the crime goes all the way to the Pakistani government, which has failed to remove materials with the national curriculum that teaches and reinforces this attitude toward Christians.

Notably, the curriculum was flagged by the United States Commission for International Freedom as a potential bar to foreign aid.

“Such poor governance has inculcated generations of Pakistani citizens with false stereotypes that undermine the basic human rights of the non-Muslims in their midst,” Choudary said. “This mis-education has reciprocally also made Muslims more susceptible to the hate ideology espoused by the many rogue Imams following hardline sects of Islam.”

“Sharoon was bright and intelligent young boy who had a potentially good future has now been killed. Yet once again in Pakistan, the debate is not on who is culpable but who is not culpable of a most heinous crime.”

The association is calling on the Pakistani government to reform of the educational system to remove the biases which openly demonize minorities. To sign the petition, [click here.](#)

400,000 deaths in Syria civil war directly attributed to US & allies

Source: <https://www.rt.com/op-edge/401765-civilians-killed-coalition-syria/>

Sept 03 – African and Asian leaders are denied by the West to have any military means against an insurgency in their countries, while the US and its allies have absolute impunity when they want to take on a population anywhere in the world, says political analyst Dan Glazebrook. The US-led coalition against Islamic State has confirmed another 61 civilian deaths are likely to have been caused by its air and artillery strikes in Iraq and Syria. That brings the total number of civilians it has acknowledged killing since the conflict began to 685.



Dan Glazebrook: I think it's also likely to be a gross underestimate because we found out in 2012, for example, that all military-age males killed in US airstrikes are not classified by the US military as civilians, they're automatically excluded from those statistics. So if I was walking down the street in Iraq, unarmed, and I was directly and intentionally blown to pieces by a US airstrike, that would not be recorded as a civilian death. Now, I don't know if they still use this criterion currently, but what we certainly do know is that the monitoring group Airwars suggested almost 1,500 people may have been killed in US coalition bombings in Iraq and Syria in March of this year alone, including the terrible strike on a residential block in Mosul that is thought to have killed around 200 people. So these statistics are certainly likely to be a gross underestimate.

There are a couple of other points I'd like to make about this as well. This narrow focus on civilians we must recognize is deeply ideological because it serves to whitewash the true scale of the slaughter taking place in Iraq and Syria right now. Why should a 16-year-old boy, pressed into service by ISIS and then blown to pieces by the US before even firing a shot, why should his life be considered so unworthy, so meaningless, as not to be recorded in any kind of statistic because he's, "not a civilian"? This use of the term and focus on civilians is actually a means of placing all soldiers, all militants, in the same category of subhuman and implies they deserve to be killed. More than that, not only do they deserve to be killed, but their lives are so meaningless and unworthy, they don't even deserve to be recognized in any kind of balance sheet as to the costs of this war.

And a third point I'd like to make is that in 2011, Syria was at peace until, in that year, the US, Britain, and France sponsored a violent sectarian insurgency, an insurgency in Syria that eventually morphed into ISIS and spilled over into Iraq. So I would actually go further than this and I would attribute all 400,000



deaths in the Syrian civil war directly to the US, France, Britain and their allies.

RT: *What would you make of comments made by US Defense Secretary James Mattis that Americans are the good guys and locals know the difference. Is there a difference between good bombs and bad bombs?*

DG: No, of course, there isn't, and what's absolutely clear is their recklessness, which was actually bad enough under Obama but has increased under Trump. The recklessness with which the US is pursuing its foreign policy goals – and Britain and its allies in the coalition, I should add – have got complete impunity and complete disregard for the lives of those living in places like Mosul and Raqqa and it really shows the racism which is inherent in what's going on here. Leaders of African and Asian states are denied by the West to have any kind of military means against an insurgency that happens within their borders. And yet when the US and its allies decide they want to take on a population anywhere in the world, they have absolute impunity to do so. So in 2011 Gaddafi was trying to put down a proto-ISIS rebellion in Benghazi and was labeled by the West as a bloody genocidal dictator and so on and was eventually subjected to torture and lynching by



those states. When the US decides it wants to carpet-bomb Mosul or Raqqa thousands of miles from its shores, it can do so with complete recklessness and impunity and disregard for the populations living there.



Christian child forced into Muslim foster care

Concern for girl who 'had cross removed and was encouraged to learn Arabic'

Andrew Norfolk
Chief Investigative Reporter

A white Christian child was taken from her family and forced to live with a niqab-wearing foster carer in a home where she was allegedly encouraged to learn Arabic.

The five-year-old girl, a native English speaker, has spent the past six months in the care of two Muslim households in London. The foster placements were made, against the wishes of the girl's family, by the scandal-ridden borough of Tower Hamlets.

In confidential local authority reports seen by *The Times*, a social services supervisor describes the child sobbing and begging not to be returned to the foster carer's home because "they don't speak English".

The reports state that the supervisor heard the girl, who at times was "very distressed", claiming that the foster carer removed her necklace, which had a Christian cross, and also suggested that she should learn Arabic. It is understood that the child told her mother that when she was given her favourite Italian food to take home, the foster carer would not allow her to eat it because the carbonara meal contained bacon.

More recently, the girl is said to have told her mother that "Christmas and Easter are stupid" and that "European women are stupid and alcoholic".

In any decision regarding a foster placement, local authorities are required to give due consideration to the child's "religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background".

Tower Hamlets refused to respond to requests to explain why it had chosen to place a white, English-speaking Christian child with Muslim foster carers, including one household where she was unable to understand the language spoken by the family.

Her first carer, with whom the girl



The five-year-old girl, whose identity *The Times* is protecting, with her present foster carer. Her mother is said to be horrified by the alien cultural, religious and linguistic environment in which her daughter has spent the past six months

lived for four months, is believed to have worn a niqab outside the family home. The carer at her present foster placement wears a burka, fully concealing her face, when she accompanies the child in public.

The wearing of a niqab or burka generally indicates adherence to a conservative, Salafi-influenced interpretation of Islam that is often contemptuous of liberal western values.

To protect the child, *The Times* has chosen not to identify her or the unusual circumstances that led to her being taken into care earlier this year. The girl's mother is said by friends to have been horrified by the alien cultural, religious and linguistic environment in which her daughter has spent the past six months.

"This is a five-year-old white girl. She was born in this country, speaks English as her first language, loves football, holds a British passport and was christened in a church," said a friend. "She's already suffered the huge trauma of being forcibly separated from her family. She needs surroundings in which she'll feel secure and loved. Instead, she's trapped in a world where everything feels foreign and unfamiliar. That's really scary for a young child."

In some areas of the country, a long-standing shortage of foster carers from ethnic-minority backgrounds frequently leads to non-white children being, of necessity, placed with white British foster parents. It is far less common for the reverse to take place.

Published fostering statistics for England show that of the 51,800 children who were in foster placements last year, 39,900 (77 per cent) were white, as were 52,500 (84 per cent) of the 62,400 approved foster carers.

The 2011 national census found that 80 per cent of England's population was white British, falling to 45 per cent in London and 31 per cent in inner-city Tower Hamlets. Across the capital last year, 39 per cent of fostered children and Continued on page 6, col 4



Has Godiva Chocolate Converted to Islam under Erdogan's Influence?

Source: <http://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/1.810755>

Sept 05 – Godiva, the luxury chocolate company founded in Belgium more than 90 years ago, is one of world's best-known chocolate brands. Less well known is that it's now fully owned by a Turkish company that has raised eyebrows by ending the Belgian legend's production of chocolates containing alcohol.

Godiva, founded in Brussels in 1926 by Pierre Draps, was named after Lady Godiva, the Englishwoman who, according to legend, rode naked through the streets of Coventry to pressure her husband, the earl of Mercia, to lower the onerous taxes he had imposed. After more than three decades in which Godiva chocolates were only available in Belgium, the company opened its first store abroad in Paris in 1958. The following decade it crossed the Atlantic to New York.

That move eventually led to its acquisition by an American firm, the Campbell Soup Company. Within 15 years, Campbell had increased Godiva's annual sales to about \$500 million, but in March 2008, Campbell offloaded the company as well.

The buyer, who paid \$850 million, was the Turkish holding company Yildiz, which also owns the Turkish food conglomerate Ulker. Yildiz has expanded Godiva even further, and today the company has some 600



stores in about 100 countries. But last year's attempted coup in Turkey caused problems for Yildiz. According to the Belgian financial newspaper L'Echo, Yildiz's owner, billionaire Murat Ulker, has suffered from rumors claiming he had a connection to the conspirators. Ulker denied the rumors, which were published in papers that support Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Still, the company's share price fell on the Istanbul stock exchange.

Recently, journalists from the Belgian media group Sudpresse discovered that in April, Godiva's Turkish managers secretly decided to liquidate all production lines for chocolates containing alcohol. This mainly affects Godiva's pralines, which contain various flavors of liqueur. "Is this a step intended to find favor in the eyes of the Muslim public?" the Belgian paper La Libre asked on Sunday. Medias-Presse.Info, a far-right website, added: "Has Godiva decided to adapt itself to Koranic principles?"

A spokesman for Godiva, responding to questions from Sudpresse, insisted that the decision had nothing to do with religion but was merely a marketing strategy aiming "to offer everyone the same range of products. The pralines with alcohol are meant only for adults. Our intention now is to offer all our products universally." Regardless of the reason, there's no doubt the anti-alcohol decision has improved Godiva's stock – if not on the Istanbul stock exchange then in the presidential palace in Ankara, from which Erdogan has been steering Turkey in the direction of Islam.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Again, Belgium-Eurabia: 0-1!

Israeli Army to Simulate War With Hezbollah in Largest Drill in Decades

Source: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.810559>

Sept 05 – Israel's army will be commencing its largest drill in 20 years in the north of the country on Tuesday, one that will encompass all forces: ground, air, sea and intelligence.



The drill, which will be overseen by Israel Defense Forces' Northern Command, is expected to last about 10 days.



It will include a scenario of instant escalation, in which the army has to defend Israel against multiple terrorist infiltrations in the north.

For instance, one scenario has "terrorists" entering moshav Shavei Tzion, 15 kilometers from the Lebanese border, from the sea, while "Hezbollah" forces stage an attack by Gesher Benot Yaakov in the Golan Heights (and a famous prehistoric archaeological site). The army will also be

practicing an attack on Lebanon and the evacuation of Israeli towns by the border in preparation for the eventuality of heavy missile attacks.

All the IDF's capabilities will be exercised during this drill, a top officer said. Dozens of divisions will be participating and thousands of reserve soldiers will be called up.



The officer also said that the army has observed Hezbollah keeping a watchful eye on drill preparations and noted that the organization seems to be in some state of alert.

The last time the Israeli army held a drill this wide was in 1998. The exercise at the time was commanded by Maj. Gen. Meir Dagan, who went on to serve as the director of the Mossad, and it

included a scenario of war with Syria. The upcoming drill will be held in memory of Dagan, who died in March 2016.

"The purpose of the drill is to test the fitness of the Northern Command and the relevant battalions during an emergency," said a top IDF officer. In the drill scenario, the cabinet tells the armed forces to vanquish Hezbollah – "as I understand it, the state in which Hezbollah either has no ability or desire to attack anymore," explained the officer.



Israeli soldiers prepare for a large drill near the Lebanese border, September 4, 2017.

Israeli soldiers prepare for a large drill near the Lebanese border, September 4, 2017. IDF Spokesperson's Unit

He said this drill will not be conducted only to test a plan designed to deter Hezbollah or hit it hard enough to buy Israel some years of quiet – the idea is to vanquish it.

According to another senior army officer, the chief of staff says that "vanquish" means to "badly hurt the infrastructure of that enemy and to reduce rocket fire," although that might not stop the fighting.



The goals of war as the cabinet defines them for the top army brass are generally contentious. In both the Second Lebanon War and the 2014 Gaza campaign known as Operation Protective Edge, the extend of the goals was arguably not entirely clear.

The character of Israel's northern border has been changing due to factors that include Russian and American involvement in the Middle East. Intelligence sources believe that the superpowers are jockeying for influence in shaping the Middle East for "the day after" the Islamic State falls. As far as American and Israeli interests are concerned, this means keeping Iran from establishing a power base in Syria – military as well as economic.

While there are thousands of Shi'ite militia fighters in Syria, including men Afghanistan and Pakistan, information in Israel's possession says that Iran has not yet established itself in Syria. So far it has been trying to wield influence remotely, such as through the initiative to operate a joint Russian-Iranian port in the Syrian city of Tartus.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah has been building its arsenal of rockets and missiles, relying on Iranian know-how and technology to do so. The organization also has a plan to manufacture rockets in Lebanon – including in subterranean factories. That said, Israel has no information showing any rocket being manufactured in Lebanon yet. According to Israeli estimates, it is so far only a plan, alongside another one to convert rockets into guided missiles using kits, apparently like the Israeli army's Joint Direct Attack Munition guidance systems.

Video of Non-Muslim Kids 'Praying' in Mosque – What Do You Think?

Video: <https://clarionproject.org/video-of-non-muslim-kids-praying-in-mosque-what-do-you-think/>



Sept 5 – The video below is said to show a school trip to a mosque in Holland. Please watch the video and answer our quick poll below (click on URL).

EDITOR'S COMMENT: The Netherlands-Eurabia: 0-1! (again)

Poll results: Should Non-Muslim Kids 'Pray' in Mosques?

Source: <https://clarionproject.org/poll-results-non-muslim-kids-praying-mosques/>

Sept 07 – Earlier this week we asked for your views on [our post](#) about non-Muslim children in Holland being taken to a mosque on a school trip and shown how to pray.

Thousands of you took part in the poll and commented. Here's what you told us.

46.9% wouldn't want your child going on such a trip.

33.1% said church and state must be separated at all costs.



17% believe it's fine to visit but wrong to make children actually take part in "mock prayers."
2.3% maintain it's important to understand other religions.
Just 0.6% said you don't have a strong view on this.

Problems with EU candiadate member



Turkish Embassy in Berlin, Germany – Protesting for the release of German reporters from Turkish prison.



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Source: <http://www.dupont.co.uk/products-and-services/personal-protective-equipment/body-armor/uses-and-applications/tactical-vests-law-enforcement.html>



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In Interview, Top Indonesian Muslim Scholar Says Stop Pretending That Orthodox Islam and Violence Aren't Linked

By Marco Stahlhut

Source: <http://time.com/4930742/islam-terrorism-islamophobia-violence/>

Sep 08 – Indonesia, the world's biggest Muslim-majority country, has a constitution that recognizes other major religions, and practices a syncretic form of Islam that draws on not



just the faith's tenets but local spiritual and cultural traditions. As a result, the nation has long been a voice of, and for, moderation in the Islamic world.

Yet Indonesia is not without its [radical elements](#). Though most are on the fringe, they can add up to a significant number given Indonesia's 260-million population. In the early 2000s, the country was [terrorized](#) by [Jemaah Islamiyah](#) (JI), a homegrown extremist organization allied with al-Qaeda. JI's deadliest attack was the [2002 Bali bombing](#) that killed 202 people. While JI has been neutralized, ISIS has claimed responsibility for recent, smaller terrorist incidents in the country and has [inspired some Indonesians to fight in Syria](#) — Indonesians who could pose a threat when they return home. The country has also seen the rise of hate groups that preach intolerance and violence against local religious and ethnic minorities, which include Shia and Ahmadiya Muslims.

Among Indonesia's most influential Islamic leaders is Yahya Cholil Staquf, 51, advocates a modern, moderate Islam. He is general secretary of the Nahdlatul Ulama, which, with about 50 million members, is the country's biggest Muslim organization. Yahya.



This interview, notable for Yahya's candor, was [first published on Aug. 19 in German](#) in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Here are excerpts translated from the original Bahasa Indonesia into English.

Many Western politicians and intellectuals say that Islamist terrorism has nothing to do with Islam. What is your view?

Western politicians should stop pretending that extremism and terrorism have nothing to do with Islam. There is a clear relationship between fundamentalism, terrorism, and the basic assumptions of Islamic orthodoxy. So long as we lack consensus regarding this matter, we cannot gain victory over fundamentalist violence within Islam.

Radical Islamic movements are nothing new. They've appeared again and again throughout our own history in Indonesia. The West must stop ascribing any and all discussion of these issues to "Islamophobia." Or do people want to accuse *me* — an Islamic scholar — of being an Islamophobe too?

What basic assumptions within traditional Islam are problematic?

The relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, the relationship of Muslims with the state, and Muslims' relationship to the prevailing legal system wherever they live ... Within the classical tradition, the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is assumed to be one of segregation and enmity.

Perhaps there were reasons for this during the Middle Ages, when the tenets of Islamic orthodoxy were established, but in today's world such a doctrine is unreasonable. To the extent that Muslims adhere to this view of Islam, it renders them incapable of living harmoniously

and peacefully within the multi-cultural, multi-religious societies of the 21st century.

A Western politician would likely be accused of racism for saying what you just said.

I'm not saying that Islam is the *only* factor causing Muslim minorities in the West to lead a segregated existence, often isolated from society as a whole. There may be other factors on the part of the host nations, such as racism, which exists everywhere in the world. But traditional Islam — which fosters an attitude of segregation and enmity toward non-Muslims — is an important factor.

And Muslims and the state?

Within the Islamic tradition, the state is a single, universal entity that unites all Muslims under the rule of one man who leads them in opposition to, and conflict with, the non-Muslim world.

So the call by radicals to establish a caliphate, including by ISIS, is not un-Islamic?

No, it is not. [ISIS's] goal of establishing a global caliphate stands squarely within the orthodox Islamic tradition. But we live in a world of nation-states. Any attempt to create a unified Islamic state in the 21st century can only lead to chaos and violence ... Many Muslims assume there is an established and immutable set of Islamic laws, which are often described as *shariah*. This assumption is in line with Islamic tradition, but it of course leads to serious conflict with the legal system that exists in secular nation-states.

Any [fundamentalist] view of Islam positing the traditional norms of Islamic jurisprudence as absolute [should] be rejected out of hand as false. State laws [should] have precedence.



How can that be accomplished?

Generations ago, we achieved a de facto consensus in Indonesia that Islamic teachings must be contextualized to reflect the ever-changing circumstances of time and place. The majority of Indonesian Muslims were — and I think still are — of the opinion that the various assumptions embedded within Islamic tradition must be viewed within the historical, political and social context of their emergence in the Middle Ages [in the Middle East] and not as absolute injunctions that must dictate Muslims' behavior in the present ... Which ideological opinions are "correct" is not determined solely by reflection and debate. These are struggles [about who and what is recognized as religiously authoritative]. Political elites in Indonesia routinely employ Islam as a weapon to achieve their worldly objectives.

Is it so elsewhere too?

Too many Muslims view civilization, and the peaceful co-existence of people of different faiths, as something they must combat. Many Europeans can sense this attitude among Muslims.

There's a growing dissatisfaction in the West with respect to Muslim minorities, a growing fear of Islam. In this sense, some Western friends of mine are "Islamophobic." They're afraid of Islam. To be honest, I understand their fear ... The West cannot force Muslims to adopt a moderate interpretation of Islam. But Western politicians should stop telling us that fundamentalism and violence have nothing to do with traditional Islam. That is simply wrong.

They don't want to foster division in their societies between Muslims and non-Muslims, nor contribute to intolerance against Muslims.

I share this desire — that's a primary reason I'm speaking so frankly. But the approach you

describe won't work. If you refuse to acknowledge the existence of a problem, you can't begin to solve it. One must identify the problem and explicitly state who and what are responsible for it.

Who and what are responsible?

Over the past 50 years, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states have spent massively to promote their ultra-conservative version of Islam worldwide. After allowing this to go unchallenged for so many decades, the West must finally exert decisive pressure upon the Saudis to cease this behavior ... I admire Western, especially European, politicians. Their thoughts are so wonderfully humanitarian. But we live in a time when you have to think and act realistically.

The last time I was in Brussels I witnessed some Arab, perhaps North African, youth insult and harass a group of policemen. My Belgian friends remarked that such behavior has become an almost everyday occurrence in their country. Why do you allow such behavior? What kind of impression does that make? Europe, and Germany in particular, are accepting massive numbers of refugees. Don't misunderstand me: of course you cannot close your eyes to those in need. But the fact remains that you're taking in millions of refugees about whom you know virtually nothing, except that they come from extremely problematic regions of the world.

I would guess that you and I agree that there is a far right wing in Western societies that would reject even a moderate, contextualized Islam.

And there's an extreme left wing whose adherents reflexively denounce any and all talk about the connections between traditional Islam, fundamentalism and violence as *de facto* proof of Islamophobia. This must end. A problem that is not acknowledged cannot be solved.

Marco Stahlhut is a Jakarta-based German academic and correspondent.

Jordan at the Edge

A briefing by David Schenker

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/6918/jordan-at-the-edge>

Sept 12 – The Arab world's fifth poorest country, Jordan has only a quarter of its adult population gainfully employed. Its accumulated debt represents nearly 100% of GDP and the Jordanian economy has been seriously afflicted by the arrival of 1.4 million Syrian refugees over the past few years. This, however, has not generated an overt backlash



against the refugees by the indigenous population, partly because the 2015-16 terror attacks in the kingdom were perpetrated by homegrown extremists rather than by incoming refugees.

Not only have those attacks raised questions about the effectiveness of the Jordanian security forces, but the perpetrators belonging to tribes that constitute the mainstay of the regime has been a major source of concern for King Abdullah, not least since an estimated 2,500-3,000 Jordanians have joined ISIS or al-Qaeda. And while Jordan managed to prevent the conflict's spillover into its territory by establishing a de-facto buffer zone along its border with Syria, the recent U.S.-Russian ceasefire agreement has kindled fears in Amman that Hezbollah and other Iranian-backed Shiite militias will destabilize the kingdom's northern border.



King Abdullah (left, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in January 2014) has sought to balance Jordan's vital strategic relationship with Israel with the staunchly anti-Israeli views of his subjects.

Another security concern has been the steep deterioration in Jordanian-

Israeli relations as a result of the recent Temple Mount crisis. Israel's enhanced security measures on the Temple Mount and the killing of a Jordanian assailant (and an innocent bystander) by an Israeli guard at the Amman embassy both prompted public outrage. With the embassy temporarily closed and its staff relocated to Israel, the king exploited the crisis to pressure Israel for concessions on Temple Mount.

These tensions notwithstanding, there is quiet understanding in Jerusalem for Abdullah's need to strike a delicate balance between his awareness of the importance of Jordan's strategic relationship with Israel (not to mention its planned multi-billion-dollar import of Israeli natural gas) and the need to appease his staunchly anti-Israeli (and anti-American) subjects. From the Israeli perspective, the reopening of the Amman embassy is vital not only for normalizing the bilateral relationship with Jordan, but for consolidating the newly developed collaboration with the Gulf states against resurgent Iran, in which the Amman embassy has apparently served as an important backchannel.

David Schenker is Aufzien Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He briefed the Middle East Forum in a conference call on September 5, 2017.



Los Angeles is officially confirmed as the host of the 2028 Olympic Games after historic carve-up with Paris who win the right to stage the 2024 Games

Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/othersports/article-4881318/Olympic-Games-Paris-2024-Los-Angeles-2028.html>

Sept 13 – The International Olympic Committee have formally awarded the 2024 summer Olympic Games to Paris and the 2028 edition to Los Angeles following a vote in the Peruvian capital Lima.

Paris, which has hosted two previous Olympics, will stage the event 100 years after its last Games in 1924 while Los Angeles will also organise its third Games after 1932 and 1984.

There were no other candidates for either the 2024 or 2028 Games and the votes were a formality. IOC President Thomas Bach said the votes for both cities were 'unanimous'.



The IOC decided in July to award both Games at the same time, following the withdrawal of four of the six cities bidding for the 2024 Olympics, amid concerns about the size, cost and complexity of organising the world's biggest multi-sports event.

Los Angeles then dropped its bid for the 2024 Olympics, for which it had been campaigning for over two years, in return for receiving the 2028 edition.

Paris, with a total Games budget of \$8.09 billion, had failed with previous attempts to land the 1992, 2008 and 2012 Olympics.



International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach (centre) poses for pictures with Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo and Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti

The presence of French President Emmanuel Macron, who also spoke on Wednesday in a video message, at the IOC's extraordinary session in July in Lausanne was seen as crucial in sealing the deal for the French capital for 2024.

The Los Angeles 2028 Games, with a budget of \$5.3 billion, will essentially follow the plan they had in place for 2024, including housing athletes at the UCLA campus.

It is the first time the IOC has awarded a Games 11 years in advance.

The Olympic body, however, was eager to secure the future of its prime product even if it meant handing out two editions at the same time after Boston, Budapest, Rome and Hamburg all pulled the plug on their bids mid-race, fearing high costs and local opposition.

PARIS AND LA'S OLYMPIC HISTORY

Paris played host to the second edition of the modern Olympic Games in 1900, and then staged the event once more in 1924.

Los Angeles had to wait until 1932 - the 10th Games - to be the host city. They followed that up with the Games of the 23rd Olympiad, in 1984.





Athlets marching towards future Olympic venues

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Paris? Great! This means that terrorism will be over by then and all the foreign fighters that joined the Islamic State should be either respectable citizens (following the Finnish prototype) or dead either in Syria or Iraq (or in the Philippines; or...). Defence companies, START YOUR ENGINES! The 2024 Military Olympic Games are just a few years away!

Illegal Migrant Problem? Greece Offers a Solution

By Daniel Pipes

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/6922/illegal-migrant-problem-greece-offers-a-solution>

Sept 12 – As Western states [prove incapable](#) of deporting their millions of illegal migrants – the current crisis [features Italy](#) – authorities in Greece have found a surprising and simple way to convince them to take the long route back home.

The International Organization for Migration logo

The migration crisis simmered in Greece at about 10,000 illegals arriving a year. Then, thanks to a combination of violence in Syria and welcoming words from Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2015, that number surged to 10,000 illegals a day pouring into Greece. Coming mostly from Turkey, they made their way unimpeded to such favored destinations as Germany and Sweden.

Eventually, as the borders to northern Europe clanged shut, over 62,000 migrants found themselves "stranded" (in the nomenclature of the United Nations' International Organization for Migration) in Greece. Unable to reach their destinations of choice, they could not find work or



sympathy in a Greece going through economic crisis, and they refused to return to Turkey. At this point, the IOM director in Athens, [Daniel Esdras](#), devised a creative solution to encourage stranded migrants to take the difficult step to give up their European dreams,

Greece has found a simple way to convince illegal migrants to return home: treat them with generosity and respect.

At this point, the IOM director in Athens, [Daniel Esdras](#), devised a creative solution to encourage stranded migrants to take the difficult step to give up their European dreams,



dreams for which they sacrificed time, money, self-respect, and perhaps endangered their lives, and instead to [return to their homelands](#).

The solution, it turns out, is counterintuitive: treat them very, very nicely, with generosity and respect, then spread the word widely.

That is the experience since the opening in December 2015 of a hostel for impoverished returnees, 80 percent male, as they went through the one-to-three-month process (including in-depth interviews by embassy personnel) to arrange their departure.



Open Centre for Migrants registered for Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration (OCAVRR)

Home : IDMI Greece Activities : Open Centre for Migrants registered for Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration (OCAVRR)

The programme is co-funded by the European Return Fund and the Hellenic Ministry of Interior

Burdened with the arch-bureaucratic name of the [Open Centre for Migrants Registered for Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration](#) (OCAVRR for short), the hostel offers free residence to illegals (or, in its delicate parlance, "irregulars") who of their own will have agreed to be returned to their countries of origin (other than war zones, namely Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Syria,

and parts of Afghanistan).

"Open centre" means the residents (whom staff politely refer to as "beneficiaries") may enter and leave the building at will. Located in a posh part of Athens with excellent vistas and co-funded by the European Return Fund and the Greek Ministry of Interior, OCAVRR provides up to 120 residents at a time with air-conditioned rooms; three catered meals a day; linens, toiletries, and basic clothing; health care and medicines; psychological counseling; and social workers. It also offers Wi-Fi, large Blu-Ray televisions, telephone cards to call home, 1 toilet per 4 residents, and 1 shower per 9 residents.

Bathrooms and floors are scrubbed through the day by a cleaning service; residents need only make their beds and wash their clothing in the free laundry machines with free soap. Families get private rooms. Interpretation is offered in nine languages. A Greek staffer joked that OCAVRR may be the only building in all of Athens completely up to the fire code. He also noted that an ambulance would get to a returnee faster than to his house.

Residents must sign an "accommodation agreement." Smoking, alcohol, guests, and pets are prohibited. A criminal record, drug addiction, or a communicative disease disqualify one; armed guards and an airport-style metal detector at the entrance of OCAVRR assure security.

Of the 80 OCAVRR current residents when I visited, 79 were Muslim (the other a Georgian Christian). Every meal is halal. All toilets are outfitted with water sprays. The prayer room is exclusively for use by Muslims and a refrigerator by the front door holds food for residents keeping the Ramadan fast, though a surprisingly small number of residents pray or fast.

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Of the 2,200 returnees who have passed through OCAVRR, 94 percent eventually left Greece for home. On leaving, they receive €500 (US\$570) in pocket money and a promise of €1,500 for in-kind support to get them economically on their feet (livestock, a taxi, and a sewing machine are common purchases).

The total spent per person is about €4,000, less than 1 percent of the welfare, unemployment, health, and other spending on the typical long-term illegal migrant.

Subsidizing the inherently difficult process of returning home to make it more pleasant and dignified is a winning formula; indeed, every Western country suffering from the problem of illegal migrants can learn from, adapt, and scale up this model to its specific circumstances. Done right, large numbers of former illegal migrants will be in business in their homelands.

Making the inherently difficult return process more pleasant and dignified is a winning formula.

Daniel Pipes is president of the Middle East Forum.

EDITOR'S COMMENT:

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What's on the Mind of a Muslim 'Refugee'?

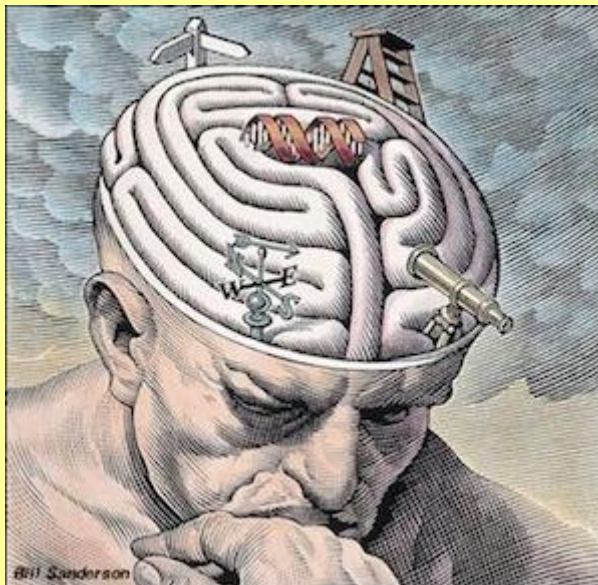
By Burak Bekdil

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/6917/what-on-a-muslim-refugee-mind>



Sept 10 – The autumn of 2015 was unusual in almost every way on the north Aegean Greek island of Lesbos from which I am writing. There were tens of thousands of illegal migrants on the island, the native population of which was scarcely 100,000. New refugees arrived every day by the thousands.^[1]

One evening, the blue-grey sky grumbled shortly after sunset. The thick clouds blackened and rain poured down over the city with a roar. As I ran across the slippery



pavement into a friend's bar, I heard a group of five poor souls speaking Persian with a Turkic accent and running amok, seeking shelter under the eaves of a building.

A quarter of an hour later I found them in front of my friend's bar, totally soaked. I went out and asked them if they spoke English; they shook their heads. I asked them in Turkish if they spoke Turkish. With glittering eyes, three of them cheerfully said, "Evet!" ["Yes" in Turkish]. I told them they could come into the bar if they liked. They hesitated but politely declined. I asked if they needed food, water, or cigarettes.

The one with the most fluent Turkish stepped forward. He drew a pack of banknotes from his pocket and said, "If you really want to help, find us a hotel. The best, if possible. We have



cash. Money is no problem. Find us a hotel and we'll pay you a commission." He explained that all the "damn" hotels on the island were full [of refugees] and they needed rooms. I apologized and disappeared into the bar.

Why do millions of Muslims risk everything to reach a civilization they blame for all the world's evils?

Nearly two years later, on a beautiful and cool summer evening, I met A. at a bar on the same island. A., a Syrian

refugee, often spends his evenings bar-hopping with his Western friends. Those friends are mostly romantic European social workers who, I observed several times, sport t-shirts, bags, and laptops festooned with the Palestinian flag. They are on the island to help the unfortunate Muslim refugees who are fleeing war in their native countries.

"I'll tell you strictly Muslim-to-Muslim," A. said in good English after having poured down a few shots of whiskey. "These (European social workers) are funny guys. And they're not just funny. They're also silly. I don't know why on earth they are in love with a Muslim cause that even some of us Muslims despise." Last year, three Afghans stopped in front of my house on the same island and asked for drinking water. I gave them three bottles and asked if they needed anything else. Coffee? They accepted and sat down in the garden chairs.

Over coffee, they said they were glad to be hosted "not by an infidel on this infidel island" but by a Muslim. The young Afghan who was dressed like a dancer from a cheap hip-hop clip on MTV said, "One day we good Muslims will conquer their infidel lands." I asked why he was receiving "infidel" money for living. "It's just halal," he answered. "They ['infidels'] are too easy to fool."

M., another fluently English-speaking Syrian, gave me a long lecture on the wonderful governance of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. "Turkey is the best country in the world!" M. said. "Erdoğan is the leader of the ummah." I asked why he had risked his life to cross illegally from the "best country in the world" to the "poor, infidel lands." "I want to go to Europe to increase the Muslim population there," he said. "I want to make a Muslim family there. I want to have plenty of children." I reminded him that Greece, too, is a European country. No it's not, he answered.

Almost all the illegal migrants on that and other Greek islands want to get to Germany, where they have heard from friends and relatives that they will be the best paid for being "poor" refugees. The cliché "the-poor-souls-are-fleeing-war-in-their-native-country" is becoming less and less convincing every day. True, most Syrians fled to Turkey after the start of civil war in their country. But why did they then risk their lives to squeeze into 12-man rubber boats with 40-50 other people, including children and the elderly? Because of war in Turkey?

No. Despite political instability and insecurity for all, there is technically no war in Turkey. It is a Muslim country whose mostly Muslim migrants want to leave it as soon as possible for non-Muslim Europe.

They reach the shores of the Greek islands, which are so beautiful that people from across the world fly there for their holidays. But the islands are not good enough. They want to go to Athens. Why? Because there is war on the Greek islands? No. It's because Athens is the start of the exit route to the Balkans.

Apply the same logic to Serbia, Hungary, and Austria. Like Greece, none of those countries will be good enough for the refugees. Why not? Because there is war in Serbia or Hungary or Austria? Or because "my cousin tells me Germans pay the best?"

Turkey's leaders often threaten Europe that they will "open the gates" and flood Europe with millions of refugees. They should ask themselves instead why those Muslim refugees are so eager to leave the "new Turkish empire" if given the chance. Why would they choose not to live a comfortable life in a powerful and peaceful Muslim country and instead flock to the "infidel" west?

Erdoğan blames the West for the tragedy. He has criticized the West for having taken only 250,000 Syrian refugees. In 2016, then Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said the United Nations Security Council's five permanent members (the US, Russia, Britain, France, and China), should pay the price, not Syria's [Muslim] neighbors.

It is ironic that millions of Muslims are trying, through dangerous means, to reach the borders of a civilization they have historically blamed for all the world's evils, including those of their own countries. The "romantic" West does not question why



millions of West-hating Muslims are heading in their direction. Or is it "Islamophobic" to point out that there is no war in Greece, Serbia, Hungary, or Austria?

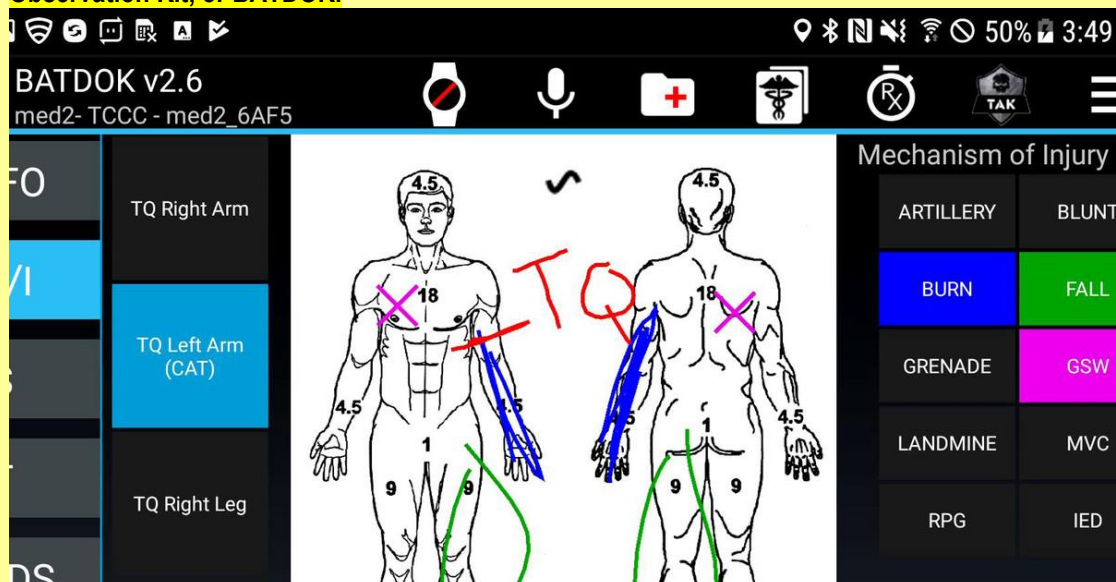
Burak Bekdil is an Ankara-based political analyst and a fellow at the Middle East Forum.

By the end of July 2017, the number of refugees and migrants in Greece waiting to be granted asylum or deported had fallen to 62,407. The five Aegean islands (Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Kos and Leros) are presently home to 15,222 asylum-seekers and migrants.

Wearable Sensors to Monitor Wounded Combatants in Battlefield

Source: <https://i-hls.com/archives/78628>

Sept 14 – Delivering life-saving care in a battlefield environment is a complex challenge. New wearable sensors will monitor the situation of soldiers in the battlefield as well as teams during rescue missions. The U.S. Air Force recently wrapped up field trials for the **Battlefield Assisted Trauma Distributed Observation Kit, or BATDOK.**



The BATDOK is a software package installed on a smartphone, tablet, or other wearable wireless device. It's fed information from sensors placed on a battlefield patient, allowing the medic or even those without medical training to simultaneously monitor the vital signs of multiple wounded soldiers in the chaotic environment of the battlefield. Alerts can also be set to deliver audible or visual cues if the soldier's condition worsens.

According to thomasnet.com, this data can be shared with medical personnel not on site and run against military electronic health records, and a medical library is available for on-site reference.

The attached sensors also give the exact location of each patient on battlefield maps.

The system has seen field-testing with Air Force flight medics, Pararescue Jumpers, and Special Forces personnel, with the developers on the scene to evaluate and tweak the system.

BATDOK is a tool that seamlessly integrates mobile capabilities for Airmen in the field, said Dr. Gregory Burnett, of the Airman Systems Directorate in the Warfighter Interface Division of the 711th Human Performance Wing. Burnett managed the development of BATDOK for the Air Force.

"BATDOK is a multi-patient, point of injury, casualty tool that assists our human operators and improves care," said Burnett, according to science.dodlive.mil. "It can be a real-time health status monitoring for multiple patients, a documentation tool, a user-definable medical library, a portal to integrate patient data into their electronic health records, and finally it is





interoperable with battlefield digital situation awareness maps, which helps identify the exact location of casualties."

BATDOK could also be used on humanitarian missions, where a commander monitors a team entering an earthquake- or tsunami-ravaged area.

The developers maintained constant interaction with the operators from their deployment, and got their feedback throughout the process. "From day one, every interface, every button, every menu, was user-validated by pararescue Airmen and combat rescue officers that were

involved in the design, integration and testing process," said Burnett.

The development has its roots back in 2014, when the U.S Air Force initiated its Battlefield Air Targeting Man-Aided Knowledge or BATMAN project to evaluate the potential application of wearable technology that was either available or in development.

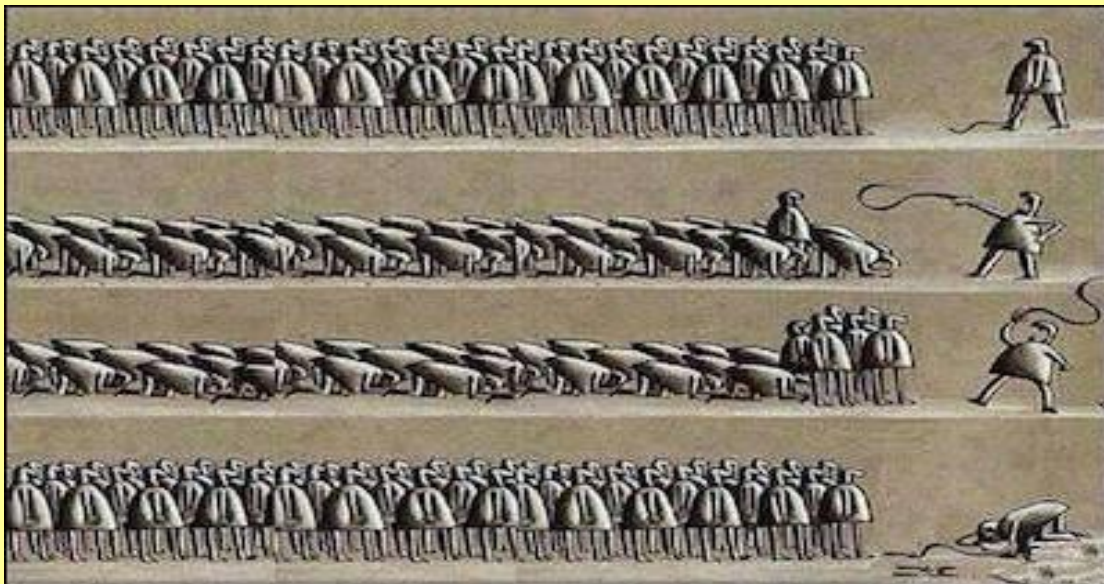


I Taught NATO to Stand Up to a Dictator

By Daniel Pipes

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/6928/i-taught-nato-to-stand-up-to-a-dictator>

Source 2: <http://www.meforum.org/6929/turkeys-erdogan-tries-to-censor-us-think-tank>



Sept 21 – On May 2, 2017, a polite letter arrived from the Director of the Political Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (known as NATO PA) asking whether my organization, the Middle East Forum, "might be able to host a set of meetings and discussions" for assembly members.

For those, like me, unfamiliar with [NATO PA](#), it is "a unique specialized forum for members of parliament from across the Atlantic Alliance to discuss and influence decisions on Alliance security." Its [Political Committee](#) "focuses on all political questions concerning the security of NATO and its member and partner countries."



The Forum quickly agreed to host the meeting on Sep. 19 on Independence Mall in Philadelphia and began inviting experts to brief the 26 members of parliament from 12 countries, ranging from Norway to Turkey, Poland to Portugal.



Given the centrality of Turkey to both the Syrian conflict and to the deeper issue of NATO's mission (does it fight Islamism as it once did communism?), we invited representatives of two key Turkish factions, both of them Islamist: the government of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the movement of Fethullah Gülen. (The two had been closely allied until a few years ago; now the government accuses Gülen of staging an alleged coup d'état in July 2016 and declares Gülen movement members "terrorists," jailing those it can, abominating those it can't.)

Emre Çelik, president of the Rumi Forum, a Gülenist intellectual group, immediately agreed to speak. However, for the longest time we could not pry a reply to our invitation out of the Turkish embassy in Washington. Finally, less than a week before the event was to take place, the Political Committee staff informed us that no less than the presidential office in Ankara demanded we remove Mr. Çelik from the program. If we refused, it would cancel out on us.

My initial reaction was, "Fine, cancel it." Having sunk much time, money, and reputation into the conference, however, the Forum hardly relished pulling the plug. We also did not want to join the ranks of Western appeasers, such as NATO PA, who submit to the will of Turkey's dictator, Erdoğan. What to do?



The Turkish delegation loudly interrupted the proceedings when Çelik was invited to the stage, then stormed out.

We adopted an unusual course of action: Yes, Çelik's name came off the program and the embassy diplomat showed up. But with Çelik's

concurrence, we arranged for him to enter the meeting through a back door and wait quietly in the wings until I, after speaking in the final session about the disgrace and damage of NATO's submitting to Erdoğan's will, invited him to the podium to address the conference.

As I announced Çelik's presence, the entire Turkish contingent stood up and protested so loudly that our security guards ran up to protect him. The co-chairman of the NATO PA delegation, surprised by my action, which he called a "bombshell," pushed Çelik aside and seized the podium. (For a video, click [here](#).)

On concluding his remarks, the co-chairman attempted to close the meeting but I interfered, asserting it was our event, and again invited Çelik to speak. **As he began, first the Turks and then the entire NATO PA delegation exited the hall,** leaving behind only our other guests, who proceeded to give him a standing ovation.

I proffer my apology to NATO PA for pulling this trick. But I stand by the deception. It was impossible for us to ignore NATO's [founding principle](#) "to safeguard the freedom" of its peoples.

It was equally impossible to ask the Forum, especially as it met within sight of Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, to acquiesce to the diktat of a foreign tyrant.

Indeed, despite the walk-out, I hope the NATO Parliamentary Assembly delegates secretly admire our taking a stand against tyranny and draw inspiration from this small act of defiance.

Perhaps they will learn to stand up to Erdoğan's bullying – precisely what they did not do in this instance.

Daniel Pipes is president of the Middle East Forum.





Marine FRIDA
The hero of Mexico's earthquakes
Score: 52 trapped rescues

'Islam in Europe' exhibition opens in Brussels after delay caused by terror attacks

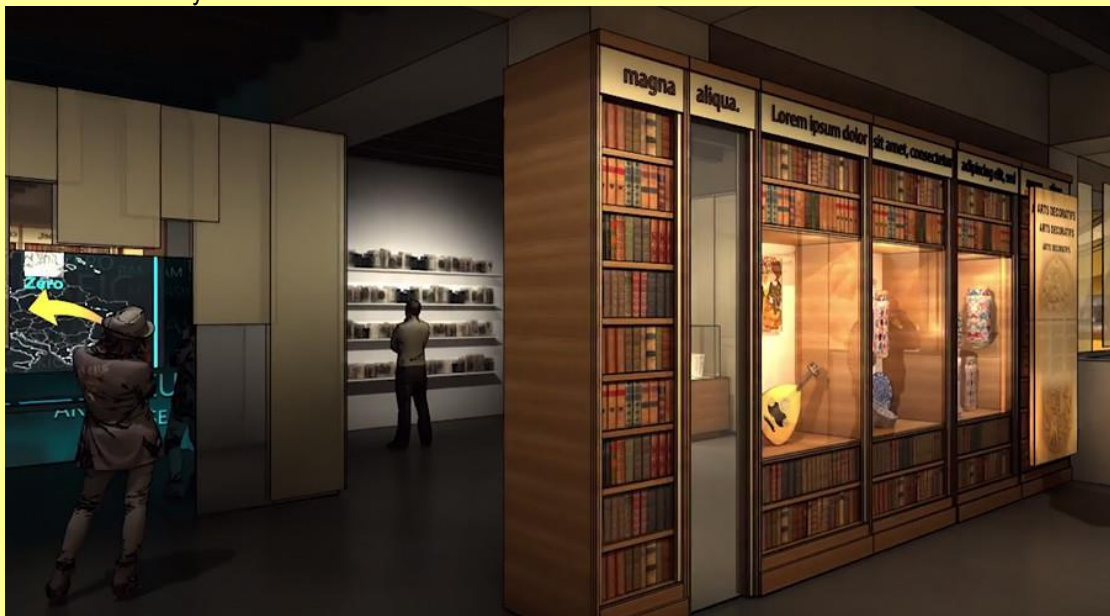
Source: <https://www.rt.com/news/404029-belgium-islam-europe-exhibition/>



Sep 21 – **A controversial exhibition revealing the influence of Islam in Europe over the course of history has opened in Brussels after a delay caused by the Islamist terror attacks that took 32 lives in the Belgian capital last year.**

The exhibition, entitled *"Islam. It's Also Our History"* by the Museum of Europe has been previously displayed in several European countries.

But its arrival in Brussels last week had been postponed by the authorities and organizers after the Paris attacks in November 2015 and the bombings in the Belgian capital in March 2016. The organizers also struggled to find a venue for the show as many were hesitant to host an event that was almost certain to attract controversy.



The exhibition finally opened on September 15 at the Vanderborcht Building, which is owned by the Brussels city authorities.





“We want to make clear to Europeans that Islam is part of European civilization and that it isn’t a recent import but has roots going back 13 centuries,” Isabelle Benoit, a historian from the Tempora organization, which designed the show, told AP.

The display uses historic and contemporary artwork, daily objects, multimedia and installations to reveal how Islam influenced Europe during the Arab rule of the Iberian Peninsula (modern Spain and Portugal), the Ottoman Empire and the Colonial Period.

But the show also addresses the current situation in Europe, which is gripped by waves of migrants from war-torn Middle Eastern and North African nations as well as the constant threat of Islamist terrorism.

“It turns out that our exhibition comes at a very relevant time in history when the meeting between Europe and Islam is witnessed by citizens from the continent in all its tragic manifestations... Should we cancel it or at least postpone it until happier circumstances? Definitely not, we believe,” the organizers said on the exhibition’s [website](#).



“It is precisely because the timing is tragic that it is important to show our contemporaries the extraordinary richness of this history, which has helped to make us what we are. We should not hide what is wrong any more than relativize it, but place it a centuries-old history, which has much more to it than just this,” they added.

Provocative artworks dedicated to modern relations between Islam and Europe have attracted the most attention at the show.

An installation by Danish artist Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen commemorated thousands of migrants who drowned in attempts to cross the Mediterranean Sea and reach Europe on rafts and rickety boats.

The guests of the display enter a dark room, decorated by screens, which show the bottom of the sea, with rolls of fabric thrown to the floor resembling the bodies of drowned children.

Jean Ulrick Desert from Haiti created burqas, garments used by some Muslim woman to fully cover their face and body in public, in the colors the national flags of the US, UK, France and Germany to show the scale of the immigration.

Meanwhile, an installation by a US artist, Gregory Green, showing a posh Louis Vuitton case

with a fake improvised explosive device inside it led to complaints by visiting Muslims

Primary school teacher Nejia Adouiri said it was *“very confrontational”* that the organizers *“wanted to make a link between Islam and what has been happening recently worldwide.”*



Adouiri also objected to the bomb-laden Louis Vuitton case being placed at the end the exhibition and therefore helping to form a negative final impression of Islam for visitors.

The organizers told AP that Green's piece won't be removed due to the complaints, but added that it may be moved to another location and put in its textual content.

"Islam. It's Also Our History" exhibition is expected to run in the Belgian capital until January 21, 2018.

Three coordinated suicide bombings took place in Brussels on March 22, 2016, with explosions rocking the city's Zaventem airport and Maalbeek metro station.

The attacks, which killed 32 and injured over 300 people, were claimed by the Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL) terrorist group.

Will artificially intelligent weapons kill the laws of war?

By Herbert Lin

Source: <http://thebulletin.org/will-artificially-intelligent-weapons-kill-laws-war11124>

Sept 18 – On September 1, [Vladimir Putin spoke with Russian students](#) about science in an open lesson, saying that "the future belongs to artificial intelligence" and whoever masters it first will rule the world. "Artificial intelligence is the future, not only for Russia, but for all humankind," he added. "It comes with colossal opportunities, but also threats that are difficult to predict. **Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world.**"

Putin also said he would not like to see any nation "monopolize" the field, asserting that "[i]f we become leaders in this area, we will share this know-how with the entire world, the same way we share our nuclear technologies today."

So Putin says he will share Russian AI with the rest of the world. Whether or not one believes that claim, it's hard to imagine that any nation will have a "monopoly" on the technology—so for the moment, let's assume roughly equal levels of AI sophistication for Russia and the West. What would it mean for the future of armed conflict to integrate equal levels of artificial intelligence (AI) into future military systems—not only those of the West and those of Russia, but for any nations that might face off in armed conflict? The level of technological sophistication is only one aspect of technology's impact on the physical battlefield. There are two other important aspects of that impact: The first involves the numbers of fielded systems that engage in combat; after all, any given system can be in only one place at a time, and more systems mean greater reach and coverage.

The second is how they are used—often captured under the rubric of the doctrine that guides mission planning. Military commanders want to accomplish certain objectives, and they deploy and use the assets available to them accordingly. They need to specify what targets are of interest, when these targets should be attacked, what the rules of engagement should be, and so on.

For the sake of argument, let's assume that the numbers of systems in a conflict are roughly equal. Then, by assumption, the only significant difference between the two sides will be doctrinal. What would be the key differences between military doctrines of various nations regarding the use of these AI-driven systems?

It is fair to say that military theorists in all major nations are now considering the impact that AI-enabled weapon systems might have in combat. Doctrinal discussions are ongoing within militaries around the world, and no one knows the full shape and contours of future doctrines for any nation. But one might still be able to make inferences based on our knowledge of past practice.

In particular, there is a great deal of Western writing concerning the extent to which the use of AI-enabled weapons will conform to international humanitarian law, i.e. *jus in bello*, or the laws of war. A typical issue centers on how these weapons will be able to make distinctions between civilian and military entities in conflict, if they can at all. In many Western nations, especially the United States, conformance to the laws of war has a high priority in planning for military operations, even if US forces in practice have from time to time not fully observed the laws of war. The US Defense Department employs thousands of lawyers (some [estimates run as high as 10,000](#), though that number seems excessively high to me) doing all manner of legal work related to



Defense functions. [Another source reports](#) that at least a few hundred lawyers oversee legal issues related to operational mission planning. Neither estimate cites source data that can be verified independently, but few observers doubt that lawyers do play an important role in operational mission planning.

It's easy to imagine that other nations might not have a comparable level of concern about military operations complying with the laws of war. So imagine a Western nation and one of these other nations, armed with similar quantities of AI-enabled weapons of roughly comparable technical sophistication, engaged in armed conflict over or in territory where civilians are present. Is it more likely that military advantage will accrue to the side that exhibits less caution and uses its weapons more aggressively or to the other side?

For me, the answer is clear from a military standpoint. Indeed, that is the point of the two sources cited above complaining about the number of lawyers that participate in planning for military operations—they worry that legal judgments override operational necessities and impede or degrade US operational effectiveness. To the extent that diligent compliance with the laws of war translates into less effective combat operations (and I have never seen an argument or evidence to the contrary), battles between forces that are equally matched qualitatively and quantitatively are likely to be won by those who are less diligent with respect to compliance.

A review of the history of unrestricted submarine warfare is instructive in this regard. Unrestricted submarine warfare refers to the wartime practice of submarines sinking civilian ships (such as merchant ships) without warning; such warfare was first practiced in World War I. [Article 22 of the London Naval Treaty of 1930](#) forbade this practice and required submarine commanders to provide for the safety of those on board before attacking a merchant ship. However, given that civilian merchant ships carried substantial amounts of war materiel, it was useful to the war effort to sink them. Submarines giving warning to civilian ships before attacking them would greatly degrade the effectiveness of such attacks, and if the civilian ships were armed, such warning might even endanger the submarine.

During the Nuremberg trials after World War II, German [Adm. Karl Doenitz was found to have violated the protocols](#) of Article 22 when he ordered the sinking of neutral merchant vessels without warning in operational battle zones. Nevertheless, the tribunal elected to ignore these breaches of international law because of authoritative testimony and evidence that the United States and Britain had also engaged in unrestricted submarine warfare.

As the history of unrestricted submarine warfare demonstrates, humanitarian motivations were ignored when observing those restrictions compromised combat effectiveness. It's not unimaginable that a similar fate might await the laws of war when AI-enabled weapons become ubiquitous.

Herbert Lin is senior research scholar for cyber policy and security at the Center for International Security and Cooperation and research fellow at the Hoover Institution, both at Stanford University. His research interests relate to the policy dimensions of cybersecurity and cyberspace, and he is particularly interested in and knowledgeable about the use of offensive operations in cyberspace, especially as instruments of national policy. In addition to his positions at Stanford University, he is chief scientist, emeritus for the Computer Science and Telecommunications Board, National Research Council of the National Academies, where from 1990 to 2014 he was study director of major projects on public policy and information technology. He is an adjunct senior research scholar and senior fellow in cybersecurity at the Saltzman Institute for War and Peace Studies at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. From 1986 to 1990 he was a staff member and scientist for the House Armed Services Committee, where his portfolio included nuclear policy and arms control issues. He received his doctorate in physics from MIT.



Is a good neighbor hard to find in the Middle East?

Source: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/is-a-good-neighbor-hard-to-find-in-the-middle-east.aspx?pageID=449&nID=118249&NewsCatID=592>



In the 15th Istanbul Biennial, the theme grabs you almost as much as the works of art. It is a misleadingly simple, event upbeat phrase: "A Good Neighbor." Yet, it is so emotionally explosive, so laden with baggage and so variable that, as the Nordic duo of curators, Elmsgreen and Dragset said, it seems to have an invisible question mark at the end. The inevitable reply, after touring the six different venues of the Biennial, **that a good neighbor, in the troubled Middle East and the troubled world, is hard to find, let alone to be.**



Is a good neighbor simply someone who does not storm into your village, destroy your house and kill your parents? Yes, if we go by one of the most forceful works of the Biennial, the short video of Mardin-born Turkish artist Erkan Özgen, where a deaf-mute boy describes without words the violence he has witnessed when the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) fighters seized Kobani in January 2015. In this video ironically titled "Wonderland," the thirteen-year-old Mohammed's account ends with a brutal hand movement that shows a decapitation. According to many critics, the video is "the crown piece" of the Biennial, which is otherwise subtle in its political criticism.

Is a good neighbor someone who does not spy on you? Turkish artist Burçak Bingöl's surveillance cameras, made of white porcelain and decorated with flowers, takes up the global surveillance culture. In Turkey, it strongly recalls the culture of snitching, the recent headlines about a man who complained about his neighbor to the police for wearing shorts in Ankara and the calls by the president and the government to report to the police if you think your neighbor was involved in a conspiracy against the government.

Is a good neighbor one who will let you live your life the way you choose, even if it means letting you cry alone? That is the question posed by Egyptian artist Mahmoud Khaled's installation, called "Proposal for a Memorial for a Crying Man," which tells the story of a semi-fictional, faceless character who dwells in a two-story house in Istanbul's Bobo



Cihangir neighborhood. The story of the Crying Man, a major image for the LGBTI community in the Middle East, starts in 2001, when several men were arrested on a gay disco boat in Cairo. Arrested, tortured and taken before a court for “sodomy,” the men appeared in the Egyptian media as they entered the courthouse with their faces covered with a white cloth—almost like a shroud that symbolized their social death in the Egyptian society. Khaled’s fictive character, based on one of the 52 men, settles in Istanbul, where he strives to create a meticulous house and a new life. The somber voice of the audio-guide lulls you into accepting the fictive “Crying Man” as a real figure of intrigue for his neighbors—one

they have respected but kept at a distance, even when they knew, from the crying sounds, that he was unhappy.

An example of good neighbours...

Is a good neighbor someone who has just moved next door, with his unknown past and memories? Iraq-born



Mahmoud Obaidi escaped Iraq with a fake passport in 1991 when the American invasion was underway and led the life of a nomad, hoping he would one day go back home, until he realized in 2003 that it just would not happen. His “Compact Home Project,” is a series of eight books with metal covers containing some of his sketches, newspaper clippings and letters. “These are what I have carried with me as home,” he said. “I entombed the fragmented remnants of my nomadic life inside [those] artists’ books. These objects then only existed inside this artwork, as traces of impossible return, shadows of an infeasible life and parodies of a non-existent home.” So much like the small things taken by the Syrian refugees today.

Is a good neighbor one who will go on the streets with you, or help you up when you have been stupefied with tear gas and encourage you to go on? The chipped murals made by Moroccan artist Latifa Echakhch in the Istanbul Modern show people demonstrating the 2013 Gezi Park protests and how the spirit of resistance eventually faded away. The work is called “Crowd Fade.” Echakhch also has done similar work on another movement that faded away, the Takrir Square demonstrations.

One of the works that have captured the zeitgeist and the neighborhood theme is Gazi Sansoy’s “3rd Vienna Siege and refugees” in Anna Laudel Gallery’s “Past Meets Present”—one of the neighbor activities of the Biennial. It couples the classical scenes of 16th century western paintings with the pop-culture figures of today: Angela Merkel and Vladimir Putin are in religious poses, with piles of euros in front of them, as women, half naked, covered or in any attire in between look on the scene. A faceless Ottoman sultan rides toward the center, behind him, refugees kept behind fences, while a series of men who resemble Pieter Brueghel’s “Blind Leading the Blind” walk behind. The sultan’s face, in a pop-art purple, is turned toward a distant city, with a dominant mosque and carelessly made collective-houses, including one built on the sea.

The sultan’s wife, stands near, most of her face covered with a veil and her eyes small with laughter, while his son, wearing a thief’s mask and a reddish mustache, is placed right near the pile of euros. Ask the curators what these people signify, and they reply, “These are imaginative figures.”

Perhaps a good neighbor, like a good artist, is one who stimulates your imagination.





CHEM NEWS



New report examines the CBRN defense market forecast to 2022

Source: <https://www.whatech.com/market-research/military/363093-new-report-examines-the-cbrn-defense-market-forecast-to-2022>

Aug 22 – The CBRN defense market is projected to grow from USD 14.68 billion in 2016 to USD 19.15 billion by 2022, at a CAGR of 4.65% from 2017 to 2022 during the forecast period. Complete report on CBRN Defense Market spread across 152 Pages, Profiling 13 Companies and Supported with 65 Tables and 33 Figures

UN: Two shipments of chemical weapons from North Korea to Syria were intercepted

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20170823-un-two-shipments-of-chemical-weapons-from-north-korea-to-syria-were-intercepted>

Aug 23 – **North Korea has been caught delivering shipments to a Syrian government agency in charge of the country's chemical weapons program, according to a confidential United Nations (UN) report on North Korea's sanctions violations.**

The report, submitted to the UN Security Council earlier this month and seen by Reuters on Monday, was compiled by a panel of independent UN experts and revealed that two shipments to the Syrian agency had been intercepted in the past six months. It did not specify, however, where the interceptions happened or what the shipments contained.

"The panel is investigating reported prohibited chemical, ballistic missile and conventional arms cooperation between Syria and the DPRK (North Korea)," the experts stated in the report, adding that "two member states interdicted shipments destined for Syria" at the behest of KOMID, Pyongyang's major arms dealer and exporter of equipment related to ballistic missiles and conventional weapons.

The United States and Russia brokered a deal in 2013 requiring Syria to destroy its chemical weapons stockpiles and the organization overseeing the elimination process last year declared the job complete. Weapons inspectors and diplomats, however, remain unconvinced that the program has been eliminated and suspect that Syria secretly maintained and developed new chemical weapons capability.

On 4 April 2017, a Syrian aircraft released toxic sarin gas on the town of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib, Syria. More than 97 civilians were killed, including 11 children and over 557 were injured. According to a special report by Reuters last week, at least one major sarin gas attack and over dozens of chlorine attacks have taken place since 2013, claiming the lives of over 200 people and injuring hundreds more.

The U.S. Mission to the UN released a statement on Monday, citing the atrocity, saying that "Assad has not relented his reign of terror and has continued to use chemical weapons in his attacks against his own people.... Through our previous actions and warnings to Assad, the United States has conveyed the grave seriousness with which we view chemical weapons use. We will not tolerate the use of chemical weapons, and those responsible for their use must be held accountable."

The Syrian regime's lack of cooperation with international inspectors and the manipulation of information has sparked criticism among experts who fear it could set a precedent for other countries in violation of UN prohibitions, including Iran which has come under fire by the Trump administration for violating the spirit of the nuclear agreement.

Fears terrorists are plotting a chemical strike on Britain

Source: http://www.nzherald.co.nz/terrorism/news/article.cfm?c_id=340&objectid=11911752

Aug 26 – British paramedics to start carrying antidote to deadly nerve gas amid fears in Britain.

Paramedics are being equipped with an antidote to some of the deadliest nerve agents amid fears terrorists are plotting a chemical strike on Britain, said the Daily Mail.





A hazardous materials crew during an investigation at the main hall of Kuala Lumpur International Airport after the death of Kim Jong-nam. File photo / AP

Thousands of frontline medics have already received the **epipen-style devices** that could combat VX or sarin, the as well as training on what to do in a mass casualty attack.

Security chiefs fear those inspired by Islamic State have 'no moral objection' to using the substances to murder and spread panic.

Malaysian police say the North Korean leader's half-brother Kim Jong-nam was killed by the nerve agent VX at Kuala Lumpur airport in February.

VX is ten times more deadly than sarin and is considered the most dangerous nerve agent ever created.

It has been classified as a weapon of mass destruction by the UN.

Propaganda posted online by the terror group urges followers to try to obtain chemical weapons.

Documents obtained by the Daily Mail reveal major health trusts are issuing nerve agent auto-injector devices to frontline staff.

First carried by soldiers, these are effective in treating so-called organophosphate poisons, which include sarin and VX.

A London Ambulance Service spokesman confirmed a "national programme" is under way.

"Our frontline staff are being taught to use nerve agent antidote kits," she said.

"Once rolled out later this year, the pen-like device will be available for our staff to use if they or patients are exposed to a nerve agent.

The pen-like device, which has a needle inside, is administered like an epipen, and releases the antidote to relieve the effects of any nerve

Counter-terror police and special forces soldiers undertook a major exercise to prepare for a chemical or biological attack earlier this year.

Both chemicals can cause death within minutes by attacking the body's nervous system. Victims may initially feel giddy or nauseous before suffering uncontrollable convulsions as they struggle to breathe.

According to the major incident plan of one big city ambulance trust, "large stocks" of nerve agent antidote kits are now being carried by their support units.

Frontline ambulances also carry a pack of ten epipens for use by paramedics on themselves if they display symptoms of nerve agent exposure.



agent."



Staff have been told it is essential they administer the antidote to themselves before trying to treat others. The epipens contain atropine and pralidoxime which are administered one after the other via auto-injections in the thigh.

The drugs freeze nerve receptors and stop them being overwhelmed by the toxins.

Security expert Raffaello Pantucci, of the Royal United Services Institute, said the roll-out was a "sensible precaution" as "the worst case scenario is first responders could become victims instead of saving lives". He added: "You only have to look at some of the propaganda on the internet to know that extremists aspire to this kind of attack."

Earlier this year, Dany Cotton, of London's Fire Brigade, said the potential for a terrorist chemical attack is a "huge concern".

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Epipen is the trade mark of adrenaline (epinephrine) auto-injector we prescribe for patients that are allergic to Hymenoptera (bees; wasps) or certain foods or other conditions that might lead to anaphylaxis. Duodote is an auto-injector containing both atropine and pralidoxime.

Beachy Head chemical haze mystery deepens as police say gas not from France

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/08/27/birling-gap-beauty-spot-evacuated-chlorine-gas-leak-causes-breathing/>

Aug 28 – **The mystery over a noxious chemical haze that drifted ashore along the Sussex coast and put scores in hospital has deepened as police have said it is unlikely to have come from France.**



Around 150 people needed hospital treatment for burning eyes, vomiting and sore throats after the mystery gas came ashore near Beachy Head on Sunday afternoon.

A senior officer said on Sunday there had been previous incidents when "stuff has come across from industrial units in France."

But officers on Monday said wind patterns suggested the cloud had not come from the Continent.

233 people were treated at the local hospital Credit: Eddie

Mitchell

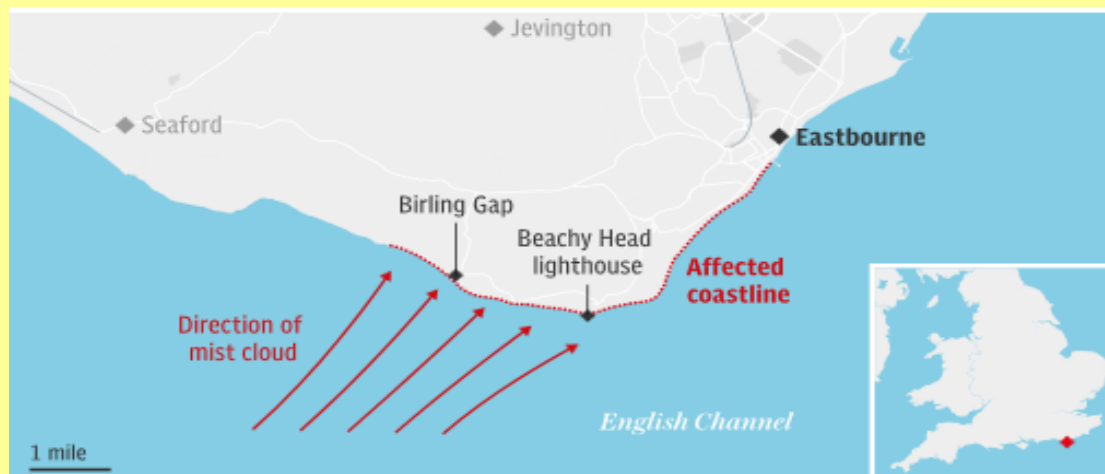
Scientists suggested the haze had instead come from shipping in The Channel or had blown from further along the English coast.

The haze had dispersed by Monday morning and police lifted an order for residents around the Eastbourne area to stay inside and close their windows.

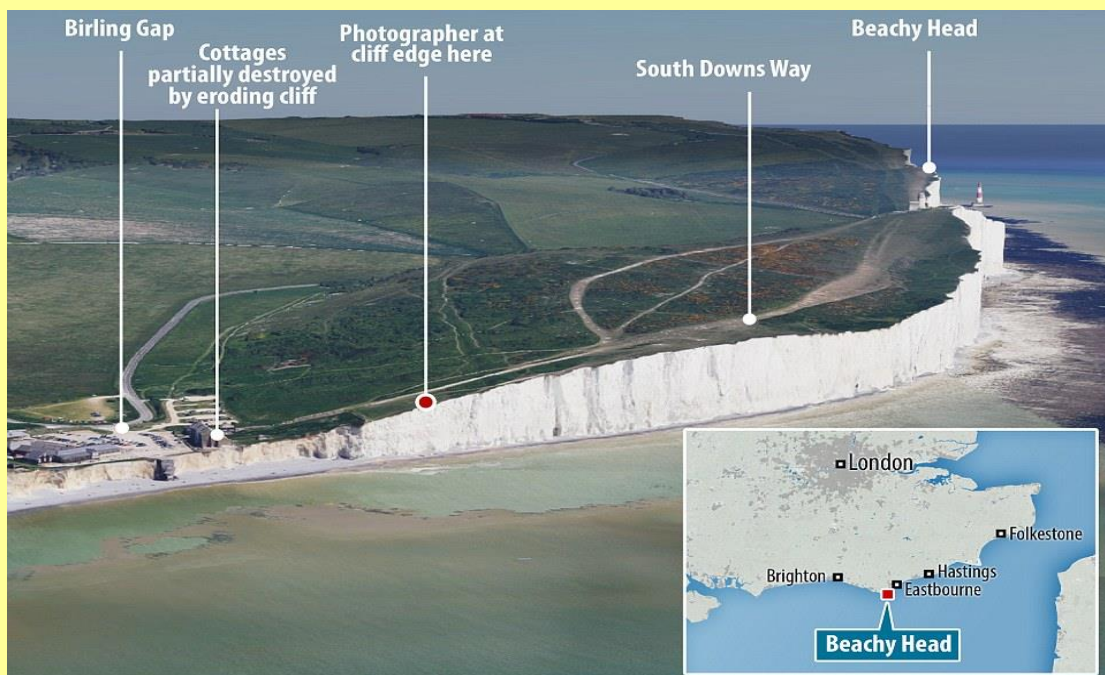
Thousands of visitors are expected to travel to the area as the Bank Holiday sees some of the hottest weather of the year.



Sussex Police said: "Neither the gas nor its source have been established, but agencies are continuing to investigate and have not ruled out either onshore or offshore locations, although it does appear that it did sweep in from the sea driven by onshore breezes."



"However, weather models suggest that an onshore source in northern France is very unlikely." The Met Office scientists are helping police try to determine the source of the haze. Winds in the Channel on Sunday had been light and variable with some fog banks. A spokesman said a pocket of low-lying cold



air had been covered by a blanket of warmer air in a phenomenon known as a temperature inversion. The phenomenon can mean that pollution becomes trapped and does not disperse.

The spokesman said: "There's a possibility that it's something from a ship in the Channel and also the possibility that it came from the English Coast."

In 2013, residents along the south coast complained after cloud of foul-smelling but harmless gas has leaked from a factory in north-west France.

The leak was blamed on a chemical factory near Rouen releasing mercaptan, which is added to natural gas to give it a smell.

The haze apparently reached land at Birling Gap at around 5pm on Sunday afternoon.



Kyle Crickmore, who had been enjoying the Bank Holiday weekend sunshine at the beach with his family, tweeted: "Some sort of chemical incident at Birling Gap, eyes are streaming and there's a strong smell of chlorine in the air."

He had finished swimming when his eyes started stinging. He looked around and saw everyone on the beach also rubbing their eyes and coughing in what he described as "all sorts of strange behaviour".

He told [BBC News](#): "Then looking out towards the water, there was just this crazy foggy haze rolling in off the sea out of nowhere. It was definitely out of the ordinary considering it was a nice clear sunny day 10 minutes beforehand."

"It was stupidly busy and it was a boiling hot day. It emptied in about 10 minutes which was quite staggering considering the amount of people who were there."

The beachfront is popular with dog walkers and is a busy spot for tourists and locals enjoying the bank holiday sunshine.

Dan Sankey wrote on Twitter: "Beautiful afternoon at Birling Gap cut short by some weird mist, burning everyone's eyes which led to the beach and cliff being evacuated."

Sameer Jadhav tweeted: "Birling Gap some weird gas leak. People crying. Ambulances called. Don't go to Birling Gap at the moment".

The effects felt by those caught in the cloud "prompted emergency services to warn people to stay away from the beaches and to keep doors and windows closed if living near the coast".

Sussex Police said: "People living along the coast in the area have been advised to keep doors and windows shut and to move away from the Birling Gap area in particular."

The RNLI said that "possibly some kind of gaseous fumes" had drifted over the scene and a significant number of people on cliff tops had been struck down with symptoms including irritation, sore eyes and vomiting.

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust said there had been a "hazardous cloud moving across from Birling Gap to the Eastbourne area".

By 10.30pm 233 patients had been treated at Eastbourne District General Hospital where they were being "decontaminated on site" by hospital staff.

Fears from the coastguard that people could be trapped on the beach saw the RNLI launch all-weather lifeboats from Eastbourne and Newhaven to the Birling Gap area.

UPDATE 1

Experts studied satellite images yesterday [29 Aug 2017] in a bid to solve the mystery over the "chemical mist" that engulfed Beachy Head over the Bank Holiday [28 Aug 2017] weekend.

One picture appeared to show a plume more than 2 miles [3.2 km] long approaching the Birling Gap after coming off a boat.

Previously experts said the bizarre gas cloud, which left 150 people in hospital with stinging eyes and noses, breathing difficulties, and being sick, may have been caused by a "toxic algal bloom."

But boffins from the Plymouth Marine Lab tweeted yesterday [29 Aug 2017] that the images showed there was "no algal unusual activity to suggest harmful bloom caused Birling Gap haze."

Holidaymakers and locals were hit as they enjoyed the Bank Holiday weekend sunshine on [Sun 27 Aug 2017].

It was quickly ruled out that it came from the UK mainland due to onshore winds.

It was then feared it had come from chemical industries in Dieppe or Le Havre, northern France -- but this was also discounted due to weather patterns.

Henry Prout of Newhaven RNLI [Royal National Lifeboat Institution] said: "The gas could have come from a container dropped at sea many, many years ago whose seal has finally broken."

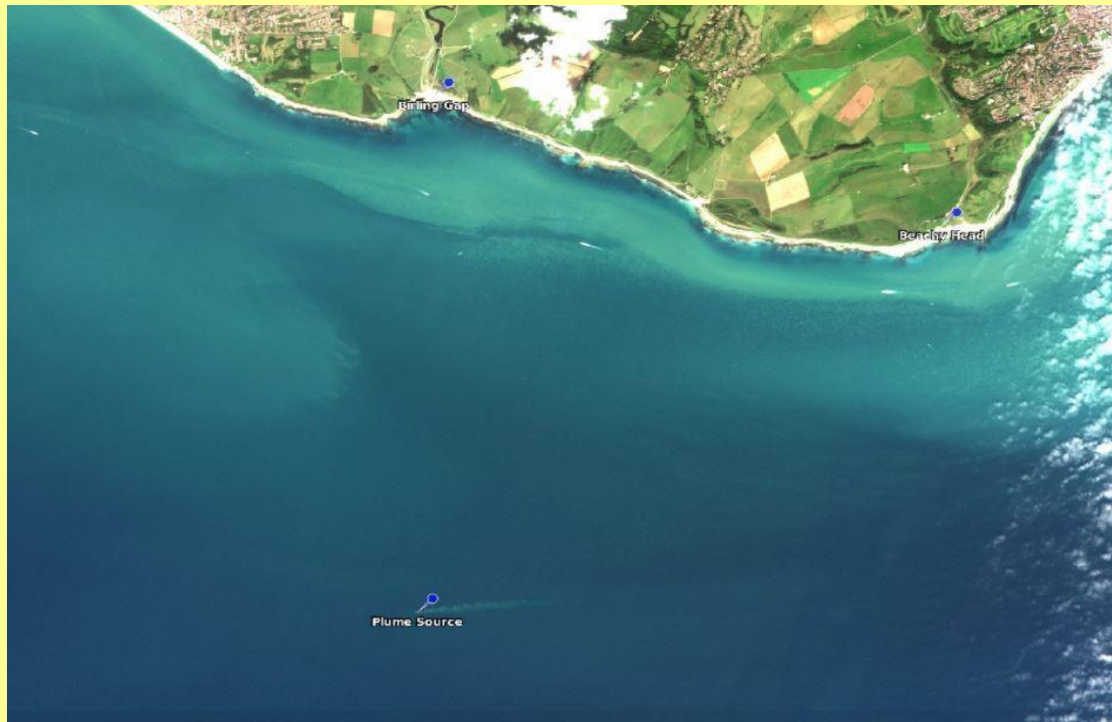
"Or it could have come from a vessel doing a chemical clean, which is prohibited in maritime law."

"Whatever the cause it is going to be extremely difficult to identify the source."

[...]

In January 2013 a foul-smelling gas cloud prompted thousands of calls to the emergency services in Sussex, Kent, Surrey and Hampshire after drifting across the English Channel. The accidental discharge of mercaptan came from a factory in Rouen, France.





In 2008, there was also a panic when agricultural waste blew over from France.



[The 2nd article above has some good photos of some of the things discussed. There is clearly no evidence of a toxic bloom, but there is a mysterious white cloud emanating from a central point. I could understand how it could be a ship, but a container at the bottom of the ocean? I cannot rule it out but it seems much more unlikely.

Burning eyes and nose could be chlorine, but that often comes with difficulty breathing and possibly burning of the skin. While the hospital notes originally it was decontaminating people, it became clear this was not necessary. It appears these people were treated and released. Perhaps a little oxygen and some eye wash? We have scant details to speculate on the type of gas or mist seeming to affect these individuals.

The source may or may not be found but I would bet they will be checking the point of the cloud believed to be a ship.

If this beach had only young people on it one might think it was a psychosomatic situation but this was a beach full of families and people of all ages. Good to know all those affected seem to have recovered.

UPDATE 2

Birling Gap Perhaps Not A Mystery

Source: <https://www.byline.com/column/67/article/1810>



Aug 30 – The mysterious chemical cloud at Birling Gap, East Sussex may not be such a mystery.

As the Met Office confirmed today, they are only interested in weather data and are unable to comment upon chemicals or their sources. The Marine and Coastguard Agency, it is claimed, believe a ship may have been "venting". It appears more likely it was not a ship but, rather, a boat.

Maritime monitoring agency NEODAAS, based in Plymouth, have identified the source of a plume of unidentified gas, which appeared at around 10.56am offshore on Sunday the 27th of August 2017. This is believed to have been carried to shore on the prevailing wind. The plume was significant in size and is believed to have been dispersed into the ozone, causing monitored levels to spike severely.



The NEODAAS image has been verified and clearly shows the plume emerging from the water. There are no ships in the area and the image, accurate to a ten metre square area, appears to show the substance emerging from on or just below the surface - no deeper than ten metres according to the experts.

Ben Taylor, one of the monitoring experts at NEODAAS confirmed that there was no algal activity. "I've never seen anything like it before," he told me. "I suppose it could be possible it's a submerged object like a container or a wreck," he added, replying to a number of theories circulating on the internet. A brief internet search does reveal a number of onshore wrecks over time on the treacherous coast, the most notable being the Coonatto. The area is also famous for cliff erosion and collapsing properties. However, a less mysterious explanation has emerged as possible.

Taylor confirmed the area where the plume originates is around thirty metres deep and surrounded by even deeper water. The area is able to accommodate submarines.

Speaking to a naval source with detailed knowledge of submarines, they confirm the depth is sufficient "for a boat to run without breaching" - meaning the conning tower would not break the surface. A submarine, such as the relatively new additions to the Russian fleet, are designed for shallow water operations and carry a range of sea, air, and land targeting missiles. One, nicknamed the "Blackhole submarine" by NATO due to its stealth capability, is believed to be the quietest diesel-electric submarine in the world.

The plume, however, is not likely to be a chemical weapon. "It's highly unlikely as weather would be too broad a variable on impact and effect," the source told me. "However," they continued, "submarines do have to vent noxious substances. Diesel, propellant, other noxious items. They would also vent during a fire, for example."

On board fire in a submarine is not unknown. In November 2008, the K-152 Nerpa suffered an incident during trials in the Sea of Japan and resulted in 20 deaths when two compartments were filled with fire suppressant chemicals. 41 people were also injured, some suffering frostbite type injuries from narcosis caused by a release of Freon R-114B2 gas. Minor exposure to Freon gas causes irritation to the eyes, ears and throat, headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, respiratory problems and can cause chemical burns. The gas is colourless and odourless.

150 people exposed to the chemical cloud at Birling Gap were treated for similar symptoms and the substances was described as having no colour or smell. Chlorine has been ruled out by authorities.

Neither the British nor Russian military comment on submarine movements.

Harvey aftermath: Explosions reported at flooded chemical plant

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/31/us/harvey-houston-texas-flood/index.html>

Aug 31 – Two explosions and plumes of black smoke were reported at a flooded chemical plant in Crosby, Texas on Thursday, officials said.

One deputy has been taken to the hospital after he inhaled fumes from the Arkema peroxide plant, the Harris County sheriff's office tweeted. Nine others drove themselves to the hospital as a precaution, the sheriff's office said.

The explosions were reported around 2 a.m. (local time).

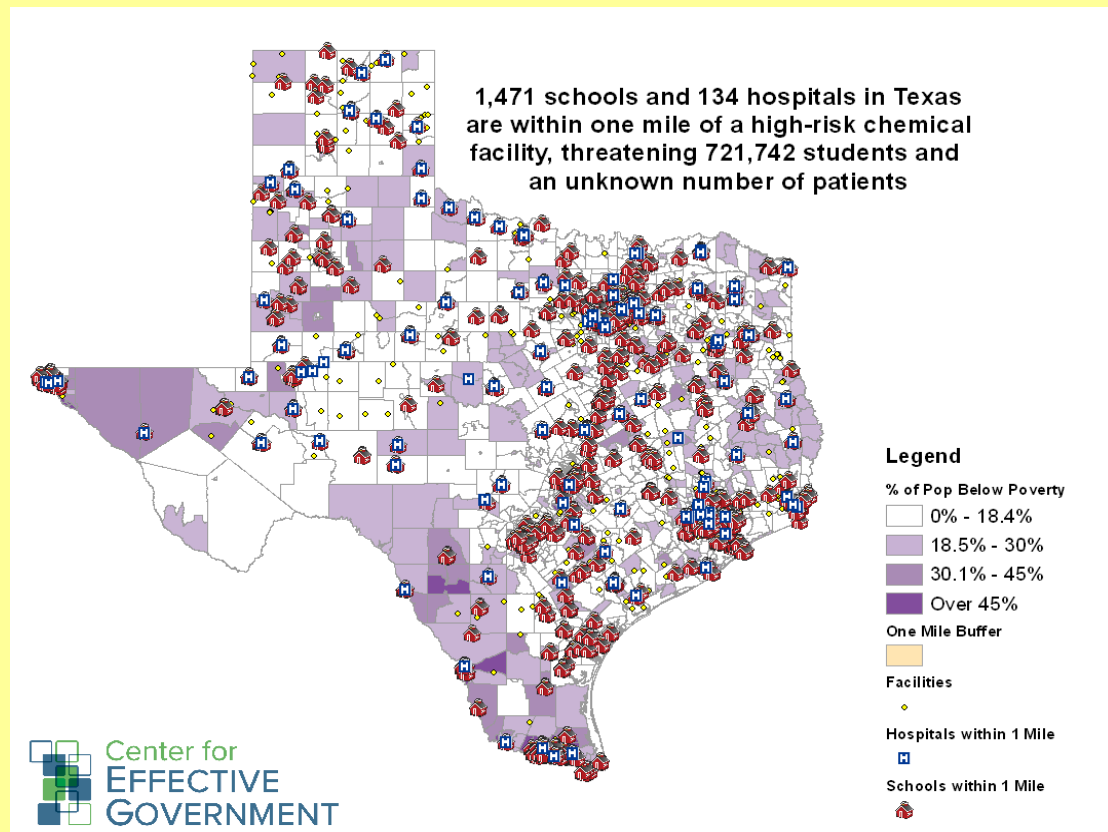
The facility, which is between Houston and Beaumont, had been closely monitored after plant officials said they expected a chemical reaction that will likely cause a fire that will "resemble a large gasoline fire." The thick black smoke from the explosions "might be irritating to the eyes, skin and lungs," Arkema officials said in a statement.

The scope of the explosions is still unknown.

The company shut down the facility as Harvey approached last week and evacuated employees as well as residents within 1.5 miles of plant as a precaution after it was flooded under more than five feet of water.

"There is a small possibility that the organic peroxide will release into the floodwaters but will not ignite and burn," the company said in a statement.





The flooding in southeast Texas has severely affected oil and chemical plants. Many have shut down operations in the past few days, including, the [Colonial Pipeline](#), which carries huge amounts of gasoline

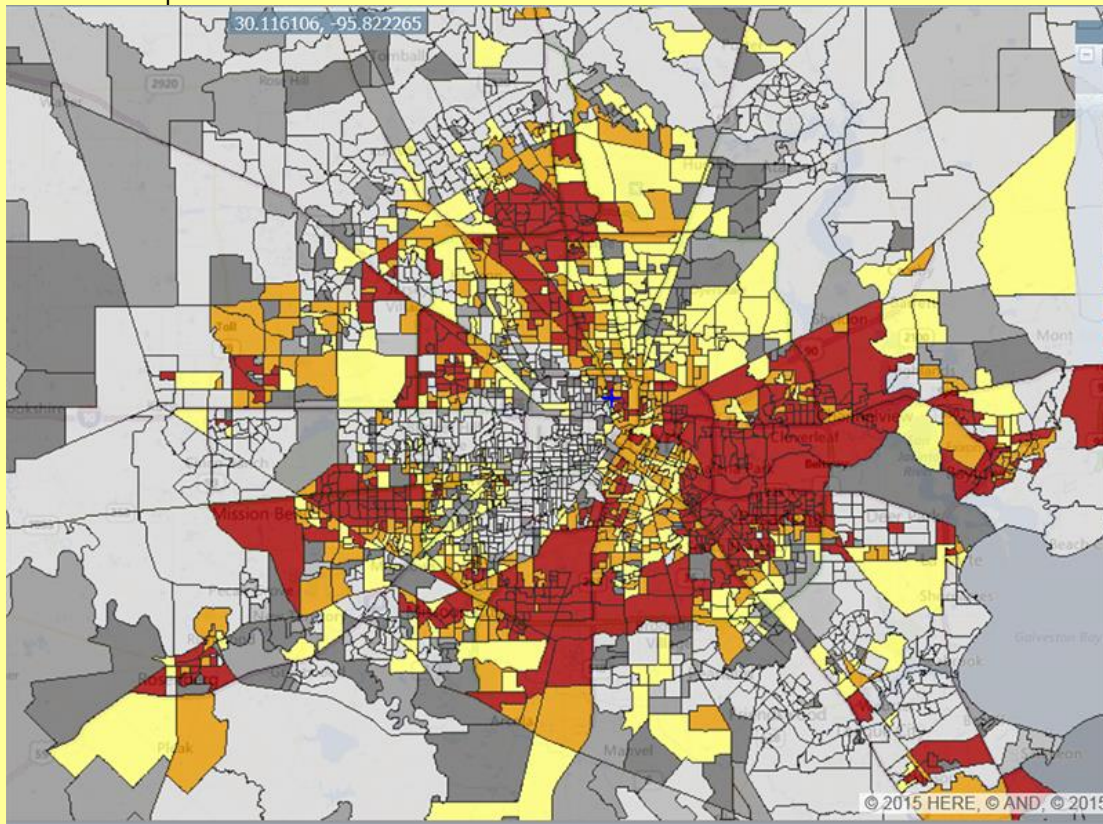


and other fuel between Houston and the East Coast. Valero and Motiva, [the largest refinery in the country](#), have also closed some facilities.



EPA Mapping Tool Shows Houston's Hot Spots Of Toxic Risk

Source: <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2015/06/15/60999/epa-mapping-tool-shows-houstons-hot-spots-of-toxic-risk/>



The EPA mapping tool highlights “vulnerable” neighborhoods near sites that handle very hazardous substances. [Screengrab from the EJSCREEN mapping tool](#)

June 2015 – What neighborhoods in Houston are most vulnerable to bad ozone days? Which ones are most at risk because of facilities that use extremely hazardous chemicals? Which have buildings with the most lead paint?

“It was hard to find solid data,” says Mark Corrales, a senior analyst with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington.

“What we have now with this tool, we’re able to apply the latest technology and huge data sets,” Corrales told News 88.7.

Corrales is talking about a [mapping tool](#) he helped develop and that [you can now use on the EPA’s website](#).

We went to the site and pulled up a map of Houston and, not surprisingly, the eastern half of it showed concentrations of vulnerable

neighborhoods. It’s where so many refineries and chemical plants are located.

“In a lot of places yes, the tool is going to show you what you expect,” says Matthew Tejada, who is director the EPA’s Office of Environmental Justice and was previously an activist in Houston.

“But it also shows you other places where you might not be expecting. I think there are sites of concern or potential threat all over the Houston region just a couple blocks away from where people live that they’ve probably never noticed before,” Tejada says.

Tejada says the tool takes into account the income and racial make-up of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods at risk from toxic sites can be seen on the map just south of the Woodlands, others are bordering the Westpark Tollway, and still others are in rural areas miles from the city.

The EPA says the mapping tool can help Texas officials implement programs to better protect the most



at-risk neighborhoods. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality told us they haven't fully evaluated the tool yet and said they want to

make sure it provides accurate information before they use it.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: That reminded me the "chemical soup" back in the Katrina era. Perhaps it is time to review now the environmental consequences of that chem industries to the people of the areas affected. Mainly because after a few days we tend to forget unpleasant issues...



Colored photos from WWI



Decon7 - BDAS+

Source: <https://www.hazmat-control.com/products/decon7-bdas/detail>

Decon7 Systems is developing a ruggedized ready-to-use (RTU) hand-held multi-part application system for its intelligent chemistry.

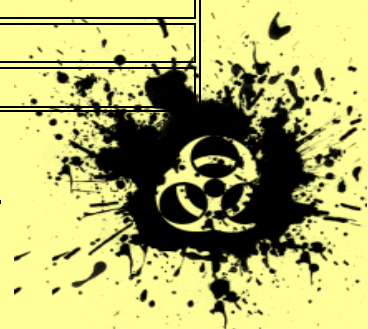
The D7 BDAS+ (Biological Decontaminant Accelerated Spray), is rapidly and easily deployable in crisis situations. Rugged in design and materials, tested in extreme environments, the D7 BDAS+ is a breakthrough product that will significantly enhance the safety of military and first responder personnel from a variety of threats.

Just as it does in bulk form, the D7 BDAS+ will neutralize harmful VOCs (volatile organic compounds), hazardous industrial chemicals, chemical and biological warfare agents and bodily fluids.

- Ready-to-use (RTU) simply aim and squeeze the trigger
- Lightweight rugged design
- Portable and rapidly deployable
- Disinfects blood-borne bacteria and viruses; including HIV/AIDS, SARS, Avian Influenza H5N1, H1N1, tuberculosis, MRSA, C. difficile, and others
- Eliminates molds, spores and odors
- Neutralizes chemical and biological warfare agents, hazardous industrial chemicals and VOCs (volatile organic compounds)
- Works on multiple surfaces, including concrete, asphalt, wood, ceramic, carpet, fabrics, leather, steel, aluminum and others
- Water-soluble and naturally biodegradable
- US EPA-registered, environmentally friendly - passed both U.S. and Canadian eco-testing.



BIOLOGICAL ORGANISMS		
Aspergillus niger	Hantavirus	Pseudomonas aeruginosa (antibiotic resistant)
Bird Flu H5N1	Hepatitis B Virus	Respiratory syncytia virus
Bervibacterium ammoniagenes	Hepatitis C Virus	Salmonella enteric
Burkholderia cepacia	Herpes Simplex Type 1	Salmonella typhi
Campylobacter jejuni	Herpes Simplex Type 2	SARS
Candida albicans	HIV/AIDS	Serratia marcescens
Clostridium difficile	Human Coronavirus	Shigella dysenteriae



Corynebacterium ammoniagenes	Legionella pneumophila	Shigella sonnei
Enterobacter aerogenes	Influenza A/Brazil Virus, H1N1	Staphylococcus aureus
Enterobacter cloacae	Klebsiella pneumonia	Staphylococcus aureus (antibiotic resistant)
Enterobacteriaceae (with extended beta Lactamase resistance)	Klebsiella pneumonia (antibiotic resistance)	Staphylococcus aureus (Methicillin resistant)(MRSA)
Enterococcus faecalis	Listeria monocytogenes	Staphylococcus pyogenes
Enterococcus faecium (Vancomycin resistant)	Norovirus Feline	Trichophyton metagrophytes
Escherichia coli	Norovirus Murine	Tuberculosis
Escherichia coli (antibiotic resistant)	Proteus mirabilis	Vaccinia virus
Escherichia coli 0157:H7	Proteus vulgaris	Vibrio cholera
	Pseudomonas aeruginosa	

CHEMICALS

- Q-Alkyl Phosphonofluoridates, such as Sarin and Soman
- Q-Alkyl Phosphonofluoridates, such as Tabun
- O-Alkyl, S-2-Dialkyl Aminoethyl, Alkylphosphonothiolates and Corresponding Alkylated or Protonated Salts, such as VX
- Mustard Compounds, Including 2-Chloroethyl chloromethyl sulfide, Bis (2-Chloromethyl) sulfide, Bis (2-Chloromethylthio) Methane, 1,2-Bis (2-Chloromethylthio) Ethane, 1,3 Bis (2-Chloroethylthio)-N-Propane, 1,4 Bis (2-Chloroethylthio)-N-Butane, 1,5-Bis (2-Chloroethylthio)-N-Pentane, and Bis (2-Chloroethylthiomethyl) Ether
- Methylamine, Saxitoxin
- Lewisites including 2-Chlorovinylchloroarsine, Bis (2-Chlorovinyl) Chloroarsine, Tris (2-Chlorovinyl), Arsine, Bis (2-Chloroethyl) Ethylamine, and Bis (2-Chloroethyl)
- Alkyl Phosphonyldifluoride and Alkyl Phosphorites
- Chlorosarin
- Chlorosoman
- Amiton, 1,1,3,3,3-Pentafluoro-2-(Trifluoromethyl)-1-Propene, 3-Quinuclidinyl Benzilate
- Methylphosphonyl Dichloride
- Dimethyl Methylphosphonate
- Dialkyl Phosphoramidic Dihalides
- Dialkyl Phosphoramidates
- Arsenic Trichloride
- Diphenyl Hydroxyacetic Acid
- Quinuclidin-3-ol
- Dialkyl Aminoethyl-2-Chlorides
- Dialkyl Aminoethan-2-ols And Dialkyl Aminoethane-2-Thiols
- Thiodiglycols
- Pinacolyl Alcohols
- Phosgene
- Cyanogen and Thionyl Chloride
- Hydrogen Cyanide and Chloropicrin
- Phosphorous Oxychloride
- Phosphorous Trichloride, Phosphorous Pentachloride and Alkyl Phosphites



- Sulfur Minochloride, Sulfur Dichloride

CHEMICAL & BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS		
GA (Tabun) Nerve Agent	VX Nerve Agent	Botulinum (Toxin)
GD (Soman) Nerve Agent	Mustard Gas (Blister)	Bacillus Anthracis (Anthrax)
GB (Sarin) Nerve Agent	Lewisite (Blister)	Ricin (Toxin)

Chemical suicide, a new phenomenon and a treat to the first responder

Source: <https://efrim.org/2017/09/05/chemical-suicide-a-new-phenomenon-and-a-treat-to-the-first-responder/>

Dear Sir / Madam,

A relatively new approach to suicide – using toxic gases generated by the combination of consumer products or common household chemicals – has become more prevalent in recent years. The vapors, especially when trapped in an enclosed space, may exist in concentrations that can be hazardous to first responders and others.

European First Responder Innovation Managers (EFRIM) teams up with the First Responders from UK, Belgium and France to reach out the European first responder community to ask for attention for this new threat to the first responders.



'The Scottish Approach'

Douglas Stirling from the Scottish Police says: "As we have seen more and more these incidents occur in the UK we have identified the critical need for us to inform not only the specialists but also our first responders of the dangers presented at such incidents. Whilst we have commenced a UK wide guidance process we feel the need to now develop practical training packages that can be delivered to all emergency services responders."

Sharing knowledge and joined training

Colleague Andy Jones add to this: we will launch a training for Police, Fire Fighters and Paramedics in November this year. We would like to get in touch with other European colleagues to discuss their experiences with chemical suicides. What are their problems? How did they solved them? How did they train their staff? How can we help each other? How can we share information etc.

Special interest group:

If interested, we would like to welcome you to come over to the training and get actively involved in developing an European special interest group around the threat of "household" chemicals to first responders. We will focus on chemical suicide but are open to discuss other threats like fentanyl drugs and acid attacks.

On behalf of the EFRIM team:

Douglas Sterling

Head of Unit

SMARTEU (Scottish Multi-Agency Resilience Training & Exercise Unit)

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters and National Training Centre

SMARTEU@scotland.pnn.police.uk

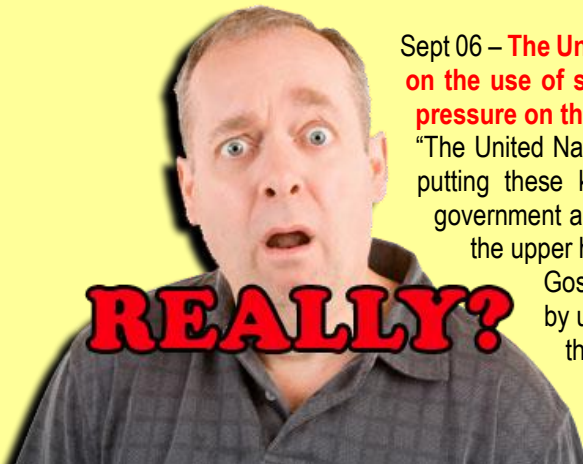


5 of the World's Most Dangerous Chemicals

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckSoDW2-wrc>

UN report about chemical weapons use in Syria based on **fake news**

Source: <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/09/06/534233/UN-Syria-Chemical-Weapons>



Sept 06 – **The United Nations has joined Western media in resorting to fake reports on the use of sarin gas in the Syrian town of Khan Sheikhun on April 4 to put pressure on the Syrian government, says an investigative journalist.**

“The United Nations is joining other organizations, the Western media particularly, in putting these kinds of reports out,” which are “fake news” because the Syrian government and army have no interest in using chemical weapons when they have the upper hand on the battle ground, Tony Gosling told Press TV on Wednesday. Gosling said the United States is attempting to establish “global domination” by using military might to control international organizations in order to get the green light to invade independent countries.

The US and its allies are using the same allegations they propped up about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq back in 2003 in order to repeat the same scenario for Syria, the journalist warned.

The trouble with bombing a murderous dictator: Guessing how he'll react

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/the-trouble-with-bombing-a-murderous-dictator-guessing-how-hell-react/>

Sept 10 – Over the past five years, Israel has conducted dozens of airstrikes in Syria, including — according to foreign reports — one early Thursday morning in the country's Hama province in which two Syrian soldiers were killed.

Many of them have been followed by angry denunciations from Damascus and vows of “consequences,” but for all his bluster, Syrian leader Bashar Assad has never seriously retaliated against Israel.

Yes, on a handful of occasions, the Syrian military has fired air defense weapons at Israeli jets, including in one case in which the IAF launched an Arrow interceptor in order to ensure the Syrian anti-aircraft missile didn't hit an Israeli community. However, Assad has yet to carry out an attack on Israel hours or days after an alleged strike.

Nor has Hezbollah, with the notable exception of a 2015 anti-tank missile attack on an IDF jeep that killed two soldiers, though that was in response to an alleged Israeli strike that killed Jihad Mughniyeh, a Hezbollah member and son of one of its leaders, not an attack on a weapons convoy or warehouse.

And while analysts say the safe bet is that the Syrian president, still beset by civil war despite recent gains, will keep holding his fire, knowing that Israel can hit him harder than he can hit Israel, the safer bet, they say, is for the Jewish state to prepare for one regardless.

Following Thursday's alleged Israeli airstrike on the Syrian military's Scientific Studies and Research Center (CERS) facility near Masyaf, which is used to create and store chemical weapons and precise missiles, Assad's army threatened that there would be “serious consequences” for the attack.

The Syrian military said the attack was “a desperate attempt to raise the collapsed morale” of the Islamic State group “after the sweeping victories achieved by the Syrian Arab army,” and proved Israel's “direct support” for IS and “other terrorist organizations.”



The lingering question, nearly 18 hours after the strike, is whether the Assad regime military's tough words are a serious threat or just that, words.



A Syrian facility reportedly attacked by Israeli aircraft early on Thursday, September 7, 2017 (screen capture: Twitter)

It's hard to get inside the mind of a dictator who torched his own country and used [a weapon of mass destruction] against his own people

According to Bilal Saab, of the Washington-based Middle East Institute, Assad's behavior toward his own people make his plans toward Israel difficult to determine.

"It's hard to get inside the mind of a dictator who torched his own country and used [a weapon of mass destruction] against his own people," said Saab, a senior fellow and director of the institute's defense and security program, in an email.

However, he said, "my suspicion is that the laws of deterrence with Israel, though never foolproof, will hold simply because the level of punishment Israel would inflict on Syria would be severe, should Assad respond militarily."

Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror, a former national security adviser, took a similar view.

"The assumption should be that there will be some kind of reaction, and I hope that the IDF is ready," he said.

However, the former general added that he doesn't expect the reaction to be particularly forceful.

"I hope for Assad that he's not taking any steps that might find him in a very bad situation," Amidror said, speaking to reporters in a phone briefing organized by the Israel Project.

Red lines

Throughout the Syrian civil war, Israel has maintained that it will not interfere in the fighting, unless certain "red lines" are crossed, namely that advanced weapons are not given to Hezbollah, that Iran is not allowed to take positions on the Golan border and that Israel's sovereignty not be violated, either deliberately or accidentally.

So when a convoy of precise missiles is on its way from Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon, Israel takes it out with an airstrike. Or when a mortar shell lands in the Israeli Golan from the fighting across the border, an IDF tank targets a Syrian army position.

Though Israel has not confirmed its role in Thursday's attack, the strike has nevertheless been attributed to the Jewish state, with the understanding among analysts that the Syrian weapons facility was being used to violate one of those "red lines."

But what are Assad's "red lines"? What will it take for him to strike Israel?



“Assad’s red lines are regime survival,” Saab said.



Screen capture from a satellite of an area near Masyaf, Hama province Syria where the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Center reportedly maintains a chemical weapons facility. (Google maps)

The question then, he said, is “what constitutes regime survival from his perspective and that of his Iranian allies, beyond the obvious (i.e., his own killing or the bombing of his headquarters).”

According to Saab, it “is anybody’s guess.”

But while Syria and Hezbollah were the two groups directly affected by the alleged Israeli airstrike, they aren’t the only people operating out of the country.

Russia, which has been acting as Assad’s patron, might also voice concern over the strike, according to Maj. Gen. (res.) Amos Yadlin, a former head of Israel’s Military Intelligence and the director of the Institute for National Security Studies think tank.

In a tweet, Yadlin warned that Israel could face “Russian opposition.”

However, Amidror said Israel has been clear with Russia about its policies in Syria and that the two countries have a sense of mutual respect.

“Each side understands the other side’s interests,” he said.

Israel’s relationship with Russia, he said, is “an example of good diplomacy: We don’t agree with them, but we respect them.”



ISIS Plans to Poison Food in Stores in Europe

Source: <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/2291601-exclusive-isis-plans-poisoning-open-markets-in-europe/>

Sept 04 – Internal communications from the ISIS terrorist group, intercepted by private intelligence firm BLACKOPS Cyber (BOC), have revealed plans for a new series of lone wolf terrorist attacks across Europe.

The internal notice directs **Islamic terrorists on the creation of poisons, which it advises them to use on food products in stores.** The attack notice was published on a private forum

of the terrorist network on Sept. 3 and had been viewed 198 times by midday Sept. 4.

Data extracted from the notice by BOC details the plan and shows it was viewed by potential terrorists in **Brussels, Paris, Stockholm, Berlin, Nice, and in the state of Florida.**

A description on the planned attack from BOC advises government agencies to escalate their terror



threat levels and to “advise vendors of consumer perishables that are open and readily accessible to diligently monitor customers lingering during nonpeak shopping hours.”

The terrorist group allegedly calls itself the **Knights of Lone Jihad**, and its post contains a graphic of a blood-covered hand with the words “First Method Poison” written next to it.

A hashtag on the image suggests the ISIS members have ties to Wilayat al-Furat, or Euphrates Province, which was the administrative division the terrorist organization established on the border of Iraq and Syria.

ISIS began its rise in this self-declared province and nearby areas. A key ISIS propaganda

channel, which the latest notice appears to be tied to, uses the name of the province.

The notice tells terrorists, “You have the following method—poisoning the kuffar,” and tells them to inject poison into foods in markets. The Arabic word “kuffar” is a derogatory term for non-Muslims.

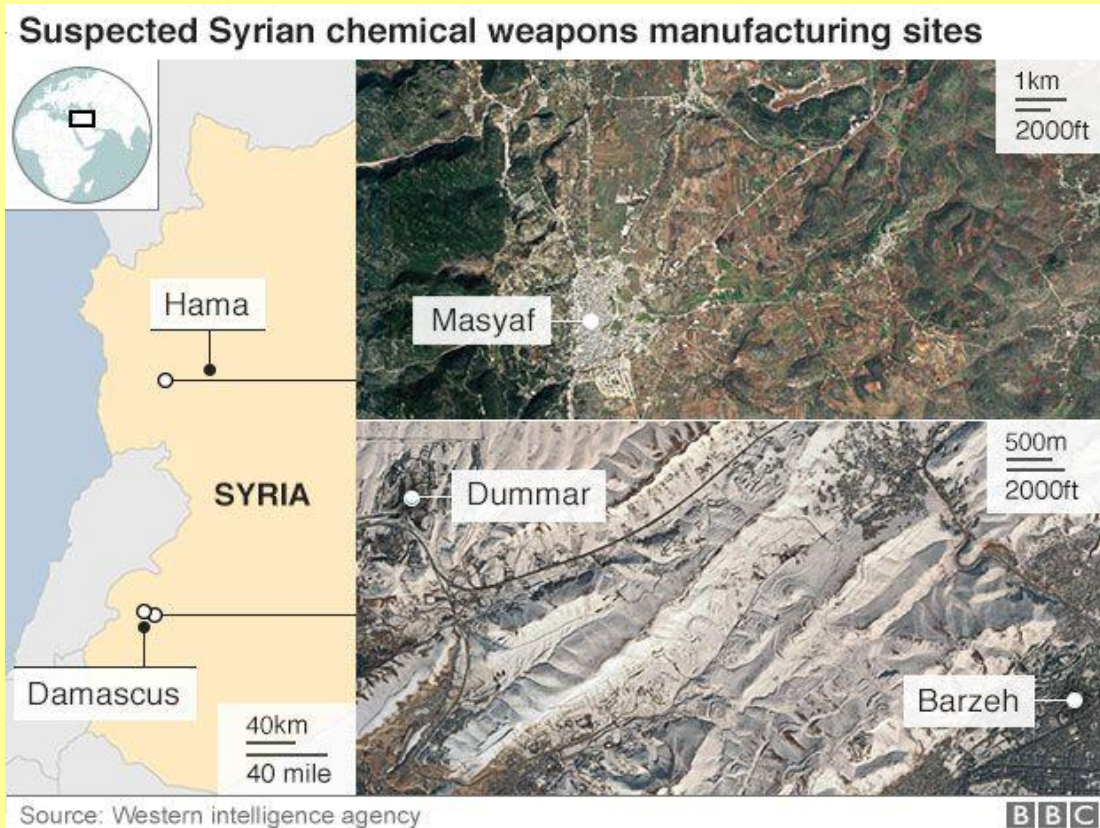
The communication updates the objectives of the terrorist group to call for attacks “in Europe and the disbelieving West and everywhere else,” using any means. It then celebrates many of the terrorist attacks that have been carried out in Europe and elsewhere, saying they have caused a “state of alert, terror, fear, and loss of security.”

Israel destroys Syrian chemical weapons facility

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20170908-israel-destroys-syrian-chemical-weapons-facility>

Sept 08 – The Israeli air force Thursday morning attacked and destroyed a chemical arms plant in in Syria. The Syrian military confirmed that Israel had attacked what a Syrian spokesman described as “a military facility,” adding that two people were killed and that “extensive damage” to the facility was caused. Israel, keeping to its policy in such instances, refused to offer any comments in the incident.

The *Financial Times* [reports](#) that a Syrian military communique said at 2:40 A.M. Israeli military planes



struck the site – noting that the planes fired several missiles at the Syrian facility from the west, while flying in Lebanese airspace.



The Syrian statement warned of the “dangerous repercussions of such hostile acts on the security and stability of the region.”

Syrian opposition sources said that four Israeli warplanes took part in the attack.

Media reports said that Israel had destroyed the Scientific Studies and Researchers Center facility near the city of Masyaf in central Syria, where Syria has been working on developing of chemical weapons. Witnesses said that large plumes of smoke were wafting over the area for hours after the attack.

The attacks appear to have targeted two other facilities: a large military storage camp next to the scientific center. The storage camp was used to store ground-to-ground rockets. The second facility attacked a weapons factory that develops arms for the Syrian regime and for Hezbollah.

The former head of Israel’s Military Intelligence, Gen. Amos Yadlin, tweeted that the Israeli attack “was not routine.” He noted that the site “produces chemical weapons and explosive barrels that have killed thousands of Syrian civilians.”

“The attack is finally an Israeli moral statement about the massacre in Syria,” Yadlin said.

Since the beginning of the uprising against the Assad regime, Israel has attacked convoys delivering advanced weapon systems from Iran and the Assad regime to Hezbollah. Last week, Maj. Gen. Amir Eshel, the outgoing commander of the Israel Air Force, told *Haaretz* that since 2012, the number of Israeli attacks on these military convoys since 2012 is approaching triple digits.

This was the first time a high-level Israeli official has confirmed the scope of Israel’s attacks.



Thursday’s attack was the first Israeli strike against a military facility in Syria since a cease-fire was reached in southern Syria in July (there have been, however, low-level border skirmishes between Israel and units of Assad army). Israel bitterly complained that the cease-fire agreement negotiated between the United States and Russia ignored acute Israeli security concerns.



University of Rome Tor Vergata 1st and 2nd Level Master Course in Protection against CBRNe events

Source 1: <http://level1.mastercbn.com/#home>

Source 2: <http://level2.mastercbn.com/#home>

	2	year duration	1	
	10	weeks	7	
	4	weeks of practical activities	2	
	6	months of internship	3	
	45	partners	45	
	∞	skill on CBRNe field	∞	

LV. 1

LV. 2





Poisons in Shopping Malls': Israeli Experts Expose New Daesh Terror Tool

Source: <https://sputniknews.com/world/201709071057186204-poisons-shopping-malls-daesh/>

Sept 07 – Daesh is notorious for the terrifying and ruthless ways it kills people. Now the jihadists are reportedly preparing a new type of disgusting attack aimed at mass casualties, Israeli counter-terrorist experts warn.



Daesh is currently instructing [its "lone wolf" attackers](#) on how to commit terrorist acts using poisons in shopping malls, Eitan Azani, the deputy director of the International Institute for Counter Terrorism, and Boaz Ganor, an expert on terrorism, said.

According to the experts, [the originality of such attacks](#) can be attributed to the terrorist group's rapid loss of territories in the Middle East and its attempt to maintain its influence on, as well as intimidate, governments and civilians abroad.

While the new tactic fits in the terror group's recent trend of carrying out "jihad on enemy land," according to Middle East expert Colonel Omar Locatelli, it is also not surprising that Daesh would try to diversify its attacks.

"Security measures on transport, for example, on airplanes, have become too tight, which is why today terrorists are looking for ways to carry out attacks in crowded places using vans,"

Locatelli [told](#) Sputnik, noting Daesh's most recent terror tool for killing as many people as possible.

Europe became a target for such attacks in July 2015 when [a 19-tonne cargo truck rammed into a crowd in Nice](#), leaving 86 people dead. Since then, several similar attacks (in [Berlin](#) and [Catalonia](#), for example) have spread fear all across Europe.

French Consulate in Israel gets suspicious envelope; staff complain of burning eyes

Source: <https://www.rt.com/news/401955-french-consulate-israel-package-suspicious/>



Sept 04 – The French Consulate in the Israeli city of Haifa has received a suspicious envelope, Israeli website Ynetnews reported, adding that staff at the consulate complained of burning eyes after the envelope was delivered to the building.

The envelope was reportedly sent from France, and it contained teabags and goji berry seeds, according to the news website.

The Fire Department arrived at the scene to examine the suspicious envelope

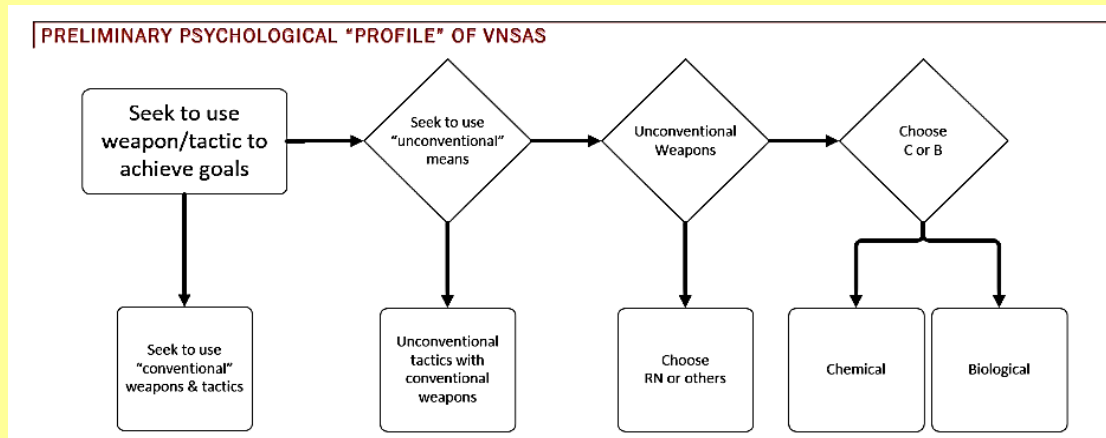
and the consulate area was cordoned off.



Profiling the CB adversary: Motivation, psychology and decision

Source: https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_ProfilingCBAAdversaryMotivationPsychologyDecision_ResearchBrief_Sept2017.pdf

Using START's newly developed Chemical and Biological Non-State Adversaries Database (CABNSAD),



a new study recently examined the influence of personal, ideological and situational factors on the likelihood of a perpetrator choosing to pursue the use of chemical or biological weapons.

*VNSAs = violent non-state actors

Captagon: Radical Islam's Little-Known 'Chemical Weapon'

By Jack Wood

Source: <https://www.thetrumpet.com/16278-captagon-radical-islams-little-known-chemical-weapon>

Sept 14 – Islamic State fighters dub it “chemical courage.” It stimulates the mind and keeps senses alert. When used on the battlefield, it allows soldiers to fight for days without sleeping. It produces euphoria, allowing its users to commit acts of carnage without the slightest feeling of remorse. It is called Captagon. This drug was first produced in the 1960s as a treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, narcolepsy and depression. Yet Captagon has a far more sinister use. Soldiers, militia and Islamic State terrorists are using this drug to fuel fighters clashing all across the Middle East.

According to a report from the *Jerusalem Post*, hostilities in Syria have prompted a huge increase in both [production and smuggling of Captagon](#). It is primarily manufactured in Lebanon and has spread far and wide throughout the neighboring countries; often via groups like Hezbollah, Iran's Lebanon-based Shiite proxy militia. Since the 1980s, selling Captagon has brought enormous profits to terrorist organizations. This has helped radical Islam to spread as never before. But the consequences of Captagon exceed mere economic empowerment for terrorists like Islamic State and Hezbollah members.

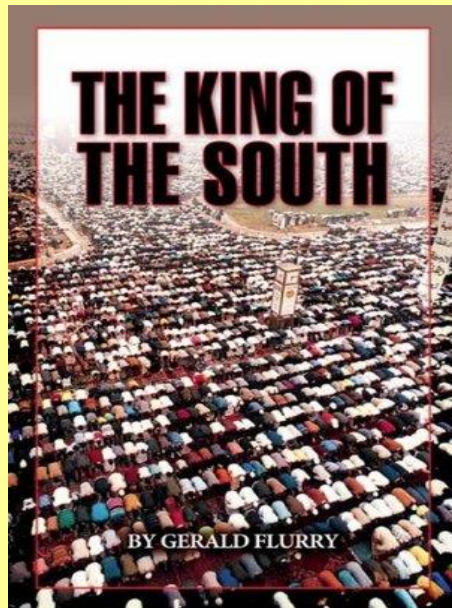
Captagon's effects on the minds and bodies of terrorists have Western governments worried. Speaking of the Captagon's effects, *Jerusalem Post* wrote:

Some claim that they also reduce the sensation of pain, neutralize inhibitions and create a feeling of ecstasy mixed with euphoria that causes extreme and wild behavior. The use of Captagon, coupled with religious jihadist radicalism, could explain the extreme barbarity of [Islamic State] operatives, their acts of cruelty, their killing and raping sprees, their beheadings, their mass hangings and their mass attacks on men, women and children.

Others report that the drug is known to bring on [dangerous side effects](#) such as brain damage and psychosis.

This produces fanatics who feel no pain, fear or remorse—fanatics who are committing acts of terrorism across the Middle East and even Europe. Earlier this year, [French officials](#)





seized shipments of Captagon worth an estimated \$1.7 million. This indicates that undetected shipments of Captagon have been feeding terrorist cells inside the European Union.

Eye witnesses to some of the more brutal attacks carried out in the last few years claim they saw the terrorists acting “zombie-like,” even serene, as they pulled their triggers and killed as many people as they could.”

Such reckless violence will only be tolerated by Europe for so long. In his booklet The King of the South, Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry points out that terrorist attacks against Western nations are part of a larger conflict between Islam and Europe. The Bible prophesies that radical Islam will “push” at the “king of the north,” a European superpower (Daniel 11:40).

What follows will be truly devastating, making the acts now being carried out by Islamic State fighters look like child’s play.

Αυτόματη μεγέθυνση

The Open Epidemiology Journal, 2014, 7, 37-45

37

Open Access

Evaluation of an Intervention to Reduce Tear Gas Exposures and Associated Acute Respiratory Illnesses in a US Army Basic Combat Training Cohort

Joseph J. Hout^{*1}, Duvel W. White¹, Michael Stevens¹, Alex Stubner¹, Anthony Arino¹ and Joseph Knapik²

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²United States Army Institute of Public Health, 5158 Blackhawk Rd, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21005, USA

Abstract: Exposing unmasked US Army recruits to elevated levels of o-chlorobenzylidene malononitrile (CS tear gas) during Mask Confidence Training (MCT) increases the risk of Acute Respiratory Illness (ARI) diagnosis in the period following CS exposure when compared to the period before exposure. All Army Activities Message (ALARACT) 051/2013 was implemented in March 2013 to reduce CS exposure concentrations during MCT and associated ARI rates. This observational, prospective cohort studied CS exposures and associated ARI health outcomes after implementation of ALARACT 051/2013 in 5 298 recruits attending US Army Basic Combat Training (BCT). These data indicate a 10-fold reduction ($p<0.001$) in CS exposure concentrations; recruit exposures ranged from 0.26 – 2.78 mg/m³ (\bar{x} =1.04 mg/m³) and chamber operator exposures from 0.05 – 2.22 mg/m³ (\bar{x} =1.05 mg/m³). The overall risk of ARI diagnosis following CS exposure also decreased when compared to period before exposure (RR=1.79, 95%CI=1.29, 2.47) resulting in 26.85% (95%CI=-0.17, 0.54) intervention effectiveness. Post-chamber ARI rates were dependent upon CS exposure concentration ($p=0.02$), and pre/post-chamber ARI rate ratios were significantly elevated at all concentration categories higher than the Threshold Limit Value Ceiling (TLV-C) (0.39 mg/m³). Results support previous research suggesting risk of ARI diagnosis after CS exposure is positively associated with CS concentration.

Source: <https://benthamopen.com/contents/pdf/TOEPIJ/TOEPIJ-7-37.pdf>

EDITOR’S COMMENT: Read the “Method” part – quite interesting with many details related to the use of CS in training



Intelligent, Low-Cost, Remote Detection for CBRN Events

By Coorg R Prasad, In H. Hwang and Robert M. Serino

Source: <http://www.cbrneportal.com/intelligent-low-cost-remote-detection-for-cbrn-events/>

June 2015 – The Homeland Defense and Security Information Analysis Center (HDIAC, www.hdiac.org) is a Department of Defense (DoD) sponsored organization with the purpose of leveraging the best expertise from industry, other government agencies and academia to solve the government's toughest scientific and technical problems. HDIAC provides information, analysis and collaboration for organizations within the DoD and broader community. One of the ways HDIAC accomplishes this is by seeking out cutting-edge technology with the potential for DoD application. A recent technology highlighted by HDIAC was the development of a Lean-Sensing approach for the detection of Chemical,

Rethinking M8 Paper on a stick...

- Blending old with new can sometimes yield outside-the-box synergy in this case and others.
- On-board GPS and camera with optional LED headlights can image, transmit and record First Person Video streaming of real-time M8 Paper color change with simulant used here.
- Funding via IR&D.



Quad-Rotor Small UAS is able to "Perch and Stare" as well as "Perch and Sense"

Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) hazards by a team at Science and Engineering Services in Columbia, Md. A Lean-Sensing approach offers the ability to cut exposure risk, response time and life-cycle cost through precision unmanned delivery of a detector early in the response sequence.

When a CBRN attack is suspected, the ability to quickly and remotely confirm the attack is vital to avoid further potential contamination. Researchers at Science and Engineering Services developed a Lean-Sensing approach that utilizes a small Lidar (Light Detection and Ranging) plus a low-cost, quad-rotor Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS). These systems can geo-locate hazards from a distance using Lidar, which can offer real-time eight digit latitudes and longitudes, and they can detect/identify/report the hazard via on-board camera and communications in minutes. On-board sensing can be as simple as M-8 Paper or more sophisticated and involve the use of a joint chemical agent detector (JCAD), radiation detector (Radiac), tactical biological detector (TacBio) or instantaneous bio-analyzer and collector (IBAC). Chemical/Biological/Radiological (CBR) sensors can be easily integrated on a commercial, off the shelf, multi-rotor drone.

In a preliminary construct of Lean-Sensing operations, a small Lidar detects and geo-locates a possible CBRN hazard in real-time with collaboration from Force Protection assets. A quad-rotor SUAS is then positioned to "perch and stare" and/or "perch and sense" by autonomously moving quickly to a hazard site to hover and survey based on situational need. In the simplest embodiment, the quad-rotor SUAS with attached M-8 paper lands directly in a chemical and images any chemical change using an on-board camera in daylight or with



headlights at night. Imagery is then streamed in real-time from the quad-rotor SUAS back to a ground station.

Alternatively, a more sophisticated architecture can be employed that involves a higher level of sensor integration with the drone. At the higher level, communications and power sharing can be hosted by the drone and data output presented as integrated information. This approach would be particularly useful if one wants to create a more advanced CBR drone with an integrated package of CBR sensors along with thermal and visible cameras. Sensor packages and cameras can also share battery power. A smart, lithium-polymer (Li-PO) rechargeable cartridge can provide a flight time of approximately 20 minutes. If a drone knows where it is going, 20 minutes is a significant amount of time.

The researchers recently tested key aspects of the Lean-Sensing construct. An SDS-Lite was used to detect, map and track a chemical cloud target measuring approximately 150 meters wide by 1,500 meters long. They were able to obtain a logical geo-located point that was then loaded into a quad-rotor drone mission plan. Based on the mission plan, the total mission time for travel and sensing/imaging was about four minutes, with another optional two minutes for a return flight with sample(s) for further analysis.

A typical scenario vectoring a vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) drone via SDS-Lite could include the following:

- T+0 minutes: A 3-D cloud target or suspected hazard site is detected, mapped and tracked.
- T+1 minute: Cloud coordinates are transferred to drone mission plan, and drone is launched.
- T+3 minutes: Vectored drone reaches cloud or hazard site for detection and reporting.
- T+4 minutes: Detection is made at the cloud or surface, and data/imagery is transmitted.



On-board recorded and transmitted drone landing with M-8 paper detection and color change. (Courtesy of Science and Engineering Services/Released)

Current technologies and systems, test results and Government and IR&D investments all indicate that the materials and preliminary methods for executing Lean-Sensing are now available for geo-locating hazards in real-time by optical means. The hazards can be visually checked and initially identified using a VTOL drone with sensor payload vectored to the hazard location. Aircraft and sensors can be as simple as a Phantom 2 quad-rotor drone with M-8 Paper or as sophisticated as an S1000 octo-rotor drone with an integrated CBR sensor package including JCAD + IBAC or TacBio + Radiac, such as AN/UDR-13.



Based on the results to date, the methods and emerging capabilities demonstrated seem to indicate an effective construct that could be ready for a series of field trials in an advanced technology demonstration. The Lean-Sensing approach offers real potential for cutting exposure risk, response time and life-cycle cost by precision unmanned delivery of a detector early in the response sequence.

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Beware of CBRN Terrorism - From the Far-Right

By Daniel Koehler and Peter Popella

Source: <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/beware-of-cbrn-terrorism-from-the-far-right>

Sept 19 – On August 12, 2017, during the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia extreme right violence cumulated in a vehicle born [terror attack, killing one and injuring 19 victims](#). The violent Far-right subsequently [“surged into the national view”](#) as [“the most visible manifestation”](#) of right-wing militancy. Around the same time, an anti-government extremist seeking to engage in terrorism received much less attention. Jerry Drake Varnell, a follower of the anti-government “Three Percenter” ideology was arrested for plotting to detonate [a 1,000-pound vehicle bomb in downtown Oklahoma City](#). Varnell was reportedly worried that groups like ISIS could [steal credit for the attack from him](#). These are just two examples of the increasing terror threat posed by far-right extremists (understood as an overlapping web of for example neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan, white supremacists, white nationalists, Christian Identity, racist skinheads, as well as parts of anti-government militia, sovereign citizen, or armed patriot groups) of which U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies have warned [months, even years ago](#). Indeed, right-wing terrorists [have killed more Americans since 9/11 than any other form of violent extremism](#), are [overall more active in committing homicides](#), are perceived to be the [no. 1 threat by local law enforcement agencies](#), and [worship](#) one of the deadliest terrorist in American history: Timothy McVeigh.

As the threat from domestic terrorism is clearly increasing, one must ask if violent tactics used by these attackers might develop beyond the use of explosives and guns. The vehicle attack in Charlottesville was an indication of that tactics diversification, even though this was [not the first incident](#) of its kind in the United States. As the Oklahoma plot shows, far-right terrorists might see themselves in some kind of competition for public recognition with Jihadist groups like ISIS, which could lead to a further escalation of tactics used for example with the deployment of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) weapons. In fact, right-wing terrorists have for decades been attempting to develop and use chemical and biological weapons. This article aims to give a short overview on the history of such efforts, the potential for right-wing terrorism to use chemical and biological agents in the future, and how authorities can counter this threat.

A Look at the Cases

Even though no significant cases of successful right-wing CBRN terror attacks in Western countries are known, a number of plots have been uncovered that indicate the motives and tactics of these extremists. In 2009 Ian Davidson, who was the leader of the right-wing terrorist Aryan Strike Force (ASF), became the [first British citizen convicted of producing a chemical weapon of mass destruction](#). When Davidson and his son Nicky were arrested in the United Kingdom, the subsequent trial and conviction made history. His plot aimed to poison water supplies of



Muslims in Serbia using the toxin ricin, which he already had produced in a significant amount. Estimations by investigators regarding the lethality of the material varied drastically but some thought the amount produced by Davison [could have killed up to 1,000 people](#).

In the mid-1980s one of the few right-wing terrorist organizations in the United States, “The Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord”, acquired large amounts of cyanide, intending to poison water supplies in major U.S. cities, but failed to overcome the technical difficulties of dissemination. In May 1996, a laboratory staff member and white supremacist in Ohio, Larry Wayne Harris, successfully acquired plague bacteria – not illegal at that time. Two years later, Harris and a co-conspirator were [arrested for threatening to release anthrax](#) in Las Vegas, even though his strain was a vaccine grade and harmless version. Material to extract ricin was also found at the home of white supremacist [James Kenneth Gluck](#) in Tampa, Fla., who was arrested by the FBI in November 1999 after he threatened judges with biological warfare. More serious seems to have been the plot led by neo-Nazi [William Krar of Texas](#), arrested in April 2003. Investigators found more than 500,000 rounds of ammunition, 65 pipe bombs and remote-control briefcase bombs, and almost two pounds of deadly sodium cyanide. Along with white supremacist and anti-government material, components to convert the cyanide into a bomb capable of killing thousands were also secured. In November 2011, a [plot to blow up government buildings and kill masses of people using ricin](#) by a group of four men belonging to an anti-government militia in Georgia was uncovered. Especially concerning was the fact that one of the four was working for the federal Department of Agriculture, giving him access to chemicals, technical equipment and ways to disseminate the poison into food and water supplies. In February 2017, 27 year old William Christopher Gibbs, member of the white supremacist Creativity Movement, [was arrested after hospitalizing himself](#) for side effects of his experiments with ricin, triggering a large FBI operation.

When looking at these cases, far-right extremists attempting to acquire and use CBRN weapons have very mixed backgrounds, ranging from career criminals to senior biodefense researchers at United States Army institutions. However, the more serious plots came from well-educated individuals with necessary access to equipment and dissemination ways indicating that right-wing terrorists might be quite well embedded in Western societies. In his seminal study about far-right terrorists’ recruitment and radicalization from 2012 for example, Pete Simi found 56% of his sample belonged to middle or upper social class and 53% had some form of college or higher education (with and without degrees). The majority of far-right CBRN plotters were part of groups and networks associated with their ideological and criminal conduct but not all of them. However, every far-right CBRN incident appears to be a culmination of a radicalization escalation process, sometimes even over years, with long histories of openly expressed violent, right-wing extremist, racist or anti-government opinions. Many of the plotters repeatedly threatened to use CBRN weapons in public to bystanders, families or friends. Even the lone actors were known to have gradually distanced themselves from their social environments getting more and more agitated and aggressive.

Now, the key question is: what makes a threat of far-right CBRN terrorism more likely and dangerous than compared with other violent ideologies, such as left-wing or jihadi terrorism? Of course, far-right extremists have equal access to open market technical equipment and supplies for manufacturing such weaponry as all other extremists in the country and their ideology is not more or less dangerous than jihadi or left-wing extremism, for example. Nevertheless, in 2012 international terrorism expert Peter Bergen [stated](#), that “11 right-wing and left-wing extremists have managed to acquire CBRN material that they planned to use against the public, government employees or both” while there was no evidence of jihadists in the United States managing to do that. From these 11 cases only one ([Joseph Konopka](#)) was motivated by left-wing extremist (more specifically anarchist) political ideals. This fact is striking, since other violent extremists, especially Jihadists, certainly do not lack the willingness to use weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), as it is currently experienced in Syria and Iraq. But how indicative is this retrospectively almost singular right-wing CBRN terror threat for the future?

To assess the possibility of an attack, one has to take three factors into account: 1) the feasibility of the used weapon (acquisition, available know-how, technology, materials or agents), 2) the “effectivity” or costs and benefits of the weapon and 3) the motivation to use the weapon regarding the pursued aims. The assassination of an individual person with a



plain firearm is feasible (through the ease of acquiring a firearm), effective (since a single, well-placed bullet will “do the job”) and sends a clear message in terms of motivation, however not to an extent exceeding every-day criminality encountered on the streets of big cities. Using a deadly toxin, like ricin, presents bigger hurdles in terms of feasibility, but is also highly effective (in terms of toxicity and evasion of forensic investigation) and, more important, will provide added value in terms of public attention and media coverage about the attack and the very ideology of the originators. Considering the attack on a crowded public space, planting explosives will lead to severe damage as well potentially high lethality. However, by mixing the explosives with radioactive material – a so called dirty bomb – will not only cause more fatalities through radiation, but also evoke a higher level of fear and terror. Additionally, such an incident would represent a difficult challenge for first responders and might render the government incompetent of an appropriate response and preparation in the eyes of the public. All terrorists potentially share this goal to make their attacks more impactful and deadly, even though right-wing terrorists rarely have aimed to produce mass casualties, so far.

Factor 2, the effectivity of a weapon is, depending on the planned operation, similar for all kinds of terrorist as well. However, the feasibility to use CBRN weapons (factor 1) might be higher for far-right terrorists than for others, e.g. jihadists, since the extreme right can rely on established and much larger support networks, which can provide the required material, know-how and dissemination ways. Of course, it is not impossible for lone actors from all ideological strands to acquire the material as well as the know-how. Regarding factor 3, the motive, the violent far-right might be in an extraordinary position right now, making it more dangerous than ever.

The current Trump administration is openly courting the extreme right and – in the eyes of observers – [fuelling a rising far-right terror threat](#), for example through the inadequate reaction to the Charlottesville attack. In addition, the general public is [much less likely](#) to perceive violent actions from far-right extremists as “terrorism” compared, for example, with those acts by Islamic extremists. This gives violent extremists from the far-right considerably more space to radicalize, escalate violent tactics and plot attacks without interference from the outside than from any other violent extremist group in Western countries. The most significant danger, however, will come to light after the demise of the Trump administration. A future US government trying to put the far-right jinni that Trump has released back into the bottle will face a much stronger, self-confident and aggressive opponent, already dreaming of a race war. The current government is favoured by anti-government militias and sovereign citizens and they are looking for a new enemy: those “counter-revolutionaries” attempting to return the United States to a pre-Trump state. Even open civil war [was threatened](#) in a case of impeachment. far-right extremists of all different strands might have heavily stockpiled firearms and explosives, but they know they cannot outgun and outman law enforcement, National Guard or the Military. A fight to retain their perceived newly gained freedom and powers therefore must include a tactical edge forcing the government to refrain from a too aggressive crackdown. CBRN agents or even the potential to quickly acquire them are the most effective and logical way to ensure the government’s passivity, especially giving the history of CBRN plots within the far-right.

What is Likely, What is Not? A Choice of Weapons

Some CBRN agents are more likely to be used in a terrorist attack than others, depending on factors such as ease of acquiring raw materials, difficulty of production, the required know-how, danger of storing the material for the terrorist, degradation of the material over time, deliverance, dispersion, and potential countermeasures. Nuclear and radiological weapons require radioactive elements that are generally stored under high-security and thus hard to obtain without a state sponsor. Low-level radioactive elements unsuitable for nuclear weapons, but sufficient for the construction of a ‘dirty bomb’ might be easier to obtain, since industry, agriculture and medical institutions are dependent on them. Americium, which is used in household smoke detectors, has indeed been found in the homes of far-right extremists, e.g. [Tampa resident Brandon Russell](#). However, its actual effectiveness as a dirty-bomb ingredient is [debated](#). Further, neo-Nazi James Cummings [acquired four 1-gallon containers with a radioactive uranium and thorium](#) mix in 2008, along with highly toxic beryllium powder and instructions to build a dirty bomb.



Chemicals and biological material, while for some part underlying [governmental restrictions concerning proliferation and acquisition](#), are much easier to access. As [noted](#) by Edward You of the FBI's Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate, Biological Countermeasures Unit, "The materials are readily available (...), and the majority of equipment can be purchased outright and do not fall under any regulatory regime." Precursors for chemical warfare agents, as sodium cyanide in the case of William Krar, can be simply bought online. Manuals explaining the synthesis of the active agents in small laboratory or kitchen setups have been found in many cases, illustrating that the required knowledge has already spread and advanced significantly. Explosives that have been found and used in terror associated cases include the so called 'mother of Satan', triacetone peroxide (TATP), and [hexamethylene triperoxide diamine](#) (HTMD). TATP can be synthesized from easily accessible household chemicals (acetone, hydrogen peroxide and sulfuric acid). Synthesis of chemical warfare agents like sarin, a nerve agent used by the [Aum Shinrikyo attacks on the Tokyo subway](#), is highly demanding in terms of technology and know-how. Considering the difficulties of achieving sufficient quality of the material and the high risk for the producers during manufacturing and storage make and attack with nerve agents appear unlikely. However, structurally more simple chemicals, like cyanide compounds which can be commercially obtained, have been used in [far-right terror plots](#).

Another potential dual-use chemical is [chlorine](#). The highly reactive gas is nowadays widely used as disinfectant, bleaching agent and within different industry branches. Millions of tons are transported on roads and railways within the US every year, and may as such be targets for terrorist attacks. Upon contact with the human mucosa, the water soluble chlorine will at first cause local irritations and, during prolonged exposition of higher doses, evoke the deadly "dry-land drowning". While no large scale attacks on hazardous material (HAZMAT) transports have been reported so far, guides to derail trains carrying such materials [have been published by Jihadists](#) and could easily be used by far-right terrorists as well. Additionally, application of commercially acquired chlorine as choking agent in local, small scale attacks pose a risk.

Alternatives to chemicals are agents of biological origin: toxins, bacteria (or spores – robust and dormant forms) and viruses. Toxins are harmful products of biological organisms, which interfere with vital body functions. Production and purification of these substances require in-depth knowledge and large amounts are thus hard to obtain. Ricin, which can be isolated from the castor oil plant, has been detected in multiple cases of far-right terror plots. While ricin is extremely deadly when taken up into the body, a wide spread application of ricin to target large groups of people is rather unlikely, just by the large amounts needed for such operation and the very proteinaceous nature. The isolation and cultivation of bacteria, although requiring some microbiological knowledge, can be done in improvised laboratory setups. Highly pathogenic strains are usually kept in isolated, high-security laboratories. However, *Bacillus anthracis* is an omnipresent, easy to isolate soil bacterium. Anthrax, as in the case of Larry Wayne Harris, is according to the CDC generally considered to be the [most likely agent which might be used in large-scale bioterror](#). Viruses are dependent on cells as hosts for multiplication and thus require an even more complicated production process, which is highly unlikely to be established outside of academic or industrial laboratories. While the deadliest infectious diseases, like ebola or lassa, are caused by viral infections, application of viruses as terror agent by far-right extremist is unlikely. However, the growing industry and professionalization of DIY bio-laboratories across the United States was [also noted by the FBI](#), which might also increase accessibility of the necessary technical equipment for potential biological and chemical terrorism.

Likely Goals of Right-Wing Terrorists

Existing research on right-wing CBRN terrorism is scarce and outdated. Few experts have even considered the potential threat, mostly in the late 1990s looking at Christian Millenarianism as a form of religious terrorism aiming for the apocalypse in a "[sacrificial ritual of mass murder and suicide](#)". Even though Christian millenarian groups have not attempted to develop CBRN weapons, they were scrutinized for such a potential threat after the Aum attack in Tokyo. Jessica Stern [wrote](#) in 1999 that "the costs of escalation to biological weapons seem to outweigh the benefits" for domestic extremists. Paul Blister and Nina Kollars [confirmed](#) this notion



regarding the Christian Patriot Movement in 2011. Right-wing terrorism, however, goes beyond Christian fundamentalism and fanaticism circling around Armageddon. Especially given the dramatic increase in anti-government sentiment and militia groups in some western countries (e.g. the US and Germany) and their partial overlap with white supremacist and nationalist groups, there is [potential for a future escalation of violent tactics](#) if anyone might attempt to contain them again. Right-wing terrorists have usually not sought large public audiences for their attacks in order to communicate specific political programs but rather to annihilate their enemies by every means possible. In addition, to create chaos and panic, as well as erode a public's trust in the government's ability to provide safety by demonstrating its helplessness – a concept known as 'strategy of tension' among right-wing extremists – is thought to break the government's monopoly of force and core political legitimacy.

[Other research](#) about right-wing extremism and terrorism has also shown, that an overlap between violent activists from the far-right and organized crime exists, which means that the acquisition of WMDs by these groups and actors could also be used as significant tool to shift the power base in extortion operations towards what could become right-wing extremist crime syndicates. In Austria for example a neo-Nazi group called '[Object 21](#)' controlled large parts of the red light milieu along the Austrian-German border through the use of explosives, arson and attacks with butyric acid. In the United States, neo-Nazi oriented networks such as the Aryan Brotherhood for example, are deeply involved in [drug trafficking](#). Highly militant and criminal hybrid networks could have severe impact within the organized crime world if they get their hands on CBRN weaponry, which is of course true not only of far-right but also for other terrorists. Summing up, the potential goals of right-wing CBRN terrorism are most likely to use it for targeted assassinations, creating chaos and fear (not necessary connected with the own group and ideology, rather to erode trust in the government's ability to protect, for which no large scale lethality is necessary as the agent itself might be scary enough), or to disrupt important commercial and logistical hubs to destabilize democratic governments, instead of producing mass casualties. In addition, it is a likely option that anti-government militias will use CBRN weapon capabilities to protect themselves from government prosecution and as leverage in extortion attempts involving their own "sovereignty" and criminal activities. This makes low to medium lethal CBRN terrorism with nevertheless severe psychological impact, creating sustained damage to democratic forms of government, a truly concerning threat. Based on previous cases, this threat seems to be greatest in the United States and Great Britain.

Counter Measures and Recommendations

The increase of right-wing extremist terror plots and willingness to use extreme forms of violence for years now combined with the growing availability of necessary chemical and biological components and technical equipment indicates that CBRN based terror attacks by the far-right have become a serious threat scenario. One of the key counter-measures is early detection of plots during the phase of preparation. A "culture of security awareness" relying on "well-informed citizenry" to flag potentially threatening individuals within the chemical and biological industries [is seen as essential by the FBI](#). However, to spot signs of radicalization (of many different extremist strands), a solid and well-trained network of countering violent extremism (CVE) providers who can deliver education and assessment is indispensable. Training programs for law enforcement, such as the State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training (SLATT) Program, must be expanded and [not cancelled](#). Especially CVE activities targeting the far-right [must be re-included in the government's focus and funding schemes](#) and far-right terror [must not be ignored](#) by the Trump administration. The current policy of [openly turning a blind eye](#) on far-right terrorism and violence, as well as radicalization, is significantly increasing the future terror threat and raising the difficulties for future administrations to contain the potential for organized violence from the extreme right again. While one reason for this might be the [special relationship](#) that developed between Trump and white nationalists during the election campaign, the key priorities of the current White House prove that the heavy focus on Islamic extremism in counter-terrorism is much more than an attempt to win over a certain group of voters. The dominant risk of terrorist attacks derives from the far-right, as statistics as well as law enforcement and intelligence officials clearly show. This strategy cannot be carried by a lack of understanding, but by an ideologically



motivated struggle, driven forward by strategists and advisors, like the now fired Steve Bannon or Sebastian Gorka.

Furthermore, first responder capabilities, for example through 'The Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response' or the 'Center for Disease Control' should be increased and not [cut back by up to 18 percent](#) as currently planned. Researching antidotes and effective antibiotics is equally important. For example, we do currently not have any effective ones against [ricin](#) or [anthrax](#) (those agents most commonly used in far-right C&B terror plots in the past), even though some promising avenues in that regard exist.

Far-right CBRN terror plots oftentimes evolved out of large support networks, long time violent radicalization processes and with a history of violent escalations. These terrorists are rarely completely clandestine. They are embedded in their own movements and countries. They belong to white supremacist, neo-Nazi or anti-government militias long before developing their plots. With the increase in anti-government violent far-right activism across Western countries, the threat of right-wing CBRN attacks increases as well, especially since the ideology of these actors is based on the total annihilation of its enemies, acquisition of power through fear and creation of chaos to destroy the population's trust in the government. Law enforcement counter measures must be swift and uncompromising against groups and actors at this stage, while it is still possible. With more consolidation and organization pushed by the current uplift and passive support through the Trump administration, a future attempt to contain the threat might meet fierce resistance and CBRN agents are likely to be involved. In addition, there should be no perception, both on the side of the far-right and in the population, that right-wing terrorism is any less dangerous or significant than, for example, jihadi terrorists. On the contrary, western countries' deadliest threat from terrorists comes from the far-right and over the last decades some right-wing extremists have tried to escalate their tactics into CBRN terrorism. The current developments indicate that this threat is not going to decrease any time soon. So it is most important to prepare and start countering this threat.

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Netherlands a 'supermarket' for countries building weapons of mass destruction: intelligence service boss

Source: <https://nltimes.nl/2017/09/18/netherlands-supermarket-countries-building-weapons-mass-destruction-intelligence-service>

Sept 18 – **The Netherlands is an interesting "supermarket" for countries that want to make weapons of mass destruction**, director Onno Eichelsheim of military intelligence service MIVD said in an interview with ANP. According to him, the Dutch intelligence services annually block a "significant number of attempts" of "countries of concerns" trying to acquire knowledge or materials for such weapons from the Netherlands. These include countries like North Korea, Iran, Pakistan and Syria. Eichelsheim did not want to say exactly how many of these attempts are blocked, because he did not want to reveal the capacity of the service that deals exclusively with doing so. He did say that dozens of



people are working on the Contra-proliferation unit and that many dozens of official reports are sent to the Ministry annually, for example on rejecting export licenses.

According to the MIVD chief, Dutch companies and knowledge institutes are insufficiently aware that countries like Syria and North Korea want to gain knowledge here. The Netherlands is technologically a high-quality country, that such countries want to use. Smaller companies that sell products such as ball bearings or heat resistant materials also need to be alert in this area, Eichelsheim said.

Countries and groups trying to buy parts for weapons of mass destruction, always use a cover in the form of an intermediary or a company, Eichelsheim said. But their are signals that can betray something about the actual client, he added. "If you have a customer who wants to pay a million euros for chemicals you can actually get on the European market for 500 thousand euros, that is a warning light", he said to the news wire. An unusual delivery address, or finding it difficult to make telephone contact with the buyer, are also signs.

Stratford 'acid attack': Six people injured near shopping centre in east London

Source: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/stratford-acid-attack-latest-updates-bus-station-incident-injured-police-a7963831.html>



Sept 24 – Six people were injured in an apparent mass [acid attack](#) in [Stratford](#), east London. Police were called to the Stratford Centre in the borough of [Newham](#) just before 8pm, a Metropolitan Police spokesman told *The Independent*.

The force said a "group of males" was reported as having sprayed "what is believed to be a noxious substance" and eight victims were injured in a number of locations.

One person has been arrested on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm, it said.

Witnesses at the scene said an argument broke out among a group of people in the Stratford Centre, which is a much smaller shopping mall than its sprawling neighbour, the Westfield Centre.



A man who gave his name as Hossen, 28, a Burger King assistant manager, said he saw a victim and his friend, a known local homeless man, run into the fast food outlet's toilets "to wash acid off his face". He said: "There were cuts around his eyes and he was trying to chuck water into them."

Another witness, Zak Abdi, who shared footage from Stratford train station, told the *Mirror Online* he saw a substance thrown at a group of men "who looked like they were on their way to a club".

"It didn't hit just one person, it hit a crowd of people. One guy had been hit in the face, he kept shouting 'I can't see, I can't see, I can't see'.

"I think he has lost his vision. He kept shouting, it was a scary moment for everyone."

Nate Higgins, 20, told the *Independent* he left Westfield shopping centre at about 8.30pm.

"I was in Westfield and I came out and saw all the police and ambulances.

"People weren't panicking. It seemed like it was settled. But as I was leaving more and more ambulances and fire engines were showing up.

"There were more fire engines than I've ever seen in one place."



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BIO NEWS



Gene editing - Where should we draw the line?

Source: <http://www.telegram.com/opinion/20170822/editorial-gene-editing---where-should-we-draw-line>

Aug 22 – When Robert Oppenheimer, who led the team developing the first atomic bomb, saw his creation burst with previously unimaginable power across the New Mexico desert in 1945, a verse from Hindu scripture



came to mind: "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." And while the forces he helped unleash - the verse signifying the ultimate power of both the creator and destroyer of all - would bring an end to World War II 72 years ago this month, it created a weapon capable of destroying humanity. Much of his life would be spent in attempting to stem its proliferation and use.

Do we stand today at a similar inflection point with an incredibly powerful new technology, but one that also requires extreme caution in its use and development?

Late last month, a team of researchers at Oregon Health & Science University announced that they had genetically repaired a disease-causing gene in a single-cell human embryo outside of the womb. The embryos were not allowed to develop beyond a few days. The enthusiasm that greeted the event, justifiably significant as

opening the potential for a new and permanent cure for genetically based diseases, must also be tempered with caution.

First consider that, at least in this instance, it comes from human experimentation involving embryonic life, something the government refuses to fund and which is illegal in many countries. Also, it's based on a technique for editing human genes developed just in the last few years and, derived from bacteria, is generically known as CRISPR. Part of its amazing capability is its ability to target specific genes and the relative ease and low cost with which it can be applied.

James Clapper, former director of National Intelligence, while in office said this sort of gene editing could help rogue nations or individual genetic "hackers" create modifications – such as plagues – with the potential of becoming weapons of mass destruction affecting humans or vital crops. Late last month we published a column by Vivek Wadhwa, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University Engineering at Silicon Valley and a director of research at Center for Entrepreneurship and Research Commercialization at Duke, that contained a question meant to confront readers with both the incredible possibilities of this new technology but also the great temptations and serious ethical questions introduced by this new development:

"If your unborn child were going to have a debilitating disease, would you take a pill to prevent it? How about adding some bonus intelligence? Greater height or strength? Where would you draw the line?"

The technique is being used not just in the United States but elsewhere. China, for instance, first edited human embryos by



other means two years ago and earlier this year injected cancer patients with cells designed to target the malignancy that were genetically modified using CRISPR.

The current focus by the scientific community is not “germline” work - involving sperm or eggs - that would permanently introduce inherited traits in populations, but research involving therapeutic applications on somatic cells, for instance, safely repairing blood cells to correct immune disorders or sickle cell anemia. More, perhaps than the public is aware, discussions have been occurring within the scientific community on ethical questions and guidelines. Naturally, there already are strong existing guidelines on research in general around the world, so concerns are not so much about responsible institutions and individuals. In fact, most institutions currently are unlikely to approve this sort of research because it is so experimental.

Certainly there are reasonable and “safe” areas in which these developments can provide immeasurable good. Further research should be encouraged, but not for now, on so-called germline editing, which creates permanent changes that are passed on from generation to generation.

But the technique is out there for almost anyone to use. The ability to prevent its misuse and the oversight for safe and reasonable use requires not just national, but international norms, monitoring and cooperation.

How can we maintain control over this technology?

Given its potential impacts, the discussion will require guidance from scientists who know this field best, including its capabilities and repercussions, and from ethicists on its implications, but also the voice of the public and its representatives who will live with what comes next.



A Global Catastrophic Biologic Risk By Any Other Name Would Smell As Sweet

By Saskia Popescu

Source: <http://www.contagionlive.com/contributor/saskia-v-popescu/2017/08/a-global-catastrophic-biologic-risk-by-any-other-name-would-smell-as-sweet>

Aug 14 – **Global catastrophic biological risks (GCBRs) have increasingly become an area of concern for policy and research, and yet, we struggle with a core definition. How can we address a distressing concept if we do not truly know what it is?**

The [Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security](#) took on this challenge and brought forth the collective minds of biodefense and biosecurity experts to formulate a working definition for GCBRs that would allow us to truly address the problem. A subset of global catastrophic risks, these are unique in that they are biological, which requires a particularly exceptional response.

The [definition](#) the Center for Health Security developed for GCBRs is, **“Those events in which biological agents—whether naturally emerging or reemerging, deliberately created and released, or laboratory**

engineered and escaped—could lead to sudden, extraordinary, widespread disaster beyond the collective capability of national and international governments and the private sector to control. If unchecked, GCBRs would lead to great suffering, loss of life, and sustained damage to national governments, international relationships, economies, societal stability, or global security.”

What makes this definition unique, aside from it being the first working definition for GCBRs, is that it highlights several components, such as sustained catastrophic damage, and instead of highlighting a specific number of deaths, it looks to a range of negative outcomes, such as infertility. The center also highlights that GCBRs are likely to be sudden and without medical countermeasures. Moreover, we



must not only think of them in terms of pandemics as “[not all GCBRs are pandemics and not all pandemics are GCBRs](#).” When examining potential examples of GCBRs, there are only a handful that truly meet criteria. Although some may meet the definition based off one’s perspective, like that of HIV/AIDS, others, such as 2009’s H1N1 outbreak would not meet the criteria.

When evaluating GCBRs, it can be easy to look at lives and dollars lost; however, it goes far beyond that. One must consider the sustained damage to national governments, international relationships, economics, social stability, etc. Within the center’s [publication](#), there are also 10 commentary pieces from a range of science and policy experts, who address the complexities of GCBRs and the need to address them from a multitude of vantage points. Some of these articles highlight what future GCBRs may look like, noting that long term, they are [likely to be](#)

[engineered pathogens intentionally dispersed](#) or accidentally released. Dr. Tom Inglesby, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, commented to *Contagion*® that, “I think many of us have recognized, in some way, that potential GCBRs exist and could conceivably cause terrible global consequence. But, as a professional community, we haven’t put a name to them, haven’t spent enough time trying to understand how they could occur, or what is needed to prevent or respond to them. We hope that offering a definition and discussion of GCBRs and inviting colleagues to offer their judgments is a way to move critical thinking on this forward.”

The challenging task of defining such a globally feared, but poorly understood risk was daunting; however, the Center for Health Security has provided us with a working tool that can now be applied to policy, and future preparedness and response efforts.

Saskia v. Popescu, MPH, MA, CIC, is a hospital epidemiologist and infection preventionist with Phoenix Children's Hospital. During her work as an infection preventionist she performed surveillance for infectious diseases, preparedness, and Ebola-response practices. She is currently a PhD candidate in Biodefense at George Mason University where her research focuses on the role of infection prevention in facilitating global health security efforts. She is certified in Infection Control.

Dog Gives Woman Fatal Tularemia, A Potential Bioterrorism Agent

Source: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/08/24/dog-gives-woman-fatal-tularemia-potential-bioterrorism-agent-11741>

Aug 24 – In its [latest weekly report](#), the CDC details the case of a woman from Arizona who died from tularemia, a rare disease that she acquired from her dog.

[Tularemia](#) is caused by the bacterium *Francisella tularensis*. Because it naturally infects rabbits and rodents, there isn’t much we can do to eradicate it. Humans can become sick (with symptoms that can be flu-like) when they come into contact with an infected animal or are bitten by a tick or insect that is acting as a vector. **Only about 125 Americans are diagnosed with tularemia annually.**

The Arizona woman, who was 73 years old and had several other health problems (pulmonary sarcoidosis and a *Clostridium difficile* infection), was most likely infected by her dog. The dog, in turn, was infected by a rabbit carcass it was chewing on. The elderly woman had respiratory symptoms, which suggested that she contracted tularemia via aerosol, perhaps from the dog’s saliva.

Tularemia: An Agent of Bioterrorism

Though it is a naturally occurring disease, bioterrorism analysts have long feared the deployment of tularemia as a biological weapon. Ken Alibek, a Soviet defector, claimed that the Soviets infected Nazi soldiers with tularemia in 1942, helping them win the Battle of Stalingrad.



That account, however, is hotly disputed by genetics professor Erhard Geissler. He [argues](#), rather convincingly, that the evidence suggests that tularemia played only a very minor role in Nazi war casualties. He believes that any cases of tularemia were the result of natural infection, not biological warfare.

Still, the threat that a microbe could be weaponized to terrify soldiers and citizens is very realistic. Even if such a weapon would have a limited impact in terms of death and injury, the psychological scar upon a nation could be substantial. For whatever reason, humans find invisible microbes to be scarier than bullets and bombs. All one needs to consider is how the U.S. responded to the anthrax attacks of 2001 and the Ebola outbreak of 2014. (One research [article](#) estimated the cost of decontamination alone following the anthrax attack at \$320 million.)



If a terrorist wished to weaponize tularemia, how would he go about it? There are two possibilities.

First, a terrorist could aerosolize the bacteria. A small nebulizer (a medical device that creates aerosols) could be placed in highly trafficked areas, such as a transportation hub or mall. According to one journal [article](#), as few as 10 bacteria are sufficient to cause infection if inhaled.

Left untreated, this form of tularemia would kill 30 to 60% of those it infected. Thus, aerosolization could be an efficient method of dissemination.

Second, a terrorist could infect rodents with tularemia and then release them into a city. Rodents could then spread them to other rodents, creating a large reservoir from which humans could become infected.



How Realistic Is Bioterrorism?

Realistic enough. Given that it's already happened, we must anticipate that a terrorist will try it again, and governments should prepare for that eventuality. Intelligence analysts often classify such acts as "high impact, low probability" -- which means that a bioterrorist attack is not likely to occur, but if it does, it will be very disruptive. (Once again, the disruption is more likely to be psychological and economic rather than in terms of body count.)

As a result, public officials must always keep in the back of their minds that rare disease outbreaks may not be accidental.

Source: *Yaglom H, Rodriguez E, Gaither M, et al. "Notes from the Field: Fatal Pneumonic Tularemia Associated with Dog Exposure — Arizona, June 2016." MMWR 66 (33): 891. Published: 25-Aug-2017. DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.mm6633a5.*

DNA Detectives Crack the Case on Biothreat Look-Alikes

Source: <http://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/news/2017/08/dna-detectives-crack-the-case-on-biothreat-lookalikes.aspx>



Scientists at Los Alamos National Laboratory are improving the identification of the bacterium that causes tularemia ("rabbit fever") and considered a "Category A" bioterrorism agent by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At left, principal investigator Jean Challacombe, assisted by Cheryl Gleasner who runs the sequencing machines, and who participated in the sequencing of most, if not all, of the *Francisella* genomes sequenced at Los Alamos. The device shown is an Illumina NextSeq 500, used in high-

throughput sequencing in the laboratory.



Aug 24 – Biological “detectives” are tracking down biothreats such as the bacteria that causes tularemia (“rabbit fever”), but they constantly face the challenge of avoiding false positives. Sounding the alarm over a bioattack, only to find it’s a harmless relative in the same genus, reduces credibility and public trust. New work at Los Alamos National Laboratory is narrowing down the confusion over *Francisella* bacteria, a few species of which include highly virulent human and animal pathogens, fish pathogens, opportunistic human pathogens, tick endosymbionts, and free-living isolates inhabiting brackish water.

“Accurate discrimination among the virulent subspecies of *F. tularensis* and the environmentally abundant *F. novicida* and its relatives is absolutely critical for the future success of biological surveillance and attribution activities,” said Los Alamos biologist Jean Challacombe, lead author on a paper out this week in the journal PLOS ONE. Biological surveillance, such as that conducted by the US Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense, provides early warning of infectious disease outbreaks, hazardous environmental exposures, or possible bioterrorist attacks by spotting trends of public health importance.

The *Francisella* genus includes several recognized species, additional potential species, and other representatives that inhabit a range of incredibly diverse ecological niches but are not closely related to the named species. Many of them cause no problems for humans or livestock. *F. tularensis*, however, is a highly virulent zoonotic pathogen (spreads from animals to humans) that causes tularemia. Because of weaponization efforts in past world wars, it is considered a first tier (most serious) biothreat agent.

The bad one, *F. tularensis* subspecies *tularensis* (Type A), is found exclusively in North America and is the most virulent, causing the disease tularemia. It can produce skin ulcers, chest pain and difficulty breathing.

The team has identified several apparently cryptic plasmids—which are linear or circular structures of double-stranded DNA capable of existing outside the chromosome—in the sequenced genomes of three commonly found environmental *Francisella* species. These plasmids provide additional phylogenetic and genomic features that differentiate pathogenic *F. tularensis* strains from clinical and environmental near-neighbor species that are not biothreat agents.

“Our work shows that of the more than 120 *Francisella* genomes that have been sequenced, only a few contain plasmids. This becomes a really useful signpost for researchers, adding genomic features that can prevent misidentification of bacterial relatives that happen to share an otherwise similar genetic profile,” she said. Environmental surveys indicate that *F. novicida* and similar strains are widely distributed and abundant in diverse environments across the United States, and most importantly, this group appears likely to be a source of environmental false positives for *F. tularensis* that have occurred in surveillance systems.

To accomplish the analysis, the team sequenced genomes from samples of seawater in the area of Galveston Bay, Texas (*F. novicida*-like), some human clinical samples (*F. novicida* AZ06-7470 and *F. opportunistica*), water from a warm spring (*F. novicida*) and a form isolated from an air conditioning system (*F. frigiditurnis*). Several of the plasmid-containing *Francisella* strains were sequenced by the Genome Sciences group in the Bioscience Division at Los Alamos.

“Only a few members of the *Francisella* genus carry plasmids; these include several *F. novicida* strains, and we found that all of the plasmids were apparently cryptic, encoding functions potentially involved in replication, conjugal transfer and partitioning, a few functions that could be important to environmental survival, and some hypothetical proteins to which a function could not be assigned,” Challacombe said.

According to the published conclusion by Challacombe and her coauthors Cheryl Kuske and Segaran Pillai, “While bacterial plasmids can carry traits that enhance the survival of host cells and influence bacterial evolution, cryptic plasmids encode few functions other than those needed to replicate and mobilize. With no obvious benefit to the host cells that carry them, cryptic plasmids are somewhat of an enigma. . . . Our results comparing the cryptic plasmids in diverse *Francisella* genomes show that they are also found in clinical isolates. These results provide a new understanding of the phenotypic variability and complex taxonomic relationships among the known *Francisella* species, and also give us new plasmid features to use in characterizing related species groups.”

There are many cultured *Francisella* isolates for which we still have no genomic sequence, the researchers point out. It will only be through the sequencing and comparison of many



more environmental and near neighbor *Francisella* isolates that researchers will be able to identify additional genomic features that enable accurately discriminating among the various species groups. Biosciences have been a strong focus at Los Alamos ever since the early radiation-dose measurement efforts of the Manhattan Project, and the Lab's Bioscience Division has long been closely involved in biohazard analysis, genetic research and development of such tools and techniques as flow cytometry.

The paper: *"Shared Features of Cryptic Plasmids from Environmental and Pathogenic Francisella Species," PLOS ONE (DOI10.1371/journal.pone.0183554) Jean F. Challacombe (Los Alamos), Segaran Pillai (US Food and Drug Administration), Cheryl R. Kuske (Los Alamos).*

Biosecurity and synthetic biology: it is time to get serious

By Eric van der Helm

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20170901-biosecurity-and-synthetic-biology-it-is-time-to-get-serious>

Sept 01 – Last month, the [SB7.0 conference](#) attracted around 800 synthetic biology experts from all around the world to Singapore. I was attending as part of the [SB7.0 biosecurity fellowship](#), together with thirty other early-career synthetic biologists and biosecurity researchers. The main goal of the conference was to start a dialogue on biosecurity policies geared specifically towards synthetic biology.

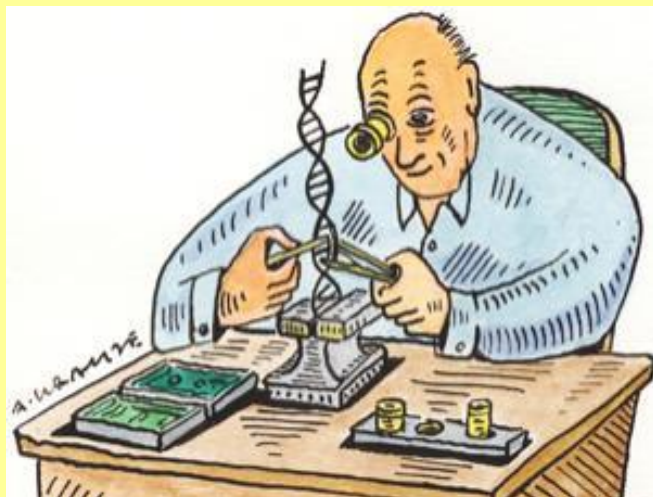
As [Matt Watson](#) from the Center for Health Security [points out](#) on his blog, the likely earliest account of biological warfare, was the one describing the [1346 attack on the Black Sea port of Caffa](#) from an obscure memoir written in Latin. A lot has changed since then, and biosecurity is now subject of the mainstream media — as exemplified by the recently published [Wired](#) article "The Pentagon ponders the threat of synthetic bioweapons."

Defining biosafety and biosecurity

It is important to first get the scope right; terms like *biosecurity* and *biosafety* are sometimes used interchangeably, but there is a meaningful difference. In a nutshell, ["Biosafety protects people from germs – biosecurity protects germs from people"](#), as simplified during an [UN meeting](#).

- Biosafety refers to the protection of humans and the facilities that deal with biological agents and waste: this has also traditionally encompassed GMO regulations.

- Biosecurity is the protection of biological agents that could be intentionally misused. Although the meanings of biosafety and biosecurity are often somewhat interchangeable in the remainder of this blog, I focus on



biosecurity as this mainly involves the human component of policy making.

During the conference, [Gigi Gronvall](#) from the Center for Health Security illustrated a prime example of biosecurity from a 2010 [WHO report](#) on the *Variola* virus, the smallpox pathogen: "nobody anticipated that [...] advances in genome sequencing and gene synthesis would render substantial portions of [*Variola* virus] accessible to anyone with an internet connection and access to a DNA synthesizer. That "anyone" could even be a well-intentioned researcher, unfamiliar with smallpox and lacking an



appreciation of the special rules that govern access to [Variola virus] genes.”

The take home lesson? What might not look like a security issue now, may soon become a threat!

Biorisks are likely terrorism or nation-state driven

What are the most likely sources that pose a biorisk? According to [Crystal Watson](#), the following risks demand scrutiny:

- Natural occurring strains (e.g., the recent Ebola outbreak)
- Accidental release (e.g. the 1979 [accidental release](#) of anthrax spores by the Sverdlovsk-19a military research facility in the USSR)
- Terrorism (e.g., the 2001 anthrax-spore contaminated letters in the US)
- State bioweapons (e.g., the US biological warfare program ultimately [renounced](#) by President Nixon)

From a biosecurity perspective, it is interesting to note which of these risks are most imminent. The same authors recently published a perspective in [Science](#) that describes the actors and organizations that pose a bioweapons threat. It describes the results of a [Delphi study](#) of [59 experts](#) with backgrounds broadly ranging from biological and non-biological sciences, medicine, public health, and national security to political science, foreign policy and international affairs, economics, history, and law.

Although the results varied considerably, terrorism was rated as the most likely source of biothreats because of the “rapid technological advances in the biosciences, ease of acquiring pathogens, democratization of bioscience knowledge, information about a nonstate actors’ intent, and the demonstration of the chaos surrounding the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2014.” Another likely biorisk source would be a nation-state actor because of the “technological complexities of developing a bioweapon, the difficulty in obtaining pathogens, and ethical and/or cultural barriers to using biological weapons.”

According to the expert panel, some threats are particularly likely to impact society:

- biological toxins (e.g., ricin, botulinum toxin)
- spore-forming bacteria (e.g., *Bacillus anthracis*, which causes anthrax)

- non-spore-forming bacteria (e.g., *Yersinia pestis*, which causes plague)
- viruses (e.g., *Variola virus*, which causes smallpox)

This list essentially covers everything that has been weaponized — only fungi, prions, and synthetic pathogens were not predicted to become weaponized in the next decade.

Now that the threats are defined: how to counteract them? One of the safeguards that has been put in place is the [Australia Group](#), “an informal forum of countries which, through the harmonization of export controls, seeks to ensure that exports do not contribute to the development of chemical or biological weapons.” This organization seeks to develop international norms and procedures to strengthen export controls in service of chemical and biological nonproliferation aims. However, as Piers Millett from [biosecu.re](#) pointed out, these tools do not on their own adequately address our current needs for properly assessing and managing risks. For example, under the Australia agreement, you need an export license to export the Ebola virus itself or a sample of prepped Ebola RNA. But you do not need one if you just want to download the sequence of the genome. In other words, access restriction in an inadequate biosecurity failsafe.

Why resurrect the extinct horsepox virus?

Biosecurity is directly related to the challenge posed by the dual use of research: it both creates a risk while providing insights to mitigate that risk. A particularly illustrative example is the recent [synthesis of the horsepox virus](#), which is from the same viral genus as smallpox, but is apparently extinct in nature. Last year, the lab of virologist [David Evans](#) at the University of Alberta in Canada reconstituted the horsepox virus, which is extinct. Synthesizing and cloning together almost 200 kb of DNA is not exceptionally challenging today, but it just hadn’t been attempted before for this family of viruses. But *why* did Evans and his team set out to synthesize the horsepox virus in the first place? There were several motivating objectives:

1. the development of a new smallpox vaccine



2. the potential use of the horsepox virus as a carrier to target tumors
3. a proof-of-concept for synthesizing extinct viruses using 'mail-order DNA.'

Evans broadly defended his actions in a recent [Science](#) article: "Have I increased the risk by showing how to do this? I don't know. Maybe yes. But the reality is that the risk was always there. The world just needs to accept the fact that you can do this and now we have to figure out what is the best strategy for dealing with that." [Tom Inglesby](#) from the Center for Health Security [reasoned](#) that the proof-of-concept argument does not justify the research as "creating new risks to show that these risks are real is the wrong path."

How well can the horsepox synthesis study be misused? Evans notes that his group did "provide sufficient details so that someone knowledgeable could follow what we did, but not a detailed recipe." Unfortunately, there are no international regulations that control this kind of research. And many scholars argue it is now time to start discussing this on a global level.

[Paul Keim](#) from Northern Arizona University has proposed a permit system for researchers who want to recreate an extinct virus. And [Nicholas Evans](#) from the University of Massachusetts suggests that the [WHO](#) create a sharing mechanism that obliges any member state to inform the organization when a researcher plans to synthesize viruses related to smallpox. Both options are well-intentioned. However, anyone can already order a second-hand DNA synthesizer on eBay and countless pathogenic DNA sequences are readily available, so these proposals do not contribute significantly to biosecurity. But, while these rules would increase the amount of red-tape for researchers, they would also contribute to the development of norms and cultural expectations around acceptable practice of the life sciences. The bottom line, which is not novel but very much worth restating, is that scientists should constantly be aware of what they create as well as any associated risks.

The future of synthetic biology and biosecurity

Synthetic biology has only been recently recognized as a mature subject in the context of biological risk assessment — and the core focus

has been infectious diseases. The main idea, to build resilience and a readiness to respond, was reiterated by several speakers at the SB7.0 conference. For example, [Reshma Shetty](#), co-founder of Ginkgo Bioworks, explained that in cybersecurity, we didn't really think a lot about security issues until computers were already ubiquitous. In the case of biosecurity, we're already dependent on biology [with respect to food, health etc.] but we still have an opportunity to develop biosecurity strategies before synthetic biology is ubiquitous. There is still an opportunity to act now and put norms and practices in place because the community is still relatively small.

Another remark from Shetty was also on point: "We are getting better at engineering biology, so that also means that we can use this technology to engineer preventative or response mechanisms." For example, we used to stockpile countermeasures such as vaccines. With biotechnological advances, it is now possible to move to a rapid-response model, in which we can couple the detection of threats as they emerge via public health initiatives and then develop custom countermeasures using in part synthetic biology approaches. Shetty envisioned that foundries — with next-generation sequencing and synthesis capabilities — are going to play a key role in such rapid responses. Governments should be prepared to support and enable such foundries to rapidly manufacture vaccines for smallpox or any other communicable disease, on-demand. While it is not clear that the details of these processes and the countermeasures themselves can be made public and still maintain their effectiveness, the communication and decision-making processes should be transparent.

Elizabeth Cameron, Senior Director for Global Biological Policy and Programs at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, similarly warned that "if scientists are not taking care of biosecurity now, other people will start taking care of it, and they most likely will start preventing researchers from doing good science." A shrewd starting point for this development was [noted](#) by Matt Watson: "one reason we as a species survived the Cold War was that nuclear scientists—on both sides of the Iron Curtain—went into



government and advised policymakers about the nature of the threat they faced. It's imperative for our collective security that biologists do the same."

In other words, it is time to start having these serious discussions about imminently needed biosecurity measures during events or conferences such as SB7.0.

Eric van der Helm is a postdoc at the Novo Nordisk Foundation Center for Biosustainability at the Technical University of Denmark (DTU).

Could CRISPR be used as a biological weapon?

Source: <https://phys.org/news/2017-08-crispr-biological-weapon.html>



Bioterrorism exercise. Credit: Oregon National Guard/Flickr, CC BY-SA

Aug 31 – The gene editing technique CRISPR has been in the limelight after scientists reported they had used it to safely remove disease in human embryos for the first time. This follows a "[CRISPR craze](#)" over the last couple of years, with the number of academic publications on the topic growing steadily.

There are good reasons for the widespread attention to CRISPR. The technique allows scientists to "cut and paste" DNA more [easily](#) than in the past. It is being applied to a number of different peaceful areas, ranging from cancer therapies to the control of disease carrying insects.

Some of these applications – such as the engineering of mosquitoes to resist the parasite that causes malaria – effectively involve tinkering with ecosystems. CRISPR has therefore generated a number of ethical and safety concerns. Some also worry that

applications being explored by [defence organisations](#) that involve "responsible innovation in gene editing" may send worrying signals to other states.

Concerns are also mounting that gene editing could be used in the development of biological weapons. In 2016, [Bill Gates remarked](#) that "the next epidemic could originate on the computer screen of a terrorist intent on using genetic engineering to create a synthetic version of the smallpox virus". More recently, in July 2017, John Sotos, of Intel Health & Life Sciences, stated that [gene editing](#) research could "[open up the potential for bioweapons of unimaginable destructive potential](#)".

An annual [worldwide threat assessment report](#) of the US intelligence community in February 2016 argued that the broad availability and low cost of the



basic ingredients of technologies like CRISPR makes it particularly concerning.

However, one has to be careful with the hype surrounding new technologies and, at present, the security implications of CRISPR are [probably modest](#). There are easier, cruder methods of creating terror. CRISPR would only get aspiring biological terrorists so far. Other steps, such as growing and disseminating biological weapons agents, would typically be required for it to become an effective [weapon](#). This would require additional skills and places CRISPR-based biological weapons beyond the reach of most terrorist groups. At least for the time being.

This does not mean that the hostile exploitation of CRISPR by non-state actors can be ignored. Nor can one ignore the [likely role](#) of CRISPR in any future state biological weapons programme.

International efforts

Fortunately, most states around the world regard biological warfare with particular abhorrence. There are already measures in place to prohibit and prevent the development of biological weapons. At the international level, this includes the [Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention](#). Under this [convention](#), states have agreed "never under any circumstances to acquire or retain [biological weapons](#)".

This convention is imperfect and lacks a way to ensure that states are compliant. Moreover, it has not been adequately "tended to" by its member states recently, with the last major meeting unable to agree a further programme of work. Yet it remains the cornerstone of an international regime against the hostile use of biology. All 178 state parties [declared in December of 2016](#) their continued determination "to exclude completely the possibility of the use

of (biological) weapons, and their conviction that such use would be repugnant to the conscience of humankind".

These states therefore need to address the hostile potential of CRISPR. Moreover, they need to do so collectively. Unilateral national measures, such as reasonable biological security procedures, are important. However, preventing the hostile exploitation of CRISPR is not something that can be achieved by any single state acting alone.

As such, when states party to the convention meet later this year, it will be important to agree to a more systematic and regular review of science and technology. Such reviews can help with identifying and managing the security risks of technologies such as CRISPR, as well as allowing an international exchange of information on some of the potential benefits of such technologies.

Most states supported the principle of enhanced reviews of science and technology under the convention at the last major meeting. But they now need to seize the opportunity and agree on the practicalities of such reviews in order to prevent the convention being left behind by developments in science and technology.

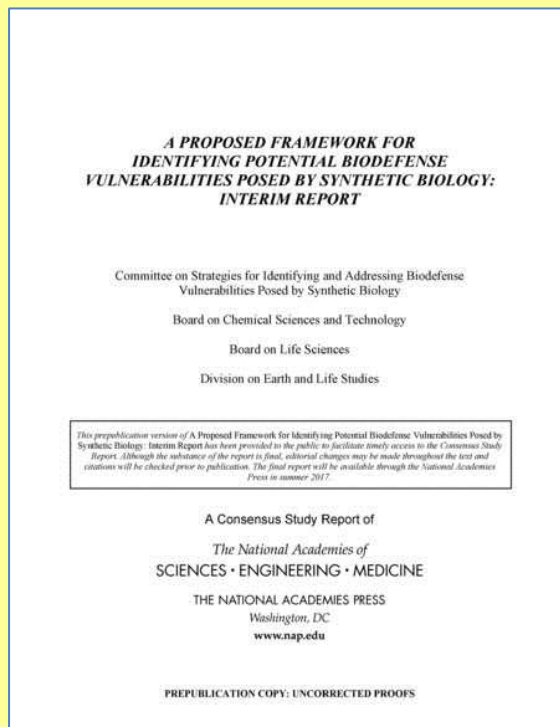
Biological warfare is not an inevitable consequence of advances in the [life sciences](#). The development and use of such weapons requires agency. It requires countries making the decision to steer the direction of life science research and development away from hostile purposes. An imperfect convention cannot guarantee that these states will always decide against the hostile exploitation of biology. Yet it can influence such decisions by shaping an environment in which the disadvantages of pursuing such weapons outweigh the advantages.

A Proposed Framework for Identifying Potential Biodefense Vulnerabilities Posed by Synthetic Biology: Interim Report

Source: <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24832/a-proposed-framework-for-identifying-potential-biodefense-vulnerabilities-posed-by-synthetic-biology>

Building on an increasingly sophisticated understanding of naturally occurring biological processes, researchers have developed technologies to predictably modify or create organisms or biological components. This research, known collectively as synthetic biology, is being pursued for a variety of purposes, from reducing the burden of disease to improving agricultural yields to remediating pollution. While synthetic biology is being pursued primarily





for beneficial and legitimate purposes, it is possible to imagine malicious uses that could threaten human health or military readiness and performance. Making informed decisions about how to address such concerns requires a comprehensive, realistic assessment. To this end, the U.S. Department of Defense, working with other agencies involved in biodefense, asked the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to develop a framework to guide an assessment of the security concerns related to advances in synthetic biology, to assess the level of concern warranted for various advances and identify areas of vulnerability, and to prioritize options to address these vulnerabilities.

This interim report proposes a framework for identifying and prioritizing potential areas of concern associated with synthetic biology—a tool to aid the consideration of concerns related to synthetic biology. The framework describes categories of synthetic biology technologies and

applications—such as genome editing, directed evolution, and automated biological design—and provides a set of initial questions to guide the assessment of concern related to these technologies and applications.

Scientists Have Found a Way to Disable a Potentially Deadly Bioweapon

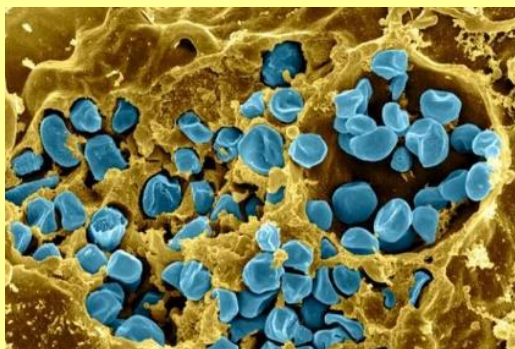
Source: <https://futurism.com/scientists-have-found-a-way-to-disable-a-potentially-deadly-bioweapon/>

Sept 05 – The organism *Francisella tularensis* has been used as a bioweapon as far back as World War II. Now, scientists have found a way to use genetic modification to disable the bacteria's virulence.

Biological Terror

The organism *Francisella tularensis* (*F. tularensis*) causes a nasty disease called [tularemia](#), which is characterized by symptoms like joint pain, muscle aches, and progressive weakness. During World War II, the Soviet Red Army reportedly used it to impede German soldiers ahead of the Battle of Stalingrad.

To this day, the Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC) ranks *F. tularensis* as one of the most concerning [bioterrorism agents](#), along with the likes of anthrax, botulism, plague, smallpox, and viral hemorrhagic fever. However, researchers may have now discovered a way to [disable this dangerous organism](#).



An image of blue *Francisella tularensis* bacteria attacking yellow immune cells from a mouse. Image Credit: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease

By [mapping out the organism's molecular circuitry](#), researchers discovered a way to disable the molecule that makes it particularly virulent. Their method focuses on a cluster of genes known as the “*Francisella* pathogenicity island.”



Through a series of structural, biochemical, and cellular studies, the researchers were able to determine how these pathogenicity genes were turned on and off. After establishing that ppGpp, a stress-sensing molecule known as an “alarmone,” was binding itself to a two-part protein using a specialized pocket on its underside, the researchers introduced a mutation that destroyed this pocket. After that, pathogenicity couldn’t be activated.

Antibiotic Resistance

The biggest advantage of this tularemia treatment is the fact that it doesn’t rely on antibiotics. With the [threat of antibiotic resistance](#) looming large, our need to find alternatives to antibiotics has become clear, and any research that can help us decrease our use of this kind of medicine is extremely valuable. This research on *F. tularensis* isn’t the first to find a viable alternative to antibiotics, however. Other solutions range from the fairly simple — [abbreviated treatment courses](#) — to the cutting-edge — [killing off antibiotic-resistant bacteria via CRISPR](#).

Having antibiotics available when we need them the most is important, but we need to establish techniques like this one to cut down on any unnecessary usage if we want to ensure they’re an effective course of treatment in the years to come.

Discussing North Korea Chemical and Biological Threat with Brig. Gen. (ret.) Woon Goh

Source: <http://www.cbrneportal.com/discussing-north-korea-chemical-and-biological-threat-with-brig-gen-ret-woon-goh/>

Sept 07 – North Korea’s latest nuclear threat represents a dark reminder of the progress made by Kim-Joung-Un’s towards his military aspirations. When discussing its WMD development program and its growing threat to the region, however, the focus remains mostly on Pyongyang’s nuclear and ballistic capabilities, often at the expense of the issue of its Chemical and Biological stockpiles.

Estimates of North Korea’s chemical and biological weaponry are imprecise and often contested, but they are sufficient to raise grave security concerns in South Korea, particularly considering Seoul’s vicinity to the border. Contrary to Pyongyang’s nuclear capabilities, which are showcased in the recurrent tests and military parades, the advancements of its chemical and biological programs remain a mystery. North Korea, for example, has never adhered to the Chemical Weapons Conventions and hasn’t, therefore, been subjected to any inspection or investigation.

To get a better overview of the current concerns and countermeasures in place in South Korea, IB Consultancy had the



pleasure to speak with Brig. Gen. (ret.) Woon Goh, Former CBR Defense Commander, as well Former Commander of the ROK Army CBRN School. Brig. Gen. (ret.) Goh graduated from the Korean Military Academy in 1985, where he received his Bachelor in Chemistry. In 2003, he became a Chemical Operational Officer in the Korean Army Headquarters and one year later Chemical Control Officer in the President Security Service for 3 years. He became the Head of Academic Affairs of the CBR School of the Korean Army and later the Head of Battle Development. He moved to the CBR Defense Command in 2009 as the Head J2/3 and he joined the Joint Chiefs Command in 2011 as the Head of the Chemical Branch J3, just prior to his current assignment.

During the past decades, North Korea has pursued Nuclear, Chemical and Biological programs with strong determination, in order to improve self-reliance and deterrence.



The focus has often been on nuclear capabilities, but a chemical or biological threat could be as deadly for South Korea as a nuclear one. How high of a priority is the deterrence of a biological program compared to a nuclear one?

Chemical and biological weapons in North Korea are very lethal weapons like nuclear weapons. I think there is a difference in the use of nuclear weapons and chemical weapons. Nuclear weapons are strategic level weapons and have great significance in terms of deterrence. It is perceived as weapons that cannot be used in war because of its deadly risks, but it plays a role in deterrence war through “the balance of fear”. On the other hand, chemical and biological weapons are operational and tactical level. That is, chemical and biological weapons are much more likely to be used in wars and terrorism, so they should be prepared first.

►► Read the rest of this article at source's URL.

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Al Qaeda's Anthrax

Is Osama bin Laden behind the mail attacks?

By Richard A. Muller

MIT Technology Review

Source: <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/401419/al-qaedas-anthrax/>



April 2002 – October 5 may not be as famous as September 11, but it may prove more historic and seminal. On that day last year the United States suffered its first death ever from a biological warfare attack. Over the following two months, 21 additional people were infected with anthrax, and four of them died. We don't know who planned the attack or who perpetrated it, where they obtained the anthrax or why it was done. The delivery weapon was the U.S. mail, although even that isn't certain for all the deaths. The World Trade Center attacks are clear and well-understood, compared to the anthrax mystery.

Although the evidence remains circumstantial, most experts continue to believe that the anthrax terrorist was a disgruntled U.S. citizen, working alone, trying to frighten and kill, or perhaps to probe our biological warfare defenses. Much of this theory is based on handwriting analysis of the anthrax letters, along with reports that the anthrax was the American Ames strain, apparently refined for military use. Barbara Rosenberg of the Federation of American Scientists gives an extensive review of the data (see the [FAS website](#)), and argues that the FBI knows the identity of the perpetrator

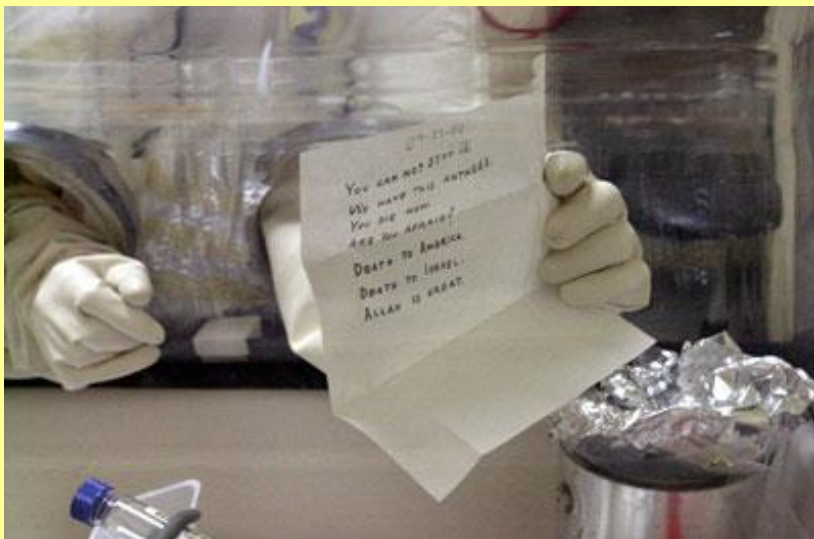
but is keeping it secret, perhaps to protect classified programs.

I disagree with these experts.

Judging from such factors as the timing of the anthrax mailings, the delivery method, the quantity of spores used and the information that was publicly available about anthrax's lethality, I think it likely that the anthrax terrorists were working for Osama bin Laden, and intended to murder thousands of people. In other words, the letters were the main salient of the “second wave” of al Qaeda terrorism. Many political questions cloud the issue for example, why bin Laden would want to target Senate Democrats. I'd like to set those aside for a moment and explain the scientific reasoning behind my view. My hypothesis may not be widely shared, but unless we consider it seriously, we risk overlooking many productive trails toward a solution of the anthrax mystery. First, look at the delivery method. A study posted on the Web by the Defence Research Establishment Suffield in Alberta, Canada on September 1 well before the anthrax letters were mailed-suggested that



envelope-borne anthrax spores could be aerosolized very effectively by the simple act of opening the mail. The report stated that anthrax dispersal from letters was “far more effective than initially suspected”; greater than 99% of the respirable aerosol particles in an envelope were released into the air when test envelopes were opened. (Steven Block of Stanford alerted me to this site.) The report concludes that lethal doses



can spread rapidly throughout a room where an anthrax-laden envelope is opened. Any terrorist checking the Web in early September might have found this report and decided to act on it. Next, consider the amounts of anthrax used. Other data in the public domain suggested that even a few grams of anthrax could, if dispersed with perfect efficiency, kill millions of people. Any terrorist who put this information together with the Canadian study might have concluded that the post was an ideal way to kill a building-full or even a city-full of civilians. If this is true, then the attack was not to be a demonstration; it was not planned to disrupt the mail, or even the U.S. economy. It was intended to commit mass murder, including United States leaders and media personalities.

If mass anthrax deaths were part of the perpetrators' plan, how did it go so wrong? I suspect that the terrorists were influenced by the misleading technical concept of “lethal dose.” Consider the following paradox: Senator Patrick Leahy, after a briefing on the possible contents of the letter sent to him, announced on Meet the Press that it might contain “100,000 lethal doses.” Yet only five people died from all the

letters. Was Leahy exaggerating? No. He was being conservative.

How can we reconcile five with 100,000? Based on primate experiments, the Defense Intelligence Agency estimates that 2,500 to 55,000 spores are enough to trigger fatal pulmonary anthrax infections in half of those exposed (the dose epidemiologists call “LD50”). It is possible that any one spore can trigger the disease, but the probability is low, so many are required, on average. Ninety-four-year-old Otilie Lundgren, the fifth and last victim, may have been killed by just a few spores. That would explain the absence of detectable anthrax in her home and belongings.

To penetrate into the most sensitive areas of the lungs, the spores or clumps of spores must be small, with diameter not much larger than three microns and a weight of about 10 picograms. Leahy's letter was reported to contain two grams of finely divided anthrax, 200 billion such particles. If we assume 10,000 particles is a reasonable average for LD50, then the letter contained 20 million lethal doses. So Leahy's estimate of 100,000 was actually low.

In the worst-case scenario (or the best-case-from the terrorist's point of view), the anthrax spores sprinkle out of an envelope, disperse like dust, are swept up into a building's ventilation system and get mixed and uniformly diluted in the recirculating air. A human breathes about a cubic meter of air every hour. With 10,000 particles in each cubic meter, two hundred billion particles from one letter could (in principle) contaminate 20 million cubic meters, almost the volume of the entire New York City subway system.

This worst-case scenario, however, is highly misleading. The primary challenge in the military use of anthrax has always been to find methods to mix the spores thoroughly with the air, and keep them there long enough to be breathed. Most dispersal methods are extremely inefficient. Lethal doses, per se, aren't meaningful.

I suspect the terrorists didn't appreciate this. In my scenario, they had managed to obtain a few grams of spores, perhaps stolen from a U.S. research facility. They correctly estimated that they had several hundred million lethal doses. Even at only 1% efficiency



(a conservative estimate, they mistakenly thought), they could kill 2 million Americans. Of course, the lethality might be limited to one building, and maybe some surrounding area, so only thousands would die or only hundreds, if they were very unlucky.

But their initial anthrax attack was a disappointing failure; only one person died, Robert Stevens, a photo editor at the *Sun*, a tabloid newspaper. The Canadian test, thankfully, may not have been good predictor of anthrax spores' behavior in the real world. In that study, the anthrax was folded in a contained sheet and was ejected when the sheet was pulled and opened. Perhaps the terrorists just dropped the anthrax into the envelope, where it remained. It is also possible that the anthrax had migrated out of the sheets during the extensive handling by the post office and settled to the bottom. And finally, maybe the anthrax did disperse, but only through the rooms where the letters were opened; the Canadian tests did not include measures of dispersal through ventilation, and this kind of dispersal may not be so efficient. In the tests, the half-life of the anthrax exposure in the chamber was about five minutes, suggesting that it settles quickly. (The air in the test chamber was recirculated, so the loss wasn't through dilution.) Five minutes is long enough to infect people in the room, but not for spores to migrate far.

At this point, I believe, the U.S.-based al Qaeda agents panicked. They had failed in their mission, and they didn't know why. They guessed that their anthrax had lost its potency, and in desperation, they mailed out all of the remainder, much of it in pure undiluted form, on October 9.

Anthrax spores were eventually detected not only at the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives, but also at the White House mail facility, the Supreme Court, the CIA mail facility, the Pentagon, and all over Washington, DC. The prevailing belief is that spores spread to so many sites through cross-contamination in the mail rooms. But I think it worthwhile to consider the possibility that some of the detections were from early, diluted letters. In their first mailings, the terrorists assumed the anthrax could be diluted, and spread in this way to more locations. This may also account for

several of the "hoax" letters that Rosenberg describes.

My scenario may seem complex, but real scenarios always are. I don't claim to have the details correct. No scenario presently explains everything, and to make sense of the complex situation, you must judge your evidence. Which is more credible when the conclusions conflict: a handwriting analyst who says the terrorist was American, or a medical doctor, Dr. Christos Tsonas, who had treated the leg of Ahmed Alhaznawi, one of the September 11 hijackers, and says "the most probable and coherent interpretation of the data available" is that the infection was skin anthrax? If we are searching only for an American who could have mailed the anthrax, we might miss the American who didn't mail it, but did steal it or maybe just failed to destroy it, when ordered to do so.

My opinion is in the minority in fact, the tiny minority. According to the October 27 *Washington Post*, a senior official said "nobody" believes the anthrax attack was the second wave. "There is no intelligence on it and it does not fit any [al Qaeda] pattern." But whether it fits the al Qaeda pattern depends, in part, on the intended scale of the carnage. It may be a mistake to assume the attack worked out as planned.

If I am right, the terrorists may now be disillusioned with anthrax attacks. But it would be foolish to relax. Bin Laden was building laboratories in Afghanistan that, given time, could have produced not grams but kilograms of spores. Tons of anthrax were grown in Soviet laboratories, and buried on Vozrozhdeniye Island in the Aral Sea (just north of Iran and Afghanistan) possibly along with some smallpox virus. (It was treated with bleach, but tests show much of it is still viable.) The Soviet anthrax was reported to be resistant to most antibiotics. So, despite the limited casualties of this first biological warfare attack on the United States, the prognosis is bleak. Biological terror is likely to prove more accessible and easier to implement than nuclear terror. The "mad scientist" of future fears is more likely to be a biologist than a physicist. Even though I am a physicist, that thought does not give me much comfort.



New biosecurity initiative to advance benefits, reduce risks of life sciences research

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20170908-new-biosecurity-initiative-to-advance-benefits-reduce-risks-of-life-sciences-research>

Sept 08 – **A new biosecurity initiative at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI) aims to identify and mitigate biological risks, both natural and man-made, and safeguard the future of the life sciences and associated technologies.**

FSI says that the initiative will be led by David A. Relman, a senior fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation and FSI. Relman, the Thomas C. and Joan M. Merigan Professor in the Departments of Medicine, and Microbiology & Immunology, has served as the science co-director at CISAC for the past four years. He left this position on 31 August to lead the new initiative.

Michael McFaul, director and senior fellow at FSI, said, “With exceptional leadership skills, valuable experience and abundant energy, David Relman is ideally positioned to work with scholars from across campus who offer critical expertise in biosecurity. This is an exciting, challenging and important new initiative for FSI that is designed to protect public health from the many new risks now accelerating.”

Relman said the biosecurity initiative will seek to advance the beneficial applications of the life sciences while reducing the risks of misuse by promoting research, education and policy outreach in biological security. His CISAC leadership gives him the know-how to lead such a wide-ranging effort across diverse disciplines and communities.

Relman said, “The opportunity to serve as co-director at CISAC has been a wonderful experience, one that has afforded me the chance to get to know outstanding faculty and staff, their scholarship, and critical policy-relevant work, all of which I had not fully appreciated sitting across campus. This experience has made clear the unusual qualities of Stanford University, and the great people that work here. I am now greatly looking forward to this new opportunity at FSI.”

Biosecurity collaborations

FSI notes that during Relman’s term as CISAC’s science co-director from 2013 to 2017, he led an expansion of the transdisciplinary work in science and security to include biology, biological and other areas of engineering, medicine, and earth and environmental sciences.

The foundations for work in biological science, technology and security were established at CISAC, especially in the hiring of Megan Palmer, a senior research scholar at CISAC and FSI. Both Relman and Palmer worked together on engagements and discussions with a growing network of more than 20 faculty involved in biosecurity across Stanford.

Palmer said, “Stanford has an opportunity and imperative to advance security strategies for biological science and technology in a global age. Our faculty bring together expertise in areas including technology, policy, and ethics, and are deeply engaged in shaping future of biotechnology policy and practices.”

New insights, new risks

In his new post, Relman said he intends to build on this foundation by creating an initiative that consolidates and focuses activity in biosecurity, develops research and educational programs, attracts new resources, and looks outward at opportunities for policy impact and changing practices across the globe.

Relman said that “new capabilities and insights are reshaping important aspects of the life sciences and associated technologies, and are accompanied by a host of new risks.” If misused, whether by malice or accident, “they pose the potential for large-scale harm,” he noted.

Relman added that the initiative will bring together interest and expertise across the centers and programs of FSI in partnership with Schools and Departments across the university.

At FSI, CISAC will co-sponsor the biological security initiative, which will leverage Stanford expertise in the life sciences, engineering, law and policy. Key partners will include Tim Stearns (biology), Drew Endy (bioengineering), Mildred Cho (bioethics), and Hank Greely



(law), according to Relman. The biosecurity group will also partner with another new program at FSI in global health and conflict, which is led by Paul Wise, Frank Fukuyama, Steve Stedman, Steve Krasner, and others, he added.

Stanford's School of Medicine and Department of Medicine will also co-sponsor the initiative, thanks to leadership from Lloyd Minor, Michele Barry and Robert Harrington. Relman looks forward to establishing similar relationships with other schools and departments, he said.

"These partnerships are critical. I'm excited to work with a growing community both within and beyond Stanford towards the goal of a peaceful and prosperous world in the century of biology," he said.



Map shows how to disable dangerous bioweapon

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20170915-map-shows-how-to-disable-dangerous-bioweapon>

Sept 15 – During the Second World War, the Soviet Red Army was forced to move their biological warfare operations out of the path of advancing Nazi troops. Among the dangerous cargo were vials of *Francisella tularensis*, the organism that causes tularemia and one of the world's most infectious pathogens.

Years later, a Soviet defector claimed that his country had unleashed their stores of *F. tularensis* on German soldiers, weakening them shortly before the pivotal Battle of Stalingrad. Others believe the outbreak on the German-Soviet front was more likely spread by rats, not Russians. Yet no one has disputed the bacteria's capacity to inflict harm.

The Centers of Disease Control (CDC) ranks tularemia as one of the six most concerning bioterrorism agents, alongside anthrax, botulism, plague, smallpox and viral hemorrhagic fever. And Russian stockpiles of it likely remain.

American scientists studying *F. tularensis* recently mapped out the complex molecular circuitry that enables the bacterium to become virulent. The map reveals a unique characteristic of the bacteria that could become the target of future drug development.

The research was published in [Genes & Development](#).

"Now we have the coordinates for stopping one of the most infectious agents known to man. By having all of these pieces, and understanding how they fit together, we can design new drugs that can shut down virulence," said Maria A. Schumacher, senior study author and the Nanaline H. Duke Professor of Biochemistry at the Duke University School of Medicine.

Duke [notes](#) that *F. tularensis* is an exceptionally hardy organism that can infect a variety of hosts, including humans, rabbits, and mosquitos, and can survive for weeks at a time in dead and decaying carcasses. It is so virulent that **a person only has to inhale 10 microscopic particles of the bacterium to become infected.** The Russians and Japanese, as well as the Americans and their allies, all explored its potential as a biological weapon during the Second World War.

After the war, Russians continued to develop the agent, searching for mutations that could make it resistant to antibiotics and thus even more deadly. **The World Health Organization (WHO) has since projected that 110 pounds of *F. tularensis* dispersed over a city of 5 million people would cause about 250,000 cases of severe illness, and 19,000 deaths.**

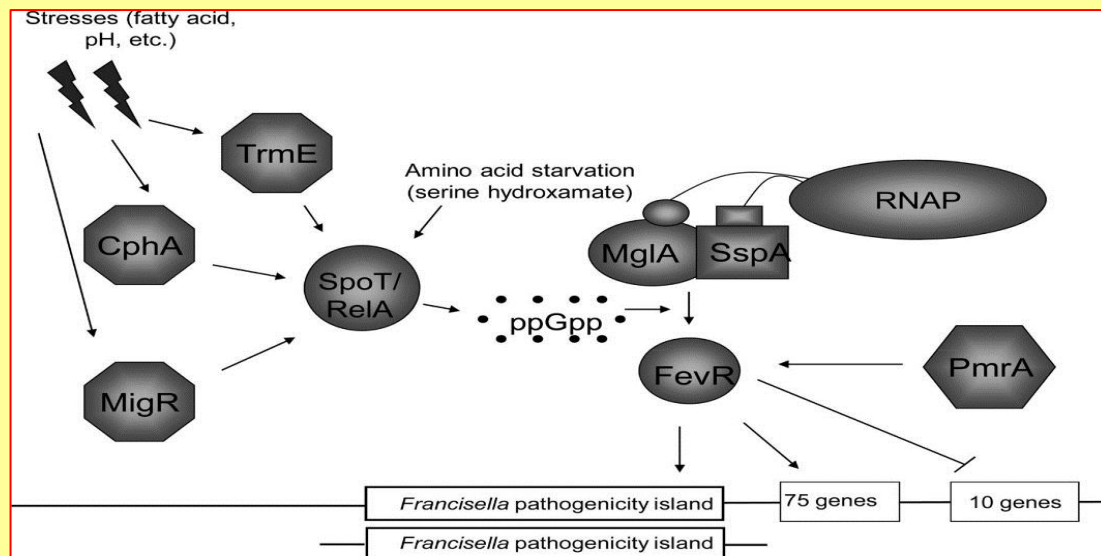
Despite decades of fervent study, the factors that make this bacterium so pathogenic are still not fully understood. Recently, a cluster of genes called the "Francisella pathogenicity island" emerged that is essential for its virulence. In this study, researchers carried out a battery of structural, biochemical and cellular studies to define the molecular factors that turn these pathogenicity genes on and off.

They suspected that a stress-sensing molecule or "alarmone" called ppGpp might play a role. Alarmones are known to respond to stressful conditions by promoting survival and virulence in bacteria.

Lead study author and Duke graduate student Bonnie J. Cuthbert started by looking at factors that might interact with ppGpp, such as the aptly named protein pathogenicity island gene regulator or PigR, the macrophage growth locus protein A or MglA, and the stringent starvation protein A or SspA. Cuthbert used a technique called x-ray crystallography to produce atomic-level three-dimensional structures of each of these proteins, and then assembled them one by one, like the components of a



circuit board. She found that MglA and SspA partner up to form a two-part protein that contains a unique binding pocket on its underside for ppGpp. Once this molecule is bound, it recruits PrgR and subsequently stabilizes RNA polymerase to this area of the *F. tularensis* genome, creating a large complex that latches onto the DNA to flip on the pathogenicity genes.



The researchers then created mutations that destroyed the binding pocket for ppGpp. They found that when the alarmone could not bind, pathogenicity could not be activated.

"We have uncovered a totally novel way for controlling virulence," said senior study author Richard G. Brennan, James B. Duke Professor of Biochemistry and Chair of Biochemistry at Duke University School of Medicine and also an advisor to Cuthbert. "If we could block this binding pocket, then we could stop virulence in *F. tularensis*. It would be a new way of fighting this bacteria, by disabling it with antivirulence drugs rather than by killing it outright with antibiotics."

— Read more in Bonnie Cuthbert et al., "Dissection of the molecular circuitry controlling virulence in *Francisella tularensis*," *Genes & Development* 31 (13 September 2017).

ANTHRAX! WHAT IF? Lincoln emergency services test bioterrorism response

Source: <http://www.theinteriorjournal.com/2017/09/15/anthrax-what-if-lincoln-emergency-services-test-bioterrorism-response/>

Sept 15 – Fort Logan High School students got a chance to see what would happen if anthrax made its way onto the school bus Friday morning as they participated in a mock disaster drill at Ephraim McDowell Fort Logan Hospital.

A school bus, driven by Chris Mingo, transported 10 Fort Logan High School students – or fake victims – to Ephraim McDowell Fort Logan Hospital where the anthrax contamination exercise was staged.

The scenario for the exercise was one aimed at testing local emergency services' skills and response when it comes to bioterrorism. The script for the scenario begins with a field trip to the Federal Courthouse in Lexington where students had been observing civil and criminal proceedings. **Several students on**

the bus began to develop allergic reactions to a "white power-like substance that was being passed around from student-to-student on the bus." As the bus was rerouted by Bluegrass 911 dispatch to Fort Logan Hospital, one student with a history of asthma seized while others experienced respiratory distress.



The substance was traced to a large envelope found by a student at the courthouse and brought onto the bus, according to the exercise scenario. A decontamination tent was set up outside of the hospital as the school bus arrived and students were removed individually and decontaminated before entering the hospital for treatment. The bus, which was roped off as a “hot zone” was also decontaminated while law enforcement was on stand by to provide security and crowd control.

Following the exercise, responders gathered inside the hospital to discuss what went well and what could be improved as far as the group’s response to the anthrax scenario.

Some of the problems identified during the critique included: the interference of a Garrard County radio test that interfered with the hospital’s ability to monitor emergency communications; placement of the decontamination tent blocked entry and could have been placed better; electrical and water supply to decontamination tent were right next to each other creating a hazard; bus hot zone doors and windows were left open and not secured to protect environment and personnel; inadequate number of medical personnel in protective outerwear/suits; and decontamination tent station/zones were not identified, making instruction to patients unclear.

State police were actually en route to the hospital at one point as they believed that the exercise was an actual event. Lincoln County Emergency Management suggested notifying local and regional agencies of training.

The absence of the Lincoln County Health Department was also noted in the critique. Both the local and state health departments were advised and participated in the planning of the exercise but failed to show due to a possible schedule conflict.

The agencies and/or organizations that participated in the event were: Fort Logan High School; Fort Logan Hospital; Lincoln Haz-mat unit; Stanford Fire Department; Stanford Police Department; Lincoln County EMS; Lincoln County EMA; Lincoln County Coroner; Lincoln School Bus Garage; Bluegrass 911 Dispatch; The Interior Journal; Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce and Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: I only hope that a fellow allergist was not part of the planning team!!! Allergy to anthrax spores – that’s a first! Why do they have to make silly scenarios to conduct a drill?



Bioterrorism and the United States: We are Vulnerable

By Susan Quinn

Source: <https://ricochet.com/455749/bioterrorism-and-the-united-states/>

Sept 17 – Remember the ricin scares and anthrax attacks in this country?

In 1995, two members of a Minnesota militia group were convicted of possession of ricin which they had produced themselves for use in retaliation against local government officials.

In 2001, anthrax was delivered by mail to U.S. media and government offices. There were five deaths as a result.

These events seem so long ago.

After the anthrax attacks, George W. Bush announced an ambitious effort for the government to develop an early-warning network against these dangerous agents. Although \$21 billion has been spent, the results have been mixed:

BioWatch, which had cost nearly \$1 billion to install and operate by then, took up to 36 hours to gather and analyze potential pathogens. Worse, its sensors had falsely warned of dozens of germ attacks in major cities — including at the Democratic National Convention in Denver in 2008.

But four years ago the Department of Homeland Security identified a Silicon Valley company, [NVS Technologies](#). The company was working on “a portable device that would swiftly and accurately analyze air samples from sensors deployed nationwide, and determine whether they contained anthrax spores or other lethal germs,” according to the [Los Angeles Times](#).

The reviews by several scientists with the government were excellent:

‘NVS has done a tremendous job in fulfilling our requirements,’ Segaran Pillai, Homeland Security’s chief medical and science advisor, wrote in a seven-page internal report dated



June 13, 2013. He recommended continued funding for NVS 'to ensure a successful outcome for the Nation.'

Nevertheless, in February 2014 –six months before the NVS engineers were going to deliver a prototype–the work was stopped. The new person put in charge of Pillai's division was Donald Woodbury. (Woodbury had spent much of his career at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which developed stealth technology and other sophisticated tools for the Pentagon.) He wasn't convinced of the NVS technology and stated that the government could find other commercial technology and identify a better use of taxpayer money. He noted Pillai's expertise, but felt it was a responsible decision regarding government resources, even after a report by the Inspector General John Roth in February 2015 that stated, "We did not identify evidence to substantiate any of the concerns." By the end of 2016, Woodbury had retired from Homeland Security.

Meanwhile Biowatch still requires 36 hours to identify a germ, while the NVS Technology was supposed to work in less than an hour.

[BioWatch Gen 2 Aerosol Collector](#)



As a result of a contract dispute, a trial began on September 12 before an administrative judge of the U.S. Civilian Board of Contract Appeals. Although the trial is scheduled to run for three days, results may not be forthcoming for weeks. NVS hopes to prove that the government acted in "bad faith," which is [defined](#) as an "intentional dishonest act by not fulfilling legal or contractual obligations, misleading another, entering into an agreement without the intention or means to fulfill it, or violating basic standards of honesty in dealing with others." I have learned that bad faith is difficult to prove.



For anyone who wonders if bioterrorism should be a serious concern, let me review [the dangers of these substances](#):

Although there are more than 1,200 biological agents that could be used to cause illness or death, relatively few possess the necessary characteristics to make them ideal candidates for biological warfare or terrorism agents. The ideal biological agents are relatively easy to acquire, process, and use. Only small amounts (on the order of pounds and often less) would be needed to kill or incapacitate hundreds of thousands of people in a metropolitan area. Biological warfare agents are easy to hide and difficult to detect or protect against. They are invisible, odorless, tasteless, and can be spread silently.

This link also provides information on how these agents can be delivered, detected and protected against. In reviewing this situation, I'm trying to figure out the reasons for the Donald Woodbury's cancellation of a project that had met milestones, one that received exemplary reviews by those who had worked with the company, and that was about to provide a prototype. And no one was able to reverse his decision. To date, as far as I can tell, the BioWatch program is still unreliable.

My questions are:

Do you find the motivation for the cancellation reasonable?

What are the odds that the NVS Technologies will win its "bad faith" case?



Do you think the contract should be re-instated and the work should continue?
Do you think this kind of project against bioterrorism should be pursued?
What other thoughts do you have about this subject?

