



The Radical Right's Obsession with Bioterrorism

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Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive and detailed picture of the obsessive interest of radical right-wing groups and individuals in biological warfare and bioterrorism since the 1970s and its evolution until the new era of the global coronavirus pandemic. It underpins the ideological and strategic reasons and motivations for such interest and cites most of the important cases of bioterrorism by these elements. An interesting part of the analysis relates to the “schizophrenic” relations of some of these ideologues and groups with their jihadist counterparts. Based on this historic overview it presents a first evaluation of the future radical right bioterrorism threat.

General

Biological weapons (BW) could be considered the second threat among CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) weapons in order of priorities, after the threat of chemical terrorism. Biological weapon is a weapon whose components are produced from pathogenic microorganisms or toxic substances of biological origins.

BW agents can be hundred to thousands of times more potent than chemical agents and provide a much cheaper route to CBRN capability, considering an equal quantity of chemical agents. As international controls are strengthened on nuclear and chemical weapons materials, biological weapons become more attractive. In addition, biotechnology expertise is spreading rapidly.

Theoretically BW could produce a higher number of casualties, but do not take effect immediately. This delay makes for a less immediately spectacular effect. Because of the incubation period, it might be somewhat easier to contain and neutralize the effects of a terrorist strike involving biological weapons than one involving chemical agents or toxins.

Bioterrorism before 9/11.

Before the September 11, 2001 attacks, few terrorist groups have attempted to acquire biological agents, and even fewer have attempted to use the agents. The number of incidents involving use or attempted use of biological agents is extremely small, especially when compared to the thousands of known terrorist incidents. The number of known victims from bioterrorist incidents was limited to the 751 people who became sick during the 1984 Rajneesh cult attacks with salmonella in Oregon, USA. There were no known fatalities. Finally, most terrorist groups have used dissemination techniques unlikely to cause mass casualties. Some have specifically targeted individuals, while others have focused on contamination of food and water. The Japanese Aum Shinrikyo (AUM)

cult/organization is the only group known to have shown an interest in developing aerosol dissemination capability but their attempts of bioterrorism failed.¹

Hiding biological weapons programs is easy to accomplish. The efforts of the Rajneeshees to develop biological agents were never detected. Indeed, it took more than a year to determine that the outbreak they caused was due to intentional contamination. The same happened for the AUM biological project.²

Regarding biological agents, experts believed that terrorists would be more likely to choose a bacteriological rather than a viral or rickettsial agent, since rickettsial infections can be readily treated with antibiotics and viruses are more difficult than bacteria to cultivate and often do not live long outside a host, making them more difficult to disseminate effectively. Anthrax spores are "attractive," among other reasons, for their relative hardiness against adverse environmental conditions, as shown by their ability to survive for decades on the Scottish island of Gruinard after biological warfare experiments during World War II.³

It is noteworthy that in the past a high number of American domestic extremist groups have attempted to use biological agents, although many of these incidents were little more than threats, and none have been particularly successful. Some food poisoning efforts have succeeded in causing illness, but no deaths.

The radical American right-wing groups are also the only extremist organizations openly preaching since the 1970s the necessity of waging biological warfare, or for preparing their constituency for defense against biological attacks.

Radical right-wing organizations⁴

¹ Ely Karmon, "Countering NBC Terrorism," in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (eds.) *The New Terrorism. Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002), pp. 193-206.

² R W. Seth Carus, "The Threat of Bioterrorism," *The Strategic Forum*, Number 127, September 1997.

³ Ron Purver, "The Threat of Chemical/Biological Terrorism," *Commentary* 60, Canadian Security Intelligence Service publication, 1005, August 1995.

⁴ There is disagreement over how right-wing movements should be described, and no consensus exists regarding what the proper terminology should be, although the terminology developed in the 1950s, using the words "radical" or "extremist" is the most commonly used one. The terminology is used to describe a broad range of movements. The term "radical right" was coined by Seymour Martin Lipset and included in a book titled *The New American Right*, which was published in 1955. The contributors to that book identified a conservative "responsible Right" as represented by the Republican administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower and a radical right that wished to change political and social life. Further to the right of the radical right, they identified an "ultraright". Most ultraright groups operate outside political life, call for

Ideology and strategy

Ideologically, many of these groups and organizations praise the Nazi behavior in WWII and are influenced by Hitler's ideas. Therefore, they see in mass murder a legitimate kind of warfare against their enemies.

Some of the radical right-wing groups are also Christian fundamentalists, adding a religious element to their extremism.

Most of these groups are fanatically anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli, and therefore could easily attack such targets.

William Luther Pierce, leader of the neo-Nazi organization National Alliance, aimed to initiate a worldwide race war and establish an Aryan state. "We are in a war for the survival of our race," he explains, "that ultimately we cannot win... except by killing our enemies... It's a case of either we destroy them or they will destroy us, with no chance for compromise or armistice." Creating social chaos is thus a useful objective in Pierce's view. Pierce, who studied physics at California Institute of Technology, wanted to impress his target audience with high technology and with non-conventional weapons.

In his now famous novel, *The Turner Diaries*, published under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald in 1978, right-wing extremists use nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiologic weapons to take over the world.⁵ One of the most widely read and cited books on the far-right, it has explicitly influenced, among others, The Order, the Aryan Republican Army, The New Order. The book exerted its most tragic influence on Timothy McVeigh. Days before he staged the bombing of the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, the deadliest terrorist attack in American history before 9/11, killing 168 people and wounding 500 others, McVeigh mailed a letter to his sister with clippings from The

drastic change and in extreme cases they use violence against the state. These groups developed from the radical right, both by adopting an ideology and containing members drawn from them. In the Radical Right a contrast is made between the main section of the radical right that developed in the 1950s and was able to obtain influence during the Reagan administration and the related ultraright that had turned to violent acts including the Oklahoma bombing. Ultraright groups, as The Radical Right definition states, are normally called "far-right", although they may also be called "radical right". I will use the term Radical Right or Radical Right-wing. Far-right will be used when citing authors who prefer this term.

⁵ Stern, J. (1999). The Prospect of Domestic Bioterrorism. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, CDC, 5(4), 517-522, URL. <https://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid0504.990410>.

Turner Diaries. F.B.I. agents also found a copy of a passage from The Turner Diaries in the car McVeigh drove on the day of the bombing.⁶

While Turner is infamous for the violence it has inspired, most notably in Oklahoma City, his impact on the shape of white nationalism—and the movement’s current resurgence—is an equal part of his dark legacy.⁷ John Sutherland, in a 1996 essay for the London Review of Books wrote that The Turner Diaries is not the work of a Holocaust-denier so much as a would-be “Holocaust-repeater.” In 1991, the National Alliance returned to the dark, nightmare world, with *Serpent’s Walk*, by Randolph D. Calverhall, a much more ambitious novel than The Turner Diaries. Opening in the year 2041, it postulates that key leaders of the SS survived the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, building an international network with the intention of returning to political power. The book features mercenaries armed with lasers and an artificial intelligence with a holographic body, among other science fiction conceits, and traces the outbreak of a global biological warfare.⁸

After McVeigh brought widespread attention to *The Turner Diaries*, the pace of violence it inspired picked up. In subsequent years, a variety of Earl Turner imitators have been arrested, among other, for stockpiling biological weapons.⁹

Martin Lindstedt, a former truck driver, has been a vocal white supremacist and an adherent of Christian Identity, a racist and anti-Semitic religious sect. Most recently, he had been the Missouri contact for the Church of the Sons of Yahweh, a Louisiana-based Christian Identity group. In the 1990s, Lindstedt was an early proponent of the anti-government militia movement, operating his "one-man militia group," the 7th Missouri Militia, and publishing an occasional newsletter, "The Modern Militiaman's Gazette," throughout the late 1990s. Over time, Lindstedt became more interested in promoting white supremacy, changing the title of his newsletter to the "Resistance Political Frontline."¹⁰

⁶ “The Turner Diaries Backgrounder,” *Extremism, Terrorism & Bigotry*, Anti-Defamation League, URL <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/turner-diaries>

⁷ J.M. Berger, “Alt History. How a self-published, racist novel changed white nationalism and inspired decades of violence,” *The Atlantic*, September 16, 2016.

⁸ J.M. Berger, “The Turner Legacy: The Storied Origins and Enduring Impact of White Nationalism’s Deadly Bible,” *ICCT Research Paper*, September 2016.

⁹ Camille Jackson, “The Turner Diaries, Other Racist Novels, Inspire Extremist Violence,” *Intelligence Report*, The Southern Poverty Law Center, 2004 Fall Issue, October 14, 2004.

¹⁰ “Missouri White Supremacist Charged with Sex Crime,” *Anti-Defamation League*, May 13, 2005, URL <https://www.adl.org/news/article/missouri-white-supremacist-charged-with-sex-crime>

In July 1997, for the first time Lindstedt describes his vision of biological warfare in his *Gazette*. The whole issue is consecrated to the subject. It opens with the prediction that “The Biological War is Inevitable. It is only a matter of time before biological warfare is used against the American people. Such was what ex-Senator Sam Nunn said on a television show several weeks ago. And Senator Nunn is right. It is only a matter of time before such weapons are unleashed on a largely defenseless population. Are you mentally, morally, physically prepared to survive such an occurrence? You and your family can survive biological warfare if [only] you are prepared.”¹¹ This is the defensive right-wing strategy for biological warfare.

Lindstedt explains in detail why biological warfare is inevitable: “Because it is cheap and easy. Unlike nuclear weapons, which required the thinking of great scientists such as Fermi, Oppenheimer, Einstein, Bohr and Teller to define the theoretical parameters and the work of gifted engineers to harness that technology, bacteria and viruses have been with us always. Dig up a shovel of soil, especially in areas which have had past outbreaks of a given disease, and one can easily with a little knowledge dig up and isolate for future use a few nasty little microbes. E. coli and salmonella can be found quite easily by leaving a meat sandwich outside refrigeration for a few days. While these bacteria are not usually fatal, they can be used for their resistance to antibiotics and cross-bred with other strains of related bacteria and used as a biological base element for the development of new strains of bacteria able to affect humans.”¹² Indeed, Lindstedt is probably aware that the first bioterror attack in the U.S. was the 1984 food poisoning of 751 individuals in The Dalles, Oregon, through the deliberate contamination with salmonella of salad bars at ten local restaurants by the Rajneesh cult.

Easy communicability and the fact that biological warfare is anonymous are other reasons. “Pathogens can be placed into open water systems and destroy anyone not drinking bottled water or on a well. There are more and more public functions where a disease can be spread among the attendees, like at trade conventions, sports stadiums, concerts, public meetings. A film of the biological agent could be spread on small denomination paper currency and sent as 'payment,' circulating as a bearer of death upon demand. Such a method of spreading biological warfare would also de-establish a nation's currency once people got wise to what else was circulating with the money supply... Once a plague becomes epidemic, then the social order of the given society

¹¹ “Biological Warfare in Our Time?” *The Modern Militiaman's Internet Gazette*, July 20, 1997, Issue #7-97, URL. <http://whitenationalist.org/lindstedt/mmgaz7.html>.

¹² Ibid.

dissolves by panic-stricken people trying to survive. No social order can survive when everyone must be treated as a possible source of deadly infection.”

“The Black Plague of 1348-1350 killed between one-third and two-thirds of Europe. However, the clearing away of the less civilized, less clean, and less able members of that society ensured survivors with enough mental and physical vigor to be able to found the Renaissance...And so it shall be in the future. Great multi-ethnic states ruled over by criminals and parasites will be replaced with small bodies of responsible government aware that it was injustice, apathy, ignorance and sloth which created the conditions which destroyed the old order... I will posit the position that the coming inevitable biological war will be a good thing for our side, for our Resistance, *if we are prepared for the consequences of biological warfare.*”

The *Gazette* includes a long list of articles about biological warfare conspiracies, citing largely microbiologist Larry Harris, whose case will be detailed later in this paper.

Eight months later, in July 1998, another issue of the *Gazette* is devoted to the subject of biological warfare, but this time clearly hinting to the offensive opportunities offered to the white power “Resistance” fighters.¹³

“Anybody can use and successfully deploy biological warfare agents. Biological weaponry can be made by very small groups of people, or even just one person acting alone. The value of the masses is negated absolutely in favor of brainpower of the individual. And by working alone, and in secret, that one individual can strike at any time, undetected, and carry out his will. The monopoly of violence, the balance of terror has thus shifted to the launcher of a shot which comes out of the dark.”

“Biological weaponry, striking at unprepared civilian populations will rip right through them just as Hitler's machine-gun armed panzers destroyed the charging Polish cavalry. The regime that ill-leads its obsolete military machine to destruction will be overthrown, just as the Polish government was replaced after its unconditional surrender and partition in 1939. So too, will be the foolish Clinton regime, starting a foreign war against Iraq and all its Arab brethren and its Pan-Islamic fundamentalist allies who regard it as the Great Satan. Meanwhile, internal dissent will turn deadly, as aggrieved anti-regime forces create, then use, crude biological weaponry against the police state that murders and oppresses them.”

¹³ “ABC's of Destruction -- Aryans, BioWar, & Clinton,” *The Modern Militiaman's Internet Gazette*, March 6, 1998, Issue #10-98, URL <http://whitenationalist.org/lindstedt/mmgaz10.html#10mmig01>

Lindstedt appeals to his “Resistance and Patriotic elements” to form survival cells of close friends and family. “The policies which should be set by all Resistance cells are those common-sense solutions which will lead to: (1) Survival and (2) Freedom. Survival comes first because you cannot enjoy your Freedom unless you are alive to enjoy it...The Resistance Action Force cells out there must consider the discreet development of biological agents [because] biological warfare is cheap, effective, easy, and undetectable. Biological warfare is such that the only defense other than quarantine is to be the only one holding the vaccine to the pathogen unleashed. Biological warfare always favors the aggrieved who have far less to lose. Since a large portion of Resistance Action Forces are of Christian Identity and/or White Nationalist persuasion and live in the rural areas most defensible to biowar, and the favored minorities of the criminal regime and the regime criminals themselves live in the urban and suburban areas most susceptible to biowar attack, it would be foolish not to use a weapon which favors our side.”

Follows a long list of full text mainstream articles about the threat of biological attacks, mostly referring to the anthrax bacteria as an immediate threat. Anthrax is cited in this issue 97 times.¹⁴

Alex Curtis was one of the most radical and influential voices on the racist right. By the late 1990s, He developed a reputation as one of the white power movement's most hard-bitten and uncompromising ideologues. Curtis hopes that a violent revolution will topple the United States government, which he considers "a Jew-occupied government," and replace it with a "race-centered" government, with citizenship and residency restricted to "those of pure White ancestry." In a diary entry from 1993, Curtis wrote, "I plan to make it my life's goal to rid the Earth of the unwanted un-Aryan elements, by whatever means necessary and possible."

On the front page of his June 2000 Nationalist Observer magazine is a story entitled "Biology for Aryans." Its first line: "The principal characteristic of biological agents that could make their use attractive to terrorists is their extreme toxicity, even compared to other weapons of mass destruction." The article goes on to describe the lethal properties of "Type-A botulinal toxin" (which "can be produced for about \$400 per kilogram" - sic!), anthrax and "typhoid culture." "The smaller quantities of agent needed on account of their lethality help reduce the costs and complexity of their production or other acquisition...in turn eliminating the necessity for a large infrastructure of personnel and facilities, which in turn eases the problem of security and avoidance of detection."

¹⁴ See for instance: Richard K. Betts, “The Primary Danger Is That An Enemy Might Trigger A Catastrophe In An American City - The New Threat of Mass Destruction,” Foreign Affairs, January/February 1998. It opens with the subtitle “What If Mcveigh Had Used Anthrax?”

The article notes that "even with relatively small-scale attacks," biological warfare is "virtually DESIGNED to cause the populace to lose all confidence in and allegiance to their own governments, apparently no longer in control." Curtis employs the Internet, his Nationalist Observer magazine, and his telephone hotlines to make his destructive fantasies a reality. Through his "privately-controlled media," he claims to "reach 100s - 1000s of the most radical racists in the world each week." These extremists can view his Web site, sign up for his E-mail mailing list, or call his phone lines without him knowing who they are. Then, they may choose to act on his fiery rhetoric.¹⁵

Incidents before 9/11 attacks

There were relatively a high number of incidents during this period carried out by radical right-wing groups. However, in most of the cases these were very small groups or even individuals involved, belonging to some small faction.

Order of the Rising Sun. The arrest in 1972 in Chicago of members of this U.S. right-wing group known as "dedicated to creating a new master race," found in their possession 30 to 40 kilograms of typhoid bacteria cultures for use against water supplies in Chicago, St. Louis, and other Midwestern cities. The two instigators were college students, one of whom, a 19-year-old, had apparently developed the culture in a school laboratory, where a quantity was found. They had detailed plans for dumping the deadly germs into the water supplies but "the organism selected would have been readily destroyed by normal chlorination". The two had recruited six or seven members who were to be inoculated against the disease, but two of the recruits panicked and tipped off the police.¹⁶

Minnesota Patriots Council. In May 1991, a tax-protest group known as the "Patriots Council" were talking about bombing a federal office building and murdering a sheriff's deputy using ricin. They intended to mix the ricin with DMSO and Aloe Vera to enable it to penetrate the skin. Four of the conspirators were indicted in August 1995, accused of violating the Biological Weapons and Antiterrorism Act of 1989. Specifically, Henderson and Oelrich were accused of purchasing in April 1991 castor beans and the ricin making instructions.¹⁷

¹⁵ "Alex Curtis: 'Lone Wolf' of Hate Prowls the Internet," *Weekly Racist Update*, Anti-Defamation League, July 27, 2000, URL. <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/Alex-Curtis-Report.pdf>

¹⁶ Ron Purver, "Chemical and Biological Terrorism: The Threat According to The Open Literature," *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Publication*, 1995.

¹⁷ W. Seth Carus, "Bioterrorism and Biocrimes The Illicit Use of Biological Agents Since 1900," *Center for Counterproliferation Research Working Paper*, Case 1992-03, National Defense University, Washington,

Thomas Lavy, a survivalist living in Arkansas and working in Valdez, Alaska, was driving from Alaska to Arkansas in 1993. Canadian Customs became suspicious of his behavior and searched his possessions. They found 4 guns, 20,000 rounds of ammunition, \$89,000 in U.S. currency, various publications, and a plastic bag with 130 grams of a white, powdery substance. According to one account, the publications included two books, *The Poisoner's Handbook* and *Silent Death* and neo-Nazi literature as well.¹⁸ According to U.S. officials, Lavy told the Canadians that the bag contained a deadly poison, ricin, which he claimed to have stolen from the U.S. Army. Nothing further was done about the ricin during the next two years. It was only in the spring of 1995 that law enforcement officials began to take a serious interest in the case. A federal grand jury in Anchorage, indicted Lavy on December 12, 1995, for violating the Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989. According to one federal official, Lavy admitted making the ricin. On December 23, 1995, he committed suicide in the Pulaski County Jail in Little Rock, Arkansas. His motivations for acquiring the ricin were never clarified before he committed suicide.¹⁹

In 1998, two members of the **Republic of Texas** were convicted of threatening to assassinate with biological agents President Clinton, Attorney General Janet Reno, and other officials. This charge centered on discussions by the two men to modify a cigarette lighter to eject a cactus needle that would be coated with some sort of biological agent such as HIV, rabies, botulism or anthrax. Although the Republic of Texas members had discussed developing rabies or anthrax for use in this fashion, they never actually made the device.²⁰ At the time, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Louis Freeh reported that "a growing number while still small of 'lone offender' and extremist splinter elements of right-wing groups have been identified as possessing or attempting to develop or use "weapons of mass destruction."²¹

The Underground Skinhead Action website contained training material on chemical warfare, a question and answer page on biological warfare and two thick volumes on non-conventional war.²²

D.C., August 1998 (February 2001 Revision)

<https://wmdcenter.ndu.edu/Portals/97/Documents/Publications/Articles/Bioterrorism-and-Biocrimes.pdf>

¹⁸ *Silent Death*, a book written by "Uncle Fester," actually Green Bay chemist Steve Preisler, a convicted criminal who wrote one of his books while in prison, is for the "home or clandestine manufacture of poisonous materials, with an emphasis on guerrilla war applications. Topics covered [in *Silent Death*] in detail include nerve gases, ricin, botulin toxin, and much more."

¹⁹ W. Seth Carus, *Bioterrorism and Biocrimes*, Case 1993-01.

²⁰ "Beyond Anthrax: Extremism and the Bioterrorism Threat," *Anti-Defamation League paper*, 2001.

²¹ *Statement for the Record of Louis J. Freeh, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation*, before the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations; Subcommittee for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies; February 4, 1999.

²² *Nationalist Observer*, June 2000.

Dr. Larry Ford, a South African expatriate, killed himself in Orange County, California in 2000, apparently because he was suspected in the attempted murder of his business partner. A biotechnology entrepreneur, Ford also happened to be a white supremacist with a passion for neo-Nazi William Pierce's novel "The Turner Diaries." He also had ties to several antigovernment extremist groups. Investigations after his death revealed that Ford possessed an unusual and deadly arsenal including biological agents and quantities of ricin.²³

Larry Wayne Harris, a microbiologist, white supremacist and born-again Christian, also a member of the neo-Nazi group Aryan Nations, predicted that biological attacks could be carried out by domestic groups fighting for their heritage, traditions, and communities, causing devastating plagues like those described in the Bible's Book of Revelation. He urged all U.S. citizens to prepare. In May 1995, six weeks after the Aum Shinrikyo sarin attack on the Tokyo subway, Harris bought three vials of *Yersinia pestis*, the bacterium that causes bubonic plague for \$300 from the American Type Culture Collection in Rockville, Maryland. No law prohibited then Harris or any other U.S. citizen from acquiring the agent.

In February 1998, Harris boasted to an informant that he had enough military-grade anthrax to wipe out all of Las Vegas. Eight bags marked "biological" had been found in the back of a car he and his accomplice were driving. Several days later, federal authorities learned that the anthrax Harris had brought to Las Vegas was a vaccine strain not harmful to human health. He subsequently published a 131-page book, *Bacteriological Warfare: A Major Threat to North America*.²⁴

The Larry Wayne Harris incidents frightened many people and sparked a proliferation of anthrax hoaxes and threats in the second half of 1998 continuing into 1999 by groups including Identity Christians and other antigovernment groups, extortionists, antiabortion activists, and presumed prochoice groups. In many cases, the perpetrator's motives were unknown, but some incidents appear to have been student pranks, demonstrating the extent to which the threat of anthrax has entered U.S. consciousness.

The wave of anthrax threats against abortion clinics

The anthrax panic in the States had grown in a complex local and international environment. Several events in the 1990s drastically increased both concern and publicity over anthrax, oversensitizing

²³ "Extremists and the Ricin Threat," *Anti-Defamation League paper*.

²⁴ Proceedings before the Regular Federal Grand Jury, Testimony of Robert James, February 25, 1998, United States District Court, District of Nevada, p. 17. *United States of America v. Larry Wayne Harris*, Complete Transcript of Proceedings, CR-2-95-093, March 6, 1998, United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio.

the American public to the dangers of anthrax in the hands of terrorists. The event that really introduced anthrax into the public consciousness was the Gulf War. Reports had emerged during the 1980s that the Iraq government had used chemical agents both against Iran during the Iran-Iraq War and against the Kurdish minority in its own territory. The Reagan administration formally acknowledged that Iraq was completing construction of a biological weapons plant.²⁵

Anti-government extremists Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols used a fertilizer bomb to destroy the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people and injuring hundreds more on April 19, 1995. It was the worst terrorist act up to that point in U.S. history. Americans soon realized that McVeigh and Nichols were hardly alone. In the early to mid-1990s the extreme right in the U.S. experienced a major resurgence. Not only were many older groups such as neo-Nazis given new energy, but entirely new movements emerged, such as the militia movement and the common law court movement. McVeigh and Nichols used conventional explosives to perpetrate their terrorist act but perhaps the next Timothy McVeigh would use nerve gas or plague or anthrax.²⁶

The combination of the Aum Shinrikyo sarin attack in 1995 and the Oklahoma City bombing heightened U.S. concern over biological and chemical agents to new levels, a concern that rhetoric soon reflected. "To build a really devastating anthrax weapon," one defense expert told a Pittsburgh newspaper, "takes less money and skill than the Oklahoma City bomb...A fertilizer bomb kills by the hundreds. A biological weapon kills by the tens of thousands." The Tokyo gas attack was a "wakeup call," according to Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre, "to us and the entire world, that people in the future are going to use these rather terrible weapons in ways that potentially just bring an entire city to its knees." The Office of Technology Assessment issued a report in 1993 suggesting that a small plane flying over Washington D.C. could use 100kg of anthrax and a crop sprayer to kill up to three million people. A few years later, in 1997, Secretary of Defense William Cohen held up a five-pound bag of sugar at a press conference to illustrate how little anthrax would be needed to devastate Washington, D.C.²⁷

1988. On October 30 and 31, 1998, eight abortion clinics in Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, and Tennessee received threatening letters claiming that a powdery substance found in the envelopes was anthrax. Tests on the material in the envelope were conducted at the University of Louisville Hospital indicated that the material was not anthrax. Reportedly, some samples were sent to the

²⁵ *Beyond Anthrax: Extremism and the Bioterrorism Threat.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Disease (USAMRIID), Fort Detrick, Maryland, for additional analysis. USAMRIID confirmed that at least four of the envelopes contained no infectious diseases. Following the anthrax threats, the Justice Department organized a multi-agency federal task force to investigate recent attacks on abortion clinics, including the anthrax threats as well as the murder of a doctor who performed abortions and 22 incidents in which someone released a chemical irritant, butyric acid, at clinics in the South.²⁸

1999. In late February 1999, more than 30 anthrax threat letters were sent to abortion clinics in all parts of the United States: Asheville, North Carolina, Charleston, West Virginia, Cincinnati, Ohio, Manchester, Vermont, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Portland, Oregon, Rapid City, South Dakota, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Washington, D.C. A few of the letters went to other targets, either because of support for abortion or due to mistakes in the addresses. It appears that most, if not all, of the letters were postmarked in Lexington, Kentucky. Laboratory tests showed that none of the letters contained anthrax.²⁹

2000 On January 3, 2000, abortion clinics in 21 states, including Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin, as well as the District of Columbia received anthrax threat letters addressed to the “Security Director” at the clinics. It appears that all clinics received the same threat post-marked December 30, 1999 in Cincinnati, Ohio, and apparently contained the same typewritten text: “You will die in less than 24 hours from exposure to the anthrax on this letter. There is simply no other way to get rid of you, we’re sorry.”³⁰

The total number of anthrax hoaxes cannot be accurately measured, but they numbered well over a hundred during the peak period of October 1998 through February 1999. It was a vicious cycle. The media duly reported on each event, causing more anxiety and more hoaxes. Victims of anthrax hoaxes, both during the 1998-1999 episodes and again in 2001, have tended to government employees, agencies and buildings, abortion clinics and schools. The nature of the anti-abortion anthrax threats, especially their precise geographical targeting against the eastern half of the U.S., suggests a conscious campaign by a dedicated group of extremists rather than a collection of copycat incidents.

²⁸ W. Seth Carus, *Bioterrorism and Biocrimes*, Case 1998-14.

²⁹ *Ibid.* Case 1999-20.

³⁰ *Ibid.* Case 2000-01

The period 1995-2000 resulted in America inadvertently transmitting to the entire world, as well as to dissidents and malcontents within its own borders, how vulnerable the American psyche was to the threat of anthrax.³¹

The October 2001 anthrax attack in the United States

Over the course of several weeks, beginning September 18, 2001, letters containing anthrax were sent to five media offices and two U.S. senators. Twenty-two individuals developed anthrax infections, mostly of the cutaneous variety. Five people died as a result. It was not a mass destruction event but rather a series of symbolic targeted attacks against individuals representing liberal media and American politicians. Possibly all the cases of anthrax exposure in the Washington area were the result of the one letter sent to Senator Daschle. Low level technology but very good aerial and cutaneous viruses were used, perhaps because the perpetrators did not have the sophisticated means for aerosol dissemination.

Before this wave of anthrax letters there were two events of actual bioterror attacks:

- The 1984 food poisoning of 751 individuals in The Dalles, Oregon (USA), through the deliberate contamination of salad bars at ten local restaurants with Salmonella, by the Rajneesh cult;
- Nine attempts, between 1990 and 1993, by the Aum Shinrikyo Japanese terrorist cult, to spread anthrax and botulinum toxin against civil population and the Japanese Crown Prince, in Tokyo. The attacks failed because the agents used by the cult were not active. Aum Shinrikyo is the only group known to have shown an interest in developing aerosol dissemination capability for biological agents. In 1990, they used a large truck with a compressor system and six hidden vents in order to spread botulinum strain, unsuccessfully, at Tokyo's international airport and the U.S. naval bases in Yokohama and Yokosuka.

On the backdrop of the September 11, 2001 deadly symbolic attacks by al-Qaeda in New York and Washington, the October 2001 successful anthrax letters attack represents therefore a threshold in the use of biological agents.

It is interesting to note that the wave of hoax anthrax letters in 1998-2000, many by radical right-wing elements, seemed to foresee the real anthrax letters of October 2001.

³¹ *Beyond Anthrax: Extremism and the Bioterrorism Threat.*

In the first weeks and months after the anthrax campaign the possible responsible suspects were Al-Qaeda operatives, the Iraqi intelligence and American radical right-wing militants.³²

It should be noted that the FBI quite quickly focused on the possibility that the perpetrator was a misfit lone scientist who obtained anthrax bacteria from a U.S. laboratory. But it took almost seven years until Dr. Bruce Ivins, an American microbiologist, senior biodefense researcher at the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) in Fort Detrick, Maryland was accused as perpetrator of the anthrax attack. Ivins died on July 29, 2008, of an overdose of acetaminophen (Tylenol) in an apparent suicide after learning that criminal charges were likely to be filed against him by the FBI. The FBI's conclusions have been contested by many, including senior microbiologists, the widow of one of the victims, and several prominent American politicians. The Los Angeles Times asserted that Ivins stood to profit from the attacks because he was a co-inventor on two patents for a genetically engineered anthrax vaccine.

It is not clear if Ivins used the letters with anthrax spread on the base of white powder because he was influenced by the 1998-2000 wave of hoax letters or he decided that this is the best modus operandi for a targeted attack.

From the various biographical details published by the media on Bruce Ivins there is no real hint to the political motivations of his act. However, it is interesting to note, that the infamous Norwegian right-wing terrorist Anders Breivik described Ivins, in his 2010 manifesto, as "a right wing, Christian, cultural conservative."³³

Al-Qaeda and other jihadists learn from radical rightist technics

In the aftermath of the 9/11 carnage, white supremacists in America and Europe applauded the suicide attacks and praised Osama bin Laden, their mastermind. According to the Washington Post, the Aryan Action group praised the September 11 attacks on its Web site and declared: "Either you're fighting with the jews against al-Qaida, or you support al-Qaida fighting against the jews."

Martin Lindstedt: "I've been wishing that the A-rabs had stolen a couple hundred jumbo-jets full of Talmudic Khazar mamzers, criminal-regimeist whiggers, niggers, gooks, beaners, etc., and crashed them into the Supreme Kort, CONgress-Kapital, J. Edgar Hoover FBI Building, all 50 state capitals, TalmudVision stations and as many concentrations of baal-priests as possible...And do you know what I'd have called it? A DAMNED GOOD START!!!!!!" Neofascist youth in France celebrated the

³² Ely Karmon, "The Anthrax Campaign – an Interim Analysis," *ICT website*, October 30, 2001, URL: <https://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=814#gsc.tab=0>.

³³ Anders Breivik Manifesto, "2083: A European Declaration of Independence," London 2011.

event that evening with champagne at the headquarters of the extreme right Front National. German neo-Nazis, some wearing checkered Palestinian headscarves, rejoiced at street demonstrations while burning an American flag. Jan Kopal, head of the Czech National Social Bloc, declared at a rally in Prague that bin Laden was "an example for our children." Horst Mahler, a former left-wing German terrorist and prominent member of the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party (NPD) in Germany, proclaimed his solidarity with the terrorists and said America had gotten what it deserved.³⁴

In the early 2000s a long and detailed document titled *White Resistance Manual* was published online. Of its 310 pages, 302 deal with tactical matters, and provide in-depth instructions for manufacturing and using multiple types of weapons and explosives, to be used against public figures, institutions and private citizens who are considered "enemies of the White race." The document's first chapters serve as an ideological and strategic manifesto, exhibiting explicit anti-Jewish and racist ideology.

In the section titled "The Goals of Our Struggle," the writer lists four short and long-term goals for the revolution. The writer calls to target primarily Jews and non-whites, "anti-White" politicians, the media, law enforcement, and "race traitors." The manual explains why these groups should be targeted, and how to carry out attacks against them and recipes for creating explosives, booby traps, mines, and poisons. The manual provides explicit instructions for lethal attack, including arson, sabotage, and assassination, as well as non-lethal attack, including threats, vandalism, and harassment of Jews and non-whites.³⁵

On March 27, 2019, and again on August 22, 2019, the *White Resistance Manual* began resurfacing on the white supremacist forum Stormfront. Links to the document were shared by multiple accounts on Gab and BitChute, and it has thus far been available for over 3,000 online users. This Manual bore a striking resemblance to the shorter *Lone Mujahid Guide*, which was published by al-Qaeda.³⁶

The Manual warns potential terrorists that toxicology examinations can disclose the presence of drugs or poisons in biological specimens (i.e. deceased targets). The examinations can determine the circumstances surrounding drug-or poison-related homicides, suicides, or accidents. The most

³⁴ Martin A. Lee, "National Alliance, Holocaust Deniers React To 9/11 Attacks," *Intelligence Report*, The Southern Poverty Law Center, Spring Issue, March 05, 2002.

³⁵ Michael Davis, "The 'White Resistance Manual': A White Supremacist Ideological, Strategic, And Tactical Guidebook," *MEMRI Inquiry & Analysis Series*, No. 1474, September 20, 2019.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

readily identified toxins include: Volatile compounds (ethanol, methanol, isopropanol); Heavy metals (arsenic); Nonvolatile organic compounds (drugs of abuse, pharmaceuticals); Miscellaneous (strychnine, cyanide). The operative should not store any poisons where investigators can find them. Make up poisons only as they are needed.³⁷

In 2014, a laptop of Muhammed S., a Tunisian chemistry and physics student who joined the Islamic State, was found in an Islamic State safe house inside Syria. It contained instructions how to weaponize the bubonic plague. One 21-minute clip, featuring former American Nazi Party member Kurt Saxon, offers instructions how to obtain the deadly toxin ricin from castor beans. Saxon provides a detailed description of the process on camera. Muhammed did not limit himself to jihadi videos or publications. He appears to have consumed material from extremists of all stripes, downloading *The Terrorist's Handbook*, *The Anarchist Cookbook*, and the neo-Nazi e-book *The White Resistance Manual*.³⁸

The Mujahideen Poisons Handbook is easily obtainable online. The book is modelled on a western publication - Maxwell Hutchkinson's *The Poisoner's Handbook*, which is legally available in the UK.³⁹ Published in 1988, its recipes for homemade ricin, botulism and other alleged "kitchen-made deadlies" were copied into electronic form by American teenagers, distributed on bulletin board systems, and then moved to the world wide web. One of the best examples of Hutchkinson's translation into jihadist Arabic documents was the *Manual of Afghan Jihad* in which Hutchkinson's advice is copied over verbatim - complete with intellectual mistakes. However, the one recipe that sticks out, and which has fascinated jihadists since 9/11 in documents alleged to instruct on the art of bioterror, is Hutchkinson's "recipe" for botulism toxin.⁴⁰

In January 2003, an IDF spokesperson reported that Hamas had published on its website a twenty-three page manual written in 1996 titled *The Mujahedin Poisons Handbook* (by one Abdel Aziz, published for the "Brothers" in Afghanistan, on 7 February 1996), which outlines how terrorists can prepare homemade poisons, chemical toxins and gases, and other deadly materials. The Israeli army ordered restrictions in the West Bank on the sale of chemical products that could be used in creating

³⁷ *White Resistance Manual*, V- 2.4, URL.:

<https://usermanual.wiki/Document/WhiteResistanceManual.86687255/view>

³⁸ Harald Doornbos, Jenan Moussa, "Recipes From the Islamic State's Laptop of Doom," *Foreign Policy*, September 9, 2014.

³⁹ "Dangerous material," *Weekly Worker*, URL <https://weeklyworker.co.uk/worker/697/dangerous-material/>

⁴⁰ "From the Poisoner's Handbook To The Botox Shoe Of Death," *Dick Destiny Blog*, June 13, 2006 URL.: <http://www.dickdestiny.com/blog/2006/06/from-poisoners-handbook-to-botox-shoe.html>

deadly explosives. According to an IDF statement, enforcing sanctions on the sale of acid, sulfur, and nitrate is "part of the war against the terrorist infrastructure."⁴¹ Under pressure from the Palestinian Authority, which at the time still controlled the Gaza Strip, the manual was withdrawn from Hamas' website after three weeks.

Radical Right-wing bioterrorism after 9/11

Post 9/11 interest in survivalist training and equipment has been used to increase militia membership and activities. Militia members at a fair in Yakima, Washington, actively sought individuals to enroll in classes on terrorism survival. The Militia of Montana sold biological warfare suits, gas masks, and potassium iodide to individuals in various parts of the United States.⁴²

Denys Ray Hughes, a survivalist or militia member, was arrested in 2005 in Kansas. In his home in Phoenix, Arizona, police found castor bean plants and various bomb-making components. In a cabin he owned in Wisconsin, authorities found ricin formulas, bottles of castor beans, and dimethyl sulfoxide (which theoretically can allow ricin to penetrate the skin). Hughes had been growing castor bean plants, cultivating thousands of seeds. In 2006, he was sentenced to 87 months in prison.⁴³

Aryan Strike Force. Ian Davison, 42, a white supremacist leading member of the British neo-Nazi Aryan Strike Force (ASF), a group that planned assaults on Muslims and Jews among others. was jailed for 10 years after he became the first person in Britain to be convicted of manufacturing ricin at his home in 2006 or early 2007. ASF had about 350 members recruited via the Internet, though not all were active.⁴⁴

On November 1, 2011, four elderly Georgia men were arrested relating to plans to obtain an unregistered explosive device and to manufacture ricin for use in attacks against other U.S. citizens and government personnel and officials. They were members of **a fringe militia organization** and began participating in clandestine meetings of a "covert" operation team starting in approximately March 2011 in which they discussed multiple criminal activities, including using toxic agents; and assassinations in an effort to undermine federal and state government and to advance their interests. One of the indicted militants, who performed maintenance services at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said that he would like to make 10 pounds of ricin and disperse it

⁴¹ Jamie Chosak and Julie Sawyer, "Hamas's Tactics: Lessons from Recent Attacks," *PeaceWatch* #522, October 19, 2005.

⁴² Craig Welch, "Militia Groups See a Revival," *Seattle Times*, October 16, 2001.

⁴³ *Extremists and the Ricin Threat*.

⁴⁴ "British white supremacist jailed for making ricin," *Reuters*, May 14, 2010.

in various United States cities, including Atlanta. He described a scenario in which the toxin would be blown from a car traveling on the interstates. He allegedly also said that he possessed the ingredient used to make the toxin and cautioned the source about the dangers of handling it.⁴⁵

An important research on right-wing radicals and the use of CBRN agents (chemical, biological and radiological) has been published in 2018 by Koehler & Popella. Based on a dataset of incidents drawing on open-source material (press reports, governmental documents, academic publications), covering the period between March 1970 and May 2017, the authors argue that far-right CBRN terrorism is a rare but existing form of far-right terrorism. The dataset collected for this analysis covers therefore the right-wing incidents before and after 9/11. It consists of 31 incidents, mostly in the United States of America (28 incidents). Even though only limited information was available on the ideological motivation and background of individuals involved in far-right CBRN terrorism, a strong indication emerged from the dataset that non-religious forms of far-right ideology, especially neo-Nazism and non-religious white supremacy, were the main driving forces behind the incidents (58 percent or 18 incidents of the dataset). Hence, according to the authors, it was not the notion of an “apocalyptic racism” that appears to have been an important goal of far-right CBRN incidents, “but rather the attempt to create chaos and cause an uprising to topple the government.”⁴⁶

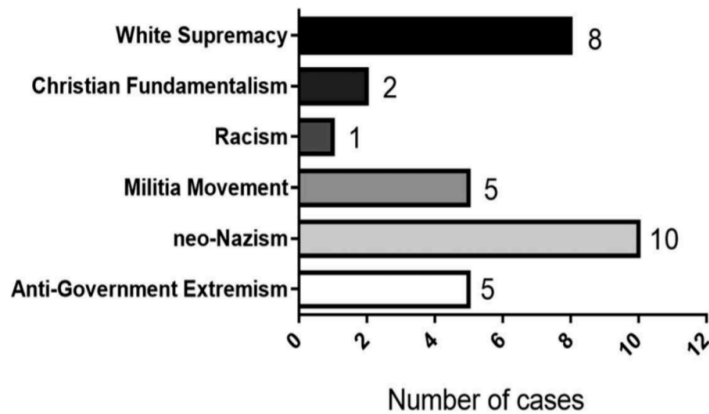
The most popular CBRN agent in far-right plots seems to be ricin, which accounts for about 33 percent (or 11 cases) of 33 counted agents across the 31 incidents (sometimes more than one agent was pursued or acquired), followed by cyanide, a chemical substance (24 percent or eight cases), and radiological material (12 percent or four cases). Other biological agents that have been featured sporadically in the plots are anthrax and bubonic plague. Both ricin and cyanide require a low level of knowledge and equipment for their acquisition and can thus be rated as agents of low complexity. See below part of the figures based on Koehler & Popella’s dataset of incidents:⁴⁷

⁴⁵ North Georgia Men Arrested, Charged in Plots to Purchase Explosives, Silencer and to Manufacture a Biological Toxin, Northern District of Georgia, U.S. Attorney’s Office, November 01, 2011, URL: <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/atlanta/press-releases/2011/north-georgia-men-arrested-charged-in-plots-to-purchase-explosives-silencer-and-to-manufacture-a-biological-toxin>

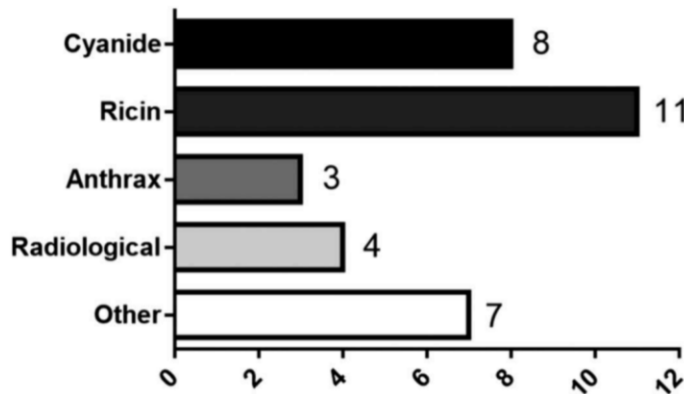
⁴⁶ Daniel Koehler & Peter Popella (2018): Mapping Far-right Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Terrorism Efforts in the West: Characteristics of Plots and Perpetrators for Future Threat Assessment, *Terrorism and Political Violence*. DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2018.1500365

⁴⁷ Ibid.

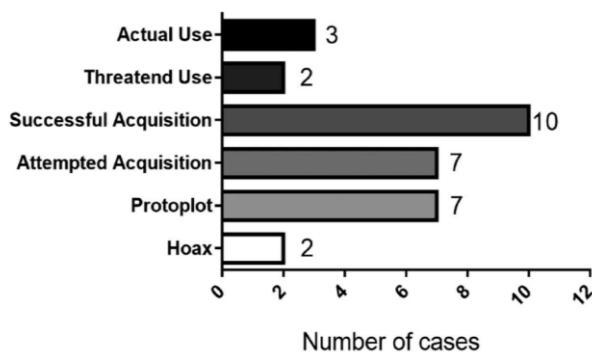
Ideological Affiliation of XRW CBRN Terrorism



Agents Used or Pursued in XRW CBRN Terrorism



Types of XRW CBRN Terrorism



Summarizing the state of the literature, far-right CBRN terrorism is generally considered very unlikely. An important conclusion is that far-right CBRN terrorism appears to be predominantly a lone-actor phenomenon. Based on the rare information about the biographical backgrounds of

rightwing terrorists, perpetrators are comparatively young age, male, have predominantly blue-collar professions and rather troubled family and mental health histories.⁴⁸

According to the Anti-Defamation League, in the United States, domestic right-wing extremist groups (both anti-government extremists and white supremacists) have long had a fascination with ricin. At gun shows, survivalist expos, and in all sorts of places across the Internet, extremists can easily purchase manuals written by or for right-wing extremists which include ricin-making instructions and sometimes advice on its use. As a result, the existence and nature of ricin is well known among right-wing extremists, who occasionally discuss its use, or even advocate or applaud its use.⁴⁹

This author has found that the Koehler & Popella database does not include some biological incidents before 9/11 and ignores dozens if not hundreds of hoaxes with anthrax letters during the huge waves of 1998 – 2000 and after the 2001 anthrax attack in the U.S., which had a tremendous psychological and social impact on the public opinion and quite a high economic price. The U.S. law enforcement and courts took harsh measures and heavy prison punishments in order to deter and diminish such disruptive biological hoaxes.

Anders Breivik formulates the new radical right's strategy

Anders Breivik's manifesto, the Norwegian right-wing lone-wolf terrorist who on July 22, 2011 killed seventy-seven people in a bombing of government buildings in Oslo and then in a mass shooting on the nearby island of Utøya, is an extremely important document for the understanding of the right-wing obsession and fascination with biological warfare and bioterrorism, for now and the future.⁵⁰ While Breivik's manifesto indicated he planned and executed the attack as a lone wolf, it also suggests that he is part of a larger organization that he calls the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon (PCCTS, also known as the Knights Templar), which seeks to encourage other lone wolves (whom Breivik refers to as "Justiciar Knights") and small cells in other parts of Europe to carry out a plan to "save" Europe and European culture from destruction. He conducted his assault specifically against the Labor Party's current and future leadership because of his belief that the party is Marxist-oriented and is responsible for encouraging multiculturalism, Muslim immigration into Norway and, acting with other similar European governments, the coming

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ *Extremists and the Ricin Threat*.

⁵⁰ Anders Breivik Manifesto , "2083: A European Declaration of Independence ," London 2011, URL: <https://info.publicintelligence.net/AndersBehringBreivikManifesto.pdf>,

destruction of European culture. Although the Labor Party members are members of his own race, he considers them traitors and holds them in more contempt than he does Muslims.⁵¹

Breivik's international connections. Breivik claims to have attended a meeting in London in 2002 to "re-found the Knights Templar." This organization, PCCTS, was formed with the stated purpose of fighting back against "European Jihad" and to defend the "free indigenous peoples of Europe." To achieve this goal, the PCCTS would implement a three-phase plan designed to seize political and military power in Europe. In his manifesto Breivik outlines the plan as follows:⁵²

- Phase 1 (1999-2030): Cell-based shock attacks, sabotage attacks, etc.
- Phase 2 (2030-2070): Same as above but bigger cells/networks, armed militias.
- Phase 3 (2070-2100): Pan-European coup d'états, deportation of Muslims and execution of traitors.

According to the manifesto, the 2002 meeting was attended by seven other individuals, two from England and one each from France, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece and Russia. He also asserts that the organization has members from Serbia, Sweden, Belgium and the United States, who were unable to attend the meeting. Breivik's manifesto notes that he does not know how many Justiciar Knights there are in Western Europe but estimates their number to be from 15 to 80.

Breivik claimed he had contact with the far-right English Defence League (EDL), a movement in the United Kingdom that has been accused of Islamophobia. He allegedly had extensive links with senior EDL members and wrote that he attended an EDL demonstration in Bradford. EDL leader Tommy Robinson denounced Breivik and his attacks and has denied any official links with him. Interpol asked Maltese police to investigate Paul Ray, a former EDL member who blogs under the name "Lionheart." Ray conceded that he may have been an inspiration for Breivik but deplored his actions.⁵³ Following the establishment of the European Defence League, the Norwegian Defence League (NDL) was launched in 2010. Breivik became a member of this organization under the pseudonym "Sigurd Jorsalfar". Former head of the NDL, Lena Andreassen, claims that Breivik was

⁵¹ Scott Stewart, "Norway: Lessons from a Successful Lone Wolf Attacker," *Tactical Analysis, Stratfor*, July 28, 2011.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ "Interpol requests Maltese police to investigate Norway mass-murderer's Malta-based "mentor", *Malta Independent Online*, 31 July 2011. "The extremists in our midst," *Sunday Times*, 31 July 2011.

ejected from the organization when she took over as leader in March 2011 because he was too extreme.⁵⁴

After an intense investigation assisted internationally by several security agencies, the Norwegian police have not found any evidence that a PCCTS network existed, or that the alleged 2002 London meeting ever took place. The police view Breivik's claim as a "figment of imagination considering his schizophrenia diagnosis" [diagnosis not accepted in court] and are confident that he had no associates.⁵⁵

For many, Breivik has become an icon not simply of efficient violence but of ideological hate for Muslims, immigrants, and their allies. However, argues J.M. Berger, Breivik's innovation was operational rather than ideological: the deadliest lone-actor terrorist attack in history. His manifesto is seen as prophetic. Some describe a full commitment to the cause as "going Breivik" or "going full Breivik." Breivik has become an inspiration for others on the fringes of right-wing and neo-Nazi ideology, labeled "Saint Breivik" and "Commander Breivik" by some of his followers. His success was destined to cast a long shadow and influence numerous other radical rightist terrorists. The bulk of Breivik's 1500 pages manifesto posted on the Internet constitutes a compilation of texts mainly copied from U.S. far-Right websites.⁵⁶

The manifesto of Australian Brenton Harrison Tarrant, the terrorist responsible for the 15 March 2019 horrific attack at the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, a 78-page text titled "The Great Replacement," paid tribute to several racially motivated terrorists, including America's Dylann Roof, Italy's Luca Traini, Sweden's Anton Lundin Pettersson, and Britain's Darren Osborne. But the New Zealand attacker places Breivik in a separate category, at once a symbol to be revered but also as a call to action, a justification for political violence. Tarrant considers Breivik to be his only "true inspiration" for launching the attack, demonstrating just how significant the Norwegian terrorist's impact was on Tarrant's own willingness to act.⁵⁷

Tarrant claims he "only had a brief contact with Knight Justiciar Breivik" and received blessing for his "mission" after contacting his "brother knights". It is not clear if Tarrant had indeed encountered his idol.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ "Hevder Breivik var for ekstrem for Norwegian Defence League" [Claims Breivik was too extreme for Norwegian Defence League], *Agderposten* (in Norwegian), 26 July 2011.

⁵⁵ Wikipedia

⁵⁶ J.M. Berger, "The Dangerous Spread of Extremist Manifestos," *The Atlantic*, February 26, 2019.

⁵⁷ Colin P. Clarke, "The Cult of Breivik," *SLATE website*, March 18, 2019.

⁵⁸ Ely Karmon, "A Manifesto for Murder," *The Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC) website*, March 26, 2019, URL.: <https://aijac.org.au/australia-israel-review/a-manifesto-for-murder/>

Chapters 3.53 and 3.55 on bioterrorism in his 1500 pages document is the most detailed and relatively recent document describing the radical right-wing ideological vision, the operational ways to achieve CBRN capabilities and the *modus operandi* in such attacks.

Chapter 3.53 is titled “Obtaining and using WMDs against the cultural Marxist/multiculturalist elites.” It defines a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) as a weapon that can kill large numbers of individuals and/or cause great damage to man-made structures (e.g. buildings). Efforts must be made to obtain biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, proposes and details Breivik. This paper will limit itself to the sub-chapters dealing with biological weapons and will cite largely from the original text.⁵⁹

Biological weapons (BW). As a tactical weapon, the main military problem with a BW attack is that it would take days to be effective. BW targeting humans have high infectivity, high potency, can be delivered as an aerosol and there are no vaccines for them (sic.). The biological agents can often be manufactured quickly and easily but the primary difficulty is not the production of the agent but delivery in an effective form. For example, anthrax is considered an effective agent and obtaining anthrax is easy as it is found in millions of anthrax sites around the world (sic.). Its first modern incidence (as a biological weapon) occurred when Scandinavian “freedom fighters” (the rebel groups) supplied by the German General Staff used anthrax with unknown results against the Imperial Russian Army in Finland in 1916.

“Our objectives when using WMD’s are the same. We will not allow our corrupt and traitorous EU elites to sell the European people into Muslim slavery. We will not allow them to annihilate Western civilisation, our identities and culture by allowing them to continue to institutionalise and implement multiculturalism. We demand their full surrender - nothing more, nothing less.”

Efforts should be made to create one or more Western European laboratories for the purpose of short-term intensive cultivation to avoid detection. The products produced in the lab should be distributed to trusted key “cultural conservatives” in several countries through a straw man. Break-in at national facilities is certainly an alternative but will prove much more difficult as it will require relatively large cells.

Obtaining WMD’s from Serbian Nationalists is a realistic scenario. More realistic is obtaining them from Christian Nationalists in the Middle East: Armenian, Coptic, Maronite, Assyrian “brothers in the Middle East” and smuggling WMD into the EU by “representative looking Europeans”, especially

⁵⁹ *Anders Breivik manifesto.*

female. “When establishing contact with nationalists among these groups make sure they are fully aware of our political standpoints, especially in regard to our goal of re-creating future Middle Eastern Christian states.” Breivik doubts the Russian or Israeli right-wing nationalists will be accommodating, as they will see it as being too risky and too early, “but the opportunity is still worth exploring.”

There is the “doubtful but not impossible possibility,” argues Breivik, to obtain WMDs from “extremely high risk sources, Jihadi groups...There might come a time when we, the PCCTS, Knights Templar will consider to use or even to work as a proxy for the enemies of our enemies. This might be an option “if conventional approaches are fruitless or if the intelligence agencies/system protectors working for the Western European regimes successfully manage to neutralise the long-term efforts to liberate our countries.” Under these circumstances, the PCCTS, Knights Templar “will for the future consider working with the enemies of the EU/US hegemony such as Iran (South Korea [sic.] is unlikely), al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab or the rest of the devout fractions of the Islamic Ummah with the intention for deployment of small nuclear, radiological, biological or chemical weapons in Western European capitals and other high priority locations. Justiciar Knights and other European Christian martyrs can avoid the scrutiny normally reserved for individuals of Arab descent and we can ensure successful deployment and detonation in the location of our choice.”

Anthrax is considered one of the most effective WMDs because it has an “excellent shock effect” and is likely to result in massive media coverage. It can have a major economic impact, remarks rightly Breivik, and gives as example the 2001 anthrax attacks: cleanups at a US Senate office building, several contaminated postal facilities and other government and private office buildings showed that decontamination is possible, but it is time-consuming and costly. Clearing the Senate office building of anthrax spores cost \$27 million, according to the Government Accountability Office. Cleaning the Brentwood postal facility outside Washington cost \$130 million and took 26 months.

Another biological agent recommended by Breivik is ricin, including ricin bullets. Ricin is produced easily and inexpensively, is highly toxic, is stable in aerosolized form, and has no treatment or vaccine. It is extracted from the castor bean by using a specific purification method, explains Breivik, and proposes a detailed practical guide how to extract poison from castor beans.

Finally, Breivik presents the strategic timeline for the right-wing revolution. “The PCCTS, Knights Templar will allow all Western European regimes to capitulate to our demands and we are hereby **giving them a deadline which is January 1st, 2020.** We will not initiate any nuclear power plant

attacks until the deadline has passed (we will instead focus on non-nuclear attacks until then). However, if the Western European multiculturalist regimes do not fully implement our demands - stop the European genocide, deport all Muslims from Europe and ban multiculturalism as an anti-European hate ideology - by this date, we are committed to effectuate ALL necessary measures in order to stop them from annihilating everything European.⁶⁰

It has been argued that CBRNe based attacks are of interest not only to large well-funded terrorist groups, but also to lone wolves, For example, after Breivik's attacks in Norway, a Mexican chemistry student, Jose Perez Bautista was arrested on August, 17, 2011 for planning to use "suffocating gases" and other chemicals to poison protesters during the Pope's visit to Spain. Breivik himself claims that, "there are cells that are already in the process of attempting to acquire chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons." Because of the independent nature of lone wolf activities one might assume that their network, financial means and CBRN knowledge are all extremely limited, and that, as a result, they do not amount to much of a threat in regard to CBRNe. However, this is not always the case as Bruce Ivins demonstrated with his alleged anthrax mailing campaign in October 2001. ⁶¹



Anders Breivik
wearing protective
clothing, photo at
the end of his
manifesto

A study prepared for the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), published only five days after Breivik's attacks, has analyzed the chapters dedicated to CBRN issues (or WMD according to the preferred denomination at the time).⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Portal Team, "Lone Wolves' CBRNe Capabilities – Lessons Learned from Breivik Attack," *CBRNe.Portal*, July 30, 2011.

⁶² Charles P. Blair, Kelsey Gregg, And Jonathan Garbose, "Norway's Anders Brevik: Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Politics of Cultural Despair," *Terrorism*, Federation of American Scientists (FAS), July 27, 2011.

“A briefcase full of high-grade anthrax has the potential to kill as many as 200,000 people if dispersed effectively. However, this is not our objective,” claimed Beverik. Despite claiming his “aim is to execute surgically precise attacks with a medium to low amount of casualties...”, argue the authors, he intended to use CBRN to cause mass casualties. “The number of civilians loses will be acceptable for certain targets. Certain target building complexes can contain as many as 30-50 category A traitors, 200-300 category B traitors and 2000-3000 category C traitors with an acceptable amount of civilians.” Breivik claims nuclear or radiological weapons will not be used by himself or his followers until at least 2020 and until then he urges his followers to use conventional, biological, and chemical weapons.⁶³

Breivik’s treatise focused on *Bacillus anthracis* (the causative agent of anthrax), ricin, and concentrated liquid nicotine. Breivik neglected the obvious and relatively easy way to acquire BWs such as botulinum neurotoxin and Foot and Mouth Disease—both of which could have massive social and economic ramifications if deployed effectively. Aerosolized anthrax, nicotine, and ricin are considered deadly BWs, but Breivik only mentions the use of aerosolized anthrax. He focuses on using un-aerosolized ricin and nicotine for armed assaults. Breivik’s understanding of the social implications of BW attacks is well grounded and he is capable of making and/or obtaining ricin and nicotine for assault use. However, the authors evaluate that Breivik’s ability to obtain weapons grade anthrax and toxins is less likely. More worrisome than the assault scenario is the scenario Breivik described of releasing chemical and/or biological agents into a building’s ventilation system. Breivik understands that along with possible high fatality rates (without the loss of infrastructure), massive media coverage, economic damage, and intense psychological effects, there are other “good” reasons for attempting a BW attack. Breivik himself was not capable of creating and deploying biological weapons, but his planning and resolve to manipulate people and organizations in order to acquire weaponized biological materials is troubling, claim the authors.⁶⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic, trigger to renewed interest in bioterrorism

The heightened volume of graphics, posters and memes circulating online in far-right channels in recent weeks clearly indicates the eagerness of some to use biological weapons as a means of terror. According to Ong and Nur, such calls are of added concern, given the ease with which individual actors can crudely weaponise the COVID-19 virus. Islamist terror networks have also urged the

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

intensification of operations against their enemies. However, far-right groups appear to be distinguishing themselves by encouraging infected persons “to weaponise the virus” by spreading it to law enforcement officials and non-white populations. For example, a post in a Telegram channel called Eco-Fascist Central circulated in March advocated for members to target Jewish communities by simply coughing on the door handles of local synagogues. Another poster called for the same tactic to be employed against critical infrastructure, that is, “cough on your local transit system.”⁶⁵ According to a February 17, 2020 brief by the Federal Protective Service Intelligence (which is part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security), white supremacists discussed plans to weaponize coronavirus via “saliva,” a “spray bottle” or “laced items” and presented this as an “‘OBLIGATION’ to spread it, should any of them contract the virus.” The discussion occurred in a channel on the app Telegram devoted to the “siege culture” philosophies of neo-Nazi author James Mason. Mason wrote in the 1980s a series of newsletters titled “Siege” that advocated for acts of racial terrorism in order to hasten a war that would cause the breakdown of society. In recent years, Mason’s writings became popular among members of the violent neo-Nazi group Atomwaffen Division and its offshoots.⁶⁶

Since the corona outbreak in early December 2019, there have been posts on Telegram, 4chan and Gab linking the coronavirus to racist and anti-Semitic slurs and memes. This has ranged from racist posts to parodies of Chinese people mocking their hygiene and eating habits. They have used terms such as “corona-chan”, and “boogaflu” (modification of the term “boogaloo” used to reference a future civil war). Fake news, rumours, hoaxes, and conspiracy theories that have been spread during the Coronavirus crisis not only raise prejudices about Asians, Jews, Chinese, foreigners, immigrants but also present them as the causes for the virus, for which they are to be blamed and punished. The most worrying aspect of the far-right’s coronavirus-related campaign is the call for actual attacks.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Kyler Ong and Nur Aziemah Azman, “Distinguishing Between the Extreme Far-right and Islamic State’s (IS) Calls to Exploit COVID-19,” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore, Vol. 12 Issue 03, April 2020.

⁶⁶ Hunter Walker and Jana Winter, “Federal law enforcement document reveals white supremacists discussed using coronavirus as a bioweapon,” *Yahoo News*, March 21, 2020.

⁶⁷ Gabriel Weimann and Natalie Masri, “The Virus of Hate: Far-Right Terrorism in Cyberspace,” *International Institute for Counter—Terrorism website*, April 5, 2020, [#https://www.ict.org.il/Article/2528/The_Virus_of_Hate](https://www.ict.org.il/Article/2528/The_Virus_of_Hate) #gsc.tab=0

Alarming, the case of 36-year old Neo-Nazi member Timothy Wilson from Missouri who tried to bomb a hospital believing COVID-19 was engineered by Jews indicates that individuals are willing to respond to such calls. He was killed in a shootout with the FBI.⁶⁸

Many law enforcement and security agencies and terrorism experts worldwide have stressed the threat of bioterrorism by radical right-wing groups and individuals in the era of coronavirus.

In the last decade, 73.3% of all domestic extremist-related killings in the United States have been perpetrated by right-wing extremists. In Europe, a similar trend is visible. In Germany, for instance, domestic intelligence services have observed a steady rise in the number of potentially violent right-wing extremists, with current estimates at 13,000.⁶⁹

Scott Atran, known researcher of terrorism at the University of Michigan, considers that “the greatest threat, by far, comes from far-right networks and white supremacist groups...[which] are extremely active, inciting attacks against Asians – who [they accuse of having] carried the disease to the White Race; immigrants from all countries but especially darker people.” There are calls on the Darknet to bomb hospitals and synagogues, to shoot, stab, or kill by any other means Asians, Jews, Muslims, African-Americans and immigrants. “All terrorist incidents in the U.S. in the last two years stem from domestic sources – far-right, supremacist, rampage-like shooters,” he explained. For these reasons, Atran believes the threat from far-right domestic terrorism is far more serious for U.S. national security than jihadi threats, for the moment. COVID-19, he thinks, will give impetus to anti-government conspiracy theories, growing hope, plans, coordination, and intention to bring about radical societal transformation through acts of violence.⁷⁰

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in April he sees a growing danger of bioterrorism attacks that aim to create a pandemic similar to that of the coronavirus. Security experts from the Council of Europe have warned of a potential increase in the use of biological weapons, like viruses or bacterias, in a post-coronavirus world. “The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how vulnerable modern society is to viral infections and their potential for disruption,” the Council's Committee on Counter-Terrorism said in a statement. Terrorists would not forget “lessons learned” during the

⁶⁸ Abdul Basit, “The COVID-19 Pandemic: An Opportunity for Terrorist Groups?” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore, Vol. 12 Issue 03, April 2020.

⁶⁹ Sara Brzuskiewicz, “Spectacularizing the Far-Right: Before and after Christchurch,” *European Eye on Radicalization*, March 22, 2019, URL.: <https://eeradicalization.com/spectacularizing-the-far-right-before-and-after-christchurch/>

⁷⁰ Kristian Alexander and Giorgio Cafiero, “Pandemics and the Threat of Terrorism: How Dangerous is Covid-19?” *Inside Arabia*, June 15, 2020.

pandemic and bioterrorism "could prove to be extremely effective." Damage to humans and economies could be "significantly higher" than that of a traditional terrorist attack. The council's security experts called on the 47 Council of Europe member states to coordinated efforts to prepare to fight a biological weapons attack by engaging in training exercises. "The Council of Europe has no concrete evidence of a heightened threat from bioterrorism due to the pandemic," according to spokesperson Daniel Höltgen but however he underlined the need for continued international cooperation in this field."⁷¹

A new study from the London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue found that more than 6,600 right-wing extremist social media pages and accounts were linked to Canadians. The study found acts of far-right terrorism in Canada have increased by 320 per cent over the last five years.⁷²

Germany has been one of the main arenas of radical right-wing terrorism. The Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV) 2018 Annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution reports that right-wing politically motivated crimes recorded as having an extremist background grew to represent a relevant challenge for the German authorities: 19,409, among these, 1,088 were violent crimes, in slight increase compared to 2017 statistics. The recent attack in Hanau together with the terrorist attack in Halle in October 2019, also signal a global interrelation between far-right extremists' behaviour.⁷³

With the increasing use of live streaming, English-language manifestos, and social media platforms and messaging applications as the main facilitator of personal networks, right-wing extremism is shifting more from a local toward a global stage. The modus operandi of these attacks appears to

⁷¹ "Coronavirus: Experts warn of bioterrorism after pandemic," *DW NEWS*, May 25, 2020.

⁷² Robert Williams, "'An extremist buffet' — COVID-19, bioterrorism and increasing anti-authority sentiment," *The Record*, June 19, 2020.

⁷³ On October 9, 2019, Stephan Balliet, a 27-year-old German national killed 2 people and injured multiple others after trying to attack a synagogue on the day of Yom Kippur in Halle, North Rhine-Westphalia. equipped with a military-style combat uniform and multiple homemade weapons, had released a manifesto before the attack and streamed his attack live on Twitch, an online platform. The fact that Balliet's manifesto was written in English indicates that in this case too, the attacker was seeking to draw the attention of an international audience. On February 19, 2020, in a far-right motivated shooting on 2 different locations in Hanau, Hesse, 43-year-old Tobias R. killed 9 people with migration backgrounds and injured 5 others, before committing suicide at his home. The letter he left highlights many white supremacist theories as the core of his communicated message includes a call for the elimination of non-white people while referencing their behaviour and committed crimes on German soil.

be linked to and inspired by previous right-wing terrorist attacks such as the one in Christchurch, New Zealand or in El Paso, United States.⁷⁴

In June 2020, Norwegian police said they were concerned that the social and economic strains caused by the coronavirus pandemic could lead to more radicalisation and extremist violence. "It's likely that an increased number of Norwegians will become vulnerable to radicalisation as a result of social and economic challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic," the PST security police force said. While the risk of suffering one or more mass attacks in the next 18 months remains at a 50-50 probability, in line with an assessment presented at the start of the year, threats against individuals are likely to rise, albeit from low levels, the PST said. A far-right man was jailed for 21 years for the racially motivated murder last year of his Chinese-born stepsister and attempting to kill worshippers in a mosque shooting spree.⁷⁵

In faraway Australia, where right-wing extremists now make up around a third of all domestic investigations at the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), the spy agency warned that the far-right is using COVID-19 as cover to push its dangerous ideas and recruit new members. Right-wing rhetoric is reaching an unprecedented audience who are stuck at home, increasingly socially isolated and spending time online because of the pandemic, according to an ASIO threat assessment. "COVID-19 restrictions are being exploited by extreme right-wing narratives that paint the state as oppressive, and globalisation and democracy as flawed and failing," the intelligence agency warned. "We assess the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced an extreme right-wing belief in the inevitability of societal collapse and a 'race war'." Unfortunately, extreme right-wing groups are more organised, sophisticated and security-conscious than before. "These groups are becoming increasingly ideological; more aware of and committed to specific dogmas, philosophies and views, many of which support or glorify violence."⁷⁶

A first evaluation of the future radical right bioterrorism threat

The radical right-wing obsession with bioterrorism and biological warfare from the 1970s to the 1990s continues after the historical September/October conventional and anthrax attacks.

⁷⁴ Mattia Caniglia, Linda Winkler and Solène Métais, "The Rise of the Right-Wing Violent Extremism Threat in Germany and its Transnational Character," *European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center (ESISC)*, 19 March 2020.

⁷⁵ "Norwegian police worry that coronavirus upheaval could lead to more radicalisation," *Reuters*, June 18, 2020.

⁷⁶ Mario Christodoulou, "ASIO briefing warns that the far-right is exploiting coronavirus to recruit new members," *ABC NEWS*, June 11, 2020.

Ideology has not changed much, besides perhaps increase focus against Muslim communities and jihadi terrorism and against the strong waves of immigration to Europe, from the Middle East and Africa and to the United States, from Latin America and the Muslim world.

The motivation has increased with the time and the change on the backdrop of new political local, regional, and global contexts.

Two events have marked the far-right groups and individuals' will to upgrade the magnitude and lethality of their attacks: the Oklahoma City bombing and the Breivik massacre in Norway.

The October 2001 anthrax in the US by a lone scientist (Bruce Ivins?) represents a new threshold in bioterrorism. Breivik has been aware of it and therefore his interpretation of its strategic significance is important in the evaluation of future attempts of bioterrorism. More so on the backdrop of his influence on right-wing terrorists of the last generation and their modus operandi. That's why he recommended "to create one or more Western European laboratories," distributed to trusted key "cultural conservatives" the likes of Bruce Ivins. In this framework it could be compared with the use of fanatic brainwashed scientists by the Japanese AUM cult, or the dedicated Saddam Hussein's biology and chemistry scientists who decided to work in the ranks of ISIS and later the Islamic State.

Operationally, the fixation with ricin and anthrax as biological agents of choice has not changed during the years (and cyanide for chemical agents), which limits the lethality of such attacks. However, terrorists, including from the right, have tried or spoken of the possibility to use botulinum toxin or plague bacteria. Modern biology scientists would be terrorists could even try to develop new more deadly engineered biological agents.

It is of note that after 9/11, despite the loathing of Arabs and Muslims, right-wing ideologues and groups were ready to cooperate with al-Qaeda and Breivik gives even more legitimacy to such a scenario. There is the "doubtful but not impossible possibility," argues Breivik, to obtain WMDs from "extremely high risk sources, Jihadi groups...There might come a time when we, the PCCTS, Knights Templar will consider to use or even to work as a proxy for the enemies of our enemies and will for the future consider working with the enemies of the EU/US hegemony such as Iran, al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab or the rest of the devout fractions of the Islamic Ummah."

Such ad hoc cooperation with jihadi groups or even with Iran (which is known to finance radical right media and Holocaust deniers) should not be discarded but rather monitored closely.

In a recent article in a special issue about "COVID-19 and Terrorism" of the Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses (CTTA) at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore, Raffaello

Pantucci argues that the economic downturn of the pandemic will create contexts in which anti-state groups can thrive. The disenfranchised communities or inequalities that will emerge in the post-COVID-19 world will create some individuals or groups who see violence as the answer to their situation.⁷⁷

Martin Lindstedt in the 1990s claimed that “the coming inevitable biological war will be a good thing for our side, for our Resistance, if we are prepared for the consequences of biological warfare. Meanwhile, internal dissent will turn deadly, as aggrieved anti-regime forces create, then use, crude biological weaponry against the police state that murders and oppresses them.”

Alex Curtis, after stressing that “smaller quantities of agent needed on account of their lethality help reduce the costs and complexity of their production or acquisition” notes that “even with relatively small-scale attacks,” biological warfare is “virtually DESIGNED to cause the populace to lose all confidence in and allegiance to their own governments, apparently no longer in control.”

Andreas Breivik in 2010 has remarked the major social and economic price of the 2001 anthrax attacks in the United States.

The covid-19 crisis is indeed a new opportunity for the radical right to focus on bioterrorism, after the global virus crisis has shown the heavy health, social, economic and political price states and large communities have paid.

Interestingly, Breivik presents the strategic timeline for the right-wing revolution. “The PCCTS, Knights Templar will allow all Western European regimes to capitulate to our demands and we are hereby giving them a **deadline which is January 1st, 2020**. We will not initiate any nuclear power plant attacks until the deadline has passed (we will instead focus on non-nuclear attacks until then).”

It remains to be seen if radical rightist groups and individuals will believe that their “Saint” and “Commander” had the visionary qualities to predict the beginning of the coronavirus era to January 2020 and therefore think that time is ripe to put in practice a biological attack, even a tactical one, but with huge strategic consequences.

⁷⁷ Raffaello Pantucci, “Key Questions for Counter-Terrorism Post-COVID-19,” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore, Vol. 12 Issue 03, April 2020.

ABOUT THE ICT

Founded in 1996, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) is one of the leading academic institutes for counter-terrorism in the world, facilitating international cooperation in the global struggle against terrorism. ICT is an independent think tank providing expertise in terrorism, counter-terrorism, homeland security, threat vulnerability and risk assessment, intelligence analysis and national security and defense policy.

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