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*Dedicated to Global
First Responders*

DIARY

October 2022



PART A



CBRN
AI & Robotics

An International CBRNE Institute publication

C²BRNE DIARY- 2022[©]

November 2022

Website: www.cbrne-terrorism-newsletter.com

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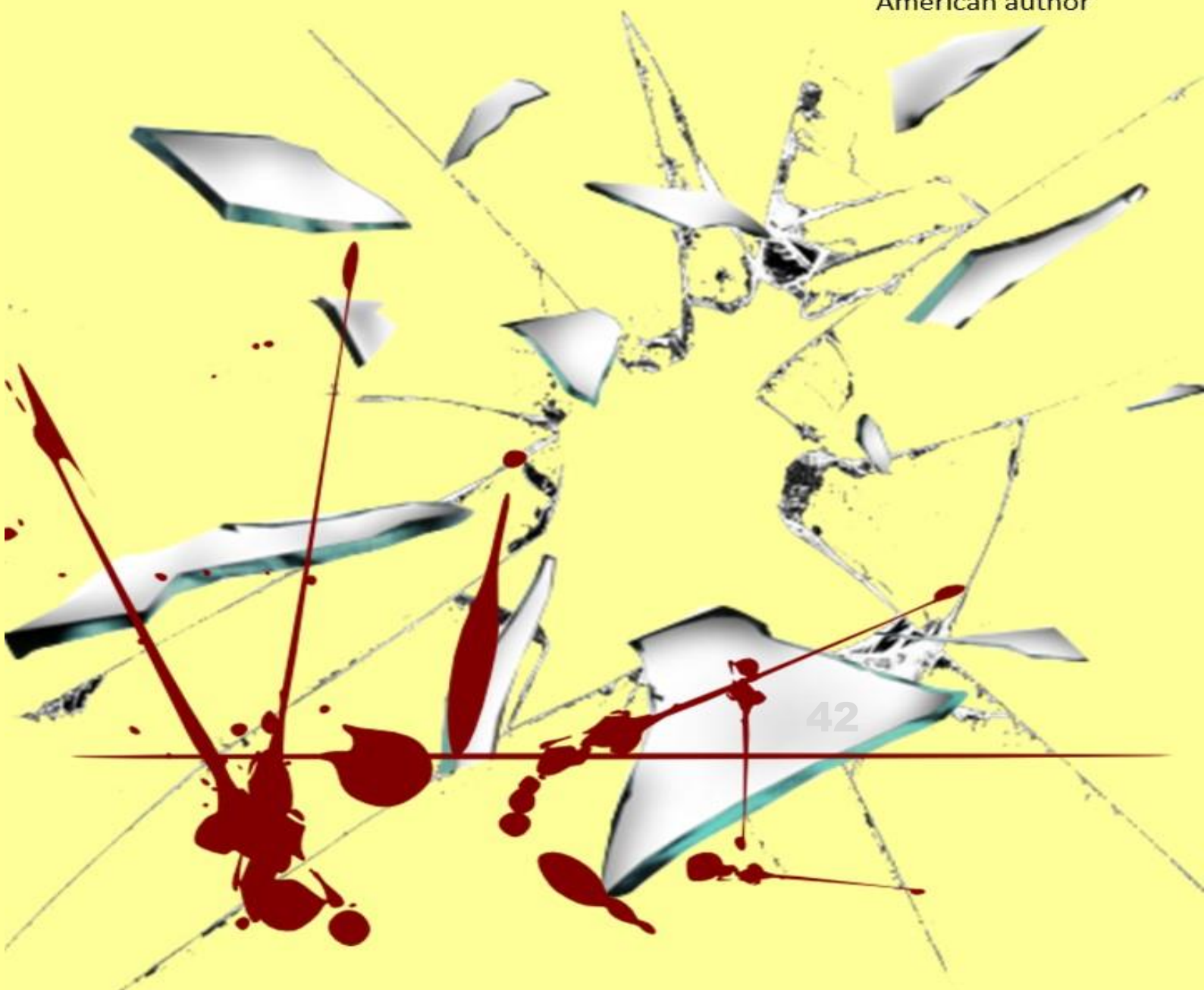


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Broken vows are like broken mirrors. They leave those who held to them bleeding and staring at fractured images of themselves.

Richard Paul Evans
American author



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Topics that attracted attention!

EDITOR'S CORNER





Brig Gen (ret.) Ioannis Galatas, MD, MSc, MC (Army)

Editor-in-Chief
ICI C²BRNE Diary



The future depends
on what we do in the
present.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Dear Colleagues,

Never been good in mathematics but ~3 years of Covid-19 + 9 months of Ukrainian war + 7 months of monkeypox + an energy crisis + threat of nuclear Armageddon = **NOT A VERY BRIGHT FUTURE!**

Pandemic: The new modified name is called “tri-pandemic” (flu-RSV¹-Covid). Synchronized efforts to sell more vaccines for all ages (0-100) and impose a 4th or 5th jab. I think we had enough; let’s wait for a proper vaccine (that is a non-experimental vaccine) and stick to logical precautions since the virus is still around mostly infecting politicians and soldier-doctors.

In addition, at least four labs (1) Boston University 2) University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston 3) US Food and Drug Administration 4) Imperial College-London) on two continents now have constructed non-natural, lab-generated viruses that retain the high immune escape of Omicron and acquire higher severity than Omicron and that, as such, are reasonably expected to increase transmission or pathogenicity in humans. Scientific rivalry they call it ...

Nukes: Many all over the world give the impression that every night when praying (if they still doing that) they add “Please God, make them push the button so we can also press our own!” A dirty bomb could be a nice alternative or an excuse to go tactical. On the other hand, it is kind of hilarious to have nuclear weapons if not to use them according to your will! If this is the case, why do we have armed forces if not to use them? Nuclear weapons are not our problem. Lack of logic is! It seems that diplomacy is something invented for practically no reason if not meant to be used in situations like the one Europe is experiencing – and Taiwan. I was always wondering what would be the faith of Taiwan and South Korea against nuclear China and North Korea – two countries willing to use them beyond threats. Are they dreaming that the US brother will risk a nuclear holocaust for their shake? In addition, will Germany decide to have nuclear weapons due to the Ukrainian crisis and beyond?

War: Only 2% of American citizens care about the fate of Volodymyr Zelensky and Ukraine, and 78% reject the free economic and military aid that the US provides to the regime. Large demonstrations in many European capitals protest against the war and its consequences. But according to my knowledge and age experience, no public protest resulted in something beneficial – exception: a new government that usually repeats the same mistakes. NATO (USA) is pushing for expansion (Sweden; Finland but only if Turkey agrees!!!) while fooling Taiwan to believe that is a huge dragon cursed to

¹ Respiratory Syncytial Virus (a common, contagious virus that causes infections of the respiratory tract)

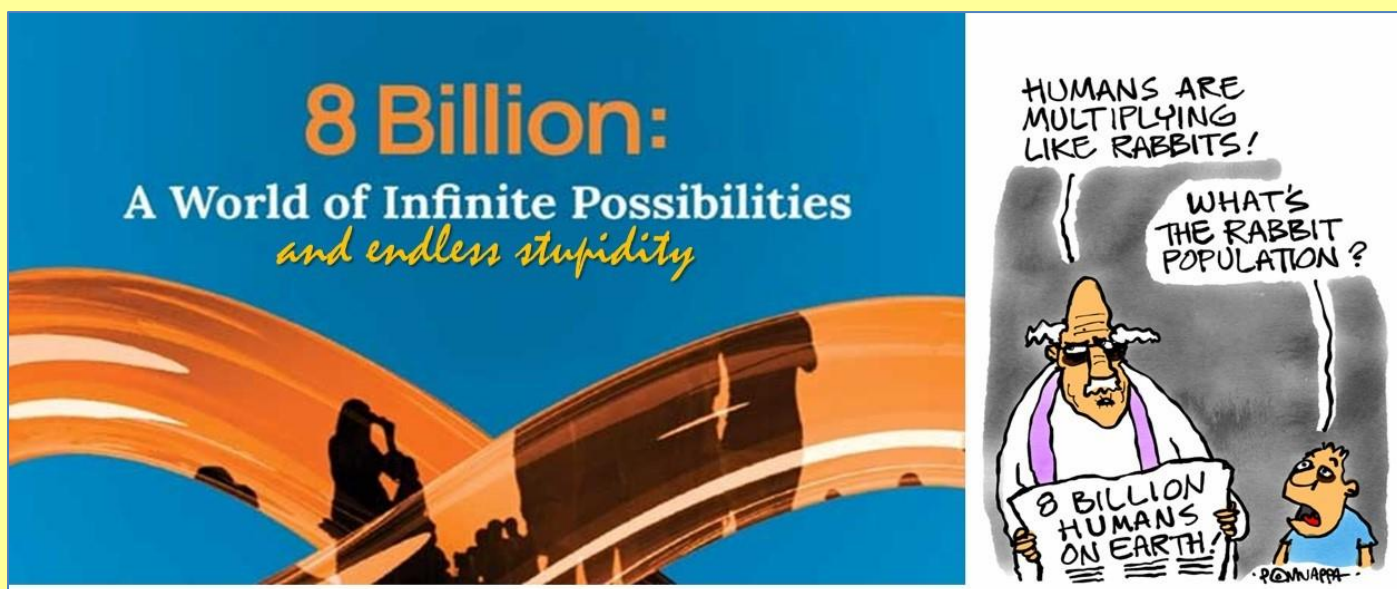


be a tiny island; Turkey continues to bull around (Greece; Syria; Libya) and pretend to be the peacemaker between Russia and the world; millions of people forced to become refugees; illegal immigration is becoming a new weapon; African nations are starving and Elon Musk is trying to persuade us (from his new G700) that he fights for our democracy and not his own pocket. By the way, what would happen if NATO approves the inclusion of Sweden and Finland despite the opposition of Turkey? Especially now that it was revealed that Russian plans to install radar and missile systems in a Turkish town located some 280 miles from a critical NATO radar base as part of an agreement to build a 4,500-MW capacity nuclear power plant in Turkey.

Society: After the results of the mid-term elections in the United States, it is now clear that there is a clash of two worlds: The old world with traditional values, where there are two sexes, the institution of family, homeland, and religion, and the new world that some extremist circles in Washington that control the Democratic party want to impose by any means. A world in which there will be no genders, no family, at least as we know it, homeland, borders, and national origins will have been abolished. Surely religion will be replaced by another kind of religion, the religion of materialism. Those who want to continue to be traditional people will not fit into this new world. It remains to be seen which world will prevail and define the future of a big power. In addition, it is reprehensible how certain, mostly European, soccer teams and mass media are trying to impose their ethics during World Cup 2022 in a country with opposite beliefs and way of living.

Dear CBRN First Responders we are not fortunate enough to live on a planet in order; therefore, you must be on constant alert because evil minds always find ways to surprise us and if this is the case, I am sure you can imagine who will get the first call!

The Editor-in-Chief



1 billion in 1804 → 8 billion in 2022



When Do Protests Succeed? The Case of Iran and the Arab World

By Marina Ottaway and Haleh Esfandiari

Source: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/when-do-protests-succeed-case-iran-and-arab-world>



Oct 17 – Iran is in the midst of an uprising precipitated by women. Women across Iran are protesting the attempt of President Ebrahim Raisi's government to re-impose strict hijab rules, as well as the death of Mahsa Amini, a young woman who was arrested for wearing the hijab improperly and was subsequently killed while in police custody. Since her death, the wave of protests has spread across the country and included people of all walks of life. The Tehran and Shiraz bazaars closed for a day in solidarity with the demonstrators, and the workers in parts of the petrochemical industry in the south went on strike on October 10 also to show their support.

Precursors to protest

The current protests are only the latest in a long series that started with the 1979 revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The uprising was successful in overthrowing the shah, but soon after, Iranians discovered that the Islamic Republic did not lead to the freedom, economic prosperity, or justice they expected, and disappointment began to set in. In just a few months, women were out in the streets to protest the imposition of the mandatory hijab. They were supported by a handful of men but opposed by a large crowd.

Their attempt to change the hijab law didn't go anywhere; however, the spirit of protest persisted. In 2009, hundreds of thousands of people crying, "where is my vote?" came out into the streets to protest a presidential election rigged in favor of the government favorite, Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad, and defeat of Mir-Hossein Moussavi, a former prime minister, the Green Movement candidate and popular choice. As the demonstrations grew larger, the military stepped in to arrest, imprison, torture, and kill protestors. In those demonstrations, a young woman, Neda Agha-Soltan, became the face of the uprising after she was killed by a plain-clothes policeman. In 2017 and 2018, demonstrations took place



over the high cost of living and low level of income. Demonstrators even called for the Supreme Leader to step down. In 2019, high petrol prices were the cause of widespread protests. Despite the courage and determination showed by Iranians, particularly Iranian women, who took part alongside men, all these protests failed to bring about change. The only successful uprising so far has been that led by Ayatollah Khomeini. The outcome of these movements was limited, despite the initial high hopes generated by the willingness of people to take to the streets in open defiance of their government.

The Arab countries had a similar experience in the past two decades, with popular mass movements that did not succeed in bringing about the desired change. Beginning in December 2010, a wave of uprisings swept through Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya and Yemen. A second wave involving Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, and Lebanon started in 2018. The outcome of these movements was limited, despite the initial high hopes generated by the willingness of people to take to the streets in open defiance of their government. Some managed to force the incumbent government out of power, but not to install new, more democratic regimes. In the most tragic cases, Syria, Libya and Yemen, the outcome was wars that have still not abated. In the most successful countries, Tunisia in the first wave and Sudan in the second, there was some progress towards democracy, at least temporarily.



Arab Spring (2011)

The importance of organizing

What explains why the Khomeini revolution succeeded and all other uprisings in that country failed? Or why did protestors in Tunisia and Sudan have some success while they failed elsewhere? The key factors, closely connected, appear to be leadership and the existence or emergence of organization among the protesters. Spontaneous uprisings can draw huge crowds demanding change, produce dramatic pictures and make headlines across the world, but in the absence of strong organization and leadership, they eventually succumb to government repression.



The protests and demonstrations that led to the 1979 revolution were highly organized and persisted for almost a full year. Millions of protesters calling for change came out on the streets in towns and cities across the country. Widespread strikes in the oil industry, government ministries and other sectors, in addition to bazaar shutdowns, disrupted day-to-day life and paralyzed the economy and government activity. The clergy, led by Ayatollah Khomeini from exile in Iraq, was instrumental in organizing mass marches; their followers distributed leaflets and cassette tapes of Khomeini's statements. The mosques became foci for political organization, and the leading clerics in towns and cities used Friday sermons to arouse their congregations and spur them into opposition activities. Most importantly, independent, organized civil society forces like the labor unions, that had made possible the initial transition, did not intervene this time. In Tunisia, protesters were organized from the beginning because of the intervention of the labor unions. Meanwhile, the government side was in disarray, with the president leaving the country and failing to offer leadership. The outcome was an orderly process of electing a constituent assembly, in which political parties, including the Islamist Ennahda, played an important role. Despite setbacks at times, the democratization process seemed to be underway and for almost ten years, Tunisia was seen by many as an emerging success story for democratic transformation. But a new president, Kais Saied, intent on reviving the early unfettered power of the Tunisian presidency, thus his own power, put an end to the hope for democracy in July 2021 by suspending the parliament and curbing the role of political parties. The resurgence of authoritarianism was greeted with dismay by many Tunisians, although not necessarily by a majority. Most importantly, independent, organized civil society forces like the labor unions, that had made possible the initial transition, did not intervene this time. Tunisia is likely to return to the pre-2010 autocratic rule. In Sudan, the initial spontaneous and loosely organized groundswell of rage against the military regime was transformed into an effective movement by the intervention of the professional associations, which had a long history of political activism. Coming together as the Forces of Freedom and Change, these groups managed to negotiate a complex transition process with the military, including protracted periods of power sharing. The agreement, if fragile, has been challenged by the military, but so far, the civilian forces have been able to withstand the threat.

Implications for Iran

What are the short- and long-term prospects for the current protest movement? On one hand, there are signs the protests are spreading and growing in significant ways. Every day, new groups join the demonstrators and their supporters. Famous Iranian actors and actresses, athletes, artists, academics, and members of Iran's Bar Association have declared their support for the protestors. They have also called on the government to stop the killing of demonstrators and for the release of all detainees, including students, women journalists, activists, and others. The prospects for organization and leadership are not good, because it is clear that the [Iranian] government will immediately move against any identifiable groups or leaders.

On the other hand, the prospects for organization and leadership are not good, because it is clear that the government will immediately move against any identifiable groups or leaders. The head of the judiciary, Mr. Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei, invited the demonstrators to come forward to discuss their grievances. None of the protesters will probably heed this vague invitation to talk, considering it a ploy to identify any leaders of the protests and knowing full well that once such leaders come forward, they could eventually be arrested, imprisoned, and put on trial. In fact, within two days of issuing his invitation to the protesters, Mr. Mohseni-Ejei urged judges to "show no weakness" when demonstrators are brought before them. History shows that without organization and leadership, prospects for success are dim. The strikes and shutdowns will probably multiply. However, as made clear in the Supreme Leader's remarks a week ago and reiterated on Wednesday, the government is determined, once again, to crush all dissent by all the force it has at its disposal. It is too early to say how it will all end.

Marina Ottaway is a Former Senior Research Associate and Head of the Middle East Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

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Is Russia's Invasion of Ukraine "Really Worse" Than America's & UK's Invasion of Iraq?

By Eric Zuesse

Source: <https://www.globalresearch.ca/russia-invasion-ukraine-really-worse-than-america-uk-invasion-iraq/5797043>

Oct 25 – America and UK invaded Iraq on 20 March 2003. Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

Which was worse?

Let's first examine the invasion of Iraq:



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – November 2022

U.S. President George W. Bush seems to have been informed, in advance, about a *New York Times* article (which was the lead-story in the newspaper on Sunday, 8 September 2002), titled [“U.S. SAYS HUSSEIN INTENSIFIES QUEST FOR A-BOMB PARTS”](#), in which the sources were anonymous “Administration officials.” The story concerned “aluminum tubes” that were “intended as casing for rotors in centrifuges, which are one means of producing highly enriched uranium ... to make an atomic bomb, Bush administration officials said today.”

So, [on Saturday, September 7th, of 2002, U.S. President Bush said, while standing beside British Prime Minister Tony Blair](#),

We just heard the Prime Minister talk about the new report. I would remind you that when the inspectors first went into Iraq and were denied — finally denied access, a report came out of the Atomic — the IAEA that they were six months away from developing a weapon. I don’t know what more evidence we need [in order for Congress to authorize an invasion of Iraq].

PRIME MINISTER BLAIR: Absolutely right.

Then, as soon as the weekend was over, on Monday 9 September 2002, was issued by the IAEA the [following](#):

Related Coverage: Director General’s statement on Iraq to the IAEA Board of Governors on 9 September 2002 [this being a republication of their notice three days earlier, on 6 Sep.].

Vienna, 06 September, 2002 – With reference to an article published today in the *New York Times* [which, as usual, stenographically reported the Administration’s false allegations, which the IAEA was trying to correct in a way that would minimally offend the NYT and the U.S. President], the International Atomic Energy Agency would like to state that it has no new information on Iraq’s nuclear programme since December 1998 when its inspectors left Iraq [and verified that no WMD remained there at that time]. Only through a resumption of inspections in accordance with Security Council Resolution 687 and other relevant resolutions can the Agency draw any conclusion with regard to Iraq’s compliance with its obligations under the above resolutions relating to its nuclear activities.

Contact: Mark Gwozdecky, Tel: (+43 1) 2600-21270, [e-mail: M.Gwozdecky@iaea.org](mailto:M.Gwozdecky@iaea.org).

It even linked to the following statement from the IAEA Director General amplifying it:

Since December 1998 when our inspectors left Iraq, we have no additional information that can be directly linked without inspection to Iraq’s nuclear activities. I should emphasize that it is only through resumption of inspections that the Agency can draw any conclusion or provide any assurance regarding Iraq’s compliance with its obligations under these resolutions.

So, this was proof of the falsehood of Bush’s and Blair’s reference, on September 7th, to the IAEA, in which Bush-Blair were saying that, upon the authority of the IAEA itself, there was “the new report ... a report came out of the Atomic — the IAEA that they were six months away from developing a weapon. I don’t know what more evidence we need.”

Because of the news-media’s ignoring the IAEA’s denial of the President’s statement, the author of the IAEA’s denial, Mark Gwozdecky, spoke again nearly three weeks later, by phone, with the only journalist who was interested, Joseph Curl of the *Washington Times*, who headlined on 27 September 2002, [“Agency Disavows Report on Iraq Arms”](#) — perhaps that should instead have been “President Lied About ‘Saddam’s WMD’” — and Curl quoted Gwozdecky:

“There’s never been a report like that [which Bush alleged] issued from this agency. ... When we left in December ’98 we had concluded that we had neutralized their nuclear-weapons program. We had confiscated their fissile material. We had destroyed all their key buildings and equipment.” Other news-media failed to pick up Curl’s article. And, even in that article, there was no clear statement that the President had, in fact, *lied* — cooked up an IAEA ‘report’ that never actually existed. Actually, the IAEA hadn’t even so much as been *mentioned* in that *New York Times* article.

Bush had simply lied, and Blair seconded it, and the ‘news’-media stenographically accepted it, and broadcasted their lies to the public, and continued to do so, despite the IAEA’s having *denied*, as early as [September 6th](#), that they had issued any such “new report” at all. (The IAEA had, apparently, somehow known in advance that someone would soon be saying that the IAEA had issued a report alleging that Iraq was resuming its nuclear program.) [Virtually all](#) of the alleged news-media (and not *only* the NYT) entirely ignored the IAEA’s *denial* (though it was not merely one bullet, but rapidly fired on four separate occasions, into the wilderness of America’s ‘news’-media) that it had issued any such “report.” All of them were actually only propaganda-media: they *hid* the fact that George W. Bush was simply lying. Both the U.S. Government and its media were frauds.

The day after that 7 September 2002 **unquestioned lie by Bush, saying Iraq was only six months from having a nuclear weapon**, and citing the IAEA as his source for that, the *New York Times* ran their article. It included such hair-raisers as

“The jewel in the crown is nuclear,” a senior administration official said. “The closer he gets to a nuclear capability, the more credible is his threat to use chemical or biological weapons. Nuclear weapons are his hole card.”

The fake ‘news’ — stenography from the lying Government and its chosen lying sources (in this case anonymous Administration-officials) — came in an incessant stream, from the U.S. Government and its ‘news’ media (such as happened also later, regarding [Honduras 2009](#), Libya 2011, [Yemen 2011](#)-, Syria 2011-, [Ukraine 2014](#), and Yemen 2015-). Do the American people never learn — ever — that their Presidents and ‘news’-media now lie *routinely*?



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Also on Sunday, September 8th, of 2002, the Bush Administration's big guns were firing off against Iraq from the Sunday 'news' shows; and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice delivered her famous "[we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud](#)" statement, which was clearly building upon the lying Bush allegation of the day before, that the International Atomic Energy Agency had just come up with this ominous "Atomic" "new report."

Then, President Bush himself, on 12 September 2002, addressed the U.N. General Assembly, seeking authorization to invade: We will work with the U.N. Security Council for the necessary resolutions. But the purposes of the United States should not be doubted. The Security Council resolutions will be enforced — the just demands of peace and security will be met — or action will be unavoidable. And a regime that has lost its legitimacy will also lose its power.

Events can turn in one of two ways: If we fail to act in the face of danger, the people of Iraq will continue to live in brutal submission. The regime will have new power to bully and dominate and conquer its neighbors, condemning the Middle East to more years of bloodshed and fear. The regime will remain unstable — the region will remain unstable, with little hope of freedom, and isolated from the progress of our times. With every step the Iraqi regime takes toward gaining and deploying the most terrible weapons, our own options to confront that regime will narrow. And if an emboldened regime were to supply these weapons to terrorist allies, then the attacks of September the 11th would be a prelude to far greater horrors.

Bush (and Blair) failed to win any authorization to invade, but did it anyway. They should be hung for it. They were atop a bi-national and entirely bipartisan (in each of the two countries) public-deception operation, like had occurred in Germany during Hitler's time. (Hitler was a boon for the nation's armaments-makers then, just as America's Presidents now are for America's armaments-firms.) And both of America's political Parties are controlled by their billionaires, who [fund the political careers of the politicians whom those mega-donors want to become s'elected' by the public to win public offices](#). For example, whereas George W. Bush lied America into invading and destroying Iraq, Barack Obama and Joe Biden lied America into believing that their [coup](#) overthrowing and replacing Ukraine's [democratically elected](#) Government in February 2014 was *instead* a 'democratic revolution' there. It's so bad that even the progressive Democratic Party site, David Sirota's "The Daily Poster," has NEVER exposed anything about [that Obama coup](#) and about those Obama-Clinton-Biden lies about Ukraine, and about the U.S. Government's planned conquest of both Russia and China — the things that might actually produce WW III (in other words: are even more important than what they *do* report about). In fact, Sirota had the nerve, on 15 February 2022, to post to Vimeo an anti-Republican-Party propaganda video, "[The Pundits Who Lied America Into A War](#)", against the Republican Party's liars who deceived the American people into invading and destroying Iraq in 2003 — though almost all leading Democrats, including Joe Biden, and Hillary Clinton, had voted in the U.S. Senate *for* (not *against*) that lie-based invasion, and though all Democratic-Party 'news'-media (and not ONLY the Republican-Party ones) unquestioningly transmitted the Bush-Administration's lies to the American people, against Iraq, in order to fool Americans into supporting the then-upcoming U.S. invasion.

That Sirota video entirely ignores the *Democratic-Party* "Pundits" — such as the Party's think tank, the Brookings Institution, whose [Michael O'Hanlon](#) and [Kenneth Pollack](#), propagandized on TV and elsewhere to invade Iraq (such as in Pollack's Council on Foreign Relations article, "[Invasion the Only Realistic Option to Head Off the Threat from Iraq. Argues Kenneth Pollack in The Threatening Storm](#)" did). Whereas Democrats blame Republicans, and Republicans blame Democrats, it's the billionaires of BOTH Parties who actually *fund* all of these lies and liars — and who *continue* to fund those liars' careers, and to present them on their 'news'-media as 'experts', to fool the public to okay the trillions of dollars that the U.S. Government pays to those billionaires' corporations such as Lockheed Martin, to profit from those wars. It's hypocrisy on top of lying, so as to convey an impression that neoconservatism — U.S. imperialism — is a 'Republican' (or else a 'Democratic') evil, when it's ACTUALLY an evil by the *billionaires* who fund BOTH Parties AND who fund the 'news'-media, both liberal and conservative, and who profit from those invasions.

It's not just the lies of America's Presidents; it is the lies that are funded by America's billionaires, who placed such people as that into Congress and the White House. This regime is an aristocracy, and imperialism is second nature to aristocrats. But an aristocracy is [a dictatorship by the very rich](#) — NOT any sort of democracy. This is [the type of dictatorship](#) that America now has — NOT a Republican dictatorship, or a Democratic dictatorship, but a dictatorship by the aristocracy, of BOTH Parties. They have made a mockery of their 'democracy'. Practically everything they do is fake, except the vast harms that they produce.

That's what led up to America's invasion of Iraq. [Here](#) and [here](#) is what led up to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

So: which is worse?

Were America and UK sanctioned for invading and destroying Iraq on the basis of lies? Should Russia be sanctioned for doing what the U.S. forced it to do [in order to protect Russia's national security](#)?

Investigative historian [Eric Zuesse's](#) new book, [AMERICA'S EMPIRE OF EVIL: Hitler's Posthumous Victory, and Why the Social Sciences Need to Change](#), is about how America took over the world after



World War II in order to enslave it to U.S.-and-allied billionaires. Their cartels extract the world's wealth by control of not only their 'news' media but the social 'sciences' — duping the public. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

NATO Politicizes Turkey's Belligerence Towards Greece; Democracies Like India Are Obligated To Protect Her

By KN Pandita

Source: <https://eurasianetimes.com/nato-politicizes-turkeys-belligerence-towards-greece-democracies-like-india-are-obliged-to-protect-her/>



Oct 25 – The 214,000sqkm Aegean Sea lying between Greece on its west and Turkey on its east, is known for The Aegean Dispute between these two countries over more than 1400 islands and islets dotting its entire waters.

The Issue

It is a long-drawn dispute about a set of interrelated controversial issues between them on the question of sovereignty and related rights in the area of the Aegean Sea. More than 1400 islands and islets located in the waters of the Aegean between Turkey and Greece have become the bone of contention between the two nations. Greece and Turkey are members of NATO, an organization that promises to come to the help of a member state if any country threatens its security.

But when two member states of NATO are at loggerheads and cannot arrive at any solution to the dispute, the question becomes complicated for NATO and the US to deal with. They are reluctant to choose between the two.

A close study of the dispute shows that the US and the European countries – the members of NATO — do not consider the dispute potentially resulting in a naval clash and adversely affecting them. Therefore, they have almost politicized the dispute, as was done in the case of Kashmir. It suits their policy and perception.

Treaties

History tells us that external powers have tried to find a formula for the solution to the dispute that would be acceptable to Greece and Turkey so that a situation of animosity and hatred is removed.

According to the Treaty of Lausanne concluded in 1923, after WWI, Greece was obliged to keep the islands demilitarized. At the same time, civilian shipping passage in the Turkish Straits mandated Turkey to demilitarize the Straits. The warring countries adhered to the clauses of the treaty. After WWII, another treaty of 1947 gave 12 islands to Greece with the condition of their total demilitarization.

Hindsight shows that Greece has agreed to be a member of NATO because it believed that would provide her security against the belligerent neighbor who does not stop short of claiming its right to most islands and islets in the Aegean Sea.

While Turkey recognized both treaties, the stand of Greece was that Turkey gave the wrong interpretation of various clauses of the treaty. Greece argues that the 1936 Montreux Convention on the regime of the Straits supersedes the Lausanne Treaty (on the Straits) as it gives Turkey the power to militarize the Turkish Straits.

Greece has a very valid point. Turkey cannot enjoy the right to militarize the Straits through the Montreux Convention and then ask Greece to stick to the Lausanne Treaty stipulating the non-militarization of islands. In 1995 Greece ratified the UN Convention on Law of the Sea called UNCLOS. It provided a legal framework to recognize the



limits of maritime zones of coastal nations. One hundred sixty countries, except Turkey, became a party to the UNCLOS.

Now UNCLOS stipulates that the sovereignty of the coastal nation extends beyond its land territory and internal waters to an adjacent belt of Sea described as the Territorial Sea to 12 nautical miles from the baseline of its coast with sovereign rights over it. The Parliament of Greece adopted UNCLOS in 1995.

Turkey objected to it. She questioned the sovereignty of Greece over several islands in the Aegean Sea, like Rhodes, Lesbos, Samos, and Kos.

Turkey's Aggressive Attitude

Trading accusations and counter-accusations have become almost the daily routine of the two countries. But the Turkish authorities have become used to issuing threats and warnings to Greece day in and day out, alleging that Greek airplanes violate the air space of Turkey.

On July 9, President Erdogan of Turkey warned Greece "to stay away from dreams and actions as it would later regret." He urged Greece "to come to its senses and demilitarize the islands in the Aegean Sea."

Turkey authorized its government to take necessary action if Greece extended its right to 12 nautical miles. It formally said that if Greece extended its territorial waters, it would have control over two-thirds of the Aegean Sea, thus depriving Turkey of its primary access to international waters and trader routes.

Turkey, trying its hand at veiled threats, said, "if Greece extended its territorial waters, it would count as *causes belli* meaning a cause for war."

In 2020 Turkey sent a seismic research vessel *Oruc Reis* to map potential drilling for oil and natural gas near the Greek island of Kashellorizon. A Turkish naval ship collided with a Greek naval ship because both were shadowing Turkey's research vessel, which, however, returned to the base after the collision.

Taking recourse to Lausanne and Paris treaties, Turkey argues that Greece is violating them by increasing its military presence in the Aegean Sea, which threatens her security.

Greece takes the position that some islands have been garrisoned because these are close to the Izmir coast, where Turkey has deployed a large landing force called The Fourth Army, which makes it "capable of seizing the Greek island." Greece admits its military presence in these islands but only for self-defense.

In 1970 Turkey invaded Cyprus. This became the catalyst for Greece to militarize the Dodecanese islands close to Turkey for defensive purposes. UNCLOS says that a country has the right over its territorial sea and air space.

Currently, Greece claims six nautical miles of the Aegean Sea; its air space is up to six nautical miles. As there have been regular violations of Greek air space by Turkish airplanes, Greece has taken its complaint to NATO.

Remember that the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 refined the boundaries, and several islands and islets beyond three miles were ceded to Greece except for three groups of islets. Presently Turkey claims the Territorial Sea of six nautical miles.

Current Tension

Turkey has converted the 1500-year-old Hagia Sophia from a museum into a mosque. Greece considers it an indirect assault on the history of her rich culture. Erdogan achieved two-fold objectives by making this anti-civilizational decision.

Firstly, he served the pro-Islamist constituency with an eye on the next parliamentary elections. Secondly, he blocked the appreciation of the Turks for the glorious Greek civilization and its service to mankind.

The rivalry boils down to who gets to explore hydrocarbons in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. There are competing claims over maritime frontiers and precious oil and gas resources.

The Imia episode of 1996 had brought the two countries close to the brink of war. A Turkish drilling ship was noticed near the island of Imia, exploring oil and gas in the region.

Role Of The US And NATO

As Turkey and Greece are members of NATO, it is natural that the US and NATO would play a conciliatory and advisory role, beseeching both to observe restraint and resolve the issue through dialogue. But the fact is that their words do not match their actions.

Turkey has not honored the UNCLOS, a landmark proposal of silencing shrill voices on both sides and reducing tension. It has, at least, laid a fair policy of each coastal country claiming 12 nautical miles as the rightful territorial limit with the respective airspace to be taken care of for no intrusion or overflights.

Turkey's refusal to accept this formula, which Greece has adopted through a motion in the parliament, indicates her ulterior designs in the dispute.



Neither the US nor NATO is taking the Aegean dispute very seriously. Their policy is conditioned by the imperative of NATO seeking the goodwill of both of its Aegean Sea members. They take no notice of the threats doled out by Ankara day in and day out.

They ignore Turkey's "Fourth Army" stationed at Izmir to grab more islands in the Aegean Sea. Turkey has a substantial naval shipyard, and she is strengthening her maritime power and demonstrating an aggressive stance against Greece.

Both countries are indeed seeking backing from Washington. But how Washington is behaving is of much interest. Greek foreign minister Kyriakos Mitsotak addressed both houses of the US Congress in May 2022.

He said, "NATO could not allow a further source of instability on its south-eastern flank." During that trip, he finalized the purchase of F-35 jet fighters. But only a few weeks later, on the fringe of the NATO summit in Madrid, President Biden held out the prospect of fighter jet delivery to secure Turkey's support for Sweden and Finland's accession to NATO.

The Turkish government has profited from the war in Ukraine, and the US has forgotten that Turkey purchased Russian-built anti-aircraft missiles.

Turkey's threats to Greece are on the rise. Alleged violation of air space is the oft-repeated accusation against Greece. For example, the dangers slapped are: "Greece would pay a heavy price if it keeps harassing Turkish fighters to get into the Aegean Sea."

Referring to a crushing defeat of the Greek forces in the western city of Izmir in 1922, he thundered, "If you go further, you will pay a heavy price." Quoting the Associated Press, the *ABC News* of July 11, 2022, wrote: "Greece's prime minister called Monday on Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to clarify whether a map displayed by a nationalist ally of Erdogan's that showed several major, inhabited Greek islands as Turkish is official Turkish policy?"

Current Status

Al Jazeera, on September 26, wrote that Ankara summoned the Greek Ambassador and protested deploying US armored vehicles on two Aegean islands near the Turkish coast. Repudiating the claim, Greece said the report was "completely unfounded" and accused Ankara of aggressive designs.

Their maritime feud is several decades old. The Turkish foreign minister told the Greek Ambassador that Athens should stop violations and respect the islands' non-military status.

Erdogan separately accused Greece of strong provocation and "playing perilous games." Greek Ambassador Christodoulou Lazarus wrote two letters to the UN Secretary-General explaining his country's stand when Erdogan hinted at a possible military operation in the Aegean earlier this month. Finally, Greece filed a complaint with the EU, NATO, and the US after Erdogan hinted at a possible military operation in the Aegean Sea.

Erdogan's Islamic Caliphate Ambition

President Erdogan is not confident of his party returning to power in the parliamentary elections to be held in 2023. Therefore he has shifted attention from domestic to foreign policy, where he can play the Islamic card.

He finds pretexts to bring pressure on Greece and force her to surrender many islands and islets in the Aegean Sea, which also is the policy of the coalition partners in his government. Erdogan was the prime conspirator in the anti-Saudi clique of four wanting to wrest the warden-ship of the twin holy shrines of Mecca and Medina from the hands of the Saudi monarchs and establish a new powerhouse of the Islamists to work for the Islamic Caliphate.

In the last two years, Erdogan has been behaving aggressively in Syria and Yemen crises. Turkey raked up the Kashmir issue at the behest of Pakistan on various platforms, including the United Nations. Erdogan feels his belligerent posturing will not be challenged because of Turkey's membership in NATO. Lately, Turkey has come closer to Pakistan and is building ships and submarines for her navy.

Turkey's military support to Azerbaijan during the fighting between Azerbaijan and Armenia, particularly the supply of Bayraktar drones, resulted in the defeat of Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Turkey's active interference in Cyprus, first by whipping up anti-Greek sentiments among the Turkish Cypriots in the north and finally demanding a re-union of the island and ultimately ending up in forced occupation of Cyprus, compelled Greece to militarize her Dodecanese islands.

Onus On The Free World

Turkey's belligerent posture towards Greece coveting her islands in the Aegean Sea, building its strong-armed presence called The Fourth Army close to the strategic port city of Izmir, her ambition of revival of the Ottoman Empire of the 19th century under the banner of Islamic Caliphate and interference in internal affairs of sovereign countries (as India or Saudi Arabia), etc. cannot be allowed to have its way.



The free world must preserve and protect Greece and its right over the Aegean Sea islands and islets. The world community must pressure Turkey to stop anti-Greece sword-rattling and contain anti-Greece euphoria, which bursts out intermittently among the Turkish population when prompted by its leadership.

India, the world's largest democracy, cannot tolerate interference from any foreign country, much less by one trying to sell a religious commodity. India has amicable and cordial relations with Greece and, like the rest of the civilized world, acknowledges the historical contribution of Greece to world civilization.

India should welcome any movement intending to support Greece against Turkish bullying, including an offer of military assistance. India will be providing a range of weapons to Armenia to protect itself against the military threats from the "Three Brothers."

BRAHMOS: THE THIRD DIMENSION

The first test of the air-launched Brahmos is to be conducted in the Bay of Bengal sometime in December this year

FUTURE CAPABILITY

- Missile with a modified seeker locks onto moving aircraft carrier in vertical mode (90 degrees). Missile destroys aircraft carrier.

PRESENT CAPABILITY

- Missile can hit target in steep dive mode at an angle of 65 degrees. Less effective against large aircraft carriers that can withstand hits on their side.

CARRIER KILLER

- The carrier-killing Brahmos will be carried by a Su-30MKI aircraft over a range of over 3000 km.

SPECIFICATIONS OF AIR-LAUNCHED BRAHMOS

Weight	: 2.5 tons
Range	: 290 km *
Weight of warhead	: 300 kgs
Max speed	: Mach 2.8
Wingspan	: 1.7 m
Diameter	: 70 cm

SU-30MKI MODIFIED TO LAUNCH BRAHMOS MISSILE, ONE PER AIRCRAFT

Max speed	: Mach 2.0
Range	: 3,000 km
Ferry range	: 8,000 km with two in-flight refuellings.
Endurance	: 3.75 hrs (up to 10 hrs with in-flight refuelling)
Service ceiling	: 17,300 m

* expandable

It will be in the interests of the free world if India provides adequate military aid to Greece, including the powerful BrahMos missiles so that the recurring threats issued by Ankara are silenced.

[Padma Shri KN Pandita](#) is the former Director of the Centre of Central Asian Studies at Kashmir University. Views expressed here are of the author's.

How to Make the Most of the Israeli-Lebanese Maritime Deal

By Hanin Ghaddar

Source: <https://warontherocks.com/2022/10/how-to-make-the-most-of-israel-lebanon-maritime-deal/>

Oct 26 – After years of stalling and hedging, a major economic collapse in Lebanon, multiple unstable governments in Israel, and threats of violence, the United States has successfully brokered a maritime border agreement between Beirut and Jerusalem. War has been averted, and everyone is happy. At least for now.

Israel will receive the most immediate benefits from this deal, as it can now quickly begin to exploit existing energy reserves in the Karish gas field. Lebanon may benefit as well, but it has more challenges to work through. Without reforms to the energy sector, profits from any future gas finds may end up in the hands of the political elite, lining their pockets and doing little for ordinary citizens. Hizballah, for its part, has seen its resistance rhetoric take a major blow with its public recognition of Israel.

Yet there are fears that it may now turn its weapons against the internal Lebanese opposition.



U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein deserves enormous credit for getting this agreement over the finish line. Now, Washington should work to maximize the benefits for the Lebanese people and regional stability. This means increasing pressure on Lebanese officials to implement necessary reforms, particularly in the energy sector.

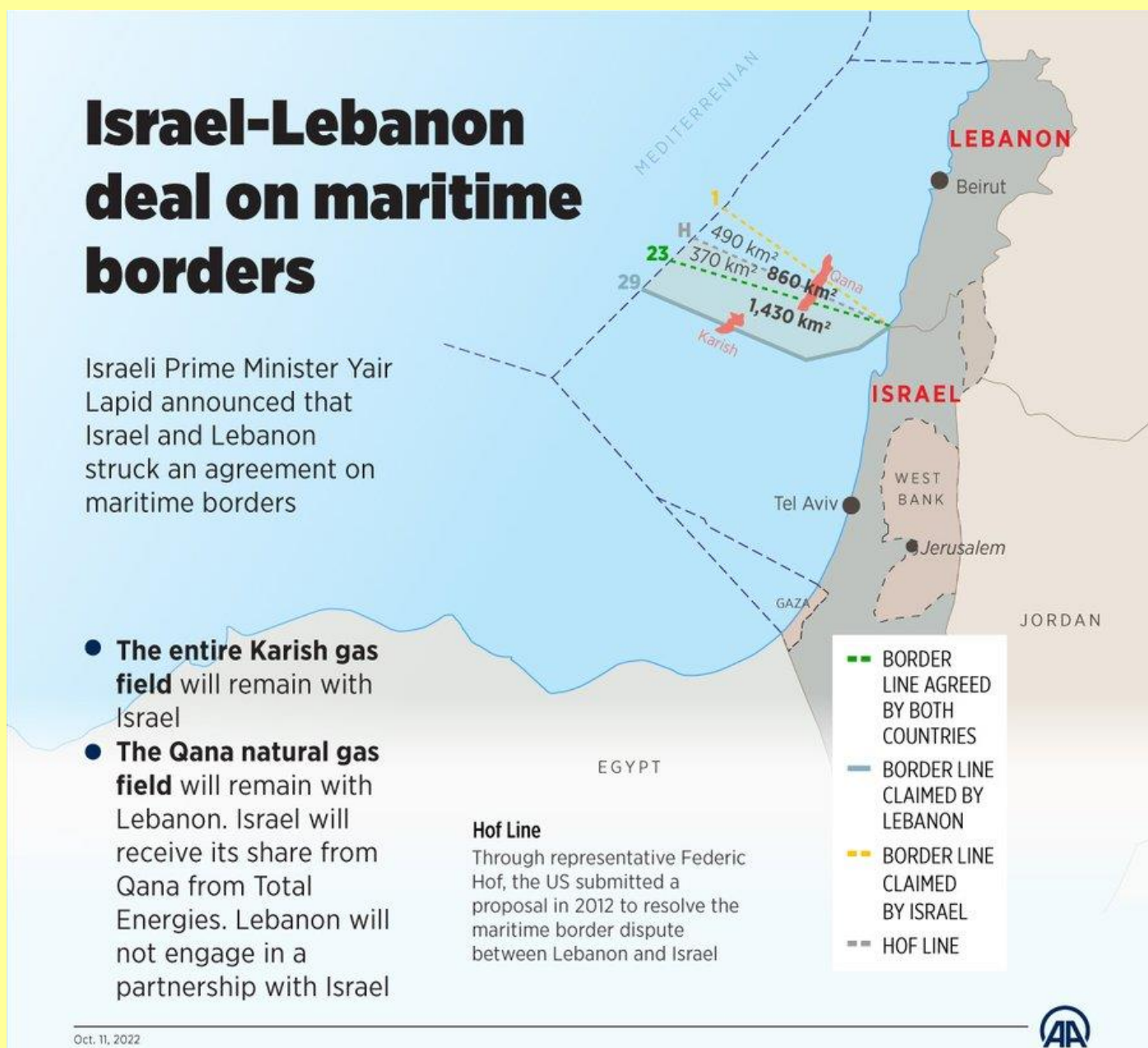
Israel-Lebanon deal on maritime borders

Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid announced that Israel and Lebanon struck an agreement on maritime borders

- The entire **Karish gas field** will remain with Israel
- The **Qana natural gas field** will remain with Lebanon. Israel will receive its share from Qana from Total Energies. Lebanon will not engage in a partnership with Israel

Hof Line

Through representative Federic Hof, the US submitted a proposal in 2012 to resolve the maritime border dispute between Lebanon and Israel



Oct. 11, 2022



The Benefits of the Deal

Actors on both sides had strong reasons to make this agreement work. With elections coming in November, Israel wanted to start digging the Karish gas field as soon as possible and position itself as a natural gas producer. Lebanon had its own set of considerations. President Michel Aoun's term will also end on November 1, and he wanted to [make sure](#) his legacy was not limited to failure and economic collapse. Hizballah, in turn, wanted to give the president they chose this goodbye gift. More importantly, the group wanted to avoid a war with Israel they knew they could not [afford](#). After [numerous threats](#) failed to prevent Israel from moving ahead on Karish exploration, Hizballah knew that only diplomacy would help them save face.

Despite [accusations](#) that Israel accepted all of Lebanon's conditions and conceded too quickly, the truth is that Lebanon started this round of negotiations with a low bar. First, knowing it was a nonstarter for Israel and the United States, President Aoun [completely dropped](#) any discussion of Line 29 as the maritime



border. This proposed boundary, the southernmost of the lines under discussion, would have cut through the Karish field, giving Lebanon a stake in it. Instead, Aoun decided to negotiate over line 23 which gave Israel complete control over Karish. Second, while Beirut secured the Qana field, its ability to exploit it is [contingent on Israeli approval](#). Total, the French company that will explore Qana, is required to reach a financial arrangement with Israel, in which Lebanon will have no say. In other words, Israel controls the Karish field, which has already been shown to contain gas, while Lebanon has to share the Qana field, in which gas deposits have not been located yet. And if there is any gas in Qana, Lebanon has agreed that Israel will receive a payment of at least seventeen percent of the revenues from Total. At best, the money will take five years to start flowing.

The End of the Resistance Narrative

In seeking to avoid a conflict while demonstrating that it could use force to advance Lebanese interests, Hizballah has now given Israel security guarantees that it will not target Karish. It has sought to spin the deal as a victory but has failed to translate this into domestic political gains. Although this is officially an agreement between Lebanon and Israel, in reality, [many in Lebanon](#) see it as a deal between Hizballah and Israel. Indeed, according to Reuters, the group reviewed and approved the agreement [line by line](#). This in itself is a breakthrough. For forty years, Hizballah's resistance narrative rejected any kind of border negotiations with its sworn enemy or any acknowledgment of the state of Israel. Now, not only have Lebanon and Hizballah acknowledged the existence of Israel, but they also share an economic interest and are forced to maintain stability across the border as they await the profits from the deal to materialize. Hizballah's narrative has [already suffered](#) from the group's involvement in the Syrian civil war, where it has ignored Israeli strikes against its military personnel, arms depots, and weapons factories. By opting for a pact with Israel rather than another military confrontation, Hizballah has rendered itself even more irrelevant.

I grew up in a Shia town in South Lebanon. I was eight years old during the 1982 Israeli invasion and the establishment of Hizballah as a resistance movement. The word "Israel" was taboo — not to be uttered under any circumstances. Although we all knew that the country existed and prospered beyond our southern border, Hizballah made sure we understood that denial was the best way to deal with this reality. And if anyone dared to say the word "Israel" the immediate reaction was a forceful reminder that "it is called Palestine!" or "the occupying entity."

In response to the maritime border deal, Hizballah's leader Hassan Nasrallah [said](#), "We do not have any problem with the agreement with Israel." He didn't say "occupied Palestine" or the "enemy state" — he said "Israel." For many Lebanese people, this indicates a major shift in narrative and strategy. None of Hizballah's officials have ever uttered the word "Israel" before. None of them tolerated others who dared to say it.

This new narrative may allow the group to buy time until it is more ready for conflict. Yet it still creates a new reality where the state next door actually exists, is Lebanon's partner in gas, and has a say in Lebanon's economy and stability. What's more, Hizballah accepted U.S. mediation in the negotiations and acknowledged American diplomacy in a matter of utmost significance to its security and military strategy.

For Hizballah, the main challenge now is to keep the resistance narrative alive. The group cannot afford to take risks against Israel at this moment, inside or outside Lebanon, and seeks to refocus internally. This doesn't mean that the rhetoric against Israel will stop, but it will probably change, with threats becoming less imminent and more rote. The group's leadership [will go back](#) to turning a blind eye to Israeli strikes in Syria and resort to narrating past tales of victories instead of seeking out new ones.

But with Hizballah striving to maintain its role in Lebanese politics, the risk is that its weapons and resistance rhetoric will turn against internal opposition and protest. Since its last confrontation with Israel in 2006, Hizballah has been confronting its Lebanese [opponents](#) instead. This includes imposing a national unity government on May 7, 2008, provoking [street clashes](#) to hinder investigations into the Beirut port blast, assassinating rivals like [former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri](#) and [Shia critic Lokman Slim](#), and targeting protestors in 2019, mainly in Shia areas.

Upcoming Phases and Challenges

For Israel, the main challenge is to preserve the maritime deal after the legislative elections and the formation of a new government. Opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu has [already criticized](#) the deal and threatened to overturn it if he becomes prime minister. [Many analysts](#), however, think this is mere election posturing that would quickly be shelved if he won.

For Lebanon, the next steps are much more challenging. If Total discovers gas in Qana, the revenues will not be enough to cover the country's financial deficits, the banking sector losses, and the Central Bank's depleted reserves. The only way out of this crisis is through substantial financial, economic, and legislative reforms that would protect energy revenues, instead of letting them be squandered through corruption. Setting up a sovereign wealth fund to manage gas revenue is particularly vital in light of this sector's poor record for fiscal responsibility. For example,



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since 1992, corruption and mismanagement in the electricity sector alone [have created](#) \$40 billion in debt, or 43 percent of the total government debt.

Without reforms, Lebanon's corrupt political class will use energy revenue to maintain their interests and positions. This also means maintaining the sectarian narratives and clientelism that have already contributed to the collapse of Lebanon's state institutions. Indeed, politicians very much hope to use the deal as an excuse to avoid reforms. By presenting Qana as a quick solution to the current crisis, they have already helped push calls for reform off the political agenda.

The U.S. Role

This deal demonstrated that the United States is still the strongest player in Lebanon. No other country — except perhaps France — was able to compel the Lebanese political class to make compromises for the sake of stability, and no one else could get Hizballah to accept a deal with Israel and acknowledge its partnership. Through this deal, Washington also enhanced its credibility and developed new channels of communication with important actors in Beirut. Biden should leverage this success to push the Lebanese government to implement long-overdue reforms.

The United States can work with its European and Gulf partners to sanction state officials who are hindering reforms in the energy sector. Actors such as the [International Monetary Fund](#) and the 2018 French-sponsored CEDRE [donor conference](#) have already spelled out what needs to be done. This includes creating an independent electricity regulatory authority, modernizing the transmission grid, and raising prices for the first time since the 1990s. A transparent sovereign wealth fund should also be established without delay.

In response to the threat posed by Hizballah, Washington can also play a positive role in the formation of a new government, the implementation of legal reforms, the [investigation](#) into the Beirut port blast, and the appointment of military officials. Over the years, the United States has become the biggest [donor](#) to Lebanon, mainly in the form of military assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces and humanitarian assistance in the recent economic crisis. Combined with [terrorism and corruption sanctions](#), this created a degree of influence that the Lebanese authorities understand very well. Washington can use this influence to push Lebanon to elect a new president, protect the judge investigating the port blast, and secure the elevation of responsible security officials.

These are not only internal Lebanese issues. They can make or break a very fragile country, whose instability will spill over to its neighbors and affect American interests in the region. The maritime deal shows what U.S. diplomacy can do. Now is the time to do more.

[Hanin Ghaddar](#) is the Friedmann Fellow in The Washington Institute's Program on Arab Politics, where she focuses on Shia politics throughout the Levant. She is the author of [Hezbollah](#)

EDITOR'S COMMENT: This is a great opportunity for an out-of-the-box collaboration that is to join forces and expel Hezbollah from Lebanon. Lebanon deserves peace and progress and this is the main obstacle (plus local corruption).

Military Working Dogs and Marines and Helicopters, Oh My!

By Senior Airman Matt Porter (87th Air Base Wing | JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J.)

Source: <https://www.jbmdl.jb.mil/News/Article/3196521/military-working-dogs-and-marines-and-helicopters-oh-my/>



Oct 21 – The 87th Security Forces Squadron K-9 section held a Joint Force training with members of the Marine Aircraft Group 49 where military working dogs were familiarized with helicopter transportation. By leveraging resources and training capabilities, two Joint Partners were able to immerse pilots, air crew, and military working dogs in a potential real-world scenario with aircraft.

“This training was to see just how capable our Military Working Dog teams are in regard to their detection capabilities and patrol work, with the added variable of helicopter involvement,” U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Lindsay Zaccardi, K-9 kennel master. “This was the first application of helicopter training for all dog teams that participated, and the Marines as well.”





According to Zaccardi, this joint training was a first-ever event for the two Mission Partners.

“We had two days of training,” said Zaccardi. “First, we had our dog teams approach a helicopter to familiarize them with the sounds and appearance of the aircraft. We needed to get them comfortable getting on and off the helicopter, and also used to being in their required gear - eye and ear pro for canines. The second day of training consisted of actually flying to a landing zone and getting the dogs to exit the helicopter onto the terrain.”

Pleased with the results of the training, Zaccardi credits the dog’s quick adaptation to the helicopter and other training scenarios to the bond they share with their handlers.

“These dogs trust their handlers and that bond played a pivotal role in their performance as a team,” said Zaccardi. “Each iteration on and off of the helicopter became more and more comfortable and ultimately were able to go immediately into “detection mode” upon exit; allowing the team to locate explosive training aids quickly and effectively.”





The real-world application for this kind of training is primarily for deployed environments. The dog teams are now qualified for helicopter insertions into a hostile theater where bomb detection is vital to mission success.

“Another important takeaway from this training is that if anything were to happen on our flight line at the Joint Base, our dog teams have the capability as a threat multiplier to be around aviation engines and still perform their duties,” said Zaccardi.

The service pair proved to be a good match, with both parties walking away from the joint training feeling accomplished and invigorated from the experience.

“This Joint Partner in particular was phenomenal to work with,” said U.S. Marine Corps. Maj. Kyle Stiritus, CH-53E pilot. “We had the aircraft they needed and the excitement for the training. Not only were we able to get their dog teams on a flight, we also wanted to be as immersive in their training as possible.”

Already eager for the next joint training opportunity, the K-9 section is seeking to collaborate with other sister services on the installation by leveraging their dogs as mutual training assets.

“In the near future, we would like to set up training with the U.S. Navy medical group to showcase Canine Tactical Combat Casualty Care and how to assist with a Military Working Dog that is injured during battle.”

What, If Any, Are the Chances of Toppling Putin and Who Might Take Over?

By Nicholas James

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221027-what-if-any-are-the-chances-of-toppling-putin-and-who-might-take-over>

Oct 27 – Speculation regarding how secure Vladimir Putin’s position is surfaces every few years, but has intensified since the invasion of Ukraine, particularly in light of Russia’s military failures in recent months. Many of these speculative debates discuss either who will take the leadership position or what sort of regime – and led by who – will replace Putin at the top.

There’s a great deal of uncertainty about what a post-Putin Russia might look like. Projections range from [violent destruction](#) of the Russian state to the reestablishment of democratic norms and a system of [substantive checks and balances](#) – presumably under the “liberal” elite and technocracy.

There is a consensus among most of the Russian elite, including liberals (although it seems to be waning in recent times): there is no such thing as a truly post-Putin Russia. Putinism is so embedded in the country’s political, social and economic institutions and relationships that it’s almost impossible to imagine.



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A realistic prognosis of a post-Putin Russia and succession plan must take this into account.

Putin most likely does not have a clear succession plan in place, other than the [prescribed procedure](#) which hands the presidency to the prime minister, Mikhail Mishustin, and calls for elections in the event of a premature departure of the current president. In other words, a voluntary change of leadership is [unlikely to take place](#). Even if there were plans in place before the war, these are now likely to have changed with circumstance.

If there is a succession plan at all, it would be enacted after the war and post-conflict settlement. This implies that the regime will try to prolong the conflict for as long as politically and economically possible given the uncertainties and widespread problems that Russian military failures have introduced into the system.

So any speculation on leadership or regime change must take this into account. Several scenarios are possible regarding the outcome of the war.

Scenario 1: Military Stalemate

In the fairly likely event of a stalemate and a return to [frozen conflict in the east of Ukraine](#), the Kremlin would probably spin this as a Russian victory – even if there was a return to the pre-February lines, something which would be seen elsewhere as a failure. The state apparatus would blame the influx of western support as the major contributing factor, leaving room for regime elites to squabble among themselves.

Regime loyalists would likely blame Russian losses on silent liberals and more vocal hawks. The former didn't readily support Russian military actions, and the latter's [incompetence led to massive failures](#) during the Ukrainian counteroffensive.

This would be likely to result in increased pressure on the regime from both liberals and technocrats as well as the military and security elite (the *siloviki*). The state would have to mollify the disaffected elites or silence them. This system would result in increased elite [autonomy and factionalism](#) leading to prolonged infighting – and the siloviki would reap most of the benefits. We're seeing this beginning to play out. For instance, two of Putin's biggest supporters of the war – Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov and the leader of the mercenary Wagner Group, Yevgeniy Prigozhin – have come out in open attacks against the defense minister, Sergei Shoigu. It's less clear if Putin can maintain his status as an arbiter between elites in both the military and business spheres.

But a stalemate in Ukraine would also result in the continuation of the status quo of the type of electoral authoritarianism that has developed since 2012 when the regime [tightened its grip on the electoral process](#) and further rigged the playing field in its favor.

Putin would not seek a successor in the medium term and would continue to exert control over politics via his tried and tested electoral authoritarianism. But Putin's power would be likely to decrease in the long term, leading to an unregulated succession with no obvious candidate to replace him. The siloviki would probably use the state apparatus to install an agreeable leader.

Scenario 2: A Russian Victory

In this unlikely instance, which I envisage as decisive battlefield advances and control over annexed territory, competent managers in the technocracy and siloviki are given preferential treatment while liberals are largely excluded. As in the previous scenario, no immediate succession plan is on the cards for the foreseeable future. The regime fully consolidates into a hegemonic authoritarian regime under Putin.

A transition of power in this scenario would take place in the future and with similar conditions to the recent transitions in Central Asia such as the replacement of Nursultan Nazarbayev [with his favoured candidate, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev](#) in Kazakhstan. But Tokayev's recent unrest and [subsequent purges](#) of Nazarbayev-era officials are still fresh in the memory of Putin's regime. They have probably learned from the Nazarbayev's missteps in those regards.

Both technocrats and siloviki have a strong footing in this potential regime. But a moderate, noncontroversial and controllable candidacy from the technocracy is preferable if Putin simply steps back but not out of power (for example, maintaining control over the budget, security and intelligence). Succession will be well regulated.

The power in this state would continue to flow through Putin rather than the executive. But a powerful siloviki faction would almost certainly try to ["tighten the screws"](#) and solidify the hegemonic regime after a transition.

Scenario 3: A Ukrainian Victory.

This plausible scenario comes with the most uncertainty out of the three. The growing autonomy of the elite during the war will create the conditions for extreme factionalism: Siloviki v liberals and technocrats. Putin's decisions will largely be irrelevant and an unregulated and sudden succession seems plausible for the short to medium term. This may take shape if Putin is forcibly removed or voluntarily removes himself from office.



Factional elites will compete for power, but it remains unclear how the process of selecting a new executive will unfold. The siloviki will have the impetus and capacity to seize higher positions but would come into conflict with the technocracy and liberals. In the case of a [weakened pro-war bloc](#), the siloviki will face staunch opposition.

In the event of a leadership election – considering social discontent, and economic and political disruption – the silent liberals and technocrats would secure the necessary votes. Still, they would face opposition from the factional forces mentioned above. Russia would probably fall into a mishmash of Yeltsin-era instability and technocratic authoritarianism, where non-democratic technical interventions are required to maintain the new status quo.

Nicholas James is a PhD Candidate, Politics @ University of Oxford.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: There is a fourth scenario called "Armageddon" resulting from Scenario #3. The important question is "What, If Any, Are the Chances of Toppling Biden and Who Might Take Over?" – perhaps the only chance to approach peace and change global mentality based on the fact that we live only 70 years!

Ukraine's War Is Like World War I, Not World War II

The West is using the wrong analogy for Russia's invasion—and worsening the outcome.

By Anatol Lieven

Source: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/10/27/ukraines-war-is-like-world-war-i-not-world-war-ii/>

Oct 27 – It often seems as if the hawkish elements of the U.S. establishment have only ever heard of one war: the Second World War in Europe. This is because whatever else they forget or get wrong about that war, they are right that it was planned and initiated by a deeply evil and megalomaniac force which posed a threat to the entire world, which had to be completely defeated, and with which no morally acceptable compromise was possible.

The perennial and exclusive [references](#) to that war allow U.S. hawks to portray every conflict in which they wish to involve America as an [existential](#) struggle against evil, which if not engaged in will lead to catastrophic consequences for America and the world. This has been true of their approach to Vietnam through Iraq to the present war in Ukraine, with disastrous results for America and the world.

This, however, is precisely what makes the Second World War so exceptional. The great majority of wars in modern history and indeed in American history have been far more morally complex in their origins and have ended not with the complete victory of one side but with some form of messy compromise. Most wars (and this includes the Second World War) also illustrate the law of unintended consequences. The end results are very often not those predicted or desired even by the ostensible "victors."

From this point of view, the First World War is a far better historical analogy than the Second for the present war in Ukraine. The years 1914 to 1918 saw the [deaths](#) of more than 20 million people, around half of them civilians. Even the French and British victor nations emerged crippled. The consequences of the First World War—including the Communist Revolution in Russia and the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—paved the way for the Second.

Of the various leading figures, only Vladimir Lenin, who predicted that war would lead to revolution, can be said to have been accurate in his analysis prior to the war. Nobody else's predictions came true. If it had been given to the governments in 1914 to see the future, not one would have thought the war worthwhile. Or as a French farmer near Verdun remarked simply a half century later to [Alistair Horne](#), the British historian of the Battle of Verdun, "Ils etaient fous, ces gens-la": Those people were crazy.

Today, no serious historians—or educated people in general—would argue that this conflict was necessary and in the real interests of any of the participants, nor that continuing the war in order to gain complete victory was necessary or wise, nor that the Versailles Settlement that ended the war turned out well for the victors, let alone the defeated. From the perspective of 112 years later, it seems obvious that in adopting the policies that led to war and persisting in its continuation, all the ruling elites of Europe fundamentally and disastrously misjudged the true interests of their countries.

As to moral guilt for the war, even in Germany, most historians today would accept that this lay principally with the German government. Germany's encouragement to the Austrian government to attack Serbia in response to the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne was the decision of Berlin alone. Germany was even more culpable for its legally and morally indefensible invasion of Belgium that brought the British Empire into the war.

At the same time, however, very few historians today would attribute sole blame for the war to Germany. In particular, one should stress the criminal folly of the Russian imperial government in forming an alliance with Serbia that emboldened Serbian nationalists to advance their irredentist claim to Austrian-held Bosnia,



and emboldened the Serbian secret service covertly to back a [terrorist](#) campaign against Austria that led to the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and provided the spark that ignited the war.

Russian support for Serbia was indifferent not only to the fanatical and reckless character of Serbian nationalism, but the fact that nationalist claims directed by different Slavic peoples against the Austro-Hungarian Empire threatened that crumbling empire with destruction and thereby threatened to destroy the entire German geopolitical and ethnic position in Central Europe. It should have been obvious to any sensible Russian official that this was an issue over which Germany would in the last resort engage in a war that threatened Russia with destruction. Indeed, some Russians did point this out, but their [advice](#) was ignored by a Russian establishment committed to geopolitical ambitions that went far beyond both Russia's real strength and Russia's real interests.

In the Second World War, aspects of German policy were uniquely evil, in line with the uniquely evil racist ideology set out in Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. In the First World War, things seem far less clear cut. The allied propaganda line of the war being a war of democracies against autocracies was rendered ludicrous by the fact that until it collapsed in 1917, the Russian Empire was a key ally against Germany. Nor of course were the British and French colonial empires democratic.

In the area of war crimes, the German strategy of unrestricted submarine warfare, intended to starve Britain into surrender, was treated in Britain and America as a monstrous and obvious war crime. The Germans argued, not without reason, that it was a response to the British strategy of starving Germany into surrender through blockade of Germany's maritime trade by the Royal Navy. The German submarine strategy was extremely stupid, because it eventually brought America into the war against Germany and thereby ensured Germany's defeat. But stupidity, however extreme, is not a war crime.

The Germans also pointed out that the British tactic (wholly in keeping with the traditional laws of war by the way) of disguising British warships as unarmed merchantmen (the "Q ships") and then sinking German submarines that tried to check on them made it necessary to torpedo all ships without warning. Once again, 112 years later, we can regret all the suffering involved, and honor the brave men who died on both sides, without taking a high moral stance one way or the other.

Today we can all agree that principal responsibility for the war in Ukraine lies with the Russian government, which invaded Ukraine. But will historians of the future attribute sole responsibility to Russia, and exonerate the U.S. and NATO member governments of all blame for trying to integrate Ukraine with the West, and thus threatening what both Russians and a long row of Western experts (including the present head of the CIA, [William Burns](#)) warned were seen in Moscow as vital Russian interests?

Concerning war crimes, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the forced annexation of Ukrainian territory, are both clearly very serious crimes under international law, for which I hope that President Vladimir Putin will one day be brought to account. Russian soldiers have committed numerous crimes against Ukrainian civilians, for which the Ukrainian authorities are correct to put them on trial. The Russian high command has at the very least displayed indifference towards civilian casualties in its air campaign against Ukraine. However, we should be very careful not to portray these crimes as in some way culturally special to Russians, or as "genocide," if only for the very obvious reason that Western forces have themselves repeatedly carried out similar actions. To use the "genocide" label in this way would put American and British commanders and air crews in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Syria on the same level as Hitler's SS and the Rwandan Hutu militias, a morally and historically grotesque proposition.

The Amnesty International [report](#) criticizing both Russian and Ukrainian actions in the war was justly attacked, but for the wrong reason. The correct charges against it were legal illiteracy and practical naivety. The fact that a war is illegal does not make everything the aggressor does a war crime. Under the laws of war, it is not a crime for Ukrainian forces to establish positions in populated areas, otherwise they could not defend their country at all. But nor is it a crime for Russian forces to bombard those positions. All of this is stated quite clearly in international treaties and conventions on the laws of war. Above all, we should not let justified moral outrage become hypocritical moral hysteria—as during the First World War—because this can very easily become an obstacle to seeking a peace settlement that may be in the best interests of ourselves and the victims of the war.

The same goes for negotiations over territory. If today it seems lunatic almost beyond belief that millions of German, French, and British soldiers should have died in a war that began over whether Austrians or Serbs should rule Sarajevo, let us consider the contemporary example of Sevastopol, the Russian naval base in Crimea. The present line of the U.S. administration and most of the U.S. establishment is that negotiations for peace are purely a matter for the Ukrainian government. And the Ukrainian government has repeatedly declared that its aim is to drive Russia from all the territory it has occupied in Ukraine, including Crimea. Recent military advances by Ukraine mean that such complete Ukrainian victory now seems at least possible.

Thirty years ago, the overwhelming majority of Americans would have simply assumed that Crimea was part of Russia, as indeed it was until the Soviet government transferred it by decree to Ukraine in 1954. Before the Russian conquest of 1783, the peninsula was ruled by Tatars, before that by Byzantines, before that by Scythians, and before that, well, whoever it was, it was certainly not Ukrainians.

Every officially connected Russian with whom I have spoken, and most ordinary Russians, have said that to defend Crimea, Russia should in the last resort use nuclear weapons, as the United States would to



defend Hawaii and Pearl Harbor. This would very likely begin a ladder of escalation that would lead to the destruction of America, Russia, and civilization itself in a nuclear war.

We should not need to wait 112 years for historians (if there are any) to tell us that this is not an outcome that would serve the interests of any country, including Ukraine, and that the risks involved colossally outweigh any conceivable benefits to the United States. By repelling Russia's invasion, Ukraine, with Western help, has already won a great victory and secured its independence and freedom to try to join the West. For the Biden administration to go beyond this, and aim at total victory for Ukraine, looks like unwarranted hubris on the part of Washington. And we should also not need historians of the future, or the lessons of the First World War, to tell us that hubris invariably leads to nemesis.

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Unbelievable statement!

Oct 29 – The American newspaper **Washington Post**, clearly disturbed by the demonstration of 100,000 Czechs in Prague, wrote the following astonishingly: "*With the slogan 'Czech Republic First', a reference to former US President Donald Trump's nationalist platform, the protest united the far right with the far left and various fringe groups. Its organizers are known for their pro-Russian views and opposition to vaccines for COVID-19*"



GCC stands with Qatar after 'provocative' German World Cup criticism

Source: <https://dohanews.co/gcc-stands-with-qatar-after-provocative-german-world-cup-criticism/>

Oct 30 – The [Gulf Cooperation Council \(GCC\)](#) condemned remarks made by Germany's interior minister against Qatar's hosting of the FIFA World Cup.

In a statement on Saturday, the GCC's Secretary General Nayef Al Hajraf renewed the bloc's support for Qatar "in addressing any interference in its internal affairs". Al Hajraf said the GCC stands against "the publishing of allegations that do not serve the establishment of normal relations between the two countries as a violation of diplomatic norms, traditions and international laws."

The GCC chief described Qatar's hosting of the event as "a source of deserved pride", praising its leading role "in building civilised communication and promoting understanding between nations in a framework of mutual respect."





**14.000.000
refugees**

big

DIPLOMACY = ZERO



**HEAT
OR
EAT?**

**All we
want is
warmth**

Energy & Food crisis

Last week, Germany's Minister of Interior Nancy Faeser criticised Qatar's human rights record during an interview with local German broadcaster ARD network.

Faeser, who is scheduled to visit Doha this week, described Qatar's hosting of the tournament as "very tricky" for the German government.

"There are criteria that must be adhered to and it would be better that tournaments are not awarded to such states," she said.

Qatar responded to the statements by summoning Germany's envoy to Doha Dr. Claudius Fischbach on Friday.

In a statement, the Gulf state's foreign ministry said it handed Claudius an objection memo to express its "disappointment and complete rejection and condemnation" of Faeser's remarks.

The Qatari foreign ministry further stated that the remarks go "against diplomatic norms and conventions, especially in light of the distinguished ties between the State of Qatar and Germany in all fields."

The memo also expressed "Qatar's complete rejection of those remarks made towards a country whose hosting of the World Cup was justice done to a region suffering from an unjust stereotype for decades."

Echoing similar sentiments, Qatar's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Dr. Majed Al Ansari described the comments "as unacceptable and provocative for the Qatari people".

Dr. Al Ansari stressed that "it was unacceptable for politicians to try and score political points locally at the expense of their relations with other countries."

"Qatar is currently preparing to be a hub for civilised communication and the promotion of understanding among world nations in a frame of mutual respect during the World Cup," the foreign ministry statement added, citing Dr Al Ansari.

Doha has received ongoing criticism for its track record in its treatment of migrant workers, with scrutiny exacerbating in recent weeks as the World Cup looms around the corner. Some of the recent criticism has also focused on its stance on LGBTQ.

Responding to the incident between Berlin and Doha, former German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs [Sigmar Gabriel](#) slammed the "German arrogance towards Qatar".

"How forgetful are we? Homosexuality was a punishable offense in Germany until 1994. My mother still needed her husband's permission to work. We treated 'guest workers' crappy and housed them miserably," tweeted Gabriel.

The former German vice-Chancellor also said it took Germany "decades to become a liberal country."

"Progress does not come overnight, but step by step. That was true for and is true for Qatar now. The UN, the ILO [International Labour Organization] praises the country for its reforms. Only we Germans insult it every day," he added.

The latest criticism by the German interior minister came just days after Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani slammed what he described as "ferocious" attacks against Qatar since it won the bid to host the World Cup.

The amir said that "no other host nation" has faced this level of criticism.

"Since we won the honour of hosting the World Cup, Qatar has faced an unprecedented campaign that no other host nation has received. And we had handled it at first in good faith while considering some of the criticism positive and beneficial," Sheikh Tamim told the Shura Council on Tuesday.

The Qatar ruler admitted that while the criticism has helped the country "develop aspects that needed development," the campaign has expanded to include slander.

"It soon became clear to us that the campaign has continued and expanded, and includes slander and double standards until it has reached such a ferocity that many, unfortunately, wonder about the real reasons and motives behind it," said Sheikh Tamim.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: No surprise! Germany always seeks to interfere or dominate in other countries' affairs either military (past history; current proxy involvement in Ukrainian war) or financially (present times).

Denmark Leads the West to Immigration Sanity

By Daniel Pipes

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63753/denmark-leads-the-west-to-immigration-sanity>



Oct 28 – Today in the West, no issue matters more than immigration policy, especially at a time when much of the world, from Mexicans to Nigerians to Pakistanis, wants to move to North America and Western Europe.

Controlling immigration has proven difficult because the Establishment in destination countries tends to view mass, unfettered, and unvetted immigration as a benign phenomenon. Two examples capture this outlook. In 2014, Sweden's establishment parties, making up 86 percent of the parliament, [joined forces](#) to marginalize the civilizationist party (that is, the party focused on controlling immigration and demanding the integration of



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immigrants) with 14 percent. Angela Merkel, the establishment German chancellor waded in a million-plus unvetted migrants, leading to a pan-European crisis in 2015-16.

Few parties are so arch-establishment as Denmark's Social Democrats (SD). Founded in 1871, it had the largest representation in parliament for seventy-seven straight years. Its accomplishments include creating the welfare state, building modern Denmark, and shaping the Danish character. "Deep down, we're all Social Democrats" a person who dislikes the party acknowledged to me.

Despite this pedigree, plus its own history of advocating open borders, the SD has since 2019 imposed a remarkably restrictive immigration policy. In so doing, it has made Denmark the West's undisputed leader in the race to save traditional culture. As few outside Denmark have noticed this remarkable shift, I went to Copenhagen in advance of the national elections on November 1 to understand what caused this shift, how much of a difference it makes, and if Denmark can offer lessons to other countries.

Building to Crisis

Denmark's unusual path started in 2001, when SD's seventy-seven-year streak came to an end and it lost power due to widespread stress over uncontrolled immigration, especially coming from the Middle East. Then, in 2006, a depiction of Islam's Prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper cartoon spurred international protests in the Muslim world. The controversy was Denmark's largest foreign relations controversy in decades. In 2015, the SD fared badly again, also due largely to the many Middle Eastern immigrants.

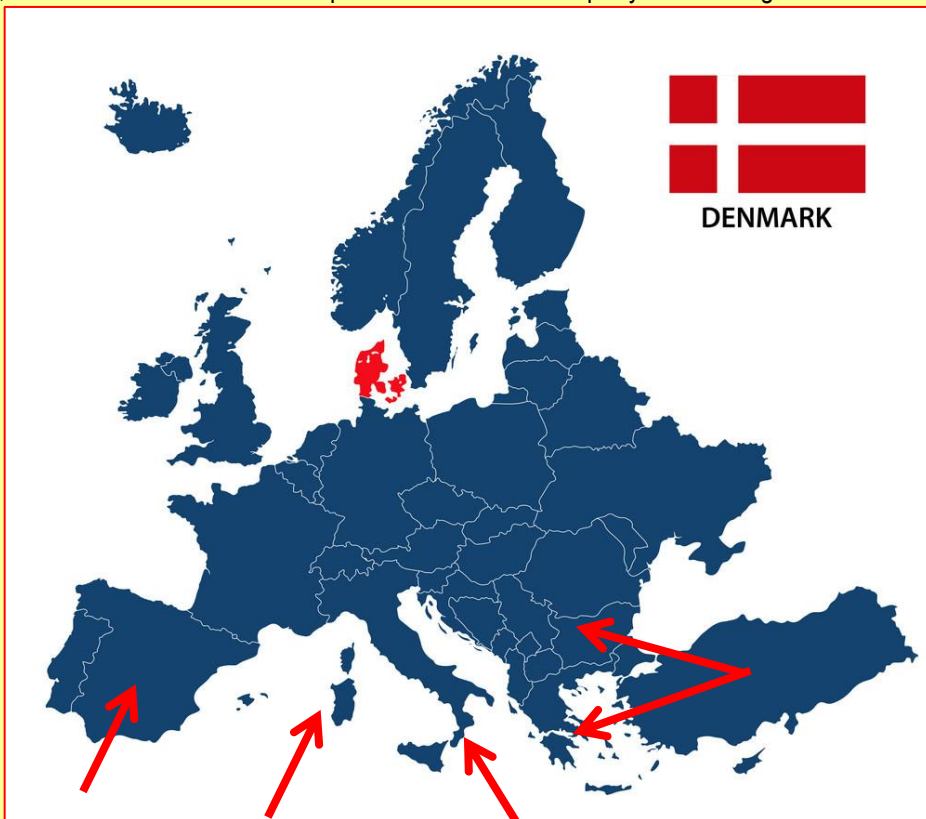
In response, the party chose a thirty-seven-year-old woman, Mette Frederiksen, as its leader. She quickly overhauled SD's lax immigration policy, calling for a cap on "non-Western immigrants,"^[1] for illegal migrants to be expelled to North Africa, and for immigrants to have to be employed for a full work-week of thirty-seven hours. Her party supported a law allowing jewelry to be stripped from migrants as well as a ban on burqas and niqabs, the all-encompassing Islamic outfits.

This jaw-droppingly tough approach by a social democratic party paid off handsomely. SD and its allies prevailed in the 2019 elections and Frederiksen went on to become prime minister. In contrast, the anti-immigration Danish People's Party (DPP) did terribly, collapsing from 37 seats in 2015 to 16 seats in 2019.

Policies

[Frederiksen](#) spoke of "sticking to our Danish values" and took steps to control immigration. Denmark accepted 21,316 [asylum seekers](#) in 2015; that number dropped to 1,515 in 2020. She announced the goal of [zero asylum seekers](#) in 2021, though the actual number increased to 2,099, presumably due to the decrease of pandemic restrictions. Likewise, the number of [asylums granted](#) went from 19,849 in 2015 to 601 in 2020, to 1,362 in 2021. In comparative terms, these numbers are trivial compared to many other Western European countries; neighboring [Sweden](#) granted 17,215 asylums in 2020, or roughly 15 times more than Denmark on a per-capita basis.

Even before Frederiksen took office, the Danish authorities had sent out a flamboyantly unfriendly message to would-be immigration. In 2015, to surprised [international headlines](#), the government placed advertisements in four Lebanese newspapers announcing that regulations concerning refugees had been tightened; in other words, go somewhere else. SD then engaged in a number of high-profile steps to encourage repatriation and even engage in forced deportations. For example, those the government delicately calls "spontaneous asylum-



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seekers" (i.e., illegal migrants) who refuse repatriation may find themselves in one of the country's three "[return centers](#)." [Inger Støjberg](#), integration minister in 2018, growled that conditions at those centers must be "as intolerable as possible."

The numbers involved were small and hardly dented the problem, the legal wrangling long and expensive, but these deportations – plus the ads, the jewelry law, and other steps – reinforced the Danish snarl to illegal migrants: "Don't come to Denmark. We're nasty. Go to Germany or Sweden instead." As a result, more refugees left Denmark [in 2020](#) than arrived.

At the same time, SD barely broached the far more challenging problem of dealing with the profound issues related to Muslim and other immigrants who come from alien cultures, far less modern circumstances, and bear an Islamist outlook. Social pathologies, unemployment, cultural clashes, and "parallel societies" remain for future governments to contend with.

A Serious Effort?

Did Denmark's Social Democratic party merely pander or is it sincere? To assess, it helps to take a step back and consider how divergently establishment and civilizationist parties view immigration.

Establishment parties welcome large-scale immigration because they tend to care little for their own culture, which they often associate with fascism, imperialism, and racism. They feel a sense of guilt toward non-Western peoples, whom they see as exploited by the West and made poorer and more repressed due to Western greed. A visitor to Denmark's National Museum will learn that Danish ships transported about [110,000 slaves](#) from Africa to the Western Hemisphere. The Establishment welcomes diversity and cultural transformation. It points to immigrants as sympathetic refugees and as aspiring young scholars, successful entrepreneurs, and proud members of the armed forces.

By contrast, attached to their own language, customs, religion, and to the cultural familiarity of those around them, civilizationists wish to preserve their traditional way of life. Symbolic of this, they cherish how [pedestrians](#) in Denmark wait dutifully for the light to turn green, even when no car is remotely in sight. Or how the public transportation works on the honor system. When large numbers of people speak other languages, pursue other customs, follow other religions, and act differently from themselves (I compulsively jay-walk), civilizationists become offended, even scared. They point to the myriad problems with Middle Eastern immigration, such as polygyny, female genital mutilation, honor killings, [criminality](#), rape gangs, jihadi violence, new [diseases](#), resisting assimilation, unemployment.

Two forces, however, disrupt establishment cohesion on immigration. One concerns [indigenous workers](#) who lose out when waves of low-cost immigrant rivals compete with them, harming their welfare; this makes far-left figures like U.S. senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT), British MP Jeremy Corbyn, and French presidential contender Jean-Luc Mélenchon cautious about waves of migrants. Interestingly, [Frederiksen](#) also articulated this position: "The price of unregulated globalization, mass immigration and the free movement of labor is paid for by the lower classes."

The other disruptive force concerns the voters; if open borders lose votes, then the establishment must rethink its approach – what happened in Denmark between 2001 and 2015. Together, these two forces suggest to me that the SD is sincere, though that will be tested should it lose the forthcoming elections.

The Current Debate

A sterile good-bad dispute over uncontrolled immigration wracks every other Western country. Denmark alone hosts a constructive debate over tactics: how far to clamp down? Being a member of the European Union (EU) and signatory to many United Nations (UN) conventions regarding asylum, family reunification, human rights, refugees, statelessness, about 80 percent of relevant Danish laws derive from those two sources. The issue, therefore, has less to do with abstract preferences and more with a willingness to defy those higher authorities.

The SD maintains that Denmark, a law-abiding global citizen with a population of just 5.8 million, must work strictly within existing confines. "We're a small country, we can't do whatever we want," Kaare Dybvad, SD's impressive minister of immigration and integration, told me. In response, Morten Messerschmidt, the equally impressive DPP leader, retorted that SD's foundational principles require it meekly to follow EU and UN diktats. Instead, he wants to push the envelope, ignoring select EU laws and leaving UN conventions. Not to do so, Messerschmidt believes, means electorally-appealing tough rhetoric without real effect.

That's the essence of the argument in Denmark, a sensible one, with a plausible case for each side. The voters will decide how aggressive they wish to be.

Why Denmark

Why, I asked my Danish interlocutors, did Denmark break the mold on immigration policy, ahead of every other Western country in developing a sensible consensus between establishment and civilizationists? I received an interesting array of answers. A sampling:



- Kaare Dybvad: the country's too-open immigration policy in the past requires a retreat and balance.
- Morten Messerschmidt: the country's economic equality points to popular enfranchisement.
- Naser Khader, the courageous Syrian-born independent member of parliament: the cartoon crisis.
- Mikkel Andersson, author of a book on immigration to Denmark: the Danes' fractious nature.
- Michael Pihl of the Danish Free Press Society: the country's non-hierarchical nature.

The most persuasive explanation came from both Peder Jensen, a Norwegian writer, and Bent Blüdnikow, a journalist and historian. With Pia Kjærsgaard (b. 1947), Denmark had the right charismatic politician at the right time with the right message. She built the DPP into a non-scary, non-extremist force that, starting in 2001, won substantial backing and forced the SD seriously to respond to her critique.

In other words, Denmark's happy evolution resulted not from national character nor from profound historical developments but from the randomness of personality and moment. That in turn implies the near-impossibility of predicting which Western country might follow Denmark toward immigration sanity.

External Impact

Observers widely recognize that Danes broke new ground. Political analyst [Kristian Madsen](#) saw the 2019 elections as "a laboratory for what the center-left [in Europe] can be." Analyst [Jamie Dettmer](#) noted that Frederiksen's victory "prompted a debate among fellow European left-wing parties: Should they, too, adopt anti-migrant rhetoric, imitate their Danish counterparts and campaign for stricter immigration rules?" [Frederiksen](#) herself offered Denmark's tough-on-immigration approach to other Social Democratic parties. "For years," she admonished them, Social Democrats "have underestimated the challenges of mass immigration. ... We have failed when it comes to maintaining the social contract, which is the very foundation of the Social-Democratic social model."

But there has not been much response. On their own, Austria's leftists made small moves in this direction when [Christian Kern](#), its Social Democratic chancellor in 2016-17, tightened immigration rules. Sweden's Social Democrats talked vaguely of pushing harder for immigrants to integrate, with Prime Minister [Magdalena Andersson](#) arguing "We don't want a Somalitown ... we want Swedish to be the natural language throughout Sweden").

In the end, then, it will not so much be the Danish model that brings sense to Europe but autonomous developments in each country. Denmark's example can inspire but it does not smooth the path forward.

[1] Curiously, the Danish government [defines non-Western](#) as any country outside the European Union, except for several Western Europe countries (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom), several west European mini-states (Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Vatican), and the Anglosphere (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States). This measure renders Ukraine, Israel, Japan, and Chile non-Western but Cypriot Turks and French Algerians rate as Westerners.

[Daniel Pipes](#) is president of the Middle East Forum.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Danish policies are fine, and it is very encouraging to realize that multicultural societies (led by UK and France) are a total failure – it is very difficult to mix oil with water; this is the way nature is. It should also be taken into account that Denmark is blessed to be located in an area with friendly neighbors along with the fact that Denmark is not one of the "gates" of Europe. The numbers mentioned in this article might make Spanish, Italians, and Greeks laugh. But anyway, it is a fine example to copy and paste.

Nearly 1,000 migrants stranded in Med as NGOs urge Italy, Malta to help

Source: <https://news.yahoo.com/nearly-1-000-migrants-stranded-155143203.html>

Nov 02 – Three charity boats carrying almost 1,000 rescued migrants on Wednesday urged Italian or Maltese authorities to welcome them into one of their ports, saying those onboard needed urgent assistance.

The vessels operated by Doctors Without Borders (MSF), SOS Mediterranee and SOS Humanity have been at sea for more than a week. They said all their requests to dock have so far proved unsuccessful.

"572 men, women and children still waiting for a safe port," MSF wrote on Twitter, referring to its Geo Barents vessel.



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In emailed comments to Reuters, SOS Humanity said it has 179 people onboard its Humanity 1 vessel, located off the eastern coast of Sicily. The German charity said it has been sending requests to dock to state authorities for the past 11 days.

The vessel run by SOS Mediterranee is currently carrying 234 people.

In an interview with the Corriere della Sera daily, Italian Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi did not reply to a question on whether the migrant boats would be allowed to dock, but said Rome cannot take charge of migrants rescued at sea by "foreign boats".

There was no immediate response from Maltese authorities to a request for comment.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's new rightist government is threatening to ban charity ships from its waters, as Rome looks once again to embrace a tough stance against boat migrants.

In comments to be included in a book, confirmed by her staff, Meloni accused sea rescue charities of breaching international law by acting as a "shuttle" between Africa and Europe.

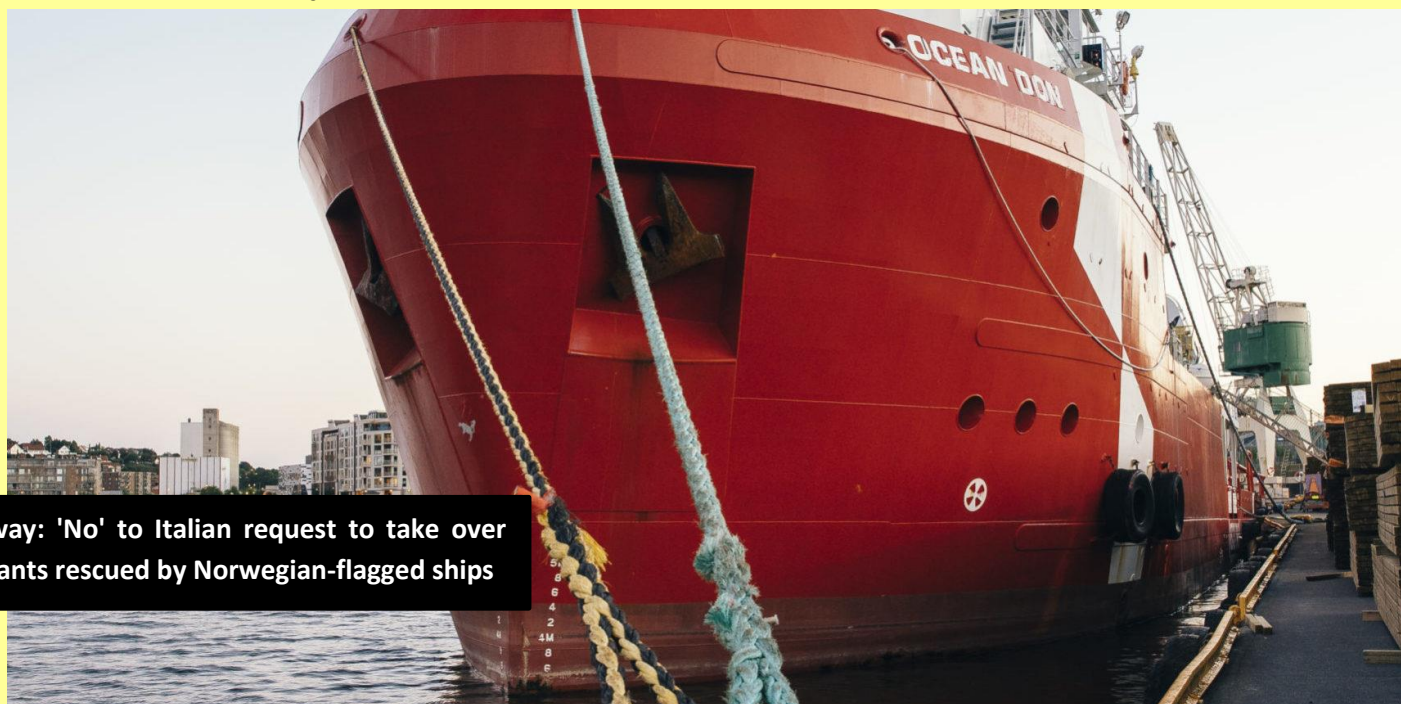
She insisted that the flag nations of the charity ships in question - Germany and Norway - should take care of the migrants currently stranded at sea, rather than Italy or Malta.

"If an NGO ship flies, let's say, the flag of Germany, there are two possibilities: either Germany recognises it and takes care of it, or that ship becomes a pirate ship," Meloni told book author Bruno Vespa.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: The so-called "rescue boats" happen to be in the area just in case or they were on the spot following an appointment. These vessels belong to a specific country; why don't they go there instead of overwhelming Italy and Malta as Meloni stated? It looks like a bad joke over innocent souls.

New rescue ship Sea-Watch 5 challenges far-right elections in Italy

Source: <https://sea-watch.org/en/new-rescue-ship/>



Norway: 'No' to Italian request to take over migrants rescued by Norwegian-flagged ships

Sep 26 – Recent events in Italy paint a dystopian picture for civil sea rescue: a few days after the political blockade of the rescue ship Sea-Watch 3, Italy votes for a hard right-wing parliamentary shift. The alliance around right-wing radical Giorgia Meloni and her party Fratelli d'Italia, whose election campaign also focused on restricting migration, became the strongest force. Instead of being discouraged, Sea-Watch, together with solidary actors, sends a new rescue ship to the central Mediterranean. The Sea-Watch 5 is a 12 years young supply vessel of 58 meters: faster, bigger, and more efficient than any of her successors.



Since Wednesday, September 21, 2022, the Italian authorities have been blocking the Sea-Watch 3. Under the recurring arbitrary justification of having rescued too many people, the recently issued ECJ ruling is being ignored. Only at the beginning of August, the court declared those arbitrary port state controls unlawful. Yesterday then, more than 40% of the voting Italians decided for a hard parliamentary shift to the right and thus also voted for illegitimate restrictions of the right to asylum and migration.

Instead of being discouraged by these events, Sea-Watch, together with European civil society, finds a strong answer: the Sea-Watch 5, a new rescue ship in the Mediterranean. After extensive surveys and examinations of various options, Sea-Watch decided to purchase the Ocean Don – a ship that is larger, faster, and more efficient than any previous vessel the organization has sent to the central Mediterranean. As a result, it can accommodate more rescued people, who can also be better cared for. As it was built in 2010, it is in perfect technical condition at only 12 years old, making it better equipped to withstand future attempts of criminalization and intimidation. The Ocean Don will be renamed Sea-Watch 5 and refitted and prepared for her first deployment.

“We strongly oppose the criminalization of migration and sea rescue by a party coalition with fascist roots. Instead of ‘Mother, Italian, Christian’, we say ‘sea rescue, human rights, Sea-Watch 5’”, says Johannes Bayer, board member of Sea-Watch.

The Sea-Watch 5 is being sent by a solidary civil society. The ship is not an act of one organization alone; it is solidarity in action. Besides numerous private donors, also the alliance United4Rescue supports the vessel financially. Liza Pflaum, deputy chairwoman: *“After the victory of the right-wing alliance in Italy, human rights in the Mediterranean Sea are in danger of drowning for good. Now more than ever, it depends on civil society showing solidarity. With the new alliance ship, we set a strong sign of solidarity and humanity against the deadly deterrence policy of the EU states!”*

Economic Sanctions Have a Poor Success Rate

By Robert Wihtol

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221102-economic-sanctions-have-a-poor-success-rate>

Nov 02 – Economic sanctions have become the weapon of choice in the United States’ diplomatic and strategic arsenal. Trade tariffs, export controls and other financial penalties offer a quick means to punish ‘bad behavior’, whether by terrorist groups, drug cartels or national governments. Over the past two decades, the US has imposed more sanctions than the United Nations, the European Union and Canada combined.

From a government point of view, sanctions are low cost. They may be drafted by a handful of civil servants, but the burden of implementation falls on multinationals and banks. And sanctions tend to boost the approval ratings of the leaders who impose them. No wonder policymakers like to use them to fill the diplomatic space between ineffective declarations and high-risk military operations. However, sanctions have a poor success rate, have high economic costs, and may also have massive unanticipated consequences for innocent bystanders.

North Korea is a case in point. Despite being subjected to some of the toughest sanctions ever applied, North Korea’s regime has remained in power and continued its weapons testing undeterred. In response to sanctions, Pyongyang has developed sophisticated [illicit tools to generate foreign exchange](#) and support the lifestyles of the country’s elite. Decades of sanctions have pushed North Korea deep into poverty. The burden is borne by the poor, many of whom live on the brink of starvation. By any yardstick, sanctions on North Korea are a failure.

As the use of sanctions has soared, so too have the compliance and opportunity costs for the private sector. Major deals have been lost and entire supply chains redirected due to ill-conceived measures. By relying so heavily on sanctions, is the US shooting itself in the foot? Agathe Demarais is the global forecasting director of the Economist Intelligence Unit. While working for the French Treasury in Russia and Lebanon she learned about sanctions firsthand. In [Backfire: How Sanctions Reshape the World Against U.S. Interests](#), which will be published on 15 November, she examines the extensive downsides to US-led sanctions and suggests a way forward in a world that is increasingly polarized between liberal and authoritarian regimes.

In 2002, the US Congress considered sanctioning oil companies doing business with Sudan, to pressure the country’s leaders into ending a brutal civil war. The US administration, however, was opposed, noting that sanctions would damage American businesses, work counter to Washington’s commitment to the free movement of capital, and force multinationals to raise capital outside the US. Congress backed down, but the debate rages on.

When American founding father Benjamin Franklin in 1763 learned that Great Britain would tax its colonies’ imports, he replied, ‘You cannot hurt us without hurting yourselves.’ The same holds true of sanctions today. When the US in the 1980s restricted grain exports to the Soviet Union, Argentina and Brazil quickly filled the gap left by US companies. And when it sanctioned Iranian and Venezuelan oil exports in 2019, Russia stepped in. Estimates put American



business opportunities lost due to sanctions at as much as US\$50 billion a year. And sanctions-related regulations have pushed banks' risk and compliance costs through the roof.

Sanctions also hurt the innocent. In response to Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, US-led sanctions cut off the country's food and medical supplies. Estimates put the resulting death toll at up to half a million, mainly children. In 1996, Madeleine Albright, the then US ambassador to the UN, said that reining in Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was 'worth it', words that she [later retracted](#) as a 'terrible mistake'. Demarais confirms [previous findings](#) that sanctions fail about two-thirds of the time, and that successes are often only partial. Her book includes an important discussion on when sanctions can be expected to work.

To be effective, sanctions should be short term, have a narrow goal, target a country with significant ties with the US, and be backed by American allies. In stark contrast, US sanctions tend to be long term, target dictatorships with few ties to the US, and have broad objectives such as regime change. The US often goes it alone, with little consultation with allies or other interested parties. It should therefore not be surprised when its sanctions fail.

Demarais wraps up with a discussion about the current decoupling of the US and China. She debunks the notion that decoupling would be beneficial to the US and the West. At the business level, decoupling would be difficult and enormously costly, given closely integrated global supply chains. And at the geopolitical level, decoupling would leave Beijing freer to pursue its own agenda in political hotspots like Taiwan. The heyday of US-led sanctions is drawing to a close. Demarais predicts that a self-reliant China will increasingly undermine US sanctions on Iran, North Korea, Russia, Venezuela and other authoritarian regimes.

Backfire provides valuable pointers for policymakers. If US-led sanctions are to retain any effectiveness, Washington will need to rethink its approach. It should become more strategic, learn from past failures, work more closely with other governments, and pay heed to the impact of sanctions on the strategic thinking of both allies and adversaries.

Robert Wihtol is an adjunct faculty member at the Asian Institute of Management and former Asian Development Bank country director for China and director general for East Asia.

PETA urges end of Harvard monkey tests, sewing eyes closed

Source: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/washington-secrets/peta-urges-end-of-harvard-monkey-tests-sewing-eyes-closed>

Oct 14 – A Harvard University neurobiology lab is under fire for conducting brain and vision experiments on baby monkeys, the latest in a string of efforts by animal welfare groups to shut down tests they view as cruel that have been funded by the National Institutes of Health and other federal agencies.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals urged Harvard Medical School officials this week to end monkey tests at the school's Livingstone Lab.



Livingstone Lab.

"I'm deeply concerned that the harm caused to the animals far outweighs any potential benefits to human or animal health — and I ask that approval to carry out these experiments be revoked," wrote PETA neuroscientist Dr. Katherine Roe in a letter shared with Secrets.

She cited experiments that take baby macaques from their mothers and, for a year, prevent them from seeing human or other faces by sewing their eyes closed or having humans wear welding masks.

"The experiments in question, conducted by investigator Margaret Livingstone, involve removing infant monkeys from their mothers at birth and subjecting them to various sensory deprivation procedures, including binocular deprivation and monocular deprivation," said the letter.

"In some experiments, newborn monkeys' eyes are sutured closed for their entire first year of life. In other experiments, monkeys are denied the opportunity to view the faces of conspecifics or even the laboratory workers

feeding them. In fact, these laboratory workers were required to wear welding masks during their limited interactions with the baby monkeys," it added.

After this story posted, [Harvard sent a statement](#). In it, the school condemned "personal attacks directed at scientists who conduct critically important research for the benefit of humanity" and said that it is transparent in its work.

On her webpage and that of the center, Livingstone detailed some of their work in line with how PETA described it.



They stole my baby & gave me this stuffed monkey to cling to. Give me my baby back!!



Where's my mommy?! I can't see! They sewed my eyes shut!



Livingstone's page said of her research, "We have generated novel, completely unnatural domains in monkeys by training them to choose between pairs of symbols to receive different reward amounts. Conversely we prevented the development of face domains by raising

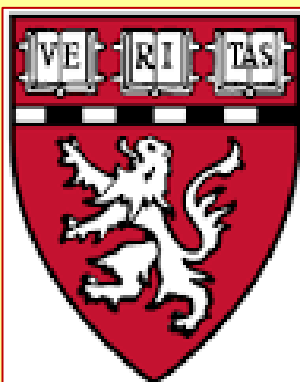


monkeys while we wore welders masks so the monkeys never saw faces. This double dissociation tells us that experience is critical for the development of specialized domains."

The [Livingstone Lab page](#) said of the research, "We found that intensive early experience learning human symbols in young macaques can cause the development in monkeys of novel, entirely unnatural, domains, selectively responsive to human symbols. Conversely, monkeys raised without seeing faces do not develop face domains, which are present in normally raised humans and macaques. This double dissociation means that early experience is critical for the development of specialized domains."

PETA's Roe said the tests traumatize the animals. "It's well established that infant monkeys deprived of their mothers, whether they are raised by surrogates, by lab staff, or in peer groups, experience both immediate and long-term effects from this deprivation." PETA also raised questions about the impact of the research, claiming it had not produced any human benefit. It provided other details on a [webpage about the Harvard research](#).

The targeting of the lab is the latest of several by animal welfare groups to end live testing. The group [White Coat Waste](#), for example, helped to end testing on beagles and what it has dubbed Dr. Anthony Fauci's "[Monkey Island](#)."



HARVARD
Shame on you!
MEDICAL SCHOOL





Kurt Zouma

When he is not kicking a ball he kicks his cat!

Ukraine – Promotion of sterilization of the unemployed and ode to collaboration with the Nazis

Source: <https://www.donbass-insider.com/2020/06/27/ukraine-promotion-of-sterilization-of-the-unemployed-and-ode-to-collaboration-with-the-nazis/>

ANY RESEMBLANCE TO REAL PERSONS OR ACTUAL FACTS IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL

2020 – Since the Maidan of 2014, Ukraine is sinking deeper and deeper into decomplexed neo-Nazism, as two recent news show: the promotion of the sterilization of the unemployed by a deputy from Vladimir Zelensky’s party, and the ode to collaboration with the Nazis placarded on the walls of the city of Kherson by the city’s own mayor!!! But according to Westerners, there are no neo-Nazis in power structures of Ukraine, and to say that would be just horrible Russian propaganda. I’ll let you be the judge of that.



Ukrainian MP calls for sterilization of the unemployed

In a [video published on social networks](#), **Galina Tretiakova**, deputy of the “Servants of the People” party (the party of the Ukrainian President, Vladimir Zelensky), said that the [unemployed give birth to poor quality children and promoted their sterilization](#), in order to reduce the social benefits budget.

“When we provide funds, which are used by the family, and the birth of a child is not for the purpose of giving him or her equal education and rights, but for the purpose of receiving material assistance, then we will receive, I will put it bluntly, children of very poor quality. This leads to the fact that they are also living at the expense of public funds,” said Ms. Tretiakova.

She then cited the example of the United Kingdom and Singapore, whose methods are brutal to say the least.

“In that sense, Britain is very hard on those who don’t work. They even once had a deputy minister of social policy who said that anyone who wants welfare should be sterilized. That is a brutal policy. I want to say that Lee Kuan Yew (former Prime Minister of Singapore) is very often reminded that Singapore is very good at this. Lee Kuan Yew sterilized women who did not have higher education,” Tretiakova added.

She stressed that by such methods, authorities in other countries “uprooted elements of the nation who are not family defenders and breadwinners”.



It is worth noting that, in addition to being a member of Parliament from Zelensky's party, Ms. Tretyakova is the head of the Social Policy (sic) and Veterans Rights Protection Committee of the Rada . With such people in the bodies responsible for defining the country's social policy, Ukraine is on the right track to imitate the Third Reich in terms of eugenics!

There were people in Ukraine who rebelled against what this deputy said. The council of the Federation of Ukrainian Trade Unions demanded her resignation, and the [political scientist Vladimir Katsman](#) drew a parallel with eugenics, asking whether afterwards it would come to measuring the size of skulls (as was done during the Third Reich).

"It turns out that in our country there are, so to speak, first-class children and second-class children, and families without social protection just give birth – excuse me for the word – to children of the class that does not suit Mrs. Tretyakova. And generally speaking, she pointed out that it would be a good idea to apply measures such as sterilisation or other measures to these parents. She gave the example of England and some other countries. If you will excuse me, but who gave this majority the right to judge us according to the type of children we have – rightly or wrongly? What's the next step: measuring skulls or comparing certain genetic characteristics? We haven't had enough yet," said Vladimir Katsman.

But two days after the scandal exploded, Tretyakova still hasn't resigned or apologized.

[Igor Guzhva, Strana's editor-in-chief](#), explained on his Facebook wall that Tretyakova's words are in the same ideological line as the health reforms, i.e. reducing social spending.

He then went on to justify this ideology, explaining that in view of the current economic state of Ukraine, there are too many people in the country and that the population must therefore be reduced even more in order to reach equilibrium (sic) within 5 to 15 years!!! I recall that [Ukraine has already lost millions of inhabitants since the dissolution of the USSR](#), that this is continuing in an accelerated way since the Maidan of 2014, and that this is causing increasing problems of financing pensions (and not only), because there are not enough young people working to finance them.

The more Ukraine is going to reduce its population, the less money there will be to pay pensions, but also the state budget, while [Ukraine is increasingly in debt and has to beg the IMF for loans to pay for the previous ones](#). How will Ukraine repay the IMF and other creditors with fewer people contributing to the country's budget? What will Mrs Tretyakova and Mr Guzhva then propose? To euthanise pensioners, or even the disabled, since these people seem to be following the path of their ideological ancestors who collaborated with the Nazis???

Kherson's mayor displays an ode to collaboration with the Nazis on his city's billboards

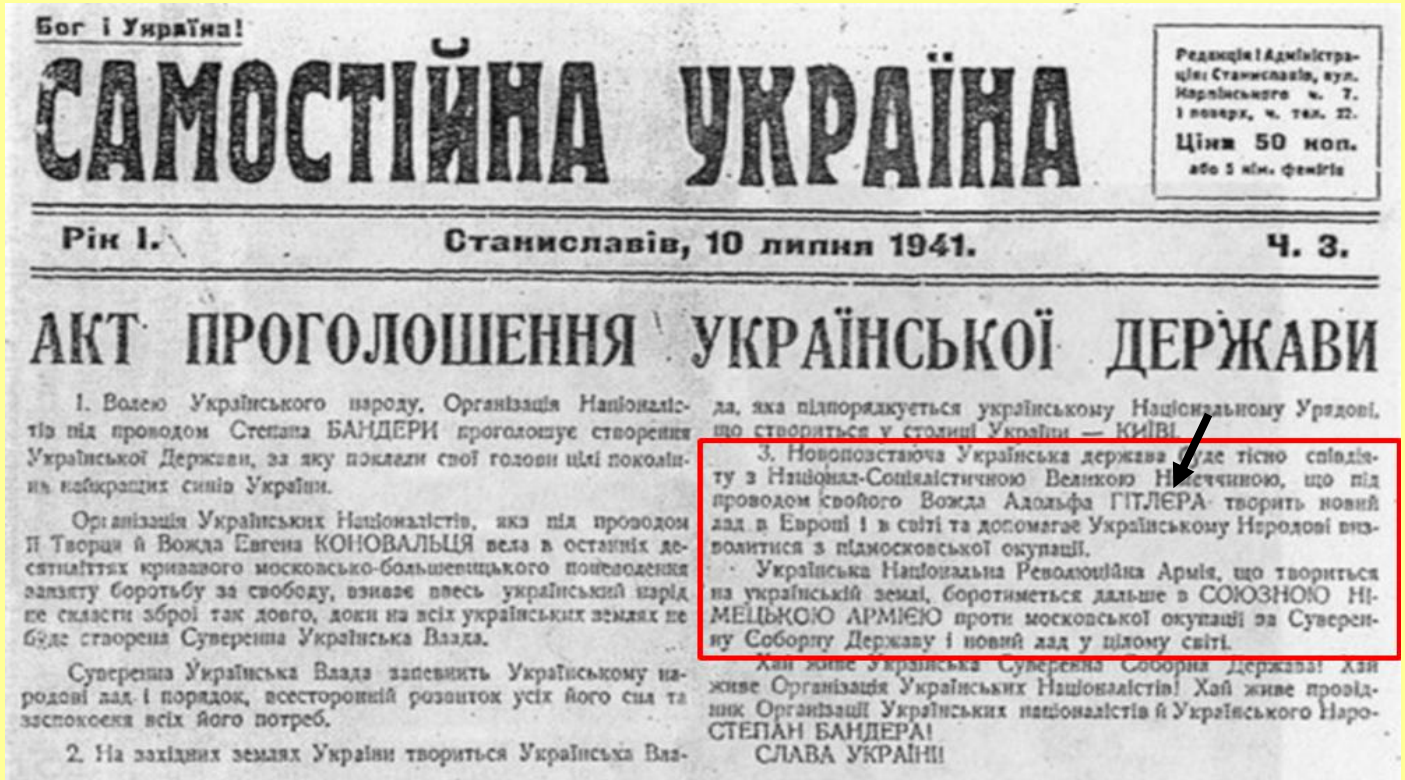
A collaboration of Ukraine with the [Nazis which is displayed in large on the billboards of the city of Kherson](#), thanks to the "bright idea" of its mayor, on the occasion of the anniversary of the [act of restoration of Ukraine, which had been published on June 30, 1941](#).



In a “strange” way, the posters hide with a ribbon in the colours of the Ukrainian flag the name of Adolf Hitler, but not the mention of Nazi Germany, which are in the 3rd point of this act signed by Stepan Bandera, and of which here is the complete translation:

“The new **Ukrainian state will work closely with the Great National Socialist Germany, under the leadership of its leader Adolf Hitler**, which is creating a new order in Europe and the world and helping the Ukrainian people to free themselves from the Moscow occupation. **The Ukrainian People’s Revolutionary Army, which was formed on Ukrainian lands, will continue to fight together with the German Allied Army against the Moscow occupation for a sovereign and united State and a new order in the world.** “

Here is a photo of the original publication so that you can check for yourself that the text has not been distorted in any way.



By deciding to publicly celebrate the anniversary of this open act of collaboration with the Nazis, the mayor of Kherson has just proved that today’s Ukraine has indeed sunk completely into uncomplexed neo-Nazism. Because it is not the initiative of neo-Nazi small groups, but an official authority of the country (a mayor), who celebrates on giant billboards, the collaboration of his country with Nazi Germany! Between this initiative of the mayor of Kherson, and the eugenicist remarks of Mrs. Tretyakova, there is no more room for doubt (for those who still had some): [post-Maidan Ukraine is indeed a country that officially sank into state neo-Nazism](#). A neo-Nazism to which Western leaders close their eyes and throw a modest veil, to hide from their population the putrid swamp they support both politically and financially. This sordid masquerade of the West supporting Nazism and turning a blind eye to its abominations was already played out in the 1930s. This is what the rewriting of history by the West has led to: we are repeating the same mistakes we made a century ago, and the consequences will be just as disastrous.

Albanian Migrants Top Arrivals by Small Boats – Why Are They Coming to UK?

Source: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-04/why-are-albanians-coming-to-uk-where-are-the-other-migrants-from>

Nov 04 – The number of Albanians crossing the English Channel on small boats has spiked over the past two years, with Immigration Minister Robert Jenrick saying they now account for 80% of people the government regards as arriving “illegally” in the UK. Home Secretary [Suella Braverman](#) this week described the trend as an “invasion,” triggering a firestorm of criticism both in the UK and abroad — including from Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, who said the rhetoric risks fuels xenophobic attacks against his countrymen. Here’s what to know.



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – November 2022

How many Albanians have arrived?

A total of 2,165 people registered Albania as their country of origin when they landed on the south coast, according to [UK Home Office data](#) from January to June 2022. That's up from 800 last year, and 50 the year before.

Why are Albanians coming to UK?

Clandestine Channel Threat Commander Dan O'Mahoney told the Home Affairs Select Committee last week that the "exponential" rise is likely "in the main due to the fact that Albanian criminal gangs have gained a foothold in the north of France."

Why are there so many Albanian asylum seekers?

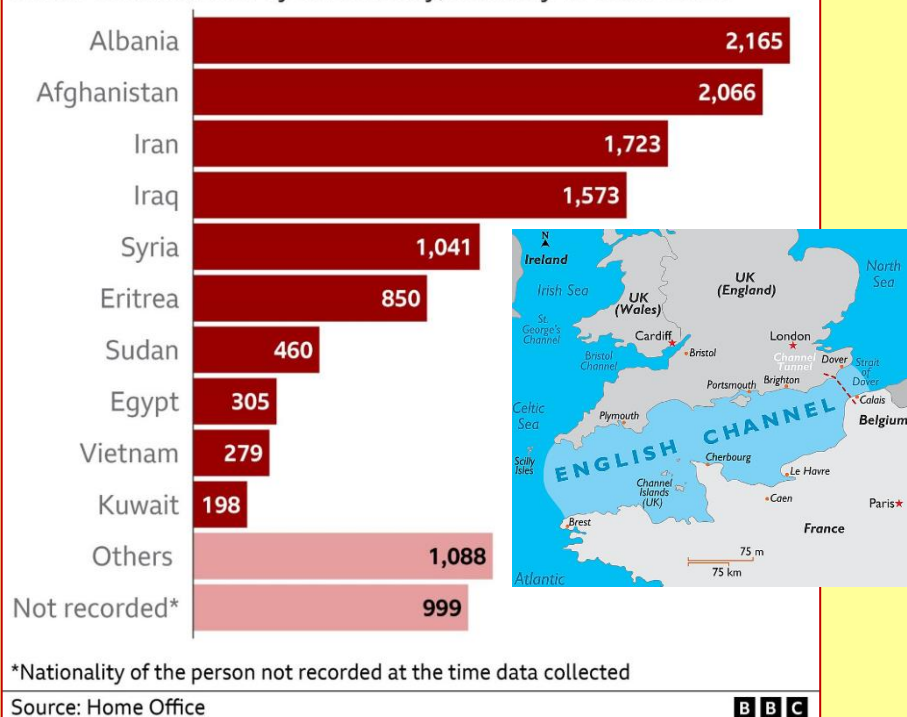
At the Conservative Party conference last month, Braverman accused Albanians of arriving in the UK of abusing [UK modern slavery laws](#). "The truth is that many of them are not modern slaves and their claims of being trafficked are lies," she said. Rama has said in a [tweet](#) that the "UK should fight the crime gangs of all nationalities and stop discriminating versus Albanians to excuse policy failures."

Why are people leaving Albania?

A [study](#) by the University of Bedfordshire and International Organisation for Migration says that trafficking in Albania is linked to low levels of education, forced marriage arrangements and limited options for safe and legal migration. Poverty and other economic factors were also cited as a major driver.

Where do the people crossing the channel come from?

Small boat arrivals by nationality, January to June 2022



Leaked documents: British spies constructing secret terror army in Ukraine

KIT KLARENBERG · NOVEMBER 3, 2022

THE GRAYZONE



Illegal immigration – Two things to consider

By the Editor of "C²BRNE Diary"

Pregnant women and unaccompanied children

According to the provision of the Greek "Article 306" of the Criminal Code : "1. Whoever exposes another and thereby renders him helpless, as well as whoever leaves helpless a person who has him under his protection or who has an obligation to feed and treat him or to transport him, or a person whom he has culpably injured, shall be punished by imprisonment at least six months. 2. If the act caused the victim a) serious bodily harm, imprisonment of at least three years is imposed, b) death, imprisonment of up to ten years is imposed."

Based on the legislation mentioned above all pregnant illegal immigrants, parents of children and unaccompanied children should be prosecuted accordingly and this should be made known to their usual [countries of origin](#)



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – November 2022

Mechanical damage to vessels

It is a common practice either to tear the plastic vessels or damage the engines of boats and then require assistance via European Emergency Number 112. Following the rescue operation, it is very easy to distinguish if the mechanical damage is real or man-made. The latter should result in immediate deportation to the countries of origin. Playing games with Coast Guard authorities is not acceptable and this practice should stop because in many instances Coast Guard personnel risk their lives under very difficult environmental conditions in the open sea to save people who caused trouble on their own. The new norm should also be communicated to the countries of origin of illegal immigrants.

UPDATE 10/11: 20-day-old infant died due to hypothermia in the boat carrying 36 illegal immigrants from Côte d'Ivoire via Tunisia to Lampedusa, Italy together with his 19yo mother.



Shame on my country!

Voting Started		11/12/2021		11:58:36 AM	
Item 72 (a) draft resolution A/C.3/76/L.57/Rev.1					
Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AFGHANISTAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAMEROON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FINLAND	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KUWAIT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEPAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAUDI ARABIA
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BULGARIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ERITREA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JAPAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOROCCO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAINT LUCIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TUNISIA
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CABO VERDE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHIOPIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KENYA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAMIBIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAN MARINO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TUVALU
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAMBODIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FIJI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KIRIBATI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAURU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAO TOME-PRINCIPE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UGANDA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN FAVOUR: 121	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGAINST: 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ABSTENTION: 53			

Resolution on 'Combating glorification of Nazism'; 105 countries voted in favor, 52 voted against, 15 abstained



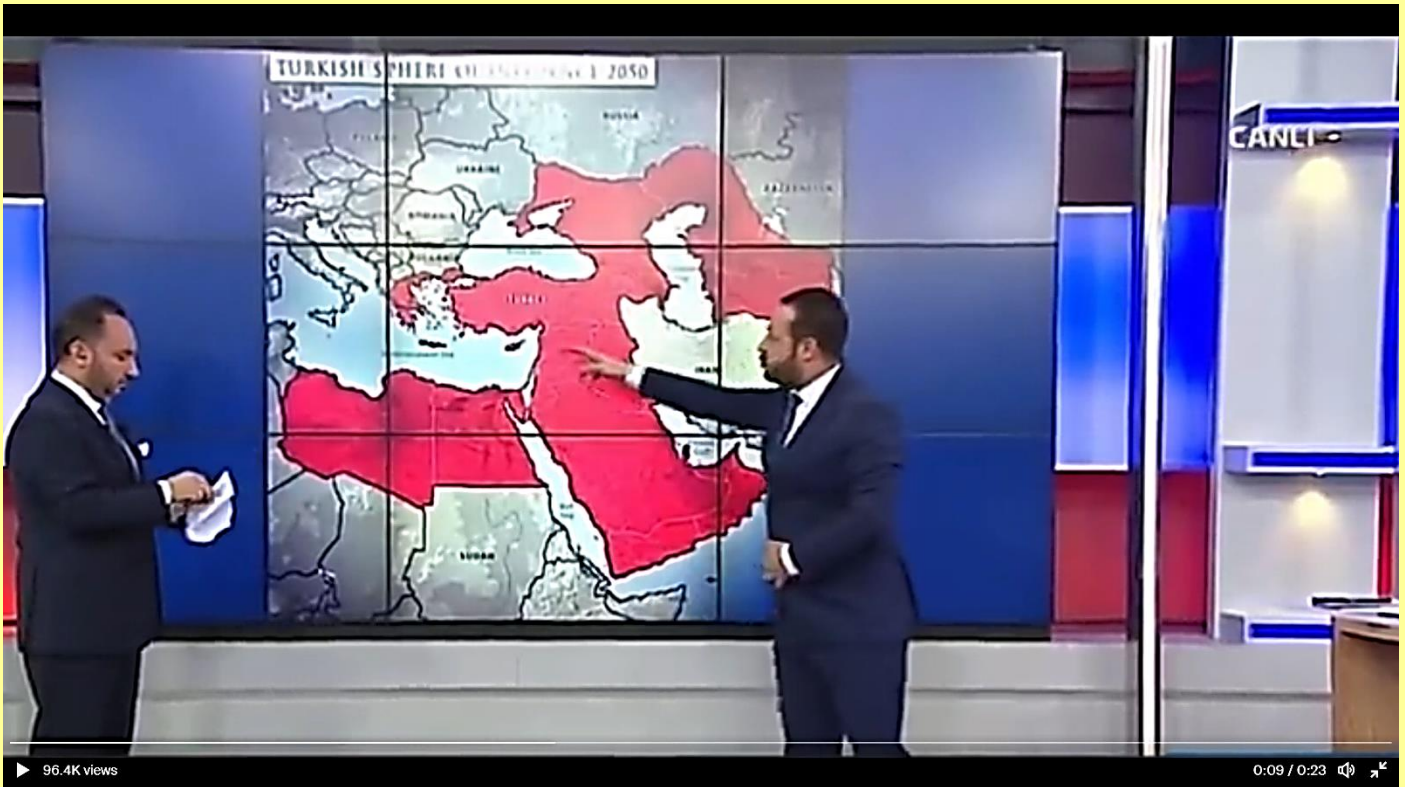
Gameday Security Magazine

Source: <https://ncs4.usm.edu/resources/gameday-security-magazine/>

The NCS⁴ *Gameday Security* magazine is a bi-annual online digital publication designed to cover the latest topics, trends, and issues within the spectator sports safety and security industry. *Gameday Security* reaches more than 9,000 safety and security professionals, including security directors and operators, facility and stadium managers, event planners/operators, law enforcement personnel, emergency managers, fire/HAZMAT, emergency medical/health services, athletic administrators, and governmental representatives. Industries represented include professional sports leagues, intercollegiate athletics, interscholastic athletics, marathon and endurance events, and sports and entertainment facilities (i.e., concerts, festivals, e-sports, and convention centers).



When humor hides a tumor!



They claim that by [2050](#) the whole region and beyond will be under Turkish control. The best part of all this delirium is that a large number of Turks actually believe it!

Europe Tangles with Immigration

By Daniel Pipes

October 12, 2022

Source:

Part I: "[L'inverno demografico rende l'Europa un pezzo d'Africa](#)," *La Nuova Bussola Quotidiana*, October 12, 2022.

Part II: "[I politici Ue sono complici di chi ci vuole islamizzare](#)," *NicolaPorro.it*, October 17, 2022.

Lorenza Formicola: Approximately 5.3 million Ukrainian refugees have moved to the European Union since Feb. 24, with minimal problems. In contrast, Europe went into crisis with the arrival of just over a million Syrians, Iraqis, and other non-Europeans in 2015-16. Please comment on this contrast.

Daniel Pipes: The 2015-16 migrants came from outside Europe, which made them unwelcome for three main reasons. First, Europeans intuitively understand that their countries cannot take in all the world's migrants. Second, they arrived primarily for economic reasons. Third, they came from alien cultures. [Adam Smith](#), the Scottish economist, pointed out in 1817 that if a humane European has no personal connections to China, he would "be willing to sacrifice the lives of a hundred millions" of Chinese in preference to losing his own finger. That remains true two centuries later.

LF: Before the Russian attack, Ukrainians, with the lowest per capita income in Europe, would not have been welcomed, then suddenly they were. Does this precedent point to future crises legitimizing migratory flows otherwise considered illegal?

The Ukrainian crisis is a great exception because Ukrainians are Europeans.

DP: No, the Ukrainian crisis is a great exception because Ukrainians are Europeans. The great majority of would-be migrants to Europe come from outside Europe and so will not be similarly welcomed. Also, most of those non-Europeans primarily seek to better their economic circumstances, which limits sympathy for them.



LF: Does racism explain the difference in the warm reception of Ukrainians versus the cold one for non-Europeans?

DP: All humans have a preference for people who act and look like themselves, but this has only a minor role in explaining the contrasting reception between Ukrainians and non-Europeans. I listed and explained those differences in a recent [article on Ukrainian refugees](#). In brief:

- Refugees vs. economic migrants
- Reluctance vs. eagerness
- Proximity vs. distance
- Solidarity vs. discord
- Invasion vs. domestic issues
- Self-interest vs. indifference
- Viable skills vs. unemployability
- Work vs. welfare
- Good citizenship vs. criminality
- Moderation vs. Islamism
- Cultural similarity vs. difference
- Assimilation vs. separatism
- Limited vs. unlimited numbers

LF: You have developed the idea of cultural zones where people should take refuge, such as Latin America for Latin Americans. How does the Ukrainian crisis bear on this concept?

DP: It confirms how natural it is for Europeans to seek and receive refuge in Europe. It's not the same when Somalis and Kurds demand entry.

LF: Given that Europe's indigenous population is decreasing in size while Africa's is expected to triple by 2100, is Africa the future of Europe?

DP: It could be unless something changes, and fast. Note some statistics: In 1885, Europe (excluding Russia and Turkish Thrace) had an estimated population of 240 million people while Africa had about 100 million. Today, those numbers are roughly 600 million and 1.25 billion. Demographers predict that in 2050, the populations will be 600 million and 2.5 billion, respectively. So, in the course of 165 years, Africa will have grown ten times faster than Europe. In 2100, the numbers are expected to be about 500 million and 4 billion.

I know of only one book on this topic, [The Scramble for Europe by Stephen Smith](#). Weirdly, Smith sees this immigration as more of a problem for Africa than for Europe (on the basis that its most talented individuals are leaving). But I see the problem as one of swamping Europe with peoples of an extremely alien culture. I expect that very few Europeans welcome such changes. Unless an effective barrier against unlimited immigration goes up soon, Europe could turn into an extension of Africa.

LF: Italy is the European country most affected by illegal migrants. Although Lega managed to reduce this problem by 97 percent in its time at the Ministry of the Interior, repatriation eluded even it. Why so?

DP: As Mario Salvini dramatically showed, it is relatively simple to prevent illegal migrants from entering by setting up patrols, rejecting "taxi" ships full of illegal migrants, and sending negative signals to potential illegals. In contrast, repatriation involves families, jobs, and the judicial system, making it far more costly, complex, and unsuccessful.

LF: ISIS and other Islamist terror groups seek to exploit illegal migrants to infiltrate Europe. How much of a problem does this present?

DP: Jihadis disguised as normal migrants have successfully engaged in violent incidents in both [Europe and North America](#). So long as unvetted migrants have access to Western countries, we should expect this pattern to continue.

LF: In an echo of what happened in late 2021, when Poland found itself invaded by migrants coming from Belarus, Bangladeshis arriving on chartered flights make up the most common illegal migrants in Italy. But whereas Warsaw raised its voice in outrage, Rome does not. Why do you think that is the case?

DP: First, the current Polish government worries about illegal migrants in a way that its Italian counterpart does not. Second, that the Belarus government invited those migrants to exploit them as a weapon against Poland made the issue highly emotional and a challenge to the Polish state. They see Europe's culture as morally inferior to those of other regions due to Europe's trio of racism, imperialism, and fascism.

LF: What do you think of a recent decision by the European Union Commission promoting the hijab (an Islamic headcover) as a symbol of diversity and freedom?



DP: This fits with the by-now traditional attitude of what I call the 6Ps, namely the police, politicians, press, priests, professors and prosecutors. They see Europe's culture as morally inferior to those of other regions due to Europe's trio of racism, imperialism, and fascism (as though these horrors were limited to Europe). They are eager to import customs that reduce European civilization.

LF: Are European leaders ignorant of or complicit in the Islamization of the West?

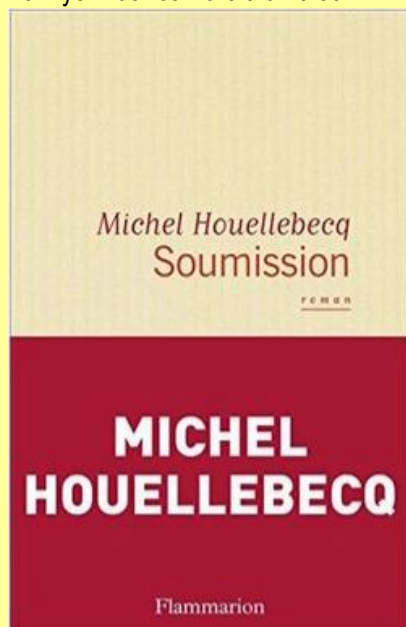
DP: Complicit: the 6Ps welcome Islamization. They denigrate Christianity and Judaism but welcome and celebrate Islam as the religion of virtuous victims.

LF: Bat Ye'or accuses European institutions of promoting Islamization by encouraging immigration from Muslim countries and then by demanding cultural dialogue. Do you agree with her?

DP: Yes, I do. She sees this process as more organized and purposeful than I do, but that's a small difference.

LF: Are any Western governments allied with radical Islam?

DP: In limited ways, at certain times and in some places, yes – for example, in Libya and Türkiye. But not more than that.



LF: In France, the issue of the headscarf in schools is back, more than ever. Why is it important that young girls wear hijab?

DP: The hijab marks the girls as Muslim, isolating them from other students and asserting their superiority through their modesty.

LF: Why do so many politicians and intellectuals insist that the hijab is just an innocent cultural symbol, analogous to a Catholic nun's veil?

DP: Again, because it undercuts traditional European customs and mores.

LF: Given the growth of antisemitism driven by Muslims, do Jews have a future in Europe?

DP: I think not. In a blog that I began in 2004 and have often updated since, "[Jewish Life in an Increasingly Muslim Europe](#)," I document a small fraction of the travails that Europe's Jews are suffering, from bigotry to murder. They are so many.

Interestingly, recent years have seen non-Jewish Europeans begin to envy Jews because they have a place of refuge. Michel Houellebecq in the novel *Soumission* has a Christian man's Jewish girlfriend announce she is escaping an Islamist government in France by moving to Israel. He sadly replies, "There is no Israel for me."

LF: You define "civilizationist parties" as European parties with a common denominator to preserve Western ways, especially from the Islamist threat. Are they the only barrier against the transformation of civilization?

DP: No, they are not. As can be seen most strikingly in [Denmark](#), leftist parties like the Social Democrats can take up the cause of limiting immigration. The phenomenon exists [in other countries too](#), but only in Denmark has such a party at the head of a governing coalition.

[Daniel Pipes](#) is president of the Middle East Forum, which leads the Israel Victory initiative.

Qatar World Cup a mistake and a 'bad choice', says ex-FIFA boss Sepp Blatter

Source: <https://news.sky.com/story/qatar-world-cup-a-mistake-and-a-bad-choice-says-ex-fifa-boss-sepp-blatter-12742447>

Nov 09 – Former FIFA boss Sepp Blatter has said awarding the World Cup to Qatar was a mistake and a "bad choice". He was president when Qatar unexpectedly beat the US in a 2010 vote. Mr Blatter told Swiss media that the country was "too small", saying "football and the World Cup are too big for that". Qatar is just over half the size of Wales.

"It was a bad choice. And I was responsible for that as president at the time," the 86-year-old said. However, he didn't cite human rights concerns as a reason for his assessment.



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With the competition less than a fortnight away, criticisms have been mounting over Qatar's attitude to gay people and [injuries and deaths of migrant workers](#) who built its stadiums.

A tournament ambassador this week [described homosexuality as "damage in the mind"](#), adding to unease over holding the event in the conservative Islamic state.

[Sepp Blatter \(left\) and Michel Platini were cleared of corruption this year](#)

Mr Blatter told Swiss newspaper group Tamedia that a meeting between former French president Nicolas Sarkozy and ex-UEFA boss Michel Platini was crucial in swinging key votes.

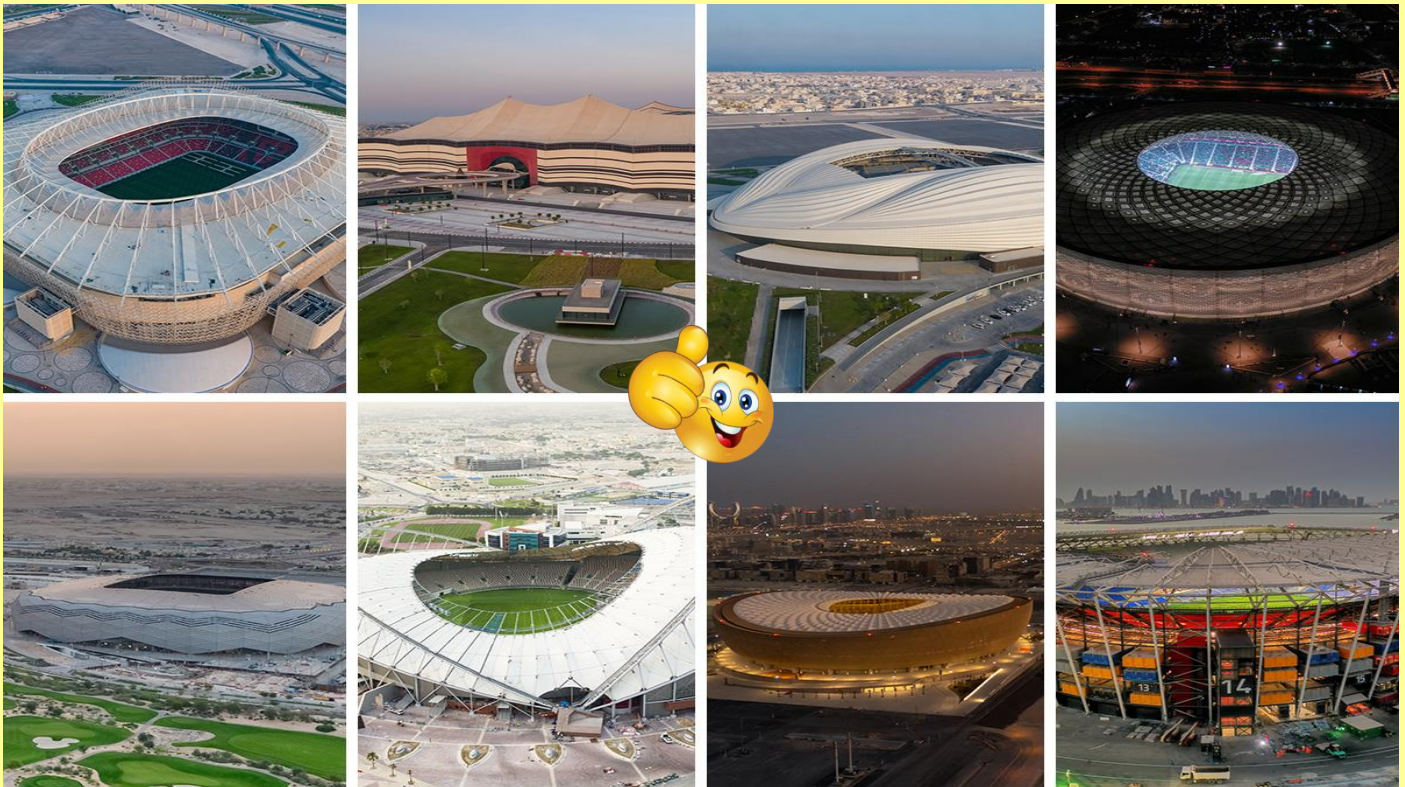
Mr Platini was invited to the presidential palace a week before the December 2010 vote and the Qatari crown prince, now the Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, was there.

Sepp Blatter repeated his claim that the ex-president put pressure on Mr Platini to change his vote.

"Thanks to the four votes of Mr Platini and his (UEFA) team, the World Cup went to Qatar rather than the United States. It's the truth," Mr Blatter said.

Mr Platini told the AP news agency in 2015: "Sarkozy never asked me to vote for Qatar, but I knew what would be good" and acknowledged he "might have told" US officials that he would vote for them.

Mr Blatter and Mr Platini were [cleared of corruption](#) this summer after a payment of two million Swiss francs (£1.7m) from FIFA to Mr Platini were exposed in 2015.



The World Cup starts on 20 November, with 32 teams competing in eight stadiums in and around the capital, Doha.

About **1.2 million international visitors** are expected but many will commute in from neighboring countries as accommodation is limited. It was switched to a winter tournament to avoid Qatar's searing summer temperatures.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: What is the reason for saying this just a few days before the Games? To satisfy the LGBTQ+ community and be politically "correct" could be a good excuse. The Western World is used to imposing its norms and habits/ethics globally and cannot tolerate environments where people believe that "if you are in my country, you will behave accordingly!". In addition, who says that the size of a country dictates if mega sports events will be undertaken? Greece got the Olympic Games in 2004 and it is not a big (in size) country.





Imagine: 19 billion euros given to African countries from where illegal immigrants are coming to Europe

Brussels Urges 'Immediate Disembarkation' Of Ocean Viking Migrants

Source: <https://www.barrons.com/news/brussels-urges-immediate-disembarkation-of-ocean-viking-migrants-01668013206>

Nov 09 – The European Commission Wednesday waded into a dispute over 234 migrants rescued in the Mediterranean and stuck aboard a ship after Italy refused to accept them, urging their "immediate disembarkation".

The Ocean Viking, a vessel operated by the European charity SOS Mediterranee under a Norwegian flag, has been forced to sail away from Sicilian waters towards France after Italy refused to let her dock.

Italian leaders have claimed that France is ready to accept the migrants, but Paris has warned that the ship is in Italian waters and branded the refusal to let her dock "unacceptable".

Immigration decisions are ultimately a matter for each EU member state, but the European Union tries to coordinate policy in the bloc. "The legal obligation to rescue and to ensure the safety of life at sea is clear and unequivocal, irrespective of the circumstances that lead people to be in a situation of distress," the European Commission, the EU's executive, said in a statement.

The statement did not call out France, Italy or Rome's new far-right premier Georgia Meloni by name, but made it clear that governments have a legal obligation to help sea travellers in distress.

"The European Commission calls for the immediate disembarkation, at the nearest place of safety, of all persons rescued and who are on board the Ocean Viking," the statement said.



© Gabriele Maricchiolo/NurPhoto/Getty Images



"The situation onboard the vessel has reached a critical level and needs to be urgently addressed to avoid a humanitarian tragedy," it warned.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Immediate disembarkation! Sure! But where? Italy? No Grazie! Then where? Belgium? The Netherlands? Norway? Sweden? Finland? Germany? Denmark? France? SILENCE ...

UPDATE 11/11: Finally the "human package" was delivered to France.

'Aggressive drills' in Response to U.S. School Shootings Can Harm Students

By Ian Thomsen (author at News@Northeastern)

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221110-aggressive-drills-in-response-to-u-s-school-shootings-can-harm-students>

Nov 10 - Six months after the mass murder of young students at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, shootings at U.S. schools appear to have reached a five-year high, according to [Education Week](#). The nonprofit magazine reports that 34 people have been killed and 88 have been injured as a result of 40 shootings at schools this year.

But [James Alan Fox](#), a [Northeastern](#) professor who maintains the longest-running and most extensive data source on mass killings, says that many of those events do not meet the traditional criteria.

What constitutes a school shooting?

Fox notes that people tend to define school shootings as tragic events that victimize students during classroom hours: At Virginia Tech, where 32 people (including 27 students) were killed in 2007; at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, where 26 people (including 20 first-grade students) were killed in 2012; at Robb Elementary School, where 21 people (including 19 students who were 10 years or younger) were killed.

Fox says that the tabulations of Education Week do not meet the traditional criteria because many of the events in 2022 took place *at* school rather than *in* school.

"Of the 10 fatal shootings, seven occurred in the parking lots and playgrounds and athletic fields outside the school," Fox says of the 2022 data. "It's an important point because when people think about school shootings, they respond by wanting more security in the school."

Fox says that inflating the threat of school shootings leads to policies that he argues can be harmful to students—such as arming teachers with guns and operating active shooter drills at schools that result in stress and anxiety that Fox cites as needless.

"The point is, you need to have a clear set of data in order to know what to do about it," Fox says.

Fox says his goal in managing the [Associated Press/USA TODAY/Northeastern University Mass Killings Database](#) (which won a 2022 EPPY Award for digital journalism) is to deepen perspective and reduce anxiety around such horrific incidents. He says the same is true of the context he provides on school shootings.

"We focus a lot on these shootings, which are awful," Fox says. "They absolutely impact the entire community when they happen. But they are extremely rare."

And yet, adds Fox, the events sometimes result in drastic measures within schools.

"Forty states require schools to conduct active-shooter drills," Fox says. "Some of the schools do these very aggressive drills involving fake blood and someone running around with a gun. I've heard of schools that have unannounced drills and they get on the public address system and announce, 'This is not a drill.'"

Fox says these measures have a deep impact on students. He cites a [2020 social media study](#) that linked active shooter drills in school to increases in student depression, stress and anxiety, as well as physiological health problems among students from 5 years old through high school age.

Instead of organizing live shooter drills, Fox recommends that administrators and teachers instruct students on how to respond in the rare case when a shooter invades their space at school.

"When you get on an airplane, they don't do a drill—they just tell you what to do in the case of a water landing," Fox says. "There are things we can do that will make kids safer without scaring them."

A general heightening of violent rhetoric has contributed to student anxiety, says [Jack McDevitt](#), a former Northeastern professor who has been studying hate crimes for 35 years.

"We're seeing more kids involved in hate crimes—and feeling justified—because of the rhetoric they see on websites and on social media," says McDevitt, who helped design the FBI's system for collecting data



and then traveled to more than 60 U.S. cities, helping train police departments across the nation to recognize and deal with hate crimes. “To think that the schools are immune to the messages all around us in society would be naive.”

McDevitt says there needs to be a greater emphasis on identifying students who need help before they reach for a gun to respond violently. Salvador Ramos, the 19-year-old student responsible for the attack in Uvalde, was a [loner who had been bullied](#).

“We don’t want to demonize young people, because there are many, many more warning signs than there are school shooters,” McDevitt says. “But it’s also the case that in many school shootings, people did see signs that they didn’t act on. We don’t do a very good job of educating people about that.

“Now, there are some places where we do it really well: There are a lot more people willing to step up and say, ‘Don’t drive the car tonight because you’ve had too much to drink, I’ll give you a ride home,’” McDevitt adds. “But we don’t see people doing that in a situation where somebody might be threatening violence at school.”

Altogether, says McDevitt, there is a need for a focused approach to school shootings based on the data.

“Are we increasing the definition of what a school shooting is?” McDevitt asks.

Fox says his research found that an average of six students were killed annually in school shootings from 2010 through 2021. For perspective, he notes that 30 students die each year [while commuting](#) to and from schools.

Overall, the toll of shooting deaths (homicides, suicides and gun accidents) throughout the U.S. reached 45,222 [in 2020](#). Fox notes that school shootings account for a very small percentage of the 3,500 children and teens who are killed in [U.S. shootings annually](#).

“These are terrible events,” Fox says of school shootings. “But it’s important to combat the hysteria. Because when there is hype and hysteria, we tend to do things that are ill-advised.”

EDITOR’S COMMENT: Agree that such drills should be carefully designed BUT a boxer who was never punched in the face is no boxer at all. Schools are modern combat zones and students-soldiers need to be trained accordingly. If not, let surprise cover TV breaking news ...

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Science

The Greeks really do have near-mythical origins, ancient DNA reveals

Analysis connects Greeks to the famed Mycenaeans and Minoans

2 AUG 2017 • BY ANN GIBBONS



Even Before A Shot Is Fired – How To Detect A Potential Shooter

Source: <https://i-hls.com/archives/105010>

Nov 11 – DAs gun violence in the U.S. continues to steadily increase, organizations and institutions such as educational campuses are seeking new ways to protect their constituents. Video surveillance systems are increasingly being deployed, although monitoring can be difficult, unreliable, and expensive. A new emergency solution recognizes firearms and immediately triggers multi-channel alerts and automated pre-defined safety protocols. The combination of these rich capabilities provides safety teams with various capabilities, such as prevention, notification, engagement, and management.

Omnilert, specializing in emergency communications, exposed its first visual gun detection solution. Powered by artificial intelligence (AI), **Gun Detect** offers always-on monitoring with unparalleled reliability at a price point affordable to organizations.



The solution changes the campus safety framework with the potential to both respond to and warn the community in real time before a shooting happens. Designed for privacy and performance, Gun Detect is a software solution typically deployed on-premise and integrated with existing IP-based video surveillance and camera systems. Customers using alternative emergency mass notification systems have the flexibility of using Gun Detect independent of the rest of the Omnilert platform, according to finance.yahoo.com. While existing gunshot detection technologies only work after incidents have escalated and provide vague details on the approximate location of the sound, this new development gives emergency response teams advance warning before shots are fired, and delivers precise information on the location and visuals of the potential shooter. According to the company, the native gun detection and mass notification integration reduces the time from first sighting to alerting to a handful of seconds and ultimately saves lives.

They made a material that doesn't exist on Earth. That's only the start of the story.

Source: <https://www.knxx.org/2022-11-08/they-made-a-material-that-doesnt-exist-on-earth-thats-only-the-start-of-the-story>

Nov 08 – It sounds like the plot of a science fiction movie: humans are destroying the Earth, gouging huge scars in its crust, and polluting the air and the ground as they mine and refine a key element essential for technological advance. One day, scientists examining an alien meteorite discover a unique metal that negates the need for all that excavation and pollution. Best of all, the metal can be replicated, in a laboratory, using base materials. The world is saved! OK, we amped the story a wee bit there. No aliens, for one thing ([unless you know something we don't](#)). But the rest of it is true. Two teams of scientists — one at [Northeastern University](#) in Boston; [the other at](#)



[the University of Cambridge in the UK](#) — recently announced that they managed to manufacture, in a lab, a material that does not exist naturally on Earth. It — until now — has only been found in meteorites.



We spoke to Laura Henderson Lewis, one of the professors on the Northeastern team, and she told us the material found in the meteorites is a combination of two base metals, nickel and iron, which were cooled over millions of years as meteoroids and asteroids tumbled through space. That process created a unique compound with a particular set of characteristics that make it ideal for use in the high-end permanent magnets that are an essential component of a vast range of advanced machines, from electric vehicles to space shuttle turbines.

The compound is called [tetrataenite](#), and the fact that scientists have found a way to make it in a lab is a huge deal. If synthetic tetrataenite works in industrial applications, it could make green energy technologies significantly cheaper. It

could also roil the market in rare earths, currently [dominated by China](#), and create a seismic shift in the industrial balance between China and the West.

Earthy, yet oh, so rare

As all of our readers will doubtless remember from their high school science classes, magnets are an essential component of any piece of machinery that runs on electricity: they are the conduit that transforms [electric power into mechanical action](#).

Most magnets, like the magnet in the battery-powered clock on your office wall, for example, are pretty cheap and easy to produce. The permanent magnets that are used in advanced machinery, on the other hand, have to be able to resist tremendous pressures and temperatures for long periods of time. And to acquire those properties, they need a special ingredient: a [rare earth](#).

Rare earths [aren't that rare](#). They're elements that can be found all over the world. The difficult part is extracting them. For one thing, you have to dig them out of the ground. That's hard enough. Then you have to separate them out: they're usually combined with other elements or materials. Breaking these compounds down, and refining them to get the raw elements, is an expensive and messy business.

The China syndrome

The [US used to be a leader in the rare earths world](#), but, in the 1980s, China found a huge deposit of these elements within its borders. Jonathan Hykawy is president of [Stormcrow Capital](#), an investment firm that tracks rare earths markets. He has a good story about this discovery.

"A few Chinese companies opened mines in inner Mongolia and they were iron ore mines, and they were producing a waste material that ended up in their tailings piles," Hykawy says. "The Japanese were buying large quantities of this iron, and they said, 'Can we sample the waste piles?' And the Chinese said, 'Sure, take all you want.' The Japanese came back a little while later and said, 'We'd like to buy the waste.' And the Chinese said, 'Well, why wouldn't we sell it to you? I mean, it's waste. What are we going to do with it?' Turns out it was rich in rare earths."

The Chinese caught on pretty quickly, and began extracting these rare elements themselves. They could do it a lot more cheaply than anyone else, because their labor costs were a lot lower, and they were willing to put up with the environmental costs, which were not insignificant. Pretty soon, Hykawy says, US production ceased, and China effectively took over the market. Today, China controls [more than 71%](#) of the world's extraction and 87% of the world's processing capacity of rare earths.

Two of these rare earths, neodymium and praseodymium, are [key components](#) in the manufacturing of permanent magnets, which means that China now dominates the permanent magnet market, too, making [more than 80 percent](#) of these high-end instruments. A decade ago, this didn't seem to be a problem. China was a willing and cooperative trading partner, apparently so unthreatening that in 2004 the US actually [outsourced the production](#) of magnets used in the guidance systems for American cruise missile and precision bombs to a Chinese company.

"We had US production," Laura Lewis says. "Magnaquench, a subsidiary of General Motors. It was in Anderson, Indiana, and it went wholesale over to China. It was a short-term view of economics; profit up front, but then we lost our capabilities down the road." Today, relations with China are more fraught. And the need for both rare earths and permanent magnets is increasing, as we move to a clean-energy economy.

The US has awoken to the realization that it is at a significant strategic disadvantage to China in this vital area for its economy and national security. It has restarted an idled rare earths mine in [California](#), and it is



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looking at potential [new mining sites](#) in Arizona, Nevada, and Wyoming. But those mines will take more than a decade to come online.

Game changer

This is why the discovery of synthetic tetrataenite is so exciting, Jonathan Hykawy says. The compound is so tough that manufacturers could make permanent magnets out of it for all but the most demanding pieces of machinery. If that happens, the US could fill a huge part of the magnet market itself, and reduce its need for certain rare earths. And it would make for a huge shift in America's relationship with China. No longer would the US be beholden to a competitor for these key materials or dependent on them for certain parts essential for the production of vital technology.

There is a potential downside, however. Rare earths [aren't just used](#) in the production of permanent magnets. They're used in fiber optics, in radiation scanners, in televisions, in personal electronics. If a big part of the rare earths market disappears because of tetrataenite, Hykawy says, the production of all of these other important rare earths could be disrupted. They could become significantly more expensive to produce, which could drive up the cost of a range of consumer and industrial goods.

Far out

But it will be a long time before tetrataenite is in a position to disrupt any existing markets, Laura Lewis says. She says there is still a lot of testing to be done to find out whether lab tetrataenite is as hardy and as useful as the outer space material. And even if it turns out to be as good, it will be five to eight years "pedal to the metal" before anyone could make permanent magnets out of it.

In the meantime, China's competitors are working hard to source rare earths of their own. The US is [investing in mines in Australia](#); there's exploration ongoing in [Malaysia](#), and the Japanese are researching ways to extract elements from [mud mined from the sea bed](#). Jonathan Hykawy says if countries are willing to invest in rare earth extraction, and tolerate the environmental implications, there's no reason they can't level the playing field with China.

"If we were willing to pay enough to produce these things, you can overcome those issues and you can produce these things in an environmentally responsible manner," he says. "This is no worse than mining and producing aluminum, for example."

West Tested Narcotic Analgesics In Ukraine

Source: <https://www.pakistanpoint.com/en/story/1593778/west-tested-narcotic-analgesics-in-ukraine-source.html>



Nov 13 – [Kiev](#) tested nasal analgesic [drugs](#) at labs found in the [Luhansk](#) People's Republic (LPR), developed by the West for [NATO](#), a source tells Sputnik.

"In the [Luhansk](#) region, a scheme was uncovered of Western pharmaceutical companies conducting blind tests of the latest drug-containing [nasal anesthetic](#) for the needs of the defense complex of [NATO](#) countries and [Kiev](#)," the source said.

According to the source, after the tests, the [drugs](#) were used by Ukrainian troops.

Meanwhile, a lecturer at the Lugansk Medical University, the chief sanitary [doctor](#) of the LPR, who participated in various medical tests before 2014, told Sputnik that the West has been carrying out lab tests in [Ukraine](#) in order to cut costs on volunteers and medical specialists.

"Most importantly, in case of failure of these studies, the [results](#) would not have been made public as quickly as it would have happened in any European country," the chief sanitary [doctor](#) of the LPR told Sputnik.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: No surprise if it is true. Many countries take advantage of other countries in conflict/war, instability, junta/dictatorship to proceed to unlawful actions – e.g., dumping radioactive/HazMat waste in the sea off-shore Somalia

Asteroids! Solar Storms! Nukes! Climate Calamity! Killer Robots!

A guide to contemporary doomsday scenarios — from the threats you know about to the ones you never think of

By Joel Achenbach

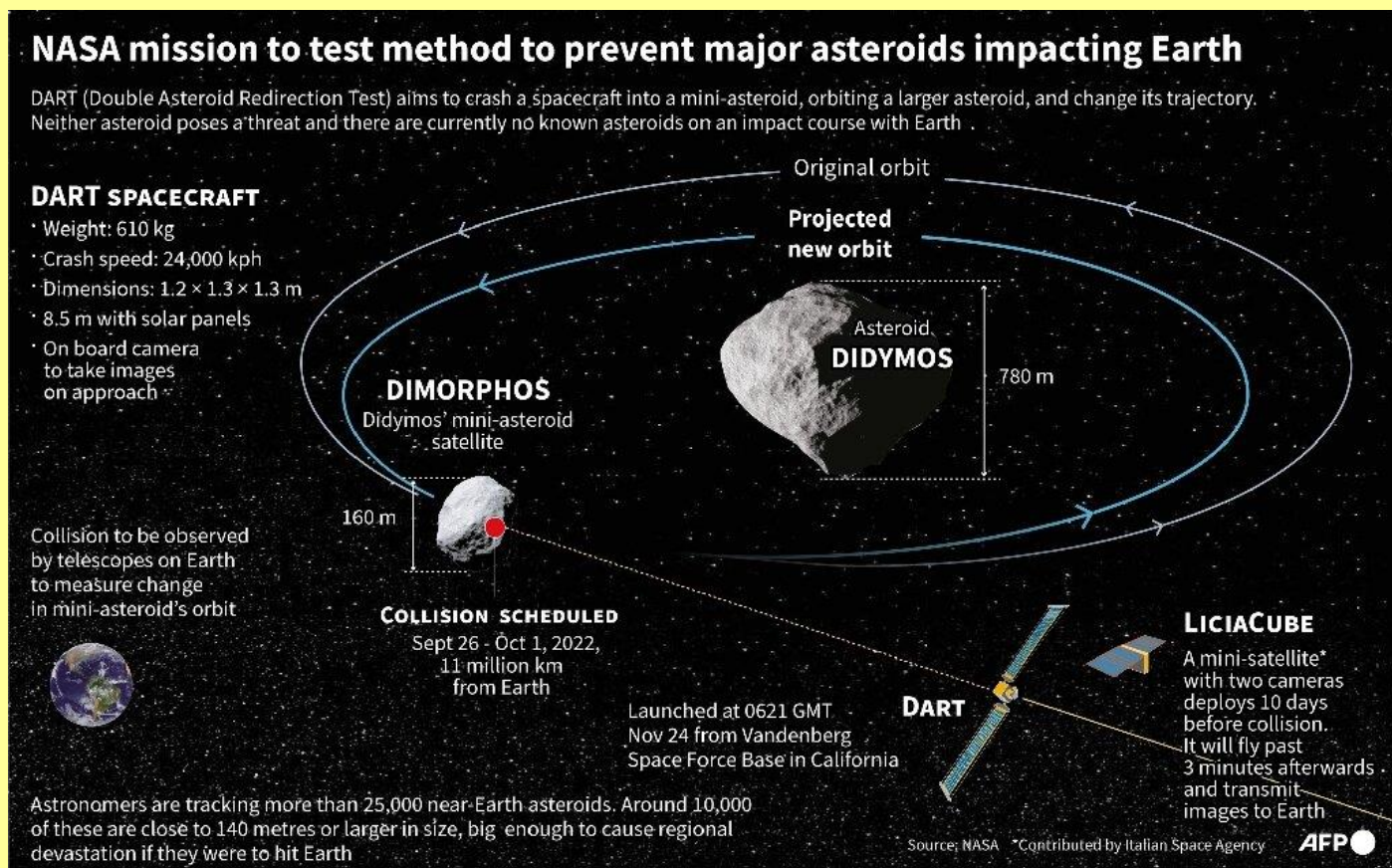
Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/magazine/2022/11/07/doomsday-scenarios-asteroids/>

Nov 07 – A few days before NASA tried to crash a spacecraft into an asteroid as part of what it called the [Double Asteroid Redirection Test](#), I talked to Lindley Johnson, the agency's planetary defense officer. I think we can all agree that this sounds like an important job.



The planetary defense officer focuses on the detection of dangerous asteroids and comets that might threaten the Earth (as in the movies “Don’t Look Up” and “Armageddon” and “Deep Impact”), and explores technologies for preventing such a thing from happening. This job is not to be confused with the NASA planetary *protection* officer, who is supposed to keep Earth’s microbes from contaminating other worlds or hypothetical alien microbes from coming to Earth, as in “The Andromeda Strain.”

The Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) was conceived as NASA’s first planetary defense mission. A golf-cart-size spacecraft was launched in November 2021 from California. If all went precisely as planned, its 10-month journey would end at precisely 7:14



p.m. Eastern on Monday, Sept. 26, when it would [collide with an asteroid](#) named Dimorphos.

The asteroid posed no threat. This mission was just a test of a possible technique of asteroid deflection: a “kinetic impactor.” No hydrogen bombs needed. The collision, if successful, would help refine existing models for what it would take to keep an asteroid from striking Earth.

My question to Johnson: How worried should we be, *really*, about killer rocks from space? He said a major asteroid impact is rare but potentially catastrophic. He cited the [Tunguska event](#) of 1908, when either an asteroid or comet exploded over a remote region of Siberia and flattened 800 square miles of forest. It was, he said, “probably a once-every-200-years or so event, on average. But it’s entirely random. These can impact any time.”

Johnson explained that there are many asteroids lurking out there, still unidentified, that are bigger than the Tunguska object, and they “would devastate a multistate area — a natural disaster of a scale we’ve never had to deal with. That includes all the earthquakes and hurricanes that have ever happened in the past. It could be an existential threat to national well-being — an economic disaster as well as an environmental disaster.” He paused a beat and said, calmly, “So it’s not something you want to happen.”

And here we are at the crux of our existential predicament as a species: There are just so many things we don’t want to happen. There are so many potential doomsdays.

This is not the cheeriest topic, to be sure, but it’s endlessly fascinating if you can stomach it. What are our biggest existential risks? Should we feel more threatened by low-probability but high-consequence risks, such as asteroid impacts and runaway [artificial intelligence](#) ([robot overlords](#) and whatnot), or should we focus on less exotic, here-and-now threats such as [climate change](#), viral pandemics and weapons of mass destruction? And [should](#)



[we even worry](#) about low-probability risks when [hundreds of millions of people](#) right now lack adequate food, water, and shelter and are living off less than \$2 a day?

We are not being paranoid when we recognize that human civilization has become increasingly complex and simultaneously armed with techniques for self-destruction. There are bad omens everywhere, and not just the [melting glaciers](#) and dying [polar bears](#). We're all still unnerved by the pandemic. Meanwhile, there's this ancient threat called war. Vladimir Putin and his advisers keep [rattling the nuclear saber](#). A nuclear holocaust is the classic apocalyptic scenario that never went away.

Not every doomsday scenario is a full-blown extinction event. There are extremely suboptimal futures in which our species straggles onward in a brutish, Hobbesian nightmare — back to the Stone Age. People who think about “existential risk” are focused on the collapse of civilization as we know it. One of their recurring themes is that there has never been a moment as pivotal as this one. “We see a species precariously close to self-destruction, with a future of immense promise hanging in the balance,” declares Oxford University philosopher Toby Ord in his book [“The Precipice: Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity.”](#) He gives us a 1 in 6 chance of “existential catastrophe” in the next 100 years.

Ord is part of a new intellectual movement called “longtermism.” Proponents of the long view say we have moral obligations to the welfare of the trillions of people who might potentially follow us here on Earth, and on worlds across the universe. Highest among those obligations, of course, is to avoid destroying ourselves and our planet before those future people are born.

To be transparent here: I skew cautiously optimistic. In theory, I would argue, we should be able to leverage our science and technology — and the evolutionary miracle of our capacity for empathy, kindness and thoughtfulness — to survive and even thrive into the future. But one's view of human destiny seems to split along generational lines, at least in my circles, where young people have grown up under the [cloud of the climate crisis](#) and the failure of leaders to respond adequately to it. They may not find it persuasive when some privileged boomer like me tells them that, sure, we've made a total mess of the world and civilization is imperiled, but don't worry — *we've got our best people working on it.*

This anti-doomsday sales job becomes even harder when we acknowledge that the climate crisis, pandemic viruses and the threat of nuclear war are only a few items on the long list of things that informed people should be fretting about. [Optimism](#) may prove delusional — a fatal flaw, in fact. But how you come down on existential risks may pivot on whether you think human ingenuity will outpace human folly. Do you believe, fundamentally, in the human race?

The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory has roots dating to World War II but remains a remarkably low-profile operation. It's a 24-mile drive southwest of the main Hopkins campus in Baltimore. The mailing address is “Laurel, MD,” but visitors will notice that it's not anywhere near Laurel, almost as if the address is trying to confuse anyone hoping to find the place. “Below the radar” is how one of the media relations people described APL. It has some 7,000 full-time employees and a campus the size of a small university. It does a lot of classified research with military applications.

The lab [handled the DART mission](#) under a NASA contract, and the assigned task was very much in its wheelhouse. It once landed a spacecraft on the asteroid Eros. It put a spacecraft in orbit around Mercury. And in 2015 it managed to fly the New Horizons spacecraft by Pluto, snapping the first close-up images of the dwarf planet. Among its future missions: sending an [“octocopter”](#) to explore the surface of Titan, Saturn's giant moon. Titan's atmosphere is four times as dense as our own. “If you put on wings,” Ralph Semmel, director of the laboratory, told me, “you could literally flap your wings and fly.”

Semmel spoke with me in his office a few days before the scheduled collision, and the conversation bounced from one existential risk to another. Naturally we talked about the [pandemic](#). “Think about the impact that covid had on the world and the nation. Consider that a body blow. How many body blows like that can the nation or the world sustain before the social fabric of societies begins to crumble?” he asked.

The laboratory has studied four existential risks: asteroids, solar storms, climate change and what he called “biothreats” — which could be anything from a natural pathogen to an engineered bioweapon. The DART mission focused on the first, and although this is exactly the kind of thing at which his engineers are brilliant, there was a real chance of failure. No one had ever knocked a celestial object off course.

Semmel wanted a success not just for the reputation of his laboratory. The world needs it, he said. “We're just emerging” from the pandemic, he noted. “We're in a pretty sad place right now from a global and national standpoint. I think some really positive results and news could really bolster folks.” He paused. “We can save life on Earth from extinction. Wouldn't it be cool to know that?”

I'm actually not all that worried about an asteroid impact. Asteroids are way down at No. 8 on my list of Top 10 Existential Worries (a list I just typed up at the urging of an editor, and which I present simply as a discussion tool):

10. Solar storm or gamma-ray burst.

9. Super volcanic eruption.

8. Asteroid impact.

7. Naturally emergent, or maliciously engineered, pandemic plant pathogen affecting staple crops.



6. Naturally emergent, or maliciously engineered pandemic human pathogen.

5. Orwellian dystopia. Totalitarianism. Endless war paraded as peace. The human spirit is crushed. Not a world you'd want to live in.

4. Cascading technological failures due to cyberattacks, reckless development of artificial intelligence, and/or some other example of [complex systems failing](#) in complex ways.

3. Nuclear war (may jump soon to No. 1).

2. Environmental catastrophe from climate change and other desecrations of the natural world.

1. Threat X. The unknown unknown. Something dreadful but not even imagined. *The creature that lives under the bed.*

Your apocalypse may vary. Toby Ord, for example, ranks “unaligned artificial intelligence” as the top risk, while another Oxford scholar, Anders Sandberg, puts nuclear war first, followed by an engineered pandemic.

A risk can be described by its probability times its consequence. The probability of [significant climate change](#) and other environmental damage is 100 percent, as we can see with our own eyes. The ultimate severity of the consequences at the global level depends on what we do about it. It's certainly the top existential crisis for those [species](#) that are on the verge of going [extinct](#), and for those cities that may run out of sandbags as the [seas rise](#). We're witnessing a mass extinction event, and we're the cause. If we can't solve the climate crisis and protect the environment of our beautiful blue marble, we probably can't solve any of the other existential threats either. (Please don't count on escaping to some other world. That is [science fiction](#). Realistically there is no Planet B.)

An asteroid impact, in contrast with the climate crisis, is an example of a low-probability hazard with an unusually wide range of potential consequences. Asteroids are detritus from the formation of the solar system 4.6 billion years ago. Most are far away, orbiting the sun in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. But some asteroids have orbits that cross the orbital path of Earth.

The impact of a mountain-size rock like the one that struck the Earth 66 million years ago and [ended the reign of the dinosaurs](#) would potentially put the final period on the human story. But the probability of such an impact happening is very low; an event like this occurs about once every 100 million years, according to Cathy Plesko, who works on planetary defense at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Far more likely is an impact from a smaller but still dangerous rock, and exactly what would happen remains a subject of intensive research, Plesko told me. “We're trying to understand how hard of a punch can we take,” she said.

Scientists and engineers talk about “risk matrices.” One risk matrix used by NASA has green squares and yellow squares and red squares. The dark green square in the lower left part of the matrix is good: low probability combined with low consequence. Dark red in the upper right part of the matrix is bad: high probability, high consequence. Yellow squares are in between.

The problem is, we don't actually know the hue of many of the risks under discussion. For example, there's much talk these days about “superintelligence” — some kind of artificial intelligence program that achieves consciousness, escapes human control and runs amok. Humans are enslaved. Or turned into batteries.

A Hollywood fantasy? Artificial intelligence is already filtering through our daily lives, but no program has yet developed the common sense of a human toddler, and self-driving cars still struggle to understand that a snowman by the side of the road isn't going to try to cross the street.

Humans are remarkably adaptable. Coping with changing circumstances, modeling the future, coming up with strategies and workarounds, mending our ways: This is kind of what we do — our evolutionary niche. But we do not function like a beehive (and by the way, [bees are in trouble](#)). We tend to be competitive, selfish, greedy, favoring individual happiness over that of the collective.

Sailing merrily against the prevailing winds of pessimism is Harvard University psychology professor Steven Pinker, probably the world's most prominent champion of the idea of progress in human affairs. He insists that he's neither an optimist nor a pessimist and is just laying out the facts — including the positive things that don't make the front page. “Headlines give you a misleading view of the state of the world because they're a nonrandom sample of what's happening. They're the most sudden, the most lurid, the newsworthy events, so they're probably going to be bad,” he told me recently. “Human psychology is attuned to the negative. It's called the negativity bias. We dread bad things more than we savor good things.”

Fear is a protective evolutionary adaptation. We need to be aware of worst-case scenarios. Fear, anger and outrage fuel action, and action lowers risk. But fear can also be exploited by charlatans and demagogues as a sales technique. Let the record reflect that many of the most unnerving doomsday scenarios of the past century have not come true. The “population bomb” that incited apocalyptic predictions in the 1960s did not lead to rising global death rates from famine. Since 1945, [nuclear weapons](#) have somehow stayed in their bomber bays, silos and submarines (at least, as this story goes to press). The Y2K computer bug didn't shatter the economy or cause planes to plunge to Earth.

I recall that one of my elementary school teachers in the late 1960s declared that the world was going to be blown up and destroyed by atomic bombs *within five years*. She attributed this startling fact to “the experts.” Arguably this was too heavy a thing to lay on kids who were just trying to learn the multiplication table, but that was the spirit of the time.



The world, of course, hasn't blown up. Still, it's "100 seconds to midnight," according to the [Doomsday Clock](#), the metaphor of our vulnerability as determined by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. In this year's update, the atomic scientists, who have branched out beyond nuclear weapons to incorporate existential risks like artificial intelligence and bioweapons, described humanity's current position as "doom's doorstep" and added, "the Clock remains the closest it has ever been to civilization-ending apocalypse because the world remains stuck in an extremely dangerous moment."

Also worth remembering: There's no reason to think that multiple existential risks can't happen simultaneously. Like a supervolcano erupting just when the killer robots announce they're taking over (good, let *them* handle it).

The point is, the Menu of Doom is even longer than the one they give you at the Cheesecake Factory. Historian Niall Ferguson, author of "[Doom: The Politics of Catastrophe](#)," told me, "Future historians will find it ironic that we had so many debates about climate change when something else was about to smash us."

He is not particularly concerned about human extinction — "The human species is incredibly hard to kill off" — but he worries about the danger of "totalitarianism 2.0." "If history has anything to tell us, it is that totalitarianism is the most dangerous thing that we've ever come up with," Ferguson said. "The most destructive things of the 20th century were the result of totalitarian regimes: Hitler's and Stalin's and Mao's."

Any such list of potential doomsdays should be written in pencil, since [the future is reliably unpredictable](#). If we were able to identify today what our most pressing problem will definitely be in, say, 50 years, much less a century from now, we'd be the first generation to possess such awesome clairvoyance.

No one in the year 1900 was worried about nuclear war. The idea of splitting the atom for military purposes had not yet entered the minds of even the most visionary scientists because physicists had only the sketchiest understanding of what an atom is, and no inkling that vast energies were bound up in the (still undiscovered) nucleus. Forty-five years later, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed with [massive loss of life](#).

So you want to avoid the blind-side hit. Don't assume you know more than you do. Stay nimble. And *do* look up.

Also worth remembering: There's no reason to think that multiple existential risks can't happen simultaneously.

After the past 2½ years, pandemics — once a relative afterthought for most of us — have resumed their historic position as a scourge of humankind. [Yet again](#) we find ourselves living through plague years. The good news: Vaccines, antibiotics, antivirals, monoclonal antibodies and genome sequencing have given us tools to fight pathogens. The bad news: The microbes adapt. [Antibiotic resistance](#) is on the rise. *Evolution is true.*

Pandemics may become more frequent as we invade new habitats and intensify interaction with wildlife carrying viruses potentially capable of spilling into the human population. Recently I emailed Ian Lipkin, an epidemiologist at Columbia University, and asked how many animal viruses are lurking out there, yet undiscovered. He answered that he and his colleagues estimate there are at least "320,000 viruses awaiting discovery."

What about a potentially catastrophic misuse of genetic engineering, including the revolutionary CRISPR gene-editing technique? I posed that question to [Jennifer Doudna](#), the Nobel laureate who co-invented CRISPR and who has been outspoken in [warning against misuse](#) of the technology. By email, she pointed out that researchers are using the technology to help humanity on multiple fronts, including health, agriculture and climate strategies. As for existential risks, "currently there are significant technical as well as knowledge barriers to using genetic engineering in ways that could threaten our society at scale."

What about volcanoes? They somehow get ignored amid the existential risk conversation. When Mount Tambora in present-day Indonesia erupted in 1815 it led to "the year without a summer." [And what about Yellowstone](#) — a "supervolcano"? The national park sits atop a hot spot in the Earth's mantle and had massive eruptions 2 million, 1.3 million and 630,000 years ago.

The impeccable source on that is Robert Smith, a University of Utah professor emeritus who has studied the Yellowstone volcanic and hydrothermal system for 66 years and is known as Mr. Yellowstone. He assured me Yellowstone is not about to have a catastrophic eruption. Smaller eruptions happen more often than the big, caldera-forming eruptions. He has calculated the probability of a full-blown eruption at Yellowstone at 0.00014 percent per year. "The chances of having a super-eruption in the lifetime of a person is exceedingly low. There are much higher risks," he said.

Then there are gamma-ray bursts. These are powerful jets of radiation from deep space, produced by exploding or colliding stars, and theoretically a threat to Earthlife. To get a handle on this, I emailed Sara Seager, a professor of physics and planetary science at MIT and a recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant. Her response was brief and to the point: "I'm not worried about getting zapped by gamma rays from deep space. The objects that explode are nowhere near us." I'm with her.

Far more likely, and therefore worrisome, is a dangerous solar storm, particularly of the type called a "coronal mass ejection." The sun can hurl a massive quantity of magnetically charged particles at Earth, throwing our own protective magnetic field for a loop and potentially disabling the electrical grid for weeks, months or longer.



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There's an expert on this at the Applied Physics Laboratory: James P. Mason, a research scientist and engineer who is the principal investigator for a planned NASA mission that will use a small satellite to scrutinize the solar corona in regions not currently observed. We've had some near-misses from ejected solar material, he says. In 2012 a plume missed Earth but zapped a sun-observing scientific spacecraft.

He is dismayed that we haven't done more as a society to get ready for when the sun gives us trouble. The grid needs backup hardware. We need transformers on standby. "Eventually they will hit. It's only a matter of time, basically," Mason says. "It's a known known."

Anxiety over existential risks is heightened when we decide our societal leaders can't be trusted. We do not trust "the experts." We do not trust the government, the mainstream news media, the corporations, the pharmaceutical industry, Wall Street, the capitalists (or communists), the United Nations, the Gates Foundation or the owners of National Football League franchises.

The problem with all this distrust is that, in a crisis, societies need collective action. This has become harder because we no longer have a "common media culture," as Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, puts it. "We now have a media culture where creating distrust of any of those [expert] voices is profitable."

There is, however, one federal agency that seems to have retained widespread respect for its competence: NASA. The asteroid whackers!

A few days before the DART collision, Nancy Chabot, the DART coordination lead, and engineer Elena Adams walked me through the ingenious concept of the mission. This was called the Double Asteroid Redirection Test because there were two asteroids, a binary pair, involved. Dimorphos, the target, orbited a larger rock, Didymos, every 11 hours and 55 minutes.

By focusing on twin asteroids, the mission simplified a lot of the technical challenges. It would be relatively easy to detect with telescopes any DART-inflicted change in the orbit of Dimorphos around its larger companion. That kept the budget for the mission at a relatively modest \$330 million. And Dimorphos was a great target in part because it was the right size. Chabot explained that the major goal of asteroid hunters is to identify the ones between 140 meters (460 feet) and 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) in diameter. Dimorphos was estimated to be 160 meters (525 feet) across.

There were uncertainties about this rock, though. Chabot and Adams had been working on the mission for years but still didn't know what Dimorphos looked like. They also couldn't be entirely sure that DART would hit the target. If DART missed, it would keep going around the sun; in theory it could get another shot at ramming into Dimorphos in about two years. But the DART team wouldn't even discuss that. Success was the only acceptable result. Close wouldn't count.

By late Monday afternoon, the 26th, the Applied Physics Laboratory was abuzz. Reporters on the space beat were stationed in a building nowhere near the mission operations center, but NASA and laboratory officials circulated through to brief us on the progress of the spacecraft as it neared the asteroid. "The level of certainty is not 100 percent on these missions," Thomas Zurbuchen, the associate administrator for science at NASA, told us. "We cannot talk our way into it."

Robert Braun, head of space exploration missions for the laboratory, floated one theoretically possible but unlikely scenario: "If we were right on course and it was shaped like a doughnut, we'd fly right through it."

As day turned to dusk, the show was on. About an hour before impact, Dimorphos appeared as a tiny, barely perceptible dot near the much brighter asteroid. The dot got bigger very slowly. Only in the last few minutes did we all get a good look at the target: a gray, harsh, lifeless rock pile. By this point everyone in the mission operations center was standing. Dimorphos grew larger in the frame. Closer, closer ... and one final image. Then nothing. A blank screen. Loss of signal. Spacecraft destroyed. Success!

Forty-five minutes later the scientists and engineers held their news conference, giddy with excitement. A TV reporter asked: Should earthlings sleep better now? Adams, the engineer, offered the desired sound bite: "I think that earthlings should sleep better. Definitely I will."

NASA held a sparsely attended but live-streamed news conference Oct. 11 at agency headquarters in Washington and revealed what scientists had learned about the collision. DART, Chabot said, [delivered a powerful punch](#), at the high end of what had been expected. NASA had defined mission "success" as altering Dimorphos's orbit by at least 73 seconds. But the rock's orbit around its larger companion was shortened by a full 32 minutes.

The scientists at the briefing did not claim to have saved the world. They understand the work that remains to be done. They need to find more asteroids and chart their orbits. They need to study other potential asteroid-deflection technologies. And at some point a system has to be put in place.

But even though scientists are not prone to bluster, the head of NASA, Bill Nelson, the 80-year-old former U.S. senator with a stentorian voice, did not hold back. "We conducted humanity's first planetary defense test and we showed the world NASA is serious as a defender of this planet," he said. A few moments later, he added, "This mission shows that NASA is trying to be ready for whatever the universe throws at us."



Conceivably I could have peppered Nelson with a series of cynical and annoying questions. Is this alleged technology really practical? What if you had a big rock coming in fast — how many golf carts would you have to fling at it? How can you keep the rock-deflection system operational for centuries even if the global economy has collapsed? And, by the way, what can NASA do about solar storms, gamma-ray bursts, rogue black holes or other things the universe might throw at us? No one asked anything like that. Sometimes you just celebrate the win — and get ready to fight another doomsday.

Joel Achenbach writes about science and politics for The Washington Post's National desk. He has been a staff writer for The Post since 1990. He started the newsroom's first online column, Rough Draft, in 1999, and started washingtonpost.com's first blog, Achenblog, in 2005. He has been a regular contributor to National Geographic since 1998, writing on such topics as dinosaurs, particle physics, earthquakes, extraterrestrial life, megafauna extinction, and the electrical grid. A 1982 graduate of Princeton University, he has taught journalism at Princeton and at Georgetown University.

'Relations with countries who attacked Qatar should be reconsidered' says senior Qatari official

Source: <https://dohanews.co/relations-with-countries-who-attacked-qatar-should-be-reconsidered-says-senior-qatari-official/>



Nov 13 – “Without a doubt, there are those who are instigating the attacks for ulterior motives only,” said Qatar's former deputy prime minister. Former deputy prime minister, Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attiyah, slammed countries that have attacked Qatar for hosting the World Cup, in an interview with Al-Watan newspaper on Sunday.

The former deputy prime minister who is known for pioneering in the business, energy and science industries, given his various ministerial roles since 1972, said that “relations with those countries should be reconsidered after the World Cup,” adding that the attacks are born out of “ulterior motives” as opposed to genuine concerns.

Al Attiyah also disclosed some more personal sentiments upon reflecting on Qatar's development as a nation, and their journey to hosting the FIFA World Cup 2022.

It started with a dream

Upon being asked whether he deemed the World Cup to be a dream or a reality that could be achieved, given his closeness to the Father Amir during his time in office, the former deputy prime minister responded with “I considered it a dream, and told the Father Amir at the time, may God protect him, that this is a dream everyone wishes for but I do not think that we will reach it.”

For his part, Al Attiyah was aware that for the most important and largest tournament in the world, there must be an integrated system comprising of stadiums, hotels, an underground network, a deeply embedded infrastructure as well as a network of flights to connect the country with the world – and Qatar at the time had only two five-star hotels.

'Is such racism acceptable in 21st-century Europe?' FM hits back at the anti-Qatar campaign

The dream had its roots in the early 80s, where the senior official recalls Qatar's hosting of the Asian Cup, as per the father Amir's evergreen wish to host international sports tournaments. The country was apparently in a deep economic crisis, having difficulty in finding funding to host the tournament.

“There was little interest at the time in the AFC championship, because the global situation in that period did not put any interest in it, and major American and European companies were not interested in a championship that had no reward. Television broadcast was also not interested in buying the rights to a championship that did not have a great return, as well as large Asian countries such as Japan or India and others, football did not have that value, but rather had interests in other games such as baseball and cricket. And so we faced a challenge,” the former deputy prime minister said.

It was these challenges, according to Al Attiyah that further encouraged Qatar's statesmen to develop the country and set particular goals for its improvement, in order to be ready to host the World Cup – one day.



Gas enters the equation

“We knew that the time for gas was coming, because the field has existed [in Qatar] since 1971, and it is the largest single gas field in the world, and because the field is not at a great depth, it is the lowest cost of extraction. His Highness the Father Emir was working on that file, and he was the one who chose me to take over the position of Minister of Energy and Industry”, the senior official told Al-Watan newspaper.

Further adding that Qatar “made a miracle and carried out giant projects in the field of gas that achieved very large returns,” allowing Qatari products to be largely exported to countries around the world, rendering the nation one of the richest in the world.

It is at this point, that the former deputy prime minister says they began “progressing” in the organisation of international sports tournaments, including the Olympics.

Attacks not done “in good faith”

“There is a strange, strange attack that suddenly appeared several weeks before the World Cup. It is true that we heard some attacks earlier, but in the recent period they have increased and western countries such as Germany, France and British newspapers have intervened,” the senior Qatari official told Al-Watan newspaper.

“Without a doubt, there are those who are instigating the attacks for [ulterior motives] only. I believe that Qatar will organise the most successful World Cup in the history of football, all the countries that organised the tournament in the past faced problems with security, infrastructure and stadiums, but the attack on Qatar in this way is strange,” the official added, emphasising that the attacks and concerns raised are not done in good faith.

The pioneer in Qatar’s political and energy sphere noted that the concern over migrant worker’s rights in Qatar by foreign entities is but “empty words” for him.

He stated that Qatar has opened its doors most for workers, embracing them and creating jobs for them, helping many homes in Asia, Africa and elsewhere.

“We live in a free world,” the former deputy prime minister said, “he who does not want to work can leave. No one is forced to work in a country that apparently oppresses workers.”

The former deputy prime minister went on to question their interference in such an “intrusive” manner, stating that Qatar does not impose its customs on anyone outside of its border – but rather leaves everyone to their freedom, unlike some of its critics who “interfere in the personal freedoms of others such as banning the veil [for Muslim women] despite allowing nuns to wear it.”

Europe thinks it holds the monopoly on World Cup: Qatar 2022 CEO

Further noting the hypocrisy of the statements, the official went on to mention the “major violations” that exist in Europe today.

“[In Europe] there are [...] mafia gangs that steal girls from Eastern Europe or elsewhere and force them to work through organised networks; in France with all due respect to them, at the time of the grape harvest they brought workers from Africa and other places and made them work for 18 hours straight, and even in Denmark, the Netherlands we hear of strange things happening that you would never see happen here [in Qatar].”

Al Attiyah frankly told Al-Watan that he “thinks these campaigns have nothing to do with the workers,” noting that he also doesn’t believe that the organisers of the campaigns have sympathy with migrant workers in the Gulf state, with the evidence being that many international bodies and organisations have come out and praised Qatar, including FIFA.

“So I was surprised when Blatter, the former president of the International Federation, participated in those campaigns, even though he was FIFA President and he announced the victory of Qatar’s bid for hosting. This in itself is strange, and I say that nothing about the campaign is innocent.”

A win for Qatar

In assessing the stages of development, challenges and hurdles the small Gulf nation has gone through to reach the final stages of preparation in hosting the biggest sporting tournament in the world, Al Attiyah believes that the World Cup, in itself, is a gain for Qatar.

“As many do not know Qatar, and when they come they will see the truth on the ground, and they will see that these campaigns against Qatar are political and not real,” he said.

“Our relations with the [attacking] countries must be reconsidered after the World Cup. They want to fail us after all the effort that was made and the sums that were spent. Unfortunately, there are parties who



pay them huge sums of money to attack Qatar, at a time when Qatar is witnessing great progress on various levels and topping global indicators in many global fields, such as health, education and security," the senior official noted.

Al Attiyah reaffirmed the slogan that Qatari officials have repeated continuously to be press over the past decade, that Qatar "welcomes everyone and treats everyone with humane and ethical treatment without any abuse," adding that he is proud that his country is hosting the World Cup, which has had a significant impact on the development of the country's infrastructure and superstructure.

The former deputy prime minister finally noted that his country has played a "very important role in spreading peace around the world," having a sizeable role in ending wars that lasted for years, such as that in Afghanistan.

"I believe that His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the amir of the country, deserves to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, because he gave peace more than any other leader in the world, and has made Doha the capital of peace", Al Attiyah said.

The Most Common Pain Relief Drug in The World Induces Risky Behavior, Study Shows

Source: <https://www.sciencealert.com/the-most-common-pain-relief-drug-in-the-world-induces-risky-behavior-study-shows>

Nov 14 – One of the most consumed drugs in the US – and the [most commonly taken analgesic worldwide](#) – could do a lot more than simply take the edge off your headache.

Acetaminophen, also known as paracetamol and sold widely under the brand names Tylenol and Panadol, also increases risk-taking, according to a study from 2020 that measured changes in people's behavior when under the influence of the common over-the-counter medication.

"Acetaminophen seems to make people feel less negative emotion when they consider risky activities – they just don't feel as scared," [explained](#) neuroscientist Baldwin Way from The Ohio State University when the findings were published.

"With nearly 25 percent of the population in the US taking acetaminophen each week, reduced risk perceptions and increased risk-taking could have important effects on society."

The findings add to a growing body of research suggesting that acetaminophen's effects on pain reduction also extend to various psychological processes, lowering people's [receptivity to hurt feelings](#), experiencing [reduced empathy](#), and even [blunting cognitive functions](#).

In a similar way, the research suggests people's affective ability to perceive and evaluate risks can be impaired when they take acetaminophen. While the effects might be slight, they're definitely worth noting, given acetaminophen is the [most common drug ingredient in America](#), found in over 600 different kinds of over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

In a series of experiments involving over 500 university students as participants, Way and his team measured how a single 1,000 mg dose of acetaminophen (the recommended maximum adult single dosage) randomly assigned to participants affected their risk-taking behavior, compared against placebos randomly given to a control group.

In each of the experiments, participants had to pump up an un-inflated balloon on a computer screen, with each single pump earning imaginary money. Their instructions were to earn as much imaginary money as possible by pumping the balloon as much as possible, but to make sure not to pop the balloon, in which case they would lose the money.

The results showed that the students who took acetaminophen engaged in significantly more risk-taking during the exercise, relative to the more cautious and conservative placebo group. On the whole, those on acetaminophen pumped (and burst) their balloons more than the controls.

"If you're risk-averse, you may pump a few times and then decide to cash out because you don't want the balloon to burst and lose your money," [Way said](#).

"But for those who are on acetaminophen, as the balloon gets bigger, we believe they have less anxiety and less negative emotion about how big the balloon is getting and the possibility of it bursting."

In addition to the balloon simulation, participants also filled out surveys during two of the experiments, rating the level of risk they perceived in various hypothetical scenarios, such as betting a day's income on a sporting event, bungee jumping off a tall bridge, or driving a car without a seatbelt.



In one of the surveys, acetaminophen consumption did appear to reduce perceived risk compared to the control group, although in another similar survey, the same effect wasn't observed.

Overall, however, based on an average of results across the various tests, the team concluded that there is a significant relationship between taking acetaminophen and choosing more risk, even if the observed effect can be slight.

That said, they acknowledge the drug's apparent effects on risk-taking behavior could also be interpreted via other kinds of psychological processes, such as reduced anxiety, perhaps.

"It may be that as the balloon increases in size, those on placebo feel increasing amounts of anxiety about a potential burst," [the researchers explained](#).

"When the anxiety becomes too much, they end the trial. Acetaminophen may reduce this anxiety, thus leading to greater risk taking."

Exploring such psychological alternative explanations for this phenomenon – as well as investigating the biological mechanisms responsible for acetaminophen's effects on people's choices in situations like this – should be addressed in future research, the team said.

While they're at it, scientists no doubt will also have future opportunities to further investigate the role and efficacy of acetaminophen in pain relief more broadly, after [studies in recent years](#) found that in many medical scenarios, the drug can be ineffective at pain relief, and sometimes is no better than a placebo, in addition to inviting other kinds of health problems.

Despite the seriousness of those findings, acetaminophen nonetheless remains one of the most used medications in the world, considered an [essential medicine by the World Health Organization](#), and [recommended by the CDC](#) as the primary drug you should probably take to ease symptoms if you think you might have [COVID](#).

In light of the findings about acetaminophen, we might want to rethink some of that advice, Way said.

"Perhaps someone with mild [COVID-19](#) symptoms may not think it is as risky to leave their house and meet with people if they're taking acetaminophen," [Way said](#).

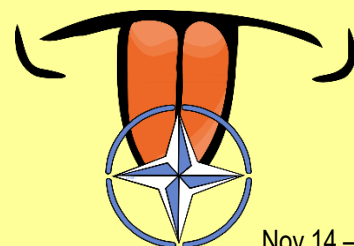
"We really need more research on the effects of acetaminophen and other over-the-counter drugs on the choices and risks we take."

► The findings were reported in [Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience](#).

Russia to Install and Man Air Defenses Inside Turkey, Close to NATO Bases

By Abdullah Bozkurt

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63796/russia-to-install-and-man-air-defenses-inside>



Nov 14 –

Russian plans to install radar and missile systems in a Turkish town located some 280 miles from a critical NATO radar base as part of an agreement to build a 4,500-MW capacity nuclear power plant in Turkey has prompted an outcry and security concerns from the opposition.

"The installation of a radar system also means the establishment of an air defense system. In other words, have you given permission for the construction of a nuclear power plant that we can't protect ourselves? How and on what basis will the software for this system, which will be left entirely to the Russians, distinguish between friend and foe?" asked opposition lawmaker Zeki Hakan Sidalı during a debate in parliament on October 26.

Sidalı represents Mersin province, where Russia's Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation is building Turkey's first nuclear power plant in the town of Akkuyu, near Buyukeceli in the Gulnar district.

The agreement was originally signed as an intergovernmental deal between the two countries in May 2010, but numerous concessions to Russia were made by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who issued hastily drafted decrees and rushed laws through parliament to please the Kremlin.

As the terms of the agreement became clearer with the construction of the plant, it turned out that Russia would be installing a radar system near the plant and possibly deploying long-range missiles such as S-400s on the pretext of providing security for the nuclear installation.

There is no explicit reference in either the bilateral agreement or the regulations adopted in Turkey since 2010 to permission granted for such systems other than general provisions on establishing Central Alarm Systems (MAI) for security in and around the power plant.



The detailed regulations issued by Turkey's Nuclear Regulatory Authority (Nükleer Düzenleme Kurumu, NDK) on August 8, 2020 on the security of the nuclear installation and materials made no mention of radar or missile systems, either.

The issue has been hotly debated in the Turkish parliament, and a legal challenge was filed in a Turkish court to stop the Russian-controlled Turkish company from proceeding with the construction as planned.

"You are bringing an atomic bomb to Akkuyu [the town where the power plant is being built] and handing the button to Putin and the Kremlin," said opposition lawmaker Serkan Topal.



Akkuyu lies on the eastern Mediterranean coast, not far from a sophisticated radar base in Malatya's Kürecik district, part of NATO's missile defense system, which works with missile interceptors in Romania and Poland to counter a missile threat. What kind of radar and air defense systems the Russians plan to bring to Akkuyu and whether they would compromise the security of Turkey and its NATO allies is an open question.

The Akkuyu nuclear power plant under construction in Turkey.

The government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has not been forthcoming with details of the plant construction, which is estimated to cost some \$20-\$22 billion. The entire process has lacked transparency and is shrouded in secrecy. The government has also been unresponsive to opposition criticism on a range of issues from national security concerns to further dependence to Russia for energy supplies, from flawed environmental impact study reports to overpriced electricity purchase guarantees that many suspect are designed to enrich the cronies of President Erdoğan.

The Russians appear to be making up their own rules as they move forward with their plans with respect to the power plant construction. Akkuyu NGS Nuclear Santral A.Ş, the company set up in Turkey by Russia to manage the plant and oversee the construction, was sued in a Turkish court by the sole Turkish board member, Hasan Cüneyt Zapsu, who claimed that the Russian-dominated board left him in the dark and did not include him in the decision-making process.

Zapsu, a long-time ally of President Erdoğan, stated that the radar installation could possibly pose a national security risk to Turkey and may not be aligned with Turkish foreign policy. He told the board that the company needed to talk to Turkish authorities before awarding a contract to a Russian firm, but he was ignored and the Russians on the board simply made a decision on June 6, 2021 and asked him to rubber-stamp it, something that has been going on for some time.

Compounding matters further, the Erdoğan government has been doing everything in its power to suppress criticism and hide from the public the details of the problems in the construction of the plant.

A parliamentary motion filed by the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) on October 24, 2022 asked the legislature to establish an investigation commission to probe security issues for the radar system to be built by Russia in Akkuyu.

Despite warnings by the opposition that a radar base could compromise Turkey's national security and violate its sovereignty, the motion was defeated in the General Assembly on October 26 by a majority of votes from Erdoğan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its far-right backers from the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).

However, the debate provided further details on some of the disputes over the Akkuyu project. According to Zapsu's lawsuit, filed at the Ankara 9th Court of Commerce under case file No.2022/655, he was



sidelined from the decision making process of Akkuyu NGS, which is building the power plant and will be operating it when it goes on line.

For this project, the Russians established a special Turkish firm in Ankara under the name of Akkuyu NGS Elektrik Üretim A.Ş. on December 13, 2010 with an initial capital of 150 million Turkish lira. All five founding members and shareholders were Russian companies, listed as Atomstroyexport, Inter Rao Ues, Konzern Rosenergoatom, Atomtecheno and Atomenergoremont. All the board members were Russian nationals. In November 2013 Erdoğan's confidant Zapsu was brought on as a member of the board. With the last changes reported to the Trade Registry at the end of 2021, the board of directors is composed of Anastasia Zoteeva (president), Anton Dedusenko (deputy president), Ekaterina Lyakhova, Hemi Edouard Proglío, Gennady Sakharov, Alexey Zhukov, Zapsu and Sergey Zvegintsev.

Russia reportedly extracted major concessions from Erdoğan on a number of issues such as using Turkey to circumvent Western sanctions and provide sanctuary for oligarchs hunted by the West. More importantly, the Russians secured the commitment of Erdoğan to not challenge changes approved by the board of directors of Akkuyu NGS at a board meeting on March 12, 2019. The changes, which were not part of the original deal that was approved by the Turkish parliament, paved the way for Russia to expand its footprint in the port of Mersin and its maritime facilities in the Mediterranean.

According to the original deal, Akkuyu NGS has the right to build, manage and use port facilities for transport, storage and loading and offloading of materials needed for the power plant. However, with the new changes introduced by the board, Russia also acquired rights to build commercial ports that can be used as a forwarding base to meet the logistical needs of Russian naval vessels in the Mediterranean. Erdoğan reportedly pledged not to challenge these plans even though they were not approved by parliament.

To sweeten the deal, Putin reportedly promised Erdoğan help in the elections next year that will put Erdoğan's 20-year rule to the test amid growing economic hardship Turkish voters are suffering. Proposals ranging from Russian influence operations to promote Erdoğan during the election campaign to offering discounts on the price of energy Turkey purchases from Russia were brought to table during the talks.

In any case, the fallout from problems with Turkey's first nuclear power plant continue to trigger political debate in Turkey, and Russia's deep involvement in the project may very well have repercussions in terms of security concerns among Turkey's NATO allies.

Abdullah Bozkurt, a Middle East Forum Writing Fellow, is a Swedish-based investigative journalist and analyst who runs the Nordic Research and Monitoring Network and is chairman of the Stockholm Center for Freedom.

Afghan Government to Blame for Rapid Collapse: U.S. Auditor Report

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221117-afghan-government-to-blame-for-rapid-collapse-u-s-auditor-report>

Nov 17 – An official report blames Afghanistan's internationally supported, now-defunct government for failing to recognize that the United States intended to withdraw from the country, one of several factors contributing to its rapid collapse in August 2021 before the Taliban seized power.

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), which examines the U.S. investment in the conflict-torn nation, produced the report through interviews with current and former American officials as well as experts and former Afghan government officials.

U.S.-backed former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani governed the country through a "highly selective, narrow circle of loyalists," destabilizing the government at a critical juncture, SIGAR found.

The report said the Afghan government's high level of centralization, endemic corruption and struggle to attain legitimacy were long-term contributors to its eventual precipitous collapse.

"The fact that the United States had supported Afghanistan for 20 years and that Afghanistan had been highly dependent on external support for much of its modern history, made it all the harder for Afghan politicians and leaders to envision a future without such support," the report said.

The evaluation noted Washington also failed to resolve the issue of corruption and to achieve its key goal of building stable democratic, representative, gender-sensitive, and accountable Afghan governance institutions.

The report noted the United States had appropriated \$145 billion for the reconstruction of Afghanistan as of June 2021, including \$36.3 billion for governance, social and economic development. However, the government dissolved when Ghani fled the country in the face of the Taliban's rapid takeover and U.S.-led NATO troop withdrawal.



“The rapid disintegration of Afghan security forces and the Ghani administration in August 2021 represented the dramatic conclusion of a two-decade, U.S.-led effort to develop and westernize Afghan society,” SIGAR said. “Over nearly 20 years and three U.S. presidencies, the United States had vacillated on the issue of military withdrawal.”

The report found that the Afghan government had received “mixed messages” from U.S. policy makers and others in Washington, rendering it unprepared for the foreign troop withdrawal.

The Trump administration’s decision to exclude the Ghani administration from peace talks with the Taliban made it “appear weak and abandoned by its primary ally, while bolstering the legitimacy” of the Islamist insurgency.

“U.S. efforts to build and sustain Afghanistan’s governing institutions were a total, epic, predestined failure on par with the same efforts and outcome in the Vietnam war, and for the same reasons,” Chris Mason, associate professor of national security at the U.S. Army War College, told SIGAR.

The U.S. reconstruction efforts, however, made some progress toward achievement of Afghan governance objectives before the collapse of the government, SIGAR said.

“In both the public and private sectors, the combination of available opportunities and the training and education provided by the United States and its international partners led to increased human capital and institutional capacity. Capacity building was imperfect, but did yield some results,” the evaluation said.

It added that “residual elements” of the former Afghan government, including the central bank and ministries of finance as well as health “still exist and are functioning, although their sustainability is uncertain.”

Since returning to power 15 months ago, the Taliban have dismantled ministries and departments meant to promote free speech and rights of Afghans, particularly those of women.

The radical ruling group has enforced its own interpretation of Islam to govern the country.

Women have been largely excluded from public life. They are required to cover their faces when in public and undertake long road trips only if accompanied by a male relative. Public parks, baths and gyms are closed to women. Teenage girls are barred from attending secondary schools beyond grade six.

SIGAR said it provided a draft of the report to the U.S. Department of State, Department of Defense and U.S. Agency for International Development for review and comment. The watchdog received official written comment from the State Department but the others did not submit any comments, it said.

“In communications with the government of then-Afghan President Ghani, high-level officials in the Biden administration made clear that the United States was preparing for a full withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan,” the report quoted the State Department as telling SIGAR in a written reply.

The letter stressed that “the standard by which the U.S. government succeeded or failed in its political objectives needs to be wholly reconsidered in this report.”

EDITOR’S COMMENT: United States had supported Afghanistan for 20 years – what is this? A joke? How do you support a country that you do not understand its history, culture, needs, and overall importance? It is easy to produce ruins but very difficult to follow an Alexander the Great policy.

Schengen States Extend Border Checks, Ignoring EU Court

By Kira Schacht (data journalist at Deutsche Welle)

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221117-schengen-states-extend-border-checks-ignoring-eu-court>

Nov 17 – According to the [Schengen Agreement](#), people and goods may freely cross the borders of the 26 signatory countries without any checks or requirements. Internal border controls within the Schengen Area can only be reintroduced as a last resort in response to serious threats to domestic security.

Citing concerns about migration and/or terrorism, however, **Germany, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and France** have kept border controls in place continuously since displaced people began arriving to Europe in increased numbers in 2015. The countries have just prolonged the checks for another six months.

That’s the second extension since the European Court of Justice ruled in April that temporary reintroductions of border controls may not last longer than six months per announced threat.

A [DW analysis from 2019](#) had also found that these border controls violate the terms of the Schengen Agreement, which is considered a binding law for the 22 EU countries who have signed on, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.



“Too politically Sensitive”

It would usually be the role of the European Commission to admonish member states for breaching EU laws. Such infringement proceedings can lead to heavy financial sanctions. In 2018, for example, Spain had not fully implemented rules mandating that all EU citizens have access to reasonably priced bank accounts. The Commission [ordered Spain](#) to pay €50,000 every day until it could implement a national law conforming to the rules.

The Commission has not launched infringement procedures against any of the relevant member states for continuing the border controls. “The issue is just too politically sensitive,” said Leon Züllig, a research assistant at the Chair for Public Law, International Law and European Law at Justus Liebig University Giessen, who is writing his dissertation on the EU’s internal borders. “The member states and their ministries of the interior would be furious.”

The European Commission did not respond to requests for comment by DW. In a [hearing](#) with members of the European Parliament in January 2021, the Commission argued that adapting the rules might be a better solution than initiating infringement procedures. It cited the fact that member states had stopped complying with the rules as evidence that the rules themselves might be inadequate. The Commission’s recent [State of Schengen report](#) lists “lifting all long-lasting internal border controls” among its priorities for 2023. It appears that the Commission intends to try to convince member states to voluntarily stop controls through [changes to the Schengen Borders Code](#). The first draft of such a reform failed in 2017 because the Council of the European Union, a roundtable of relevant ministers from member governments, did not support it.

Proposed Changes Require Mass Surveillance The latest proposal by the Commission would introduce a range of changes to the rules governing the Schengen Area. Notably, it aims to [expand the range of “alternative measures”](#) that member states can introduce instead of border controls. In [consultations about the reform](#), member states specifically requested that technologies currently only used at the EU’s external borders be applied within the Schengen Area, as well.

Such technologies would include automatic surveillance and data collection by authorities through, for example, analysis of [Passenger Name Record](#) and Advanced Passenger Information data. This adds up to what Leon Züllig calls an “invisibilization” of border controls. “From the point of view of fundamental rights, these measures are perhaps even more dangerous than a physical barrier,” he said, “because they are ultimately relying on a kind of mass surveillance — including of EU citizens.”

These alternatives might also increase the risk of discrimination at the border. PICUM, an NGO dedicated to safeguarding human rights of undocumented migrants, [voiced concerns](#) that the proposal opens the door to racial profiling. The organization also refers to [reports](#) showing that surveillance technologies replicate and enshrine biases against marginalized people.

The proposal now lies with the European Parliament’s Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, which has just presented its [draft report](#). The report suggests deleting some of the relevant sections of the proposal, warning that “permitting more checks that will look and feel like border control does not match with the aim to offer EU citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers.”

Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar, the chair of the committee, also told DW: “Any technological developments must be consistent with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the EU data and privacy standards, which are the highest in the world.” The European Parliament has [criticized](#) the ongoing border controls in the past, and has generally supported free movement over increased national security. It remains to be seen whether those suggestions, in turn, will be accepted by the Commission and the EU member states. For now though, border controls in the free movement area will now enter their eighth consecutive year — with no consequences in sight.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: Another proof that the “Union” is a joke! Officials in high places fail to realize the threats Europe is facing and the need to strengthen security measures. Besides, if you have nothing to hide there is no big deal if you have to show a passport at the border. Without European Police, European Armed Forces, and European Immigration Policy, each country is responsible to do what is best to protect its citizens.

Daniel Pipes on the Possibility of a Middle East Götterdämmerung

November 17, 2022

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63805/daniel-pipes-on-the-possibility-of-a-middle-east>

Global Review: Do you think that the current mass protests will overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran?

Daniel Pipes: I do not. While they are impressively wide and enduring, they probably lack the leadership necessary to remove the Islamic Republic.

[A protest in downtown Tehran, Iran, on September 21, 2022.](#)





A protest in downtown Tehran, Iran, on September 21, 2022.

GR: How do you assess U.S. and European support for the Iranian protest movement?

DP: Insufficient. Western governments should have helped to shape a leadership, punished Tehran for attacking Kurds, and ended the nuclear negotiations farce.



GR: Might the Iranian regime, sensing itself in danger, aggress against another country – perhaps Saudi Arabia or Israel?

DP: Yes, a Götterdämmerung such as you sketch out is entirely possible.

GR: What do you make of Tehran's claim to have built a hypersonic missile that can reach Israel in 400 seconds and maneuver to avoid Israel's air defenses?

DP: The Iranian authorities routinely lie (for example, about sending drones to Russia) so, while they could be telling the truth this time, the audacity of this claim makes me disinclined to believe it. That is, the distance from Iran to Israel is about 1,800 km, so the missile would need to travel at $4.5 \text{ km per second} = 16,200 \text{ kph}$, which is over Mach 13; the fastest speed ever recorded in the atmosphere was the NASA X-43 traveling at Mach 9.6.

An Iranian newspaper threatened Israel (also in Hebrew) with a hypersonic attack requiring only 400 seconds to reach its target.

GR: What is the likely effect of the Iranian mass protest in Iran's vassal states of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen?

DP: So far, the effect has been minimal. But if protests rock the Islamic Republic, that could quickly change.

GR: The mid-term elections past, will the Biden administration change its Middle East policy?

DP: Middle East policy had a minuscule role in the elections, plus the Democrats are generally satisfied with

their outcome; together, this translates into little incentive for significant change.



GR: Will the administration revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, i.e., the Iran deal?

DP: Not long ago, I expected the deal to be signed; now I am less sure. The administration emits negative noises about the JCPOA but an outsider cannot tell if these are sincere or a bargaining ploy.

GR: Please name five important ways that the war in Ukraine affects the Middle East.

DP: The loss of fertilizer and foodstuffs, inflation, a bounty for oil and gas producers, dismay among clients of Russia's armaments, and a much-enhanced Moscow-Tehran axis.

GR: How long will Israel's new government remain in power?

DP: Israeli governments rarely make it through their full four-year term but I expect this one will make it beyond the half-way mark.

GR: What major policy differences do you expect from the Netanyahu-led government?

DP: It will pander to the Haredim on the issues they care about (funding, conversion, military service) and it will abandon the effort to bring Israeli Muslims into the political process.

GR: How do you assess the Israel-Lebanon maritime border deal?

DP: It was the weakest action of the anti-Netanyahu government in power during the past 1½ years, a near-desperate attempt to show a diplomatic accomplishment in advance of the November 1 election.

GR: How will Israel's relations with the United States and European Union change?

DP: Should ministers from the National Religious Party break with longstanding policies, ties with allies could fray.

GR: Benjamin Netanyahu previously made sure to have good relations with Vladimir Putin; can this continue, now that Russia relies on Iranian drones to attack Ukraine?

DP: Israel needs less to appease Putin in Syria, given that Ukraine has become his overwhelming priority, but that remains a concern. Also, it still must tread carefully because of the substantial Jewish community living in Russia (estimated at 165,000 persons). Also, international pressure on Israel to supply aerial defenses to Ukraine keeps growing because Israel alone can provide certain defenses against Iranian drones and other air attacks. In all, much worse Israeli relations with Russia look likely.

GR: Israel and Turkey have improved diplomatic relations; is this a major turn or a tactical maneuver by Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan?

DP: It's the purest of tactics, reflecting Erdoğan's needs at a time of weakness. His hostility toward Israel remains firmly in place, fueled by an Islamist worldview.

Weather impact on democracy!



Josep Borrell* called the temperature in apartments above +17° a crime against European values!

"We are faced with a choice between freedom and comfort. We have talked a lot about being willing to die for the ideals of democracy, it's time to prove it."

* Spanish politician serving as High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy





UKRAINIAN WAR

EU RESISTANCE GEAR



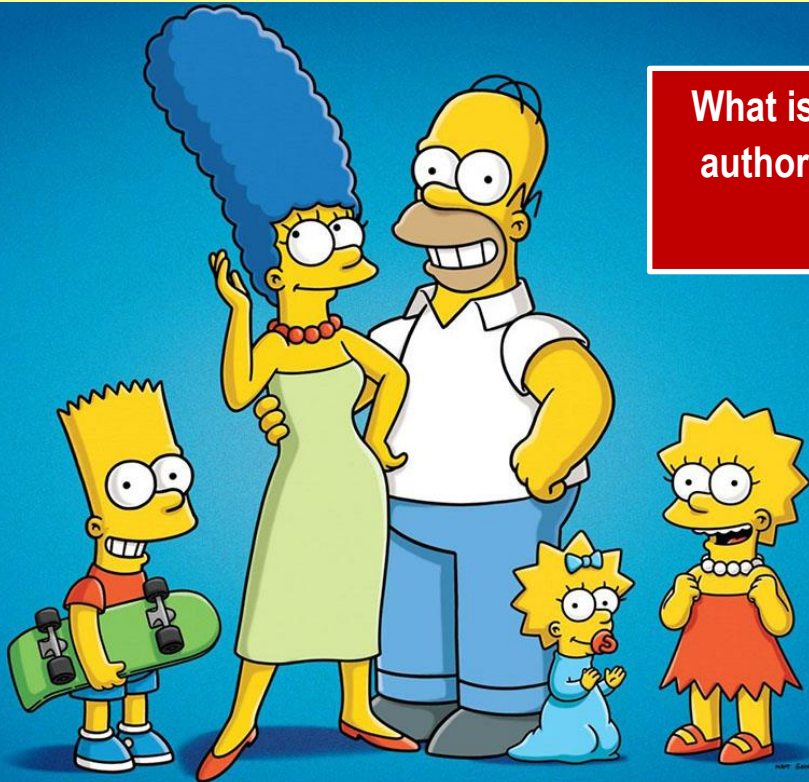
'The Simpsons': 30 Times the Fox Comedy Successfully Predicted the Future

Source: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/tv/tv-news/simpsons-future-predictions-accurate-1140775/>



What is going on with the authors of this animated sitcom?

QATAR 2022 FIFA Final
Mexico vs. Portugal?



As of November 13, 2022, 152 people have been credited with writing or co-writing at least one episode of *The Simpsons*.

Nov 16 – Across 33 years and more than 700 episodes, Fox's *The Simpsons*, while serving as the foundation of modern comedy, has had many moments that have manifested themselves in real life. In a world where truth can often be stranger than fiction, things that writers pitched as jokes were able to, much like the late Poochie, elevate out of the frame and make their way to a new dimension. *The Hollywood Reporter* has culled together 30 episodes, plotlines, and throwaway jokes that came to fruition in our three-dimensional world. So kick back in your Spinemelter 2000, grab your glass of Skittlebrau or Malk and enjoy!

●► Read the full article at the source's URL.

The Simpsons predictions for 2023 that will give you chills

Source: <https://www.irishmirror.ie/tv/simpsons-predictions-2023-give-you-27840447>

Aug 2022 – People have been trying to predict the future for as long as humanity has been around. From mystic Baba Vanga to the Mayans, The Simpson's have also made predictions that will give you chills. The long-running series has famously built a reputation for forecasting our future. For over three decades, the series has thrived with a dedicated audience invested in Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie. As they have previously predicted things like tiger attacks and the Trump presidency, many people eye on The Simpsons predictions seeing as some of their insights have come true.

A recent TikTok video titled 'Simpsons predictions for 2023 that will give you chills' has recently gone viral.

Inflation and Economic crisis

We are all aware of gas prices, and the ongoing cost of living crisis, but this prediction, apparently for the year 2023, may shock you. A man tells Homer: "Anarchy, the end of civilisation coming soon to an America near you." Homer responds: "America can't collapse, we're as powerful as Ancient Rome." The man plays him a video that says: "The modern world an inexorable march of progress." Homer says "sweet", and the video continues:



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"Or, is it, we're slaves to the system, close the supermarket, and we starve." Then cards appear saying, no local farming, peak oil, Ben Bernanke, solar flares, 17 year cicadas, deadly troll. Homer adds: "Oh my god, this unsourced, undated video has convinced me beyond any reasonable doubt." The man reassures Homer and says: "I'm the guy you want to know when the stuff hits the fan."

A Nuclear War between the US and China

The Simpsons apparently predict for 2023 that there could be a nuclear war between the US and China. In one of their episodes, the news anchor can be heard saying, "it is with great sadness that I inform you that America and China have declared war. A massive nuclear attack is expected to reach our shores within the hour!" *It comes after a number of previous predictions came true.*

Game of Thrones prediction

A 2017 episode also seemed to predict Daenerys Targaryen's big plot twist on an episode of "Game of Thrones."

US voting

In 2008, The Simpsons showed Homer trying to vote for Barack Obama in the US general election, but a faulty machine changed his vote. Four years later, a voting machine in Pennsylvania had to be removed after it kept changing people's votes for Barack Obama to ones for his Republican rival Mitt Romney.

Donald Trump as US president

In the 2000 episode, 'Bart to the Future', the show goes next level on its prediction talents when it name drops Donald Trump as having been POTUS. The episode features Lisa being president.

While in the Oval Office, we hear her say: "As you know, we've inherited quite a budget crunch from President Trump."

In 2017, Trump became the 45th President of the United States.

Siegfried and Roy tiger attack

The Simpsons parodied entertainers Siegfried & Roy in a 1993 episode called "\$pringfield (Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Legalized Gambling)." During the episode, the magicians are viciously mauled by a trained white tiger while performing in a casino. In 2003, Roy Horn of Siegfried and Roy was attacked during a live performance by Montecore, one of their white tigers.

Something called "respect to another nation!"





EDITOR'S COMMENT: You might say that I am obsessed with the astronomical amount of money certain "celebrities" are given. You are right!

EU Commission suggests need for new charity rescue boat rules

Source: https://euobserver.com/migration/156446?utm_source=euobs&utm_medium=email

Nov 22 – The European Commission wants to promote talks on possible new international maritime rules on sea-rescues for charity boats. On Monday (21 November), it told reporters discussions are needed with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a UN agency that regulates shipping.

"We have no concrete proposal and it's not really the role of the commission to have that either," EU home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson, told reporters.

Yet a [five-page document, also published on Monday](#) by the commission, says the IMO talks are needed to create a "specific framework and guidelines" for NGO boats rescuing people and bringing them to European shores.

Johansson was unable to respond when asked if this means possibly removing the 'closest port of safety' from the international maritime rulebook. Instead, she noted that around 90,000 people crossed the central Mediterranean this year, a 50-percent increase when compared to 2021.

She said most of those [taking boats from Libya](#) were predominantly from Egypt, Tunisia and **Bangladesh** and unlikely to be in need of international protection. Some 15 percent of those 90,000 were brought to Italy by NGO ships, according to the International Organization for Migration and the UN refugee agency (UNHCR). The rest were rescued by the Italian coastguard or by some other means. Johansson still insisted on the need for IMO talks given the latest



row [between France and Italy over SOS Mediterranee's Ocean Viking](#), which was this month forced to disembark some 230 people in Toulon in France, after Rome ignored 42 requests for a port.

"The situation today with the private vessels operating at sea is a scenario which still lacks sufficient clarity," she said.

"This current challenge was not thought of when maritime law was first agreed. There is a need for more cooperation between member states, flag states and coastal states and other relevant actors," she said.

The International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) was set up in 1979. It says a place of safety is one where a person's "safety of life is no longer threatened" and where basic human needs, like food, shelter and water, can be met.

But Italy under the far right leadership of its prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, contests that interpretation and said flag states have to take in migrants rescued by charity boats.

In late October, Italy's interior minister Matteo Piantedosi announced they would slap a territorial water entry ban on NGO boats.

It says the ban is based on article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which states arriving ships must not be "prejudicial to the peace, good order or security of the coastal state".

But some legal scholars contest it, including Luca Masera, a professor at University of Brescia and a member of Italy's Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration (ASGI). "The decision of the Italian government is in contrast with the international law of the sea, as the Italian Supreme Court has already stated in relation to the same practices used when [Matteo] Salvini was interior minister," he said, in an email, earlier this month.

France has since announced it will no longer take in 3,500 migrants from Italy under a so-called EU solidarity mechanism.

The mechanism was set up under the aegis of the French EU presidency over the summer and includes some 8,000 pledges spread over a dozen EU states. But only around 100 have so far been relocated, a figure that Johansson on Monday said had to be increased.

"It's clear we need to step up on implementation," she said. EU interior ministers on Friday will discuss the row between France and Italy, as well as how to further prevent departures from Libya.

Those talks will feed into another meeting among EU interior ministers set for 8 December, followed by the launch of a so-called "Team Europe initiative on the Central Mediterranean" on 12 December.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: It is obvious that Europe is fed up with illegal immigrants. It is obvious that charity rescue boats are something like a good business for those involved. It is obvious that this must stop unless flag countries (currently: Germany and Norway) accept these people in their countries [they do not]. It is obvious that certain African departure countries need to do what is necessary to stop the flow. It is obvious that legal scholars and activists should stop interpreting international laws according to their wills and intentions. When you tear your fast boat or sabotage its engines of a vessel this is not a reason to demand S&R operations. When you board infants, children, pregnant and elderly without life jackets there is a legal responsibility of those providing transportation. Based on the above no rules are required and will not be accepted by the countries playing the role of Europe's Gates. Stop hypocrisy and take action aiming at the root of the problem.

The Russia-Turkish Bond to Harm the West

By Burak Bekdil

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63817/the-russia-turkish-bond-to-harm-the-west>

Nov 18 – If they had met as presidents of other countries, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Russian President Vladimir Putin would probably have hated each other. Historically, Turkish Islamists have hated both Tsarist and Soviet Russia. Similarly, Russians have never been fond of the Turks. Today, however, Erdoğan, with a foot in NATO, is exhibiting a pro-Russian tilt never seen before. What is the secret of this ostensible marriage?

Turkey has refused to join Western sanctions against Russia over Ukraine, thereby throwing Putin a lifeline. Turkey's skies remain open to Russian airlines and its doors remain open to hundreds of thousands of Russians and their money. Turkey's exports to Russia are [surging](#). In July alone, exports to Russia shot up by a dizzying 75% year-on-year.

Russia's state-owned Rosatom, which is building Turkey's first nuclear power plant, had [sent](#) around \$5 billion to its Turkish subsidiary, the first in a series of such transfers. Russian cash helped to plug the growing hole in Turkey's foreign currency reserves — and at a time when Erdoğan needs foreign money to shore up the country's ailing economy before the presidential and parliamentary elections in June 2023.

Some analysts see this as a scheme to open up room for parking Russian funds in Turkey. It might look to them as if the [increase](#) in the Turkish central bank's foreign currency and gold reserves — to \$108.1



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billion on August 4 from \$98.9 billion on July 26 — had to do with Russian money flowing to Turkey. Bloomberg [reported](#): "Mystery capital flows into Turkey have reached new highs, allowing policy makers to boost foreign reserves despite a growing trade deficit and weak demand for lira assets."

Bloomberg's source remains unclear.

In March, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu [said](#) that Russian oligarchs were welcome in Turkey. In October, *Financial Times* [reported](#) that a record \$28 billion from unclear origins had flowed into Turkey between January and August this year. Turkish investigative journalist Aytuğ Özçolak listed some of the [Russian oligarchs](#) who have business interests, investments and funds in Turkey: Leonid Mikhelson, Vagit Alekperov, Vladimir Lisin, Vladimir Potanin, Alexey Mordashov and Mikhail Fridman.

[According](#) to Marc Pierini, senior fellow at Carnegie Europe and former EU ambassador to Ankara, the number of Russian expatriates in Turkey, as well as their real estate investments and financial transfers to Turkish banks, have grown substantially. Furthermore, Pierini wrote, there is a suspicion that Russia is trying to circumvent some of the effects of Western sanctions via Turkey, in particular through the acquisition of stakes in Turkish oil businesses, as joint companies help to blur Russian trade in oil.

Pierini further wrote: "The Kremlin's policy is highly pragmatic: knowing that Turkey's partners in NATO are keen to keep it in the North Atlantic Alliance and Ankara has every interest in staying within NATO, Putin's goal remains anchoring Erdoğan more and more to Russia through a vast mesh of mutually beneficial operations in the fields of defense, energy, trade, and finance.

"By doing this, Putin is comforting an embattled incumbent president and is openly bolstering Erdoğan's position in the upcoming elections. More than the Turkish president abandoning his traditional Western partners, the world is witnessing the Russian president using Turkey for his own benefits."

Jokes in Ankara's political grapevine describe Putin as "head of Erdoğan's party's Moscow provincial branch." Whichever indicators one looks at, Putin wants Erdoğan to stay in power. He would rather not gamble with someone else as Turkey's new leader. This is understandable. Erdoğan's potential rivals have pledged to reinstate Turkey's strong bonds with the West.

The Erdoğan-Putin bond has two main pillars. One is pragmatism: They both strategically, politically and economically benefit. The other is ideological: They both hate Western civilization.

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

EDITOR'S COMMENT: NATO, the US, the EU, Russia, China, and the rest of the world are anxious to see how long the double-face game of Turkey will go on.





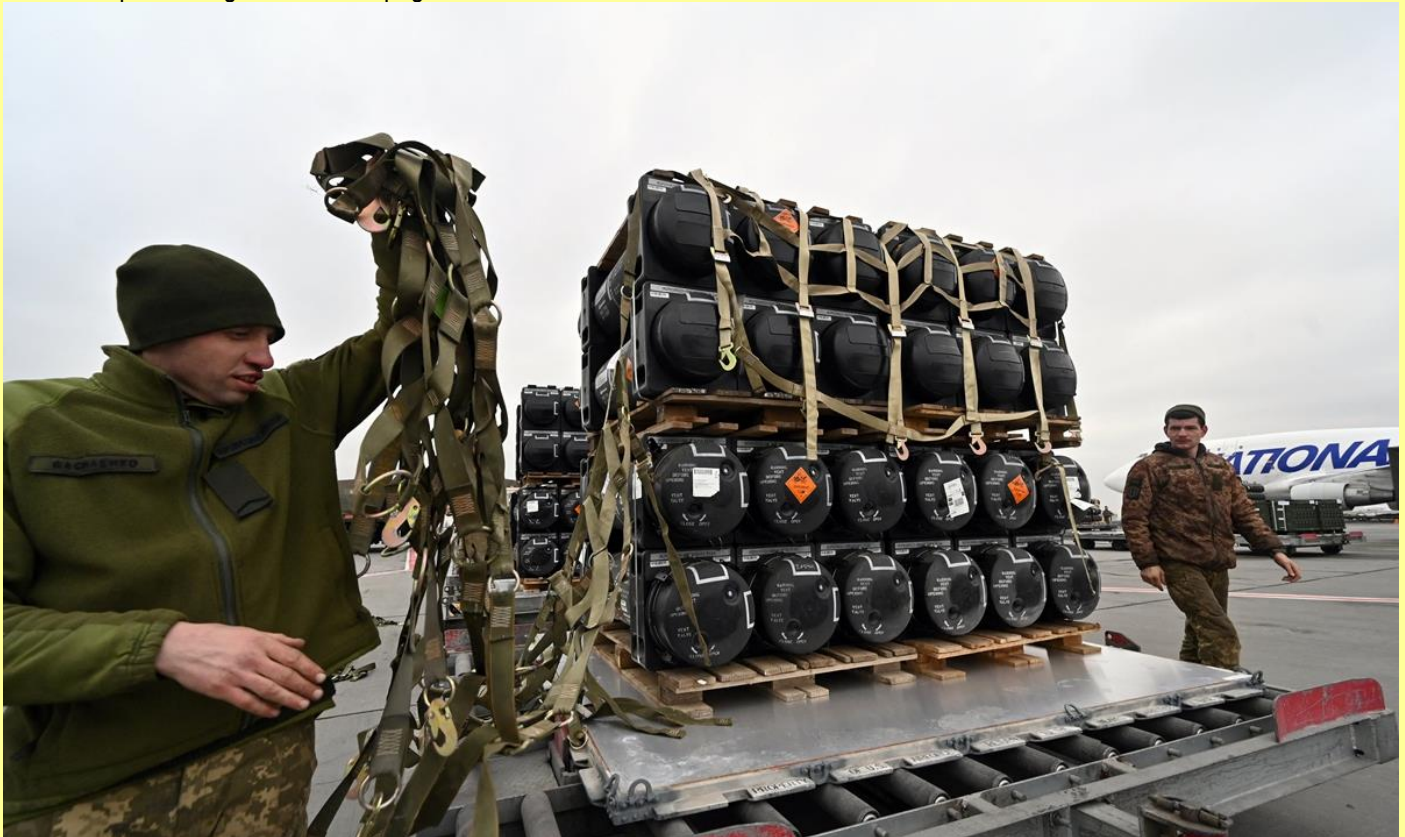
T - NEWS

Weapons sent by US and NATO may fall into dark net and even to terrorists, leading widespread and unbearable cost

Feeding armed conflict

By Fan Lingzhi and Lin Xiaoy

Source: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202206/1267729.shtml>



Ukrainian servicemen unload a Boeing 747-412 plane with the FGM-148 Javelin, anti-tank missiles provided by US to Ukraine as part of a military support, at Kiev's airport Boryspil on February 11, 2022. Photo: AFP

June 2022 – Heartless terrorists turned dreadful mercenaries, weapons scattered in a chaotic battlefield... These disturbing signs showed that a big, horrible disaster is sprawling in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Executive Director of Europol Catherine De Bolle told German media in late May that they were very concerned that the military equipment the West is sending to Ukraine will end up on the black market and in the hands of terrorists and criminals.

Previous reports show that the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) found the US was stepping up its efforts to recruit members of international terrorist groups, including extremist organizations, as mercenaries to fight in Ukraine and take part in sabotage operations against Russian forces.

After US President Joe Biden formally signed the \$40 billion aid package to Ukraine, this worry became more pressing. Can the flow of weapons from NATO and the US to Ukraine be monitored? Is it only a matter of time before terrorist groups take hold of those weapons? Who is laughing behind Europe's worried back?

Several experts told the Global Times that it is difficult to control the flow of weapons on the battlefield. They noted that not only Europe, which has been deprived of its security autonomy by the US and NATO, but also the third world countries, will suffer the costs. Those who prefer to live by the sword will fall by the sword. While the military-industrial complex profiteers, it is only a matter of time before this backfires, experts noted.

Flow of illegal weapons

Jürgen Stock, the head of Interpol, warned that once the Russia-Ukraine conflict ends, guns and heavy arms will flood the international market, according to a Guardian report.



"Once the guns fall silent [in Ukraine], illegal weapons will come. We know this from many other instances of conflict. Criminals are even now, as we speak, focusing on them," said Stock, stressing that the illegal weapons flowing into the criminal market will create a challenge. Several days ago, De Bolle expressed the same concern in an interview with the German newspaper Die Welt am Sonntag. She said the arms delivered from the EU to Ukraine could easily fall into the hands of criminals which would imperil the internal security landscape of the EU.

Along with weapons are bloodthirsty criminals. According to the SVR, in April about 60 ISIS militants, aged 20 to 25, were released from prisons controlled by Syrian Kurds with the intervention of American intelligence services. They were "transferred to the US military base of Al-Tanf, located in Syria near the border with Jordan and Iraq, for combat training with the aim of a subsequent deployment to Ukraine," according to a statement from the SVR.

Analysts pointed out that the frantic fascist "dream" of killing is the same on both sides of the Atlantic. The far-right "white supremacists" in the US now also threaten ordinary people's lives. The recent spate of mass shootings in the US has made the possible influx of illegal weapons from Ukraine more even frightening.

What would it look like, on both sides of the Atlantic, if a large amount of unregulated weapons flows from Ukraine to extremists around the world? Regardless of this question, it seems that the US does not care.

On May 21, during his visit to South Korea, Biden signed into law a \$40 billion aid package for Ukraine. Previously, the US Senate and House of Representatives had quickly passed the bill with unusual "efficiency."

A heavy price to bear

What weapons have the US and other NATO countries provided since the Russia-Ukraine conflict erupted? A June 5 report by Al Jazeera titled "Weapons to Ukraine: Which countries have sent what?" said that US aid accounts for a significant portion, including 1,400 Stinger anti-aircraft systems, 5,000 Javelin anti-tank missiles, several thousand rifles with ammunition, and a range of other equipment.

However, some of the Western weapons sent as aid to Ukraine are being sold on the dark net. ASB Military News reported on June 2 that some of the arms the US and NATO donated are being sold to buyers in the Middle East and North Africa. According to the Pentagon's 2021 budget, each Javelin missile costs \$178,000. However, these missiles are now listed for sale on the dark net for just \$30,000, ASB Military News revealed.

"Many people are taking these weapons and selling them to terrorist organizations on the black market. As a result, these weapons will be used in the future to kill people in Europe and other places," US journalist John Mark Dougan confirmed the news in an interview with the Global Times, saying it is almost impossible to monitor the circulation of these weapons. Dougan is a former US Marine who traveled to Ukraine as a reporter after the conflict broke out.

"The management of weapons on the Russian-Ukrainian battlefield is in a very chaotic state and the whereabouts of these weapons cannot be traced at all," Li Wei, an expert on national security at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, told the Global Times.

Li pointed out that the Russian army, as the regular army, has a set of weapons management processes. On the side of the Ukrainian army, the situation is more complicated. In addition to the regular army, there is the Azov Battalion and other militia organizations. "At the beginning of the conflict, some weapons were even distributed to civilians," he said.

Li noted that in the process of delivering aid, Western countries just handed them over to the Ukrainian government, but as these weapons are funneled into the conflict and their final destination, there lacks the ability and interest to monitor the situation. Where might these weapons go in the future?

Akila al-Taya, an Iraqi security expert, recently told Russian news agency Sputnik that US weapons currently supplied to Ukraine are likely to be smuggled to extremists inside or outside Ukraine, as well as to terrorist groups, including the Islamic State, to arm them or create new organizations under other names.

"If these weapons are in the hands of terrorist organizations and criminal gangs, this could strengthen European separatism and spark internal conflict. Europe would be held accountable for US military actions and its own mistakes," He Zhigao, a research fellow with the Institute of European Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), told the Global Times.

He noted that the influx of refugees after the Ukraine crisis has raised the possibility of terrorist attacks, adding that "the overlap of the refugee crisis, the influx of weapons, and the threat of terrorism is a scenario that Europe is extremely unhappy to foresee."

"These episodes of chaos prove that the autonomy of Europe's security has obviously been lost during the Russia-Ukraine conflict," Li told the Global Times. Looking back, whenever Europe has tried to achieve security autonomy, the US has caused trouble to block the process, with NATO as a key culprit. "Russia tried to improve relations with Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but in the US' view, such an improvement could be a



threat to its global hegemony," Li said, noting that "the US wanted to re-awaken 'Russophobia' in Europe, and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has made the US' plan perfectly realized."

"For Europe, it is necessary to define and maintain its core interests more clearly. If they blindly follow the pace of the US, their security autonomy will be a fantasy, let alone being an independent actor with global influence," Li said. He believes that Europe should strengthen strategic autonomy and transfer its security concepts. Europe should also support the role of the UN in the field of conventional arms control with major powers including China, He said.

Doomed to be backlashed

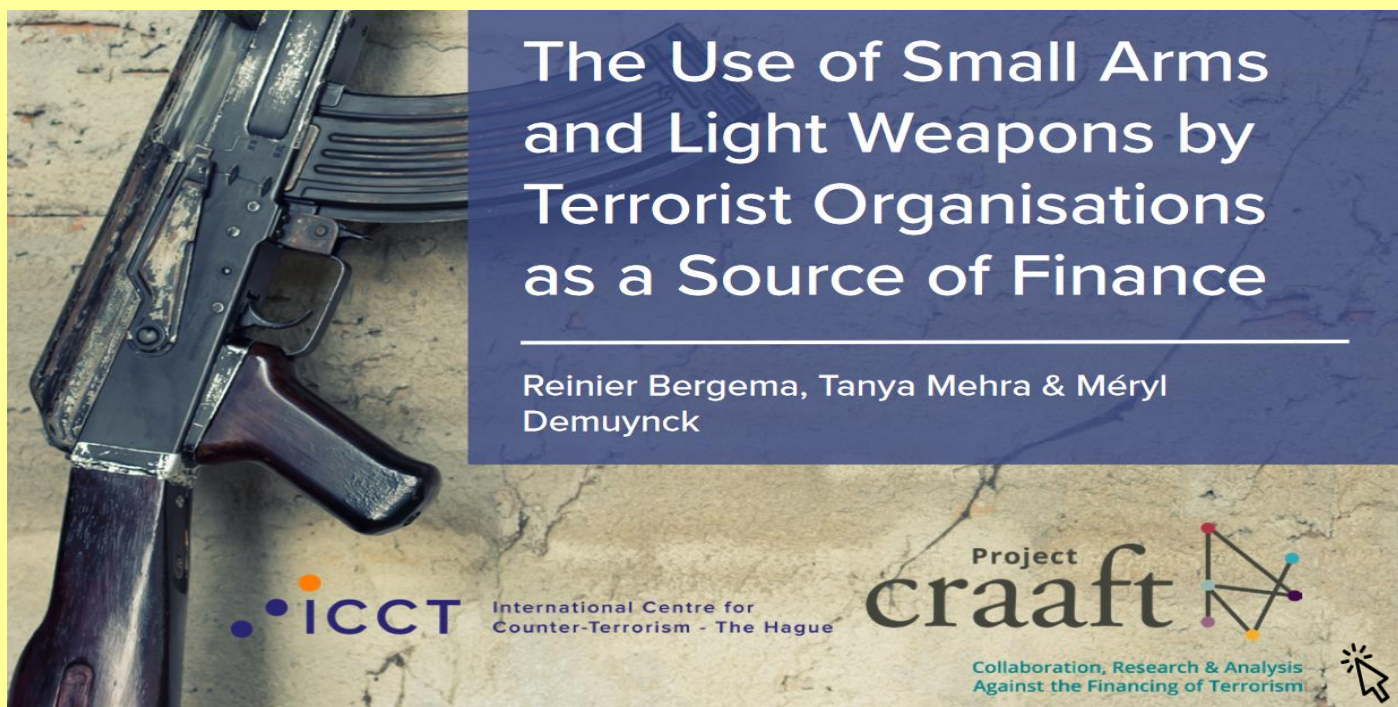
In addition to the deepening anxiety in Europe, frequent gun violence has hit the US recently. At least 13 mass shootings occurred in the US over the last weekend, resulting in 16 deaths and more than 70 injured. So far, there have been 246 mass shootings in the US this year, according to a report by CNN on June 6. Scattering guns in foreign countries while being unable to ban guns domestically, the US' practice at home and abroad seems to be linked by a "dark line."

"The dark line shows that some people want to see the consequences of the proliferation of guns," Zhang Yifei, an assistant research fellow with the Institute of American Studies of the CASS, told the Global Times, highlighting that by "selling guns globally and not banning guns at home, the biggest winner would be the military-industrial complex of the US."

The American political magazine "Jacobin" recently published an article indicating that it is difficult to say how much of the \$40 billion in US aid will ultimately go directly to Ukraine. But one thing is clear. For arms manufacturers, what is happening in Ukraine is a "bonanza." Meanwhile, sending a mixed bag of mercenaries into the battlefield seems like the last piece of the puzzle to fully implement the whole plan. Just as De Bolle assessed, "people who are going to fight in Ukraine do not represent a homogeneous group but rather adhere to different ideologies." Zhang said that the biggest hidden danger of US' approach is that those who hold dollars and American weapons must be pro-US. "Those who gather with a common interest will naturally disperse when their interests are exhausted. Therefore, backlash will be a sure outcome for the US," he said. "The US is ready to use any means to achieve its geopolitical goals, not excluding sponsoring international terrorist groups," the SVR said.

The Global Times found that the definition of terrorist support in the UN's International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, almost "fits perfectly" with the behavior displayed by the US, and ironically, the US is also party to the convention. "As a hegemonic country, the US often defines 'terrorism' unilaterally," Li said, noting that "in the eyes of the US, whether it is 'supporting terrorism' is not defined by the UN, but only by the US' standards."

But Al Qaeda, which was responsible for the 9/11 attacks, was created with US funding. Therefore, the US is a country that supports terrorists, Li concluded.



The Use of Small Arms and Light Weapons by Terrorist Organisations as a Source of Finance

Reinier Bergema, Tanya Mehra & Méryl Demuynck

icct International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - The Hague

Project **craaft** Collaboration, Research & Analysis Against the Financing of Terrorism



Printing insecurity: Tackling the threat of 3D printed guns in Europe

The International Conference on 3D Printed Firearms gathered over 120 participants from 20 countries

Source: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/printing-insecurity-tackling-threat-of-3d-printed-guns-in-europe>

May 27 – Law enforcement professionals, ballistic experts, forensic scientists, policy makers and academia have gathered this week in The Hague, the Netherlands, for one of the world's biggest platforms of exchange on the threat of 3D printed weapons.

The International Conference on 3D Printed Firearms, organised by Europol and the Dutch National Police (Politie) in the framework of EMPACT Firearms and hosted at the University of Leiden, saw some 120 participants from 20 countries address the latest challenges facing law enforcement in their efforts to tackle this threat.

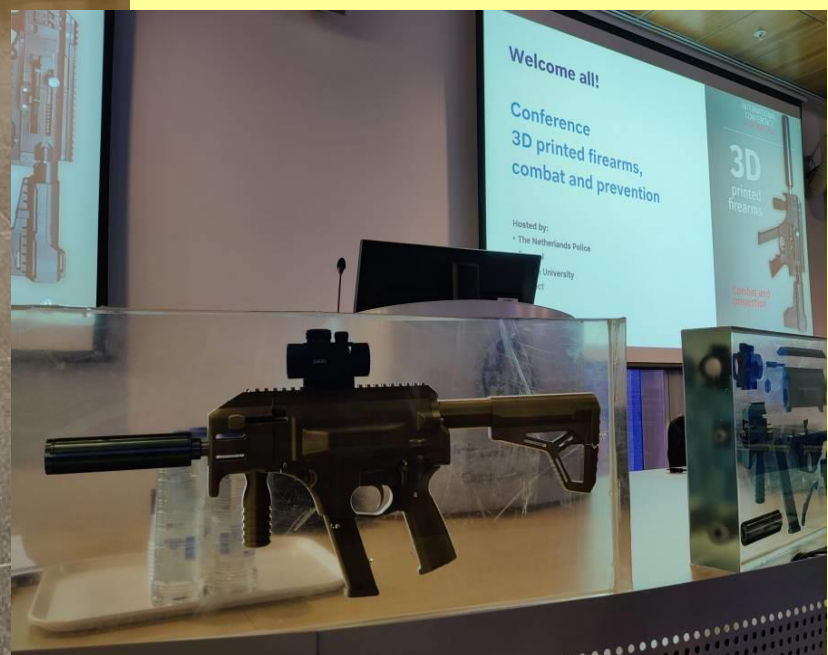
Over the course of two days (24-25 May 2022), the participants explored the fundamental processes required for developing joint intervention strategies in this field, including tactical and forensic research, software, scientific developments and legislation.

Opening the conference, Chief Constable Gerda van Leeuwen at the Dutch National Police (Politie), said:

The development of 3D printing of firearms is a current and future threat. International cooperation therefore is crucial to be able to counter. This conference will focus not only on current state of play, but also on building a strong network of specialists on this topic, creating intervention techniques and sharing best practices.

The team leader of Europol's Analysis Project Weapons and Explosives, Martin van der Meij, added:

The threat posed by 3D printed weapons is very much on the radar of Europol, amid the growing number of such firearms being seized in investigations across Europe in recent years. Such a challenge can only be



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addressed by combining the expertise, resources and insights of law enforcement, the private sector and academia to get such guns off the streets.

3D printed weapons are no longer a matter of fiction

Back in 2019, two people were shot dead in Halle, Germany, by a perpetrator using a homemade weapon, based on a blueprint downloaded from the internet to partly manufacture the weapon with a 3D printer.

In April 2021, the Spanish National Police (Policía Nacional) raided and dismantled an illegal workshop in the Canary Islands which was producing 3D printed weapons. Two 3D printers were seized, alongside gun parts, a replica assault rifle and several manuals on urban guerrilla warfare and white supremacist literature. The owner of the workshop was arrested and charged with illegal possession of weapons.

A month later, two men and one woman were arrested in the town of Keighley in the United Kingdom as part of an investigation into right-wing terrorism. All three were charged with possessing components of 3D printed weapons.

Conclusions of the conference

- Connection and cooperation between law enforcement and the industry/private sector is needed to identify and monitor the developments around 3D printed firearms.
- An international network of experts on 3D printed firearms will be created, tasked with keeping law enforcement agencies abreast of developments in 3D printed firearms.
- The main policy recommendations of participants and other developments around 3D printed firearms will be put into a factsheet, which will be distributed to partners and policymakers worldwide.

Family details horrific abuse at hands of female ISIS leader

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/family-details-horrific-abuse-at-hands-of-female-isis-leader/2022/10/24/4f60856a-53cd-11ed-ac8b-08bbfab1c5a5_story.html

Oct 24 — A Kansas native convicted of leading an all-female battalion of the Islamic State group had a long history of monstrous behavior that included sexual and physical abuse of her own children, family members said in court filings.

Prosecutors cited the abuse allegations in seeking a maximum 20-year sentence for **Allison Fluke-Ekren**, 42, when she is sentenced Nov. 1 for providing material support to the Islamic State group.

“Allison Fluke-Ekren brainwashed young girls and trained them to kill. She carved a path of terror, plunging her own children into unfathomable depths of cruelty by physically, psychologically, emotionally, and sexually abusing them,” First Assistant U.S. Attorney Raj Parekh wrote in a sentencing memo spelling out the allegations Fluke-Ekren’s own children and parents have made against her.

Fluke-Ekren pleaded guilty to terrorism charges after she admitted that she led the Khatiba Nusaybah, an all-female battalion of the Islamic State, in which roughly 100 women and girls — some as young as 10 years old — learned how to use automatic weapons and detonate grenades and suicide belts.

Parekh’s sentencing memo spells out how Fluke-Ekren went from childhood on an 81-acre farm in Overbrook, Kansas, to an Islamic State leader, traveling from Kansas to Egypt to Libya and then to Islamic State-controlled territory in Syria. Along the way, she had 12 children and five different husbands, several of whom were killed in fighting.

Through all the years, family and acquaintances of Fluke-Ekren portrayed her as the driving force who pushed her second husband into radicalization and convinced him to take her and the kids to Egypt. Her plans for an all-female battalion were ignored and rejected by other terrorist groups like Jabhat al-Nusra, and only the Islamic State finally acquiesced to her idea, prosecutors said.



Fluke-Ekren's parents describe her as manipulative and difficult from the start. Family members describe how she would laughingly tell the story of how she tried to drown her brother in an icy lake as children.

Perhaps most disturbing in a laundry list of disturbing reports are allegations from two of her children that she engaged in sexual abuse of her kids.

"My mother would beat my body, leaving my muscles cramping in agony. (She) would then go to her room and masturbate over the fact that she beat me. I could hear her from the other room," one of Fluke-Ekren's daughters, now an adult, wrote in a letter to the court. She is expected to testify at Fluke-Ekren's sentencing hearing.

Fluke-Ekren's oldest child, a son, also says he was molested.

"My mother is a monster who enjoys torturing children for sexual pleasure," he wrote in his own letter to the court.

It is unclear to what extent the abuse allegations will affect the sentence imposed by U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema because they are not directly related to the terrorism crimes. The daughter will be allowed to testify at the sentencing hearing because she was a victim of the terrorism — her mother enrolled her in the Khatiba Nusaybah as a child. The son is not expected to testify.

Fluke-Ekren, for her part, is denying many of the abuse allegations. She has complained that she has an inadequate opportunity to refute her family's statements.

Fluke-Ekren "is shocked and saddened by these allegations but acknowledges Witness-1 (her daughter) experienced trauma in Syria," defense attorney Joseph King wrote in his sentencing memo, which seeks a sentence below 20 years. "She cannot undo the pain that she caused in taking Witness-1 to Syria."

Her son said Fluke-Ekren has a long history of denying abuse and people choosing to believe her over her children.

"I know her and I know she wants to lie her way out of this, to get a slap on the wrist and try to use a sob story to once again get power and access to victims," the son wrote.

Other allegations included in prosecutors sentencing memo:

— She urged a woman to commit a suicide bombing. When the woman said she could no longer carry out an attack because she was pregnant, Fluke-Ekren took in the child after his birth so the woman could go forward with the attack.

— She told others that her oldest son was born after she was raped by an American soldier as a way to ingratiate herself inside the terrorist groups where she sought to increase her status.

— She forced her 13-year-old daughter to marry an Islamic State fighter.

— In Libya, she sought to establish a school for girls in which she showed young girls videos of Iraqi women being raped by American soldiers. "She would tell us that if we didn't kill the 'kuffar' (non-believer) that we would be raped," the daughter wrote in court papers about the experience.

Al-Shabaab, the Branch of al-Qaeda in Somalia and the Horn of Africa

The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center

Source: <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/al-shabaab-the-branch-of-al-qaeda-in-somalia-and-the-horn-of-africa/>

Islamic State regains momentum in Syria's Kurdish areas

Source: <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/10/islamic-state-regains-momentum-syrias-kurdish-areas>

Oct 24 – The Islamic State has recently renewed its activities in the areas under the control of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in northeast Syria.

On Oct. 14, IS claimed responsibility for an operation in the village of Tal Alo in Hasakah province, [targeting](#) Hamidi Bandar Hamidi al-Hadi, the son of the leader of al-Sanadid Forces (Forces of the Brave) formed by the Arab Shammar tribe and operating under the umbrella of the SDF and the US-led coalition.

Hadi's car was blown up on the road between Tal Alo and Sheikh Hamidi's farm in the Qamishli countryside. Hadi, who survived the assassination attempt, is also the grandson of the sheikh of the Shammar tribe in Syria, [Hamidi Daham al-Jarba](#).

On Oct. 19, IS members also [shot dead](#) Amer Awad al-Shawi, a former member of the SDF, and his companion Ayman al-Shawi, in al-Busayrah in the eastern countryside of Deir ez-Zor.

[Zain al-Abidin al-Akeidi](#), a journalist from the Deir ez-Zor countryside, told Al-Monitor, "IS would [suspend its operations](#) in the area for a few days or a few weeks, only to make a more ferocious comeback. Moreover, some tribes are creating a suitable environment for IS. The large numbers of displaced people in the eastern and northeastern countrysides of Deir ez-zor enables IS to hide its cells and fighters."



He explained that IS has been able to regain momentum amid the [fragile security of the SDF](#). “Corruption plaguing most security services affiliated with the SDF is fostering the presence of IS, which pays bribes for freeing its fighters and suspending prosecutions against its cells. Also, the religiously conservative tribal areas are ethnically and religiously sensitive toward the Kurdish forces and label the SDF as atheists or enemies of Islam. In some cases, they even sympathize with IS.”

Akeidi added, “IS carries out security operations according to the method of lone wolves. It has great influence in the countryside of Deir ez-Zor, and sometimes [imposes zakat](#) [obligatory charitable payment] on residents. IS also pursues workers and employees in the oil fields run by the SDF.” But the failed assassination attempt, he said, was the first time IS broke into an area controlled by al-Sanadid forces.

“IS’ strategies are based on three main factors to ensure its continuity,” Raed al-Hamid, an Erbil-based expert on armed groups, told Al-Monitor. The first, he said, is preserving its own men, which is “why it has been operating in small, mobile groups of less than 15 fighters. IS has stopped fighting major offensive battles in large numbers to preserve its human resources.”

The second factor, he said, is that “the popularity of IS’ ideology seems to be fading. Even if it is still able to lure in some young people, their numbers remain limited in Iraq and Syria. The third and most crucial and vital factor is financial. IS is working on several fronts to obtain financial revenues. It is controlling the main roads by setting up fake temporary checkpoints or ambushes to intercept convoys of trucks and tanks. It is also imposing taxes on the owners of shipping companies.”

An Assessment of the Second U.S. Government Domestic Terrorism Assessment

By Seamus Hughes, Moshe Klein, and Alexis Jori Shanes

Source: <https://www.lawfareblog.com/assessment-second-us-government-domestic-terrorism-assessment>

Oct 28 – By their very nature, congressionally mandated reports can be dull check-the-box exercises. By the time the reports come out, the members of Congress (or, more likely, their staff) who requested them have usually moved on to their next hot policy topic, and the executive branch is stuck writing annual reports that no one ever reads. However, every once and a while, there is a topic of such importance that the reporting requirement produces an informative piece of work that should influence public policy. The recently released intelligence assessment of domestic terrorism is such a document. This is the second iteration of the Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism.

The [first one](#), while interesting, [fell short in a number of ways](#) and felt, in a sense, like an attempt to placate eager congressional overseers. [This iteration](#), which was released with little fanfare or a typical departmental press release, is a significant improvement. From additional granularity in the size and scope of the threat of domestic terrorism to a more forthcoming acknowledgement of its complexity, it should provide a road map for U.S. domestic counterterrorism efforts.



More Numbers, More Problems

The 44-page report, written jointly by the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, is required, under 2020 law:

[T]o the fullest extent feasible and for purposes of internal recordkeeping and tracking, uniform and standardized definitions of the terms “domestic terrorism,” “act of domestic terrorism,” “domestic terrorism groups,” and any other commonly used terms with respect to DT; methodologies for tracking incidents of DT; and descriptions of categories and subcategories of DT and ideologies relating to DT[.]

By measures of law enforcement investigations, domestic terrorism is increasing. The FBI notched roughly 1,400 domestic terrorism investigations by the end of fiscal year 2020, up considerably from the 1,000 average during previous years. By the end of 2021, however, the number of investigations had nearly doubled to 2,700. The agency attributed “a significant portion” of the investigations to crimes related to Jan. 6, but even accounting for this anomaly, the numbers have risen significantly.

Most of the investigations were related to racially or ethnically driven violent extremism, anti-government or anti-authority violent extremism, and civil unrest. If those labels feel like catchalls, it is because they are. That is the nature of domestic terrorism investigations in America. Domestic terrorism, as defined by [18 U.S.C. § 2331\(5\)](#), is best described as anything but al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. As a result, ideologies categorized as domestic terrorism can range from the garden variety white supremacist to a hardened anarchist and everything in between. The broad buckets of ideologies are understandable, but at some point they become less valuable to congressional appropriators wondering how to allocate money.

As in last year’s assessment, the FBI did not distinguish between the types of investigations, which can range from assessments and preliminary inquiries to full-scale examinations. To an outsider, that lack of specificity may seem acceptable, but there are [vast differences in the distinctions](#). An assessment is the



lowest form of an investigation. It is typically not labor intensive and has less investigative tools at its disposal. By contrast, a full-field investigation can involve dozens of agents and analysts to get it to fruition. Quite simply, 2,700 full-field investigations would be overwhelming within the scope of the number of FBI employees. On the other hand, 2,700 open assessments, while unprecedented, would still be manageable.

While the data included is informative, lack of data in other areas only raises more questions. Although the FBI employs around 4,400 investigators, it's not clear how many are assigned to domestic extremism matters—or how resource intensive those domestic matters are. For the second year in a row, the FBI refused to give a hard count of the number of employees focused on domestic violent extremism, but the agency did expand its 474-word [non-answer answer](#) from last year to a 525-word note about how it's difficult to do a count because countering domestic extremism involves a lot of employees.

On the purely intelligence side, the report notes that, despite the increased threat, the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) does not employ a single analyst focused exclusively on domestic terrorism. One could argue that the NCTC is hamstrung in some respects because its [mandate](#), or at least a narrow reading of its statute, limits its ability to focus on terrorism not related to the international variety of groups like the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. At the same time, the assessment states Homeland Security employs only ten analysts for domestic extremism threats. However, that number represents a meteoric increase from five years earlier, when there was not a dedicated domestic terrorism analyst squad.

The Jan. 6 arrests also drove the more than fourfold increase in domestic terrorism-related arrests between fiscal years 2020 and 2021. The FBI and its partner agencies arrested roughly 800 domestic terrorism subjects in 2021 alone, up from around 180 the previous year. By contrast, the agency arrested approximately 850 domestic terrorism subjects between fiscal years 2015 and 2019 combined.

The FBI received more than 14,000 referrals of potential domestic violence incidents in the report's two-year span: nearly 5,700 in fiscal year 2020, and 8,400 in fiscal year 2021. It passed off around 2,700 incidents to partner agencies.

During the same two years, the agency released roughly 6,000 domestic terrorism intelligence products, which can include everything from raw data to finished reports. That figure is also up, from 4,000 products in the five-year period covered in last year's report. This represents a significant rise in intelligence analysis by the FBI, Homeland Security, and the NCTC. It speaks to both the increased focus on the topic of domestic terrorism and a hunger by state and local officials for more information. Indeed, by any good measure, the counterterrorism apparatus has experienced a ["sea change"](#) since Jan. 6.

There is a downside to this deluge of information: If everyone is yelling, the most important items sometimes get lost in the noise. This signal-versus-noise phenomenon was thrown into sharp relief in the run-up to Jan. 6, during which time the field office [reporting](#) appears not to have risen to a level of concern at headquarters.

There may be more clarity in the numbers in coming reports, as the Justice Department now requires U.S. attorney's offices to [flag and tag](#) domestic violent extremism cases they're prosecuting—even if the charges are not expressly linked to terrorism

The Easter Eggs

Law enforcement and intelligence reports tend to bury the most interesting items in seemingly throwaway lines of a much bigger report. This sometimes reflects the reality that reports are often authored by apolitical analysts who are blissfully oblivious to the political winds and thus do not appreciate the possible ramifications in reporting ground truths. But most of the time, certain Easter eggs can be found in the final report because analysts want to hint at issues they're worried about without upsetting the policy folks who have final say on bringing these documents to light.

First and foremost, departments tend to dodge formal questions about whether they need more legal authorities. However, a specific example of potential legislative initiatives mentioned in the report is adjusting legislation to expand federal law enforcement capabilities to respond to threats from juveniles. Indeed, in recent public remarks, senior FBI officials [have raised](#) alarms about the rising number of cases involving minors and the lack of useful legal tools available. In conversations with prosecutors and law enforcement around the country by the authors, officials increasingly raise concerns that they are stuck between a rock and hard place. They have minors as young as 11 who are steeped in white supremacy but have little moral appetite or legal ability to arrest them. Quietly, they have quickly put together haphazard intervention and diversion programs to try to dissuade these young—and [usually male](#)—individuals from their extremist beliefs. The status quo for law enforcement on this issue is not tenable in the long run. Although extremism motivated by abortion-rights beliefs has not been a significant threat in the past, especially compared to anti-abortion-related extremism, the report notes that following the *Dobbs* decision, there is an increased threat to anti-abortion organizations and individuals. Indeed, there have been a [rising number](#) of acts of vandalism toward religiously affiliated pregnancy centers in recent months. In August, FBI Director Christopher Wray [told the Senate Judiciary Committee](#) the agency had opened "a number" of investigations into abortion-related violence.



The end of the report includes a list of what the agency has identified as “significant domestic terrorism incidents.” Among the six pages of incidents is the Jan. 6 attack, which the report describes, modestly, as criminal actors “disrupting a joint session of the U.S. Congress in the process of affirming the presidential election results.” The significant incidents section also lists several instances where violent extremists were motivated by “personalized ideology.” One of the more prominent events involving such ideology occurred when an extremist carried out a [mass shooting at spas near Atlanta, Georgia](#), killing eight and injuring many more. Members of law enforcement still face challenges combating the threat from individuals who seek to commit acts of violence merely to watch the world burn. The law enforcement community colloquially calls this problem the “[Joker effect](#).” These attacks are difficult to disrupt because the usual intelligence processes and tactics that can be used to counter other terrorist attacks, like analysts specializing in ideological nuances and catchphrases or talking to known or suspected terrorists, are not applicable. One thing of final note, which may be our own way of burying the lede in this piece, the report has a subtle difference in the section listing how domestic and international investigations are handled. In the 2021 report, the FBI stated a supervisory special agent could close a terrorism investigation with the approval of the special agent in charge. This week’s report added 12 important words to that section. Investigations could be closed but “notice to the responsible HQ unit must be provided before closing.” Meaning: The buck for investigations that go south may stop at the Hoover Building. It’s unclear if this is a formal change or just a reflection of a practice that was already in place in the past but not expressly noted in 2021. If it was a policy change, it’s significant. For all its shortcomings, this year’s assessment provided a window into the rising domestic terrorism threat in America and represented an important improvement from the previous iteration. This is all to say, sometimes congressionally mandated reports are actually worth reading.

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Pakistan: Oldest Prisoner Freed From Guantanamo, Back Home

Source: <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-10-29/pakistan-oldest-prisoner-freed-from-guantanamo-back-home>

Oct 29 — A 75-year-old from Pakistan who was the oldest prisoner at the Guantanamo Bay detention center was released and returned to Pakistan on Saturday, the foreign ministry in Islamabad and the U.S. Defense Department said.

Saifullah Paracha was reunited with his family after more than 17 years in custody in the U.S. base in Cuba, the ministry added.

Paracha had been held on suspicion of ties to al-Qaida since 2003, but was **never charged with a crime**. Last year in May, he was notified that he had been approved for release. He was cleared by the prisoner review board, along with two other men in November 2020.

As is customary, the notification did not provide detailed reasoning for the decision and concluded only that Paracha is “not a continuing threat” to the United States, according to Shelby Sullivan-Bennis, who represented him at his hearing at the time.

The DOD said in its Saturday statement that the U.S. appreciates “the willingness of Pakistan and other partners to support ongoing U.S. efforts focused on responsibly reducing the detainee population and ultimately closing the Guantanamo Bay facility.”

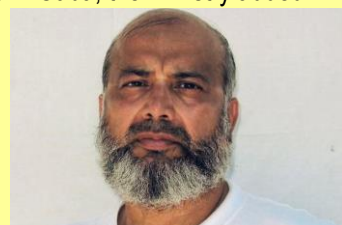
In Pakistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said it had completed an extensive inter-agency process to facilitate Paracha’s repatriation.

“We are glad that a Pakistani citizen detained abroad is finally reunited with his family,” the ministry said.

Paracha, who lived in the United States and owned property in New York City, was a wealthy businessman in Pakistan. Authorities alleged he was an al-Qaida “facilitator” who helped two of the conspirators in the Sept. 11 plot with a financial transaction.

He has maintained that he didn’t know they were al-Qaida and denied any involvement in terrorism.

The U.S. captured Paracha in Thailand in 2003 and held him at Guantanamo since September 2004. Washington has long asserted that it can hold detainees indefinitely without charge under the international laws of war.



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – November 2022

In November 2020, Paracha, who suffers from a number of ailments, including diabetes and a heart condition, made his eighth appearance before the review board, which was established under President Barack Obama to try to prevent the release of prisoners who authorities believed might engage in anti-U.S. hostilities upon their release from Guantanamo.

At the time, his attorney, Sullivan-Bennis, said she was more optimistic about his prospects because of President Joe Biden's election, Paracha's ill health and developments in a legal case involving his son, Uzair Paracha.

The son was convicted in 2005 in federal court in New York of providing support to terrorism, based in part on testimony from the same witnesses held at Guantanamo whom the U.S. relied on to justify holding the father.

In March 2020, after a judge threw out those witness accounts and the U.S. government decided not to seek a new trial, the younger Paracha was released and sent back to Pakistan.

In its statement on the elder Paracha's repatriation, the **DOD said 35 detainees remain at Guantanamo Bay as of Saturday, and that of 20 of them are eligible for transfer.**

Examining the Nexus between Organised Crime and Terrorism and its implications for EU Programming¹

¹By Tuesday Reitano, Deputy Director, Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (Geneva).
Colin Clarke, Associate Fellow, International Center for Counter Terrorism (ICCT - The Hague).
Laura Adal, Senior Research Analyst, Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime.

Thread

AZ @AZgeopolitics

🚨🇺🇸🇩🇪🇳🇱 The weapons supplied to Kiev fall into the hands of criminals in Finland, the criminal police of the country reported.

According to these data, these weapons have already been found in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.

Assault rifles are mentioned 🚨

12:46 PM · Oct 30, 2022 · Twitter Web App

294 Retweets 36 Quote Tweets 834 Likes



Perspectives on Terrorism

Volume XVI, Issue 5 | October 2022

University of Leiden, NL

Source: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism/archives/2022#volume-xvi-issue-5>



Universiteit Leiden

The current issue features five **Articles**. The first two, by Atal Ahmadzai on the one hand and by Dalbir Ahlawat and M. Raymond Izarali on the other hand, discuss the local and regional implications of the Taliban gaining state power in Afghanistan. The third article by Alif Satria and Cameron Sumpter explore



a policy dilemma of Indonesia's counterterrorism strategy. This is followed by an analysis from Raphael Cohen-Almagor on the (ir-)responsibility of social media for spreading terrorist content, exemplified by the role of Google's YouTube. Finally, Jeppe T. Jacobsen offers five reasons why cyberterrorism has not happened – yet.

The current issue also features two **Research Notes**. The first of these, by Matthew DeMichele, Wesley S. McCann, Kathleen Blee and Peter Simi, explores what led nearly 50 people into and out of White Extremism. In the second Research Note, Katalin Pethö-Kiss examines the reasons why five individuals decided to attack places of worship in Europe, concluding that there is no such thing as a 'typical extremist'.

The **Resources** section features, in its CT-Bookshelf 11 short reviews by our book reviews editor, Joshua Sinai. This is followed by a review of David C. Rapoport's *Global Waves of Terrorism* by Alex Schmid. Our information resources editor, Judith Tinnes, offers a new bibliography on the terrorism research literature. Associate Editor Berto Jongman contributes another of his wide-ranging surveys of recent online resources on terrorism and related subjects. And Broderick McDonald provides a list of academic theses (Ph.D. and M.A.) on terrorism in war and terrorist warfare tactics.

In **Announcements**, our new Associate Editor, Méryl Demunyck, presents her first "Conference Calendar".

Finally, the brief **About Perspectives on Terrorism** section lists the people behind the journal and their tasks. The texts of the current issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* have been selected, edited and prepared by James Forest and Alex Schmid, the journal's principal editors, with the help of our Associate Editors. Editorial Assistant Jodi Moore handled proof-reading, while the technical online launch of the October 2022 issue of our journal has been in the hands of our Associate Editor for IT, Audrey J. Vrolijk (ISGA, The Hague Campus of Leiden University).

Resources

[Counter-Terrorism Bookshelf: 11 Books on Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism-Related Subjects](#)

Reviewed by Joshua Sinai

[Book Review: David C. Rapoport. Waves of Global Terrorism. From 1879 to the Present. New York: Columbia University Press, 2022](#)

Reviewed by Alex P. Schmid

[Bibliography: Terrorism Research Literature \(Part 4\)](#)

Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes

[Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects](#)

Compiled and selected by Berto Jongman

[40 Full-Text Academic Theses \(Ph.D. and M.A.\) on Terrorism in War and Terrorist Warfare Tactics, written in English between 2007 and 2022](#)

Compiled and selected by Brody McDonald

Pipe dreams: The Taliban and drugs from the 1990s into its new regime

By Vanda Felbab-Brown

Source: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/pipe-dreams-the-taliban-and-drugs-from-the-1990s-into-its-new-regime/>

Editor's Note: *Vanda Felbab-Brown explains the Taliban's drug policy since the 1990s through the current period, and the ground realities and policy implications of its recent poppy ban. This piece was originally published by [Small Wars Journal](#). The research reported here was funded in part by the Minerva Research Initiative (OUSD(R&E)) and the Army Research Office/Army Research Laboratory via grant #W911-NF-17-1-0569 to George Mason University. Any errors and opinions are not those of the Department of Defense and are attributable solely to the author.*

Sep 15 – Perhaps nowhere in the world has a country and the international community faced an illicit drug economy as deeply entrenched as in Afghanistan. In 2020, opium poppy was cultivated on some 224,000 hectares in Afghanistan, one of the highest levels of cultivation in the country.^[1] In 2017, the drug economy in Afghanistan reached levels even higher—unprecedented anywhere in the world at least since World War



II. Very high levels of opium production, though, had characterized Afghanistan's opium poppy economy since 2002. But neither opium poppy cultivation nor heroin production was only a post-2001 phenomenon in Afghanistan; each was robust and steadily expanding during the Taliban era.^[2] The Taliban's 2000 ban on opium poppy cultivation was an isolated and likely unsustainable policy move by the Islamist regime.

In the post-Taliban era decreases in poppy cultivation and opiate production^[3] that periodically took place over the previous two decades have largely been the result of the saturation of global and local drug markets, poppy crop disease, inauspicious weather such as drought, or temporary coercive measures in certain parts of Afghanistan that could not be sustained economically or politically, and rapidly broke down. Several structural factors determined the shape of the Afghan poppy economy during this period: insecurity, political power arrangements, and a lack of ready economic alternatives.

After toppling the Ashraf Ghani government in August of this year, the Taliban has announced its intention^[4] to rid Afghanistan of drugs. Taliban interlocutors stated that same objective in conversations with me in winter 2019. Yet implementing and maintaining any kind of poppy ban will be wickedly difficult for the Taliban. Even if à la the 1990s, the Taliban seeks to use poppy suppression to obtain international legitimacy (such as with Russia and Iran) and recognition, any lasting suppression would face the same structural and political obstacles that poppy bans and eradication faced in Afghanistan since the mid-1990s. The Taliban regime could ram through temporary poppy bans, but it will struggle to maintain the bans even more than it had to three decades ago. In fact, any effort to maintain them could critically internally destabilize the Taliban. But unlike in the 1990s, it is a new drug world out there—replete with synthetic opioids.



The Taliban and Drugs and Other Trade in the 1990s

In the 1990s, the Taliban did not originally exploit the drug economy out of a need for financial profits, nor did it need the drug profits to expand its military capabilities and intensify the conflict. When the movement first emerged in Kandahar in 1994 and started expanding in southern Afghanistan, its financial resources and operational capacities, such as weapons, came from other sources—namely, external sponsors, such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and from the successful exploitation of the illicit traffic with legal goods with undeclared legal goods under the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA). Moreover, the Taliban's expansion through the country also came mainly prior to its exploitation of the illicit narcotics economy. It was the need to consolidate its political power once its military expansion had taken place that drove the Taliban to embrace the drug economy.

By October 1996 the Taliban fielded at least 25,000 men and was armed with tanks, armored vehicles, helicopters, and fighter aircraft. Through Pakistan's ISI, the Taliban was also able to recruit former Afghan



personnel in Pakistan refugee camps who were veteran pilots, tank drivers, and technicians by offering high salaries paid in US dollars.^[5]

The second source of the Taliban's physical resources was its exploitation of the illicit traffic with legal goods that existed between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Under the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement, negotiated in the 1950s, landlocked Afghanistan secured a deal from Islamabad that allowed goods to pass from the port of Karachi through Pakistan and over the border to Afghanistan duty-free. Yet, the subsequent U-turn scheme that emerged benefited the smugglers above all and worked like this: a buyer in Afghanistan issued a letter of credit to import some goods, say refrigerators, through the port of Karachi. The appliances were then driven through Pakistan into Afghanistan duty-free. The trucks unloaded their cargo on the Afghan side and returned to Pakistan empty. Meanwhile, the tax-free goods were carried back to Pakistan illegally, for example, by camels and donkeys. The goods, which sold for far less than the goods imported into Afghanistan legally, were then distributed via a trucking industry to a large extent controlled by Afghan refugees in Pakistan. According to the World Bank, this illicit traffic amounted to \$2.5 billion in 1997.^[6]

Local warlords charged tolls for the smugglers' use of the roads and passes under their control. The growing chaos of the early 1990s and the increasingly higher and higher tolls and taxes charged by the local warlords severely threatened the interests of the transport mafia. On any route a transport could have been stopped as many as twenty times and forced to pay tolls, and occasionally the local warlords even robbed the transported goods.

Although, purported to be long incensed with the excesses of the predatory warlords on the highways and by their arbitrary taxation and extortion, the Taliban provided protection to the smuggling enterprise. The Taliban set up a one-toll system for trucks entering Afghanistan at Spin Boldak, patrolled the highway against other warlords, and, crucially, declared that the Taliban would not allow goods bound for Afghanistan to be carried out by Pakistani trucks, thus satisfying a key demand of the Afghan transport mafia.^[7] The transport mafia was ecstatic, and the Taliban got paid handsomely by the traffickers. In March 1995, for example, the Taliban reportedly collected 6 million rupees (\$150,000) from transporters in Chaman in a single day and twice that amount next day in Quetta.^[8] In 1997, for example, the Taliban was estimated to have received \$75 million from the illegal smuggling with licit goods.^[9] Apart from facilitating procurement, logistics, and salaries, the money obtained from the illicit traffic also allowed the Taliban to buy off some of its opponents. This bribe approach was, in fact, a key feature of the Taliban's military tactics.^[10]

Compared to the greedy and unpredictable local powerbrokers who had controlled and taxed the trafficking routes prior to the Taliban, the Taliban significantly lowered many transaction costs for the traffickers, preventing constant power shifts and bringing stability to the industry and helping to streamline it.

Seeing drug production as anti-Islamic, the Taliban's original impulse was to prohibit it. When in late 1994 and early 1995 the Taliban moved out of Kandahar west to the Helmand Valley, the main poppy growing region in Afghanistan at the time, it banned the drug trade. In a series of communiqués about the Taliban goals, its leaders made a commitment to end opium poppy cultivation. The emergence of the Taliban on the political and military scene in the poppy growing regions halved the acreage allocated for poppy for the following growing season, a trend that farmers attributed to the fear of reprisals from the Taliban. But wheat prices were also booming that year and there was a significant carry-over of raw opium from the bumper opium harvest in 1994.^[11] In fact, both the United Nations and the United States were hopeful that should the Taliban succeed in taking over the country, it would stem Afghanistan's opium and heroin production.^[12] The Taliban also cracked down harshly on hashish addicts, imprisoning them, beating them, and submerging them in cold water for several hours at a time.^[13]

But the Taliban's prohibition did not last. By 1996, the Taliban adopted a *laissez-faire* approach to drug cultivation, that progressively evolved into taxing the farmers as well as providing security for and taxing the traffickers. The new edicts the Taliban issued now read: "The cultivation of, and trading in *chers*(cannabis, used for hashish) is forbidden absolutely. The consumption of opiates is forbidden, as is the manufacture of heroin, but the production and trading in opium is not forbidden."^[14] In practice, however, heroin labs or trade were not dismantled. The 10% *zakat* on opium, formerly paid to the village mullahs, was now directed to the Taliban's treasury, earning an estimated \$9 million in 1996-7, from the south's regular output of 1,500 tons of opium.^[15] A 10% *zakat* was also levied on the traffickers. As the 1990s progressed, these taxes were increased to 20%, bringing in between \$45 million to \$200 million a year.^[16] By 1999, the Taliban also taxed heroin labs.^[17] The Taliban also sought to expand and regulate the narcotics economy by providing official government licenses for opium cultivation, by setting up model farms teaching the farmers how to grow poppy more efficiently, and by distributing fertilizers for the cultivation of poppy.^[18]

Thus, poppy cultivation continued increasing throughout the 1990s. In 1980, the total production of opium in Afghanistan consisted of 200 metric tons. By 1990, it had climbed to 1,600 metric tons in 1990, by 1994 to 3,400 metric tons in 1994 and 4,600 in 1999.

The illicit narcotics industry boosted the Taliban's legitimacy because it provided a reliable source of livelihood to a vast segment of the population. Not only was this livelihood fairly lucrative, it was frequently the only source of livelihood available to the population in an otherwise devastated economy.^[19] Ruined by the war against the USSR in the 1980s, Afghanistan's economy continued being in a critical condition



throughout the 1990s. All economic activity, short of subsistence production and the microeconomic spillover from illicit activities came to a halt.

Moreover, as in the case of illicit smuggling of legal goods, the illicit narcotics economy also allowed other forms of microeconomic activity to develop in areas where there was previously only limited agricultural production. Services, such as rest stops, teashops, and fuel stations sprung up in connection with the smuggling of narcotics.^[20] Many people thus developed a stake in the illicit narcotics economy: the traders, the smugglers, the shopkeepers, and the local warlords and religious elites whom the Taliban tolerated and allowed to cut in on the narcotics economy. But unlike the smuggling of legal goods under ATTA, the illicit narcotics economy, being highly labor intensive, also provided a reliable, and frequently sole source of livelihood to the vast segments of the rural population. Farmers themselves emphasized the Taliban's sponsorship of the illicit economy as a crucial source of the movement's political power. Ahmed Rashid's 1997 interview with Wali Jan, an elderly farmer near Kandahar, illustrates the reaction of the peasants: "We cannot be more grateful to the Taliban. The Taliban have brought us security so we can grow our poppy in peace. I need to grow poppy crop to support my 14 family members."^[21] He earned around \$1,300 a year, a small fortune by the standards of Afghan farmers.

The Taliban's statements themselves, even if only partially genuine, also attest to the political salience of the illicit narcotics economy and to the social (and political) costs the movement associated with crop eradication. In 1997, for example, Abdul Rashid, the head of the Taliban's anti-drug control force in Kandahar, explained: "We let people cultivate poppies because farmers get good prices. We cannot push the people to grow wheat as there would be an uprising against the Taliban if we forced them to stop poppy cultivation. So we grow opium and get our wheat from Pakistan."^[22] Similarly, elsewhere, the director maintained:^[23]

Yet in late 1999, the Taliban did issue a ban on poppy cultivation that resulted in the largest reduction of opium poppy cultivation in a country in any single year. Cultivation fell from an estimated 82, 172 hectares in 2000 to less than 8,000 in 2001. Globally, this reduction contributed to a 75% fall in the global supply of heroin for that year.^[24]

The ban severely affected the prospects for economic survival for vast segments of Afghanistan's rural population. In the words of one DEA official, the ban was "bringing their country—or certain regions of their country—to economic ruin."^[25] Absence of viable alternative means of subsistence and income drove the majority of landowners and sharecroppers heavily into debt, with many sharecroppers ending up essentially in bonded labor. Unable to repay their debts, others were driven to borrow even further or abscond into Pakistan.

While banning opium cultivation in 2000, the Taliban did not ban or otherwise interfere with the sale and trafficking of opium and poppy during that period. In choosing to curb the production, the Taliban risked its domestic political capital, based crucially on its sponsorship of the poppy economy, in the hope of obtaining international legitimacy. Most of the international community was treating the Taliban regime as a pariah—with Russia, China, Iran, and Iran actively supporting the Taliban's weakening armed opponent, the Northern Alliance. By 2000, only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates recognized the Taliban regime.

Through the ban, the Taliban might have also sought to boost the price of opium and consolidate its control over the heroin trade. As cultivation exploded during the 1990s, the farmgate prices for opium plummeted. The 2000 ban by the Taliban and the resulting supply contraction of 75% did in fact substantially increase prices for opium. The total farmgate value of opium went from \$56 million in 2001 to \$1,200 million in 2002.^[26]

The political costs to the Taliban, however, were substantial.

Moreover, the ban was not sustainable. By the summer of 2001, with the ban still in place, some farmers started seeding poppy once again.^[27] The Taliban rescinded the ban on poppy cultivation in September 2001. Some analysts have attempted to explain the reversal of the Taliban's policy by arguing that the Taliban needed greater financial resources in order to fight against the United States after 9-11.^[28] For several reasons, however, this explanation is likely not accurate. First, as already mentioned, the temporary ban on poppy cultivation vastly increased the price of heroin, thus significantly increasing the Taliban's financial profits. Moreover, the Taliban's stockpile and the stockpile of Afghanistan's major traffickers in 2001 were believed to amount to 3,000 tons.^[29]

The Taliban's sensitivity to the political costs associated with eradication, especially in anticipation of the upcoming war with the United States, is much more likely what drove the Taliban's decision. In fact, in 2002, after the United States toppled the Taliban regime and Hamid Karzai became the new president, farmers in southern Afghanistan complained that Karzai had promised to let them grow poppy in exchange for their help in toppling the Taliban regime, and that they now felt betrayed.^[30]

In short, the popular myth that if the Taliban remained in power the drug economy would not have emerged and expanded in Afghanistan is incorrect. The domestic economic conditions in Afghanistan—grinding poverty and underdevelopment—resulted in the drug economy spreading its roots deeply throughout Afghanistan prior to the Taliban's takeover of the country, and the Taliban's 1990s policies strengthened this trend. The political costs of destroying the sole source of livelihood for large segments of the population were too great even for the Taliban to ignore, and



it became a willing sponsor of the drug economy. Like the mujahadeen warlords before and after its reign, the Taliban never succeeded in kicking Afghanistan's opium habit, it became hooked on it.

The Drug Trade and Counternarcotics Policies in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2021

Over the past 20 years, opium poppy cultivation continued to underlie much of Afghanistan's economic and political life throughout the country. Poppy is deeply entwined in the socio-economic fabric of the country, and hence, inescapably, in its political arrangements and power relations.

The Taliban has been profiting from the drug trade, as were various criminal gangs (sometimes connected to the government), the Afghan police, various militias, tribal elites, and many ex-warlords-cum-government officials at various levels of the Afghan government. Sometimes the involved individuals and groups, including of those nominally on the opposite sides of the violent conflict, strongly overlap, and multiple intersections and connections exist among them. During the past 20 years, police units, often highly abusive and criminalized, taxed the drug economy. Local commanders and powerbrokers equally taxed it as well as owned or sponsored poppy fields. They also rented land to poppy farmers and provided microcredit for cultivation. Border officials, such as at Kabul airport or at the Spin Boldak or Zaranj crossings, let trafficking pass for a cut of drug profits. With its widespread territorial influence and reach throughout the country, the Taliban has taxed cultivation, processing, and smuggling of drugs; and units and members of the Taliban have been deeply involved in all these elements. In various years, the Taliban allowed its fighters to disengage from fighting in order to collect the drug harvest. The Taliban also collects taxes from independent drug traders and various criminal groups, while suppressing others.

Over the past twenty years, the Taliban has been able to obtain tens to hundreds of millions of dollars from the Afghan poppy economy per year. 2020 upper-range estimates put that number at \$416 million.^[31]

However, like the vast majority of militant groups, the Taliban has simply taxed any kind of economic activity in areas where it operated—from legal trade in goods (hundreds of millions annually) to illegal mining (\$464 million in 2020),^[32] sheep herds (not profitable effectively taxing them is an expression of effective authority), logging, NATO trucks, and wildlife contraband and donations from abroad (\$240 million).^[33] In 2020, this combined income was estimated to amount to as much as \$1.6 billion.^[34] Similarly, at the peak of NATO's surge^[35] in Afghanistan in 2011 (when 150,000 NATO soldiers were fighting the Taliban), the Taliban's "taxes" on truckers supplying NATO^[36] likely surpassed the Taliban's income from drugs.^[37]

In contrast, the attitude of the Islamic State in Khorasan toward the drug economy has been varied. Its western branch in Herat, now largely moribund, was deeply implicated in the drug trade. Its eastern branch in Nangarhar, surprisingly, sought to suppress opium poppy cultivation there, despite the highly negative economic impact on local populations.^[38]

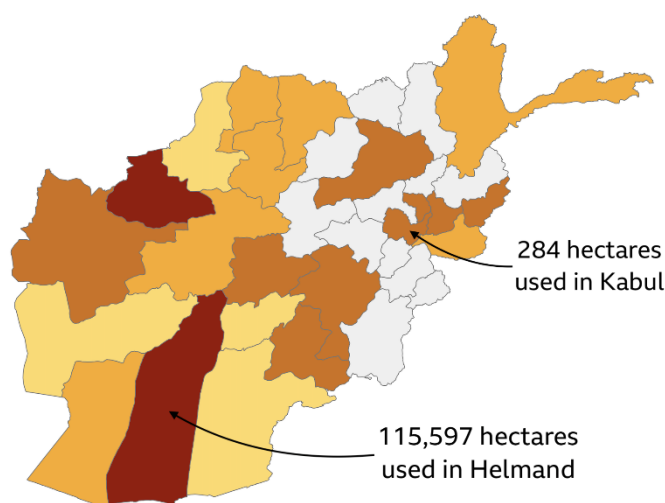
Unfortunately, many of the counternarcotics policies adopted during most of the 2000s not only failed to reduce the size and scope of the illicit economy in Afghanistan, but also had serious counterproductive effects on the other objectives of peace, state-building, and economic reconstruction.

The initial objective of the US intervention in 2001 was to degrade al Qaeda capabilities and institute a regime change in Afghanistan. Dealing with the illicit economy was not considered to be integral with the military objectives. Thus until 2003, US counternarcotics policy in Afghanistan was essentially *laissez-faire*. The US military understood that it would not be able to obtain intelligence on the Taliban and al Qaeda if it tried to eradicate poppy. Meanwhile, it relied on key warlords who were often deeply involved in the drug economy since the 1980s, not simply to provide intelligence on the Taliban, but also to carry out direct military operations against the Taliban and al Qaeda.^[39]

Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan

Hectares used by province, 2020

- Fewer than 1,000
- 1,001-10,000
- 10,001-20,000
- More than 20,000
- Poppy free



Source: UNODC

BBC



Under a concept of “lead nations” for the international assistance mission in Afghanistan, with a specific country being responsible for reconstruction in a specific sector, Britain was tasked in 2002 with counternarcotics. Sensitive to the political problems of eliminating the rural population’s livelihood, Britain at first deployed a **compensated eradication** program. Thus, during the 2002-03 poppy growing season, Britain promised to pay \$350 to the farmers for each *jerib* (unit of area) of poppy they themselves eradicated, with \$71.75 million committed for the program.^[40] But from the outset, the policy was plagued by numerous problems, including corruption and moral hazard, and thus the policy was aborted in less than a year.^[41]

By 2004, increased **interdiction** was undertaken instead. Its goal was to target large traffickers and processing laboratories. Immediately, however, the effort was manipulated by local Afghan strongmen to eliminate drug competition and ethnic, tribal, and other political rivals. Instead of targeting top echelons of the drug economy, many of whom had considerable political clout, interdiction operations were largely conducted against small vulnerable traders who could neither sufficiently bribe nor adequately intimidate the interdiction teams and their supervisors within the Afghan government. The result was a significant vertical integration of the drug industry in Afghanistan.^[42]

The other—again undesirable—effect of how interdiction was carried out was that it allowed the Taliban to integrate itself back into the Afghan drug trade. Having recouped in Pakistan, the Taliban was once again needed to provide protection to traffickers targeted by interdiction.^[43]

Alarmed by the spread of opium poppy cultivation, some public officials in the United States in 2004 and 2005 also started calling for a strong poppy eradication campaign, including aerial spraying.^[44] Thus, between 2004 and 2009, **manual eradication** was carried out by central Afghan units trained by Dyncorp as well as by regional governors and their forces. Immediately, the scheme generated violent strikes and social protests against it. Another wave of eradication took place in 2005 when reduction in poppy cultivation was achieved. Most of the reduction was due to cultivation suppression in Nangarhar province where, through promises of alternative development and threats of imprisonment, production was slashed by 90 percent.^[45]

However, alternative livelihoods never materialized for many. The Cash-for-Work programs reached only a small percentage of the population, mainly those living close to cities. The overall pauperization of the population there was devastating.^[46] Unable to repay debts, many farmers were forced to sell their daughters as young as three years old as brides, or abscond to Pakistan. In Pakistan, the refugees frequently have ended up in the radical Deobandi madrasas and have begun refilling the ranks of the Taliban. Apart from incorporating the displaced farmers into their ranks, the Taliban also began to protect the opium fields of the farmers, in addition to protecting the drug traffic. In fact, the antagonized poppy farmers came to constitute a strong and key base of support for the Taliban, denying intelligence to ISAF and providing it to the Taliban.^[47] Just like interdiction, eradication has been plagued by massive corruption problems, with powerful elites able to bribe or coerce their way out of having their opium poppy fields destroyed or to direct eradication against their political opponents, with the poorest farmers, most vulnerable to Taliban’s mobilization, bearing the brunt of eradication.^[48]

Moreover, the reductions in opium poppy cultivation due to eradication were not sustained.

To recap, eradication and opium poppy bans had the following effects:

- First, they did not bankrupt the Taliban. In fact, the Taliban reconstituted itself in Pakistan between 2002 and 2004 without access to large profits from drugs, rebuilding its material base largely from donations from Pakistan and the Middle East and from profits from another illicit economy, the illegal traffic with licit goods between Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- Second, eradication strengthened the Taliban physically by driving economic refugees into its hands.
- Third, eradication alienated the local population from the national government as well as from local tribal elites who agreed to eradication, thus creating a key opening for Taliban mobilization.^[49]
- Fourth, and crucially, eradication critically undermined the motivation of the local population to provide intelligence on the Taliban to the counterinsurgents while it motivated the population to provide intelligence to the Taliban.
- Fifth, the local eradicators themselves were in the position to best profit from counternarcotics policies, being able to eliminate competition – business and political alike – and alter market concentration and prices at least in the short term within their region of operations.

In a courageous break with a previous counterproductive policy, the US administration of President Barack Obama wisely decided in 2009 to scale back poppy eradication in Afghanistan, but it struggled to implement its new strategy effectively.

The interdiction policy adopted in 2008 by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan (ISAF) and then Resolute Support (RS) neither bankrupted and weakened the Taliban, nor systematically altered the structural drivers or political dynamics of the poppy economy and the strength of organized crime, and corruption in the region. Between 2016 and 2020, the United States dedicated significant assets to aerial bombing of presumed Taliban drug depots, but this effort neither weakened the Taliban’s operational structures nor significantly affected^[50] its financial inflows.



The US-Taliban Doha deal of February 2020 precludes the United States from mounting such aerial bombing of opium/ heroin and ephedra/ ephedrine depots, labs, and transportation trucks. Rural development policies similarly failed to address the structural drivers of poppy cultivation and many were not sustainable. Most have withered with the significant intensification of insecurity in the country and the Taliban's ever expanding territorial influence.

Indeed, no supply side suppression measures—whether eradication, interdiction, or alternative livelihoods—have ever been effective and lasting anywhere in the world in the context of an on-going war. Peace and security and extensive government presence are inescapable preconditions for successful supply reduction measures.^[51]

Under conditions of intense and growing insecurity, demand reduction measures in Afghanistan, such as treatment and prevention, have for years been the most promising and highly beneficial venue for drug policy interventions. Yet they were never adequately funded or prioritized either by international donors or the Afghan government.

The Taliban's Poppy-Ban Promise and Ground Realities

Delivering on its stated promise to rid Afghanistan of poppy will be extremely difficult for the Taliban.

Already, the Taliban regime faces the loss of many billions dollars that had been allocated to Afghanistan—from the IMF, the World Bank, the United States, and the European Union; and the country's central bank reserves are frozen in the United States.

The country's illegal and informal economies can only offset a part of those losses. The Taliban cannot simply double its poppy economy—the global market being already saturated with opioids, including synthetic ones.^[52] Banning poppy cultivation, to deliver on its promise^[53] to make Afghanistan drug free, would be enormously socially explosive. Maintaining any such ban would require extensive and lasting repression.

Beyond immiserating already desperately poor people hit by COVID-19, drought, and large economic contractions in a country where 90 percent of people live in poverty and at least 12 million in condition of malnutrition, such a ban would also eliminate income and employment for its middle-layer commanders and rank-and-file fighters.

Growing unhappiness of the Taliban's powerful middle-layer commanders and their networks would pose a major threat to the Taliban regime's survival.

The Taliban's success as an insurgency reflected the fact that despite consistent NATO efforts to set off internal fragmentation the group remained cohesive. But the challenge of maintaining cohesiveness across its many different groups and factions having varied ideological intensity and materials interests is very different in war than it is now that the Taliban is in power. The various factions have highly disparate views about how the new regime should rule across just about all dimensions of governance: from inclusiveness, to dealing with foreign fighters, to the economy, to external relations. Many of the middle-level battlefield commanders—younger, more plugged into global jihadi networks, and without the same personal experience of the Taliban mismanaging its 1990s rule—are more hardline than some older top Taliban leaders and shadow governors.

To survive as a regime, the Taliban will not only need to bridge and manage their different views on ruling but it will also have to assure that key commanders and their rank-and-file soldiers retain enough income not to be tempted to defect.

A poppy ban would significantly constrain the pool of resources to keep the various Taliban elements happy.

Indeed, a key to the Taliban's successful blitzkrieg this summer was its bargaining with and promising to local and national level powerbrokers and militias that the Taliban would allow them to maintain some rents from some local economies, such as mining in Badakhshan and logging in Kunar and the drug trade across the country.

It yet remains to be seen whether the Taliban top or local leadership will get greedy and renege on those promises, seeking instead to displace non-Taliban political and criminal structures from the drug trade and other local economies. A Taliban move to exclude others from local rents would be a replay of the behavior of anti-Taliban warlords after 2001, but it would once again generate new sources of frictions amidst a tanking Afghan economy and potential bases of armed opposition.

Even without a ban, the Taliban will struggle to find jobs for the many now unemployed soldiers of the Afghan security forces whom the United States paid. Even if half of the nominal force were ghost soldiers or are dead, and say only 150,000 soldiers actually fought, they are now a loose force without income for themselves and their families. They melted before the Taliban, but in time may resort to banditry or be tempted to join old or new militias, even if only to get economic rents.

And preserving the Taliban's income from trade with Iran, China, Central Asia, and Pakistan, which has brought the Taliban hundreds of millions^[54] in informal taxes, depends on^[55] whether the Taliban can assure Iran's, Russia's, and China's principal counterterrorism interests and prevent leakage of terrorism to those countries and Central Asia. Those interests trump for those countries any economic opportunities Afghanistan offers. And with the exception of China and the Gulf countries, their aid pockets are shallow.



Policy Implications

What those complexities likely means is that the Taliban will likely repeat some of the script of its 1990s policy playbook. It is likely to bargain with the international community that it will implement a comprehensive poppy ban *after or in conjunction* with the international community's recognition of the Taliban regime and after the international community delivers robust alternative livelihoods assistance to Afghanistan. Until then, the Taliban will likely argue it cannot starve the Afghan people by implementing a ban.

And if and when the Taliban decides to risk the political—and potentially armed—backlash to enforcing a ban, it will struggle to sustain it. Even if the Taliban were able to maintain adequate security, and international donors did agree to deliver alternative livelihoods aid, it would take decades of extremely auspicious policies and circumstances for rural development to effectively compensate for poppy suppression.

Moreover, unlike in Myanmar where the various ethno-nationalist groups compensated income losses due to poppy eradication by expanding methamphetamine^[56] production, the Taliban cannot easily do so. The existing meth production^[57] in Afghanistan is nowhere as established as the one in Myanmar which dominates East Asia and Australian markets, while Europe is supplied from United States out of robust production in Mexico. The Taliban would struggle to compete with the East Asian, Mexican, and European producers. The only places where a market for Afghan meth could expand significantly are Africa and the Middle East where meth consumption is still relatively small. But a lot of other drugs, such as tramadol and captagon, dominate in those areas. Moreover, if meth use did start taking off there Chinese and Myanmar-based meth producers could also seek to expand their operations there and thus compete with either meth—or heroin—produced in Afghanistan.

And the 21st drug century is fundamentally different from the 1990s: it abounds with cheap and potent synthetic opioids.^[58] So, if the Taliban did enforce a ban in Afghanistan for a year or two, it could find that its lucrative European drug markets has been snatched from underneath it by Chinese and Indian fentanyl producers. Thus, even after it rescinded a ban, it may not be able to recover its financial losses or restore employment to oppressed and impoverished Afghans, restive militias and powerbrokers, and its own disaffected factions.

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EDITOR'S COMMENT: My opinion is that if US troops were willing to destroy ALL the poppy fields in Afghanistan, they had the technology and the means to do that. But the profit was huge for both locals and invaders and the story goes on ...

The Repatriation of Five Women and Eleven Children from Syria: A Turning Point in the Netherlands?



By Tanya Mehra LL.M

Source: <https://icct.nl/publication/repatriation-women-children-netherlands/>

On [4 February 2022](#), the Netherlands repatriated five women and their eleven children from the al-Hol camp in North-eastern Syria to ensure the women would be brought to justice. This decision does not come as a surprise because the Netherlands already repatriated another woman, Ilham B., with her three children in [June 2021](#), after a Dutch court indicated they would terminate criminal proceedings against her due to her absence.

Nearly 300 persons with jihadi intentions have travelled to Syria and Iraq from the Netherlands, one-third of which are women. The vast majority of these persons have joined the Islamic State (ISIS). So far, 65 adults and 30 children have returned to the Netherlands, mainly on their own in 2013 and 2014. Additionally, 20 adults, as well as 45 children, have returned to a third country, for example that of the parents' foreign nationality and could potentially return or be extradited to the Netherlands.

This perspective explains briefly why the five women and their children are returning to the Netherlands, how the relevant Dutch legal proceedings work, and what will happen to these women and their children upon return to Dutch soil. Finally, the perspective will reflect on whether more repatriations can be expected, as well as whether the approach to repatriation in the Netherlands is changing.

Proceedings before the Dutch courts

Although it is not yet officially confirmed, it is most likely that Amber K. (two children), Hafida H. (three children), Nawal H. (four children), Meryem S. (two children) and Naima, (mother of Meryem S.) are the



females that have been repatriated, as these women were mentioned in the court ruling which would terminate their criminal proceedings. Three of the women are included in the [National Sanction List on Terrorism](#), and their financial assets are frozen as a result.

To understand why the current women are being repatriated, it is important to look at the case of Ilham B. in more detail. In March 2016, Dutch Prosecutors issued an (international) arrest warrant against Ilham B. who was, at that time, in the Ain Issa camp in Northeastern Syria. In 2018, the court in Rotterdam [decided](#) to stay the proceedings – thus postponing – indefinitely and issued a warrant to apprehend and extradite her. The decision constitutes an obligation on the Dutch Government to make genuine efforts to bring the suspect to the Netherlands, by requiring the Ministry of Justice to engage with the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) and the Dutch consulate in Erbil, Iraq, to facilitate the arrest and extradition of the accused to the Netherlands where she could stand trial.

Ilham B., and the five women are being tried in absentia, which is permitted in the Netherlands under certain conditions, such as informing the accused when the trial will be held and right to be represented at trial by a [defense counsel](#).

A cornerstone of the right to a fair trial is the right to be present and to be able to defend oneself in person, as enshrined in [article 14\(3\)\(d\) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#). In the Netherlands, the right to be present at trial is guaranteed in [article 278 section 3 of the Criminal Procedure Code](#). By being present at court, the accused is generally in a [better position](#) to effectively defend him- or herself, examine the witnesses, and to have the free assistance of an interpreter, if needed.

Trials in absentia are problematic from a rule of law perspective, but they are not prohibited and are very common amongst the members of the Council of Europe according to a [survey](#) conducted by the European Committee on Crime Problems of the Council of Europe. Other concerns with trials in absentia relate to legal presentation and the right of retrial and/or right to appeal. Considering the impact such trials have on the right to be present and defend oneself, these should only be permitted in exceptional cases.

If a trial is to be pursued in absentia however, the prosecutor has a formal duty to notify the suspect of the start of the trial. The court will check whether this duty has been observed at the start of proceedings. This notification traditionally means sending a letter to the last known address in the Netherlands, but notification can also take place through posting a message on social media, for example Facebook or Twitter. The notification can trigger the accused to avail his or her right to be present at trial, in which case the court will [stay the proceedings](#) to allow the accused to attend the proceedings. The court may also come to the conclusion that the presence of the accused is required in the interest of justice, at which point the court could choose to summon the accused.

A [few MPs](#) in the Netherlands have suggested to specifically allow the women in the camps to attend their trial through video conferencing. According to [article 131a of the Criminal Procedure Code](#), hearing and questioning of witnesses, including suspects, is permitted through video conferencing. Whilst videoconferencing is permitted, however, the suspect needs to be consulted. The major benefit of being present in court and allowing the accused to effectively defend him- or herself and communicate confidentially with counsel should be taken into account when considering video conferencing. Some [other relevant factors](#) include the quality of the equipment, and the need of a mutual legal assistance agreement when the accused is abroad. The legal and logistical complications are even more amplified in the context of the women in the al-Hol camp, according to the [former Minister of Justice and Security](#). However, he also indicated that it is ultimately up to the court to determine whether video conferencing would be acceptable in this specific situation. The AANES is not recognised as a state, and thus is not capable of concluding an international agreement. Further, supplying the camps with specialised video equipment could pose a security risk.

The principle of legal certainty in the context of proceedings, means that an accused is entitled to have clarity on whether a prosecution will be pursued. The principle also ensures a certain stability in legal proceedings and contributes to the performative function of justice. In the Netherlands, under [article 29f of the Criminal Procedure Code](#), the accused can request that the court terminate criminal proceedings. Such a termination can only be [considered](#) when a prosecution has actually been initiated, for example when an arrest warrant has been issued and before the proceedings have commenced in court. The right to have a decision by the court within a reasonable time is not considered to be a decisive factor to terminate a case, but proceedings could be terminated if none, or only minimal steps have been taken to pursue the criminal proceedings.

Once proceedings are terminated in the Netherlands, the accused is [notified](#) that the prosecution will no longer be pursued. This means that the prosecutor could [not try](#) the person for the same offences again in accordance with the *ne bis in idem* principle. In the Netherlands this also [applies](#) when prosecution is no longer pursued or terminated. Only if new facts come to light after the decision to terminate a case, may the person be prosecuted for the same offences. Furthermore, victims can, as a directly interested party, file a [written complaint](#) with the Court of Appeal against a terminated prosecution, but this has not yet happened. Another consequence of terminating the proceedings is that it would no longer be possible to impose supervision under the [Long-Term Supervision Act](#). Under this Act and as part of prison sentence, a court could impose measures with the aim to change behaviour or limit a person's freedom, for example by imposing a duty to report to the police daily. In [France](#), a similar procedure is available for the suspect to request the court



to terminate the proceedings, and would bar the prosecutor from issuing a charge for the same offences. Unlike in [Belgium](#), where [several women](#) already have been convicted in absentia, the accused can file an appeal against the verdict, in which case a retrial will take place before the same court. In the [United Kingdom](#), like in other common law countries, both the prosecutor and the accused can seek for a *nolle prosequi*, a declaration of unwillingness, to pursue continued prosecution. This would lead to an adjournment of the case but not an acquittal, and would not bar prosecutorial proceedings in the future. Considering the legal implications of a termination of a case, the closing of a case should be considered with great caution.

Back to Ilham B. In [February 2020](#) the court in Rotterdam came to the conclusion that staying the proceedings was no longer viable. The decision was made that proceedings would be terminated in three months based on the prolonged duration of the proceedings and lack of concrete progress in returning the suspect to the Netherlands to stand trial. Despite the efforts taken by the Prosecutor, the court concluded that the Minister of Justice and Security clearly had an interest to protect national security and also ensure accountability, but not necessarily before a national court. However, three months later, in [June 2020](#), the court has been informed that the [Minister of Justice and Security](#) now does wish to pursue prosecution in a Dutch court, and therefore decided to stay the proceedings for six months to allow the authorities to take concrete steps to repatriate Ilham B. This led to repatriation of Ilham B. in the summer of 2021.

A few months later, on [11 October 2021](#), the court in Rotterdam concluded that it would no longer stay the proceedings of five other women who are in the camps in North-eastern Syria. The reason for this is that the court expected that the women would be repatriated to the Netherlands to stand trial, or alternatively that the government would give a concrete commitment as to when repatriation will be possible. The Netherlands repatriated the five women and eleven children in the first week of February 2022.

What will happen to the women and their children?

Despite the fact that this may only be the second time that the Netherlands has actively repatriated women and children from Syria, this does not mean that the relevant authorities are [not prepared](#) for their arrival. For each of the known women and their children in the camps a detailed plan is in place. Upon arrival the mothers and children will be separated and the mothers will be detained and transferred to the terrorism detention facility for women in Zwolle, NL. The municipality where the child will live/originates from takes the lead in developing an individual return plan with the support of the *Raad voor de Kinderbescherming* (RvdK, Dutch Child Protection Board) and *Jeugdbescherming* (Youth Care). The plan is subsequently also shared with the local youth care professionals. Each return plan consists of four pillars: custody, security risk, care, and education.

Considering the prolonged duration of the children's stay in the camps, it is now common practice in nearly all cases that children are placed in a specialised youth care facility for a 3-month term of observation. During this period, an assessment will be made of the needs of the child including their risks and protective factors. This is also the time when the potential school is informed.

For each child returnee, regardless of their age, the RvdK requests to the juvenile court that they be placed under supervision pursuant to [Section 1:255 of the Dutch Civil Code](#) and for an authorisation for custodial placement pursuant to [Section 1:265b of the Dutch Civil Code](#). The reason for custodial placement is that upon arrival, the parent will be arrested and the child will need to be placed in custody. When doing so, the child can be placed either with their extended family, a foster family, or in a certified institution. If the child is placed with a foster family, the family needs to be provided with sufficient guidance on how to recognise traumas of the child and monitor signs that are detrimental to the development of the child. If it is in the best interest of the child, supervised visits between biological parent and child will be possible, irrespective of whether the child has been placed under supervision or placed in custody. Prior to the return of all child returnees, all the extended families are screened by the RvdK to assess their suitability. Factors that are taken into consideration include pedagogical safe environment, age of the child and the extended family members, violent extremist ideologies among the extended family members, ability to deal with the media, and trust in the care and support institutions. According to the RvdK, a vast majority of the families of the 135 children were considered suitable.

A turning point in policy?

Approximately [120 adults and 200 children](#) who either have at least one parent with Dutch nationality, or parents who have lived for a considerable time in the Netherlands, are still detained in Syria. Out of those still in Syria, 40 adults and 70 children are being held in camps held by the AANES, 25 adults and 70 children are believed to be with terrorist groups in North-western Syria, 35 adults and 30 children are elsewhere in Syria. At present, an additional 25 children have lost their lives due to security risks, illness and lack of medical care. The Netherlands is not the only country that does not actively repatriate their nationals from Syria and Iraq. Several European countries have been [challenged](#) in court to repatriate the women and their children for some time now. The European Court on Human Rights is expected to rule in the cases of *H.F. and M.F. v. France* and *J.D. and A.D. v. France* which will have an impact on the policy of European countries towards the repatriation of their nationals held in camps in North-eastern Syria. However, countries like [Kosovo](#),



[Kazakhstan](#) and [Russia](#) have been actively repatriating women and children affiliated with IS back home. More recently other European countries have (implicitly) changed their policy towards repatriation of all or some of the women and children in the camps in North-eastern Syria. In December 2019, [Finland](#) publicly announced that they would repatriate all the Finnish women and children from the camps in Syria. Also, in [Belgium](#), the policy towards the repatriation of its children specifically changed in early 2021 with the government deciding that all children below 12 years old should be repatriated. In [May 2019](#), a grandfather in Sweden managed to get the support from the Swedish authorities to repatriate seven of his grandchildren. As of autumn 2021, Sweden has been actively repatriating three families at a time from North-eastern Syria. So far eight women and eighteen children have been repatriated to [Sweden](#) by January 2022. Other countries that are stepping up their efforts in repatriation include [Denmark and Germany](#) bringing back together 48 mothers and children. On 15 December 2021, a coalition agreement was presented to the Dutch Parliament, which serves as a roadmap for the new government. In [this agreement](#) the approach regarding individuals who travelled to the conflict zone remains unchanged. This means that the Netherlands will only consider repatriation on a case-by-case basis. Yet, during the weekly briefing by the Prime Minister, Mark Rutte for the first time [stated](#) that his personal views are changing. He felt that if the women would not be prosecuted and eventually return, they would pose a bigger risk to society than repatriating them to the Netherlands. Further, in the Netherlands like many other civil law countries there is no formal [legal precedent](#), therefore courts are not bound by the decisions of previous courts. This does not mean that a judge would not take the ruling of a judge in a similar case into consideration. The situation in the Netherlands is quite unique, where a termination of legal proceedings is final and a person cannot be prosecuted again for the same offences. So far at least [eight women](#) have requested the court to terminate the proceedings, it is very likely the court will reach a similar decision as in the current case of the five women and of Ilham B.

As has been repeatedly stated [before](#), repatriation of the women and children is from a moral, legal and security perspective, the only way forward. Considering the [attempted prison escape](#) by ISIS in January 2022 and deteriorating situation in the camps and the fact that already fifteen Dutch women have [escaped](#), the need to repatriate is only becoming more urgent. As many more women have requested their cases to be closed, it is time to change the policy in the Netherlands regarding repatriation, for the inevitable alternative is that the courts will decide to terminate their criminal proceedings. The relevant authorities in the Netherlands, ranging from the Prosecutor's Office to the Council of Child Protection Board, intelligence services to the municipalities, are well prepared to deal with the women and children. The Netherlands should have faith in the relevant authorities to handle the prosecutions, where appropriate, and rehabilitation and reintegration of these women and their children back into society.

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Netherlands to repatriate 40 women and children from Syria

Source: <https://www.dw.com/en/netherlands-to-repatriate-40-women-and-children-from-syria-camps/a-63615355>

Nov 01 – The Netherlands is set to repatriate its largest ever group from Kurdish camps in Syria. The dozen women will be arrested on suspicion of joining jihadi groups, while their children are to be placed in state care. The Dutch government on Tuesday said it would repatriate 12 women and their children from Kurdish-run detention camps in northern Syria. The group of 40 people is the largest ever to be repatriated by the Netherlands and follows a May ruling by a Dutch court ordering that the women be brought back. Thousands of extremists from Europe and other parts of the West joined the so-called ["Islamic State" \(IS\) militant group as fighters](#). They often took wives and children to live in the self-declared "caliphate" in territory conquered in Iraq and Syria.

Brussels Terror Attack Victim Euthanized at Age 23

Source: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/982984>

Oct 25 – Performing euthanasia for "mental suffering that cannot be alleviated" is still considered an extraordinary measure. Indeed, fewer than 2% of the requests for euthanasia fall within that category, and few such requests are made by young patients.

There is no doubt that people will talk about the case of [Shanti De Corte](#) not only because of the reason stated in her euthanasia request but also because someone so young was able to meet the strict conditions



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required for the law to be applicable. It's something that Belgian broadcaster RTBF brought up during a recent episode of #Investigation, which reported on the aftermath of the 2016 Brussels attacks.



On May 7, surrounded by her family, Shanti was euthanized. She was 23 years old. Six years earlier, on March 22, 2016, Shanti had been at Brussels Airport when terrorists set off bombs. She was in the departures area with 90 other students from Sint-Rita Campus College, located in the northern town of Kontich. Shanti was only a few meters away from the blast. Although she was not physically injured, the Flemish teen was traumatized by the attack. This was confirmed by the school psychologist who treated the students. "There were some students who reacted worse than others to these traumatic events. And having had two discussions with Shanti, I can tell you that she was one of these students who were more sensitive to the effects. To me, it's quite clear. Even before the attacks, she'd experienced serious psychological issues. Therefore, I referred her for psychiatric care."



Eleven Antidepressants Daily

A few weeks after that March day, Shanti was admitted to a psychiatric hospital in Antwerp. It was a place she knew well, having been an inpatient there several times before the attacks. Shanti was treated with antidepressants. She shared her thoughts about them on numerous occasions. "I get several drugs at breakfast and up to 11 antidepressants a day. I couldn't do without them. With all the drugs I take, I feel like a ghost who doesn't feel anything anymore. Perhaps there were solutions other than the drugs." It was a brief respite. In 2020, Shanti attempted [suicide](#). Her spirits were at their lowest. She was heavily medicated, and her medication had been increased over time. She turned down therapeutic help that was offered by a therapist who specializes in treating the victims of the Brussels attacks. The student got in touch with the Life End Information Forum, an association that supports the right to die with dignity. In April 2022, Shanti submitted



a new euthanasia request, stating that she was in a medically futile condition of mental suffering. Two psychiatrists granted their approval.

A Small Proportion

Last March, the Federal Commission for the Control and Evaluation of Euthanasia reported on data from 2021. "There continues to be a very small number of euthanasia requests that cite mental and behavioral disorders (psychiatric conditions, such as personality disorders, and cognitive issues, like [Alzheimer's disease](#), are included in this group): 1.9% of all cases of euthanasia. Like all euthanasia files, these requests meet the legal conditions (the patient is legally competent, the request is in writing, the condition is medically futile, and the suffering — which is constant, unbearable, and cannot be alleviated — results from a serious and incurable disorder; the request is well-considered and repeated)," the report states.

An Assessment of the Second U.S. Government Domestic Terrorism Assessment

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221101-an-assessment-of-the-second-u-s-government-domestic-terrorism-assessment>

Nov 01 – The recently released intelligence assessment of domestic terrorism is the second iteration of the Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism. Seamus Hughes, Moshe Klein, and Alexis Jori Shanes write in [Lawfare](#) that the [first one](#), while interesting, [fell short in a number of ways](#) and felt, in a sense, like an attempt to placate eager congressional overseers. [This iteration](#), which was released with little fanfare or a typical departmental press release, is a significant improvement. "From additional granularity in the size and scope of the threat of domestic terrorism to a more forthcoming acknowledgement of its complexity, it should provide a road map for U.S. domestic counterterrorism efforts," they write, adding:

By measures of law enforcement investigations, domestic terrorism is increasing. The FBI notched roughly 1,400 domestic terrorism investigations by the end of fiscal year 2020, up considerably from the 1,000 average during previous years. By the end of 2021, however, the number of investigations had nearly doubled to 2,700. The agency attributed "a significant portion" of the investigations to crimes related to Jan. 6, but even accounting for this anomaly, the numbers have risen significantly.

Most of the investigations were related to racially or ethnically driven violent extremism, anti-government or anti-authority violent extremism, and civil unrest. If those labels feel like catchalls, it is because they are. That is the nature of domestic terrorism investigations in America. Domestic terrorism, as defined by [18 U.S.C. § 2331\(5\)](#), is best described as anything but al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. As a result, ideologies categorized as domestic terrorism can range from the garden variety white supremacist to a hardened anarchist and everything in between. The broad buckets of ideologies are understandable, but at some point they become less valuable to congressional appropriators wondering how to allocate money.

....

The Jan. 6 arrests also drove the more than fourfold increase in domestic terrorism-related arrests between fiscal years 2020 and 2021. The FBI and its partner agencies arrested roughly 800 domestic terrorism subjects in 2021 alone, up from around 180 the previous year. By contrast, the agency arrested approximately 850 domestic terrorism subjects between fiscal years 2015 and 2019 combined.

The FBI received more than 14,000 referrals of potential domestic violence incidents in the report's two-year span: nearly 5,700 in fiscal year 2020, and 8,400 in fiscal year 2021. It passed off around 2,700 incidents to partner agencies.

During the same two years, the agency released roughly 6,000 domestic terrorism intelligence products, which can include everything from raw data to finished reports. That figure is also up, from 4,000 products in the five-year period covered in last year's report. This represents a significant rise in intelligence analysis by the FBI, Homeland Security, and the NCTC. It speaks to both the increased focus on the topic of domestic terrorism and a hunger by state and local officials for more information. Indeed, by any good measure, the counterterrorism apparatus has experienced a ["sea change"](#) since Jan. 6.

The authors note two worrisome developments:

in recent public remarks, senior FBI officials [have raised](#) alarms about the rising number of cases involving minors and the lack of useful legal tools available. In conversations with prosecutors and law enforcement around the country by the authors, officials increasingly raise concerns that they are stuck between a rock and hard place.

They have minors as young as 11 who are steeped in white supremacy but have little moral appetite or legal ability to arrest them. Quietly, they have quickly put together haphazard



intervention and diversion programs to try to dissuade these young—and [usually male](#)—individuals from their extremist beliefs. The status quo for law enforcement on this issue is not tenable in the long run.

Although extremism motivated by abortion-rights beliefs has not been a significant threat in the past, especially compared to anti-abortion-related extremism, the report notes that following the *Dobbs* decision, there is an increased threat to anti-abortion organizations and individuals.

The authors conclude:

For all its shortcomings, this year's assessment provided a window into the rising domestic terrorism threat in America and represented an important improvement from the previous iteration. This is all to say, sometimes congressionally mandated reports are actually worth reading.

U.K. Unveils New Counterterror Strategy to Address New Threats

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221101-u-k-unveils-new-counterterror-strategy-to-address-new-threats>

Nov 01 – The U.K. government will carry out a wholesale refresh of the U.K. counter-terrorism strategy, to protect its citizens from new, emerging and persistent threats.

In the U.K. and overseas, there has been a shift towards self-initiated terrorists operating independently from organized groups with increasingly personal ideologies and warped views used to justify violence.

The tactics and methodologies used by terrorists are diversifying and becoming increasingly fragmented.

The [U.K. Home Office](#) says that to meet those threats, the counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) will be updated to reflect these new challenges. This will involve seeking a diverse range of views and engaging security experts from across the U.K. and overseas, so that CONTEST continues to robustly protect the British public from terrorist threats.

Security Minister, Tom Tugendhat, said:

Terrorists seek to divide us and sow hatred. We will not let them. Our commitment to the values we cherish is too strong.

But as the nature of terrorism continues to evolve and endure, so must we.

We will ensure that our response to the terror threat continues to be world-leading and ensure we have a strategy that allows people to go about their lives freely and with confidence.

The update will take into account a series of important reviews, including the second volume of the Manchester Arena Inquiry, set to be published next week.

In addition, the findings from the Independent Review of Prevent, led by William Shawcross, will strengthen the government's ability to stop individuals being drawn into terrorism in the first place.

The government will do everything possible to strengthen the UK's protection against terrorist attacks.

This includes a renewed commitment to introduce the Protect Duty, which will enhance the safety of public venues while avoiding placing additional burden on small businesses.

The U.K. counterterror system already encompasses the efforts of more than 20 government departments and agencies.

Since 2017 alone, more than 200 recommendations have been implemented in response to terrorist attacks, including the creation of the world's first multi-organizational Counter Terrorism Operations Centre, in London in June 2021.

Head of Counter Terrorism Policing, Matt Jukes said:

Since its launch in 2003, CONTEST has proved to be an enduring and effective strategic framework for the UK's counter-terrorism response, but it shouldn't stand still.

Today's threat is dominated by increasingly fragmented ideologies, self-initiated terrorism, and the reach of hateful online ideologies into the lives of young people.

It is vital that any future strategy reflects these learnings and also looks forward to the collaborations we will need in the future to keep people safe.

Counter-Terrorism Policing, uniquely, has made an evolving contribution to all 4 pillars of the CONTEST strategy and will continue to be at the heart of our preparedness for the terrible moments when attacks happen.

The government expects to publish an updated and enhanced version of CONTEST next year. In the meantime, it will continue to deliver a counter-terror strategy to keep the public safe.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: I think that the overall approach remains strictly "operational" without considering the "reaction of the people". People need to be trained to respond accordingly to various "threat levels" and improve their defenses at their work, office, school, university, factory, transportation,



home, etc. The most important player [people] in all emergency response plans is usually ignored and this is a big mistake. We train people for earthquakes from age 5 or 6. We can do the same for urban terrorism. Perhaps the burden is that they do not have earthquakes in the UK.

Africa: As Terrorists Claim New Ground, An African Strategy Is Vital

Source: <https://allafrica.com/stories/202211010036.html>

Oct 31 – As Islamic State (IS) and al-Qaeda leaders have been targeted and eliminated internationally, the terrorist groups have expanded and consolidated their African operations. According to Jihad Analytics, [half](#) the attacks claimed by IS since the beginning of 2022 were carried out in 10 African countries. Among them were Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria - the four Boko Haram-affected countries of the Lake Chad Basin.



A map with an outline of the Lake Chad basin.

Boko Haram factions are also expanding operations beyond the region. For a long time, the eight primary target areas of violent extremism in the Lake Chad Basin were North and Far North (Cameroon), Lac and Hadjer-Lamis (Chad), Diffa (Niger), and Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (Nigeria). However in 2022 the scope has expanded, particularly with the establishment of [Ansaru](#) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) cells in other parts of Nigeria.

This has complicated counter-insurgency operations, especially where national militaries are already overstretched. The extension of terrorist activities beyond the Lake Chad Basin also puts these groups beyond the reach of the region's Multinational

Joint Task Force - a military response to Boko Haram set up by Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

There is the growing possibility of mergers or alliances of convenience involving the three prominent violent extremist groups in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, namely ISWAP, Ansaru and Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS). The move to expand and consolidate operations is forging unlikely ties not only between terrorist groups but between them and organised criminals.

A merger of Boko Haram's three factions may cause a spillover of terrorism into the wider Sahel

Two examples are the kidnapping of train passengers in Kaduna, Nigeria, in [March](#) and the jailbreak leading to the escape of prisoners affiliated with Boko Haram in Abuja, Nigeria, in [July](#). The former involved a collaboration between the Boko Haram faction Ansaru and criminal gangs referred to as bandits. The latter brought together two Boko Haram factions, Ansaru and ISWAP.

Growing links are also being observed between Boko Haram offshoots outside their usual geographic zones of operation. A merger of the three breakaway factions may cause a spillover of terrorism in Nigeria and the wider Sahel.

Ansaru is affiliated with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, while ISWAP owes allegiance to the IS core. JAS has reportedly reached out to IS, leading the global terror organisation to nudge its most successful affiliate, ISWAP, towards an alliance with JAS. A merger could see a consolidation of fighters and resources. It may also lead to greater control of economic activities in the communities where these groups operate, improving terrorists' access to income.



These trends could expand recruitment into violent extremist groups. Attacks such as the Abuja jailbreak show the ability of perpetrators to target capital cities in affected countries. Boko Haram has hit N'Djamena in Chad and Abuja in the past.

Between January and June, Nigeria had the second highest number of IS-claimed attacks globally

Collaboration between terrorists and other armed groups will affect counter-insurgency measures, making a careful analysis of the conflict dynamics vital. Only by staying ahead of the curve and being proactive can Lake Chad Basin and other African countries avoid becoming more deeply entrapped.

The rise of banditry and abductions signals worsening insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin. Nigeria is currently the epicentre, but the phenomenon is [rising](#) in northern Cameroon. Train attacks, hostage takings and arms flows increasingly characterise the already vulnerable region. Nigeria's north-west and north-central zones are particularly affected, with transnational expansion likely.

In the 16 June 2022 edition of its Al-Naba publication, IS [declared](#) Africa the land of Hijra and Jihad and called on its members to relocate to African countries. Analysts have observed the growing involvement of IS and al-Qaeda in the affairs of their African affiliates. The prevailing belief is that the continent is the next stronghold for an 'Islamic caliphate'.

Between January and June 2022, Nigeria had the second-highest number of IS-claimed attacks (305), just behind Iraq and ahead of Syria at 337 and 142, respectively. The actualisation of IS' desire to 'remain and expand' in Africa may internationalise a conflict that has hitherto been primarily local.

Islamic State's expansion in Africa may internationalise conflicts that have hitherto been primarily local

If more terror attacks are launched from locations such as the Lake Chad Basin, these new target countries may be further isolated from the rest of the world through profiling and travel restrictions.

The African Union (AU) has shown a willingness to support regional organisations such as the Lake Chad Basin Commission in the fight against violent extremism. This was emphasised at an AU Peace and Security Council [meeting](#) on 23 September. Given the increasing complexity of the situation and a clear trend towards terrorist expansion in parts of Africa previously spared, the AU's role is crucial.

Drawing on its experience in Somalia and the Lake Chad Basin, the AU's security bodies should assess the current threats and upgrade their responses accordingly. This implies a consolidated approach that aims to stabilise affected regions, focusing on the military and the socio-political sources of violent extremism.

Greater AU support is also needed for the Lake Chad Basin's stabilisation and recovery [strategy](#). The AU should also consider bolder engagement with the 85 country member-Global [Coalition](#) against Daesh, which in December 2021 announced the establishment of an Africa Focus Group.

Terrorism Conspiracy Theories Among the U.K. Public

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221102-terrorism-conspiracy-theories-among-the-u-k-public>

Nov 02 – Notable minorities of the UK public say they believe conspiracy theories about terror attacks including the Manchester Arena bombing, the 7/7 attacks in London, 9/11, and school shootings in the US, with belief particularly high among younger people and those who get much of their news from social media and messaging platforms, according to new research.

The study — [Truth Under Attack? Belief in Terrorism Conspiracy Theories Among the U.K. Public](#) — was carried out by the Policy Institute at [King's College London](#) for BBC Panorama and BBC Radio 4 podcasts, using data collected by Savanta ComRes. It reveals that while the vast majority — four in five people (80%) — believe serious terrorist attacks have taken place in the UK in recent years, a third (35%) say they don't think the official story has told us the whole truth, and one in five (19%) goes as far as saying they think the victims of terror attacks in the UK are not being truthful about what happened to them.

These doubts extend to beliefs about specific attacks, elements of which are questioned by a minority of the public:

- ❖ One in seven (14%) say it's definitely or probably true that the Manchester Arena bombing involved "crisis actors" who pretended to be injured or killed — but that people weren't really injured or killed.
- ❖ One in eight (13%) say it's definitely or probably true that the 7/7 attacks in London were probably a hoax.
- ❖ One in six (17%) believe it's definitely or probably the case that attacks such as the Manchester Arena bombing and the 7/7 attacks in London did happen, but they were not carried out by terrorists.

Belief is even higher when it comes to the suggestion that information about these attacks is being suppressed:

- ❖ A quarter (26%) of the public say it's definitely or probably true that the mainstream media and government officials are involved in a conspiracy to cover up important information about the attack at Manchester Arena.
- ❖ A similar proportion — 29% — think the real truth about the attack on 7/7 in London is being kept from the public.



And it's not just attacks in this country that are questioned:

- ❖ A quarter (24%) of the UK public say it's definitely or probably true that people in the US government either assisted in the 9/11 attacks or took no action to stop them because they wanted the US to go to war in the Middle East.
- ❖ One in six (16%) people in the UK say they believe at least some of the school shootings in the US have probably been hoaxes.

Belief in Terror-Related Conspiracy Theories Is Higher Among Younger People, as Well as Those Who Get Much of Their News from Social Media

One in four (24%) people aged 18 to 34 say it's true that the 7/7 attacks were probably a hoax – roughly double the proportion who say this among the population overall (13%). Belief in this conspiracy theory declines with age, with 8% of 45- to 54-year-olds thinking it's true, and just 4% of the oldest surveyed – those aged 65 and above – thinking the same.

And while 14% of the population overall say it's definitely or probably true that the Manchester attack involved “crisis actors”, this rises to 44% among those who say they know a great deal or fair amount about news and events from the messaging app Telegram. Those who get much of their information from other social networks, such as TikTok (32%), Instagram (29%), Twitter (28%) and WhatsApp (28%), are also more likely than the public as a whole to say they believe this conspiracy theory – in contrast to those who rely more on traditional news sources, such as newspapers and magazines (16%) and major TV and radio broadcasters (13%).

There Are Also Differences in Belief By Gender and Level of Engagement with the Political Process

Men (17%) are twice as likely as women (8%) to say the Manchester Arena attack was probably a hoax, as well as more likely to think victims of UK terror attacks are not telling the truth about their experience (23% men vs 15% women). Meanwhile, 24% of those who say they didn't cast a vote in the 2019 general election think the Manchester and 7/7 attacks were not carried out by terrorists, compared with 16% of the public overall.

There Is Distrust About the Role of the U.K. Government in Terror Attacks, and This May Have Worsened Due to the Experience of the Pandemic

Around a third (31%) believe the UK government has been involved in covering up terror attacks in the country, and one in five (22%) think it has deliberately allowed such attacks to happen to further their own political agenda. Another one in five (18%) think the UK government has been involved in orchestrating terror attacks on UK soil. Added to this, one in three (34%) people agree that the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has made them much more suspicious of official explanations of events, including terrorist attacks – and they are more likely to feel this way if they already see it as an important part of their identity to question what they're told rather than just believe explanations from the government or mainstream media (44%).

Overall, When It Comes to Belief in a Range of Different Types of Conspiracy Theories Relating to Terror Attacks in the U.K., There Is a Hardcore Minority Who Are Particularly Strong Believers

From analysis of responses to 11 conspiracy statements about terrorist attacks in the UK, it is possible to identify five distinct groups among the public with varying degrees of belief.

It reveals that a hardcore minority of around one in 11 (9%) people can be classed as strongly accepting most or all 11 conspiracies, while a further one in five weakly accept (21%) at least some of them, and 6% say they're not sure what to think about these theories. But the biggest group, making up half (50%) of the population, strongly reject most or all of the statements, and one in eight (13%) reject them more weakly, thinking some types of claims are false, but having less certainty about others.

Professor Bobby Duffy, director of the Policy Institute at King's College London, said:

Significant minorities of the UK public say they believe outlandish conspiracy theories on terror attacks, even that high-profile terror attacks such as the 7/7 bombings in London and the Manchester Arena attack were a hoax, involved 'crisis actors' or that they weren't carried out by terrorists. Overall, around one in 11 of the UK population fall into a group who can be classed as strongly believing such conspiracies. This type of extreme belief is at the end of a much wider funnel of suspicion and distrust, where around four in 10 think there are so many conflicting accounts it's hard to know what to believe and around three in 10 do not believe the whole truth is being told about these incidents.

There are clear characteristics of those who tip from this suspicion into conspiracism, with younger people, those who get a lot of their information from social media and messaging platforms, and those who're disengaged from mainstream politics being most likely to believe conspiracies. Of course, this doesn't mean that social media use causes these beliefs, rather than attracting those already susceptible, or that it is an easy task to crack down on the sharing or fueling of conspiracies. But it is a key and growing challenge that governments and platforms need to engage with.

Survey Details

Savanta ComRes surveyed 4,459 UK adults aged 18+ online, from 1 to 9 October 2022. Data was weighted to be representative of the UK population by age, gender, region and social grade.





Parkland sentencing: Nikolas Cruz sentenced to life in prison

Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/US/live-updates/parkland-nikolas-cruz/>

Nov 02 – Nikolas Cruz was sentenced to life in prison on Wednesday, following two days of victim impact statements from survivors and family members of the **17 students and staff** killed in the Parkland high school massacre.

Last month, a [Florida jury rejected prosecutors' appeals for the death penalty](#), reaching a verdict on life in prison for the 2018 mass shooting Cruz committed at age 19 at South Florida's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.



Many victims' parents were outraged by the verdict, arguing that sparing Cruz the death penalty may send a bad message to future school shooters. The jury's decision needed to be unanimous to sentence Cruz to death.

Destroying Artworks, Environmental Activists are No More Than Eco-Terrorists

Source: <https://japan-forward.com/editorial-destroying-artworks-environmental-activists-are-no-more-than-eco-terrorists/>



After throwing soup at a van Gogh's painting "Sunflowers" at the National Gallery in London, Britain, members of the group Just Stop Oil glue their hands to the wall. (© Just Stop Oil/Handout via REUTERS)

Nov 02 – Art masterpieces continue to suffer attacks worldwide.

All these attacks have been carried out by individuals with a perverted sense of justice. Under the guise of environmental activism, they engage in destructive behavior referred to as "eco-terrorism."

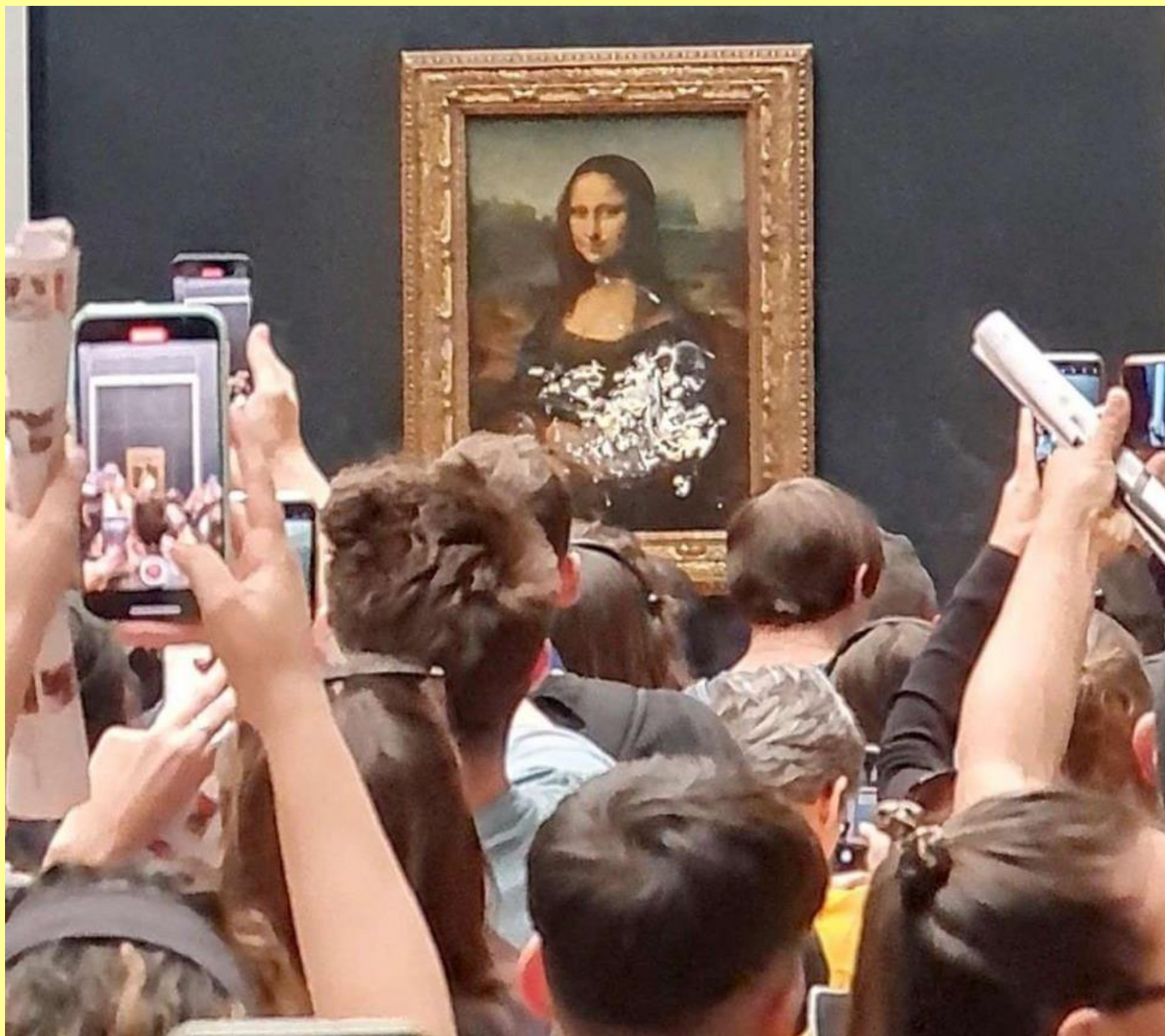
Their argument is based on the rhetorical question: "Which is more important, a work of [art](#) or human lives?"



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Of course, both are important. These are not things that can be superficially compared or ranked.

We cannot legitimize acts involving wanton destruction of artworks by individuals who consider environmental issues of overriding importance. Exactly the same would apply to someone who believes art to be more important — destruction of our planet would not be allowed.



Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" with cake thrown onto its face, which is covered with tempered glass. Incident on May 29, at the Louvre Museum in Paris (@ Klevisl007 via Twitter, Reuters via Kyodo)

Destruction of Artwork for Any Reason is Unvarnished Criminal Act

Regardless of the arguments made by those who perpetrate such destruction, their acts are unforgivable. This is clearly criminal conduct. At the Museum Barberini in Potsdam, Germany, on October 23, climate change activists threw mashed potatoes at the painting *Meules* (Haystacks) by Claude Monet. Earlier, in London's National Gallery on October 14, a separate group of activists doused Vincent [van Gogh](#)'s *Sunflowers* with a can of tomato soup. Back in May 2022, Leonardo Da Vinci's immortal *Mona Lisa* was attacked with a cake. And in July, two activists glued themselves to Sandro



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Botticelli's *Spring* at the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence. In all these instances, the paintings escaped damage because they were covered with protective glass. Nonetheless, such actions are not acceptable. The police took the activists involved into custody on suspicion of violating various laws, including damage to property.



Environmental activists of the group Last Generation after throwing mashed potatoes at the Claude Monet painting “Les Meules” at Potsdam’s Barberini Museum on Sunday Oct. 24, 2022, to protest fossil fuel extraction. (Last Generation via AP)

Defining Terrorism

Should this be considered terrorism? Japan's [Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets](#) defines "terrorist activities" to mean: *Activities intended to kill or injure people or destroy important facilities or other objects for the purpose of forcing a political or other principle or belief upon the State or other persons or causing fear or terror in society based on such principle or opinion.*

Destructive behavior by climate activists undertaken with the intent of disseminating broadly their own ideological beliefs concerning environmental issues are unmistakably terrorism. Many of the destructive eco-terrorists are young people, and reportedly they have won some support on the internet. Sympathetic conformity without sufficient thought inevitably leads to the next crime. Instead, we need to reject such barbarism in no uncertain terms. These activists need to wake up to reality. Terrorism cannot become widely acceptable. If the activists continue, the end result must be that their ideology is marginalized by society. If they truly are convinced of the justice and legitimacy of their beliefs, they should shun terror and fight their battle in the court of public opinion.

ISIS Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency in October 2022

Source: <https://www.counterextremism.com/blog/isis-redux-central-syria-insurgency-october-2022>

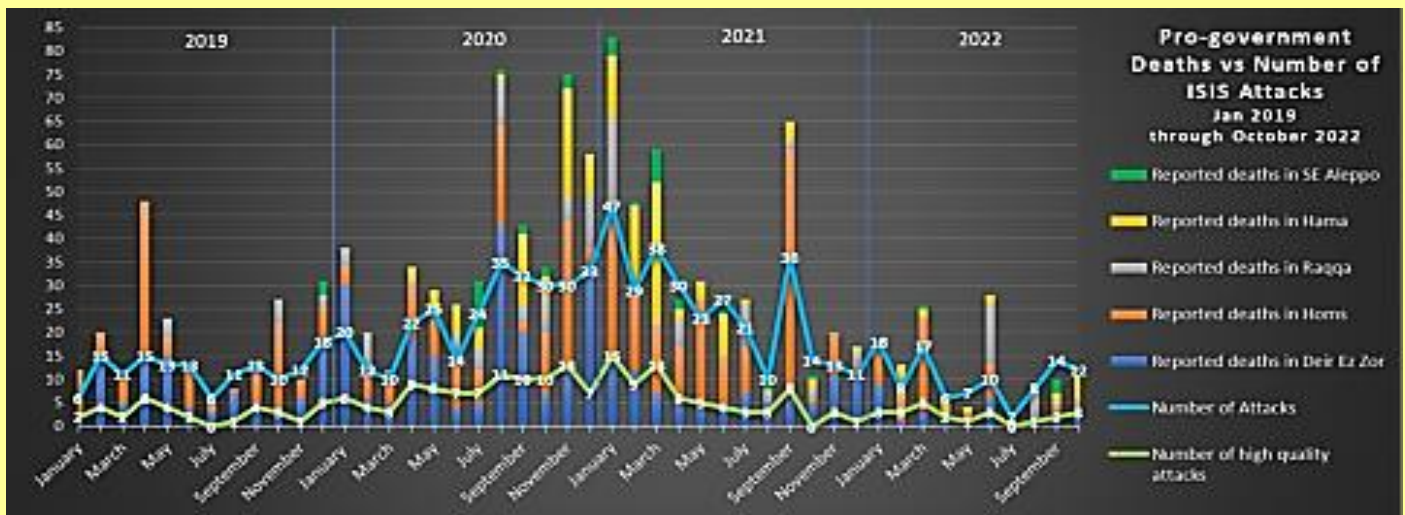
Nov 04 – ISIS militants carried out at least 12 confirmed attacks in October in the Raqqa, Hama, Homs, Aleppo, and Deir Ez Zor governorates. These attacks killed at least nine pro-Assad regime soldiers and two civilians and wounded 11 more. Additionally, there were three high quality* attacks in October. Attacks,



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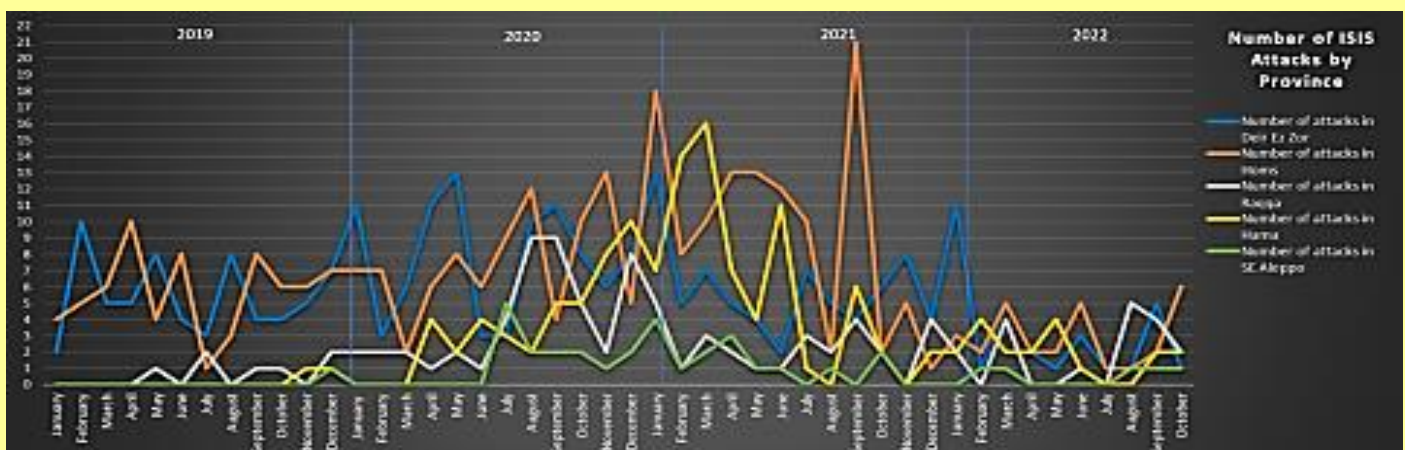
high quality attacks, and deaths remained consistent with the recent increase in ISIS activity following a historic low point reached in July. However, unlike August and September, October's confirmed activity was concentrated in Homs, rather than in the southwest Raqqa region. (It is worth noting that all but two of the confirmed southwest Raqqa attacks since August have come via ISIS claims, so this perceived change in activity may only reflect a change in ISIS media strategy, rather than a drop in actual attacks.)

ISIS continued the trend it began in August of claiming some Badia attacks, claiming in October one attack in southern Aleppo and two in southwest Raqqa. These media announcements come on the heels of July's rare three-page editorial in the group's weekly Naba magazine detailing the activity of ISIS cells in central Syria, which coincided with reports shared with this author of a restructuring of ISIS's Badia command. October also saw the launching of the first major anti-ISIS operations of the year by regime



forces, focused primarily in eastern Hama, Homs, and Deir Ez Zor.

ISIS attacks increased sharply in Homs (6) following a three-month lull in the province, dropped sharply in Deir Ez Zor (1) after a spike in confirmed activity in September, and in Raqqa (2) after two months of elevated activity. Confirmed ISIS activity remained steady in east Hama (2) and in southern Aleppo (1). The sharp increase in Homs attacks is partially attributable to the regime's new



anti-ISIS operations, which have encountered many mines and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) across the region.

Raqqa, Aleppo, and Hama

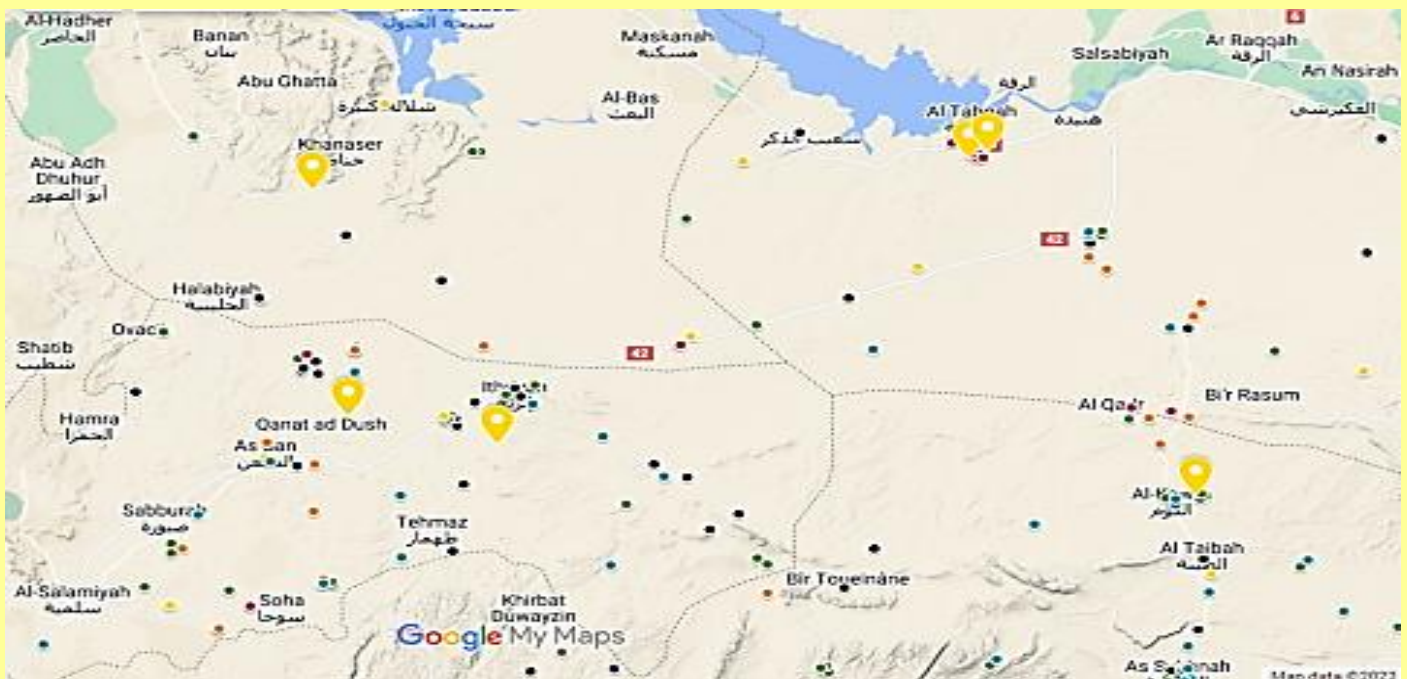
ISIS claimed all three of the attacks documented attacks in Aleppo and Raqqa in October (none of which were reported on by regime media, which is standard for these areas). The first occurred on October 5, when ISIS claimed an IED attack on a regime military truck west of Khanasir, Aleppo. The second claim was for a similar IED attack on a regime truck west of Tabqa, Raqqa, on October 24. Lastly, ISIS claimed



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a small arms attack on a regime barracks near the Tabqa Airbase on October 30, which is confirmed to have killed at least one soldier. These are the ninth, 10th, and 11th ISIS claims in central Syria since the Naba magazine editorial in late July. Prior to that, ISIS had only claimed one attack in central Syria in 2022.

There were two reported incidents in eastern Hama in October that could be attributed to ISIS. The first occurred on October 6, when local Facebook pages reported that unknown men on a motorbike had killed two civilians and wounded a third in a drive-by shooting while the civilians were fishing in the countryside. The attack reportedly occurred “near Abu Huwadid, in the northeast Salamiyah countryside.” This author found two villages referred to as Abu Huwadid on online maps, one southeast of Salamiyah, near Uqayribat, and one in the far northeast, between Sa’an and Wadi Azeeb, that is also referred to as Rasm Ahmar. Both of these areas are near previous ISIS hotspots. Furthermore, the second Hama incident occurred on October 17 when a mine or IED destroyed a regime National Defense Forces (NDF) truck near Wadi Azeeb, potentially linking the October 6 assailants with the nearby mine attack a week later. The October 17 attack killed three regime fighters, including the commander of the unit, and wounded six others.



Map of ISIS attacks in southern Aleppo, southwest Raqqa, and east Hama in 2021 and 2022. October 2022 attacks are highlighted.

Homs and Deir Ez Zor

There was one confirmed attack in Deir Ez Zor in October. Two local members of the regime’s 4th Division were killed on October 3 in the village of Toub, next to Bouleel, on the Euphrates River between the cities of Mayadin and Deir Ez Zor. If the two men were killed by ISIS it would mark a rare attack deep in the urban belt controlled by the regime, and along the critical smuggling routes across the Euphrates. However, local journalist [Zain al-Abidin](#) told this author that, according to his sources, it is believed the men were killed alongside three other Iranian-backed militiamen due to an internal conflict over control of the smuggling route. Al-Abidin said a similar incident occurred nearby in Salihiyah on October 6 when 4th Division soldiers killed six others in a smuggling dispute. This author could not verify the alleged October 3 incident, and an NDF member he spoke to denied that there was infighting in Deir Ez Zor. However, with the continuing crash of the Syrian economy, controlling smuggling has become exceedingly important for armed groups to maintain funding, so it would not be surprising if battles broke out over the issue. However, even if the killing was a bout of regime infighting rather than an ISIS attack, such incidents only weaken regime security and play into ISIS’s hands.

Homs experienced the most ISIS attacks in October. The first attack was reported on October 3, when serious fighting broke out east of al-Kawm between ISIS cells and regime militiamen from Liwa al-Quds and the local NDF. Security forces were forced to abandon their outlying positions despite the use of regime warplanes. It is worth noting that just three weeks earlier, a group of ISIS fighters had ambushed regime forces north of al-Kawm, near the Kadir Oil Field.

On October 9, a soldier from the 4th Division’s Security Office was reported killed somewhere on the Palmyra-Deir Ez Zor highway, likely by a mine or IED. On October 12, a regime source reported that three 17th Division soldiers had recently disappeared while on patrol east of the Tanf zone, likely either



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kidnapped or had deserted to ISIS (ISIS cells entering from Iraq had ambushed 17th Division soldiers in this area on September 1 as well). On October 18, a member of the Russian Wagner PMC was reportedly injured by a mine while assisting Liwa al-Quds fighters in an anti-ISIS clearing mission around the Jazal Field area of Homs. Local pro-regime media pages reported the death of a soldier somewhere in Homs on October 29, and on October 31, a mine or IED destroyed a regime military truck near Palmyra, killing one soldier and wounding four.



Map of ISIS attacks in eastern Homs and Deir Ez Zor in 2021 and 2022. October 2022 attacks are highlighted. Missing from the map is one attack that occurred somewhere in eastern Homs.

Regime Operations

The Syrian regime and its Russian and Iranian allies launched new, widespread anti-ISIS operations at the start of October, the first serious operations of 2022. Russian military officials traveled to southern Raqqa to meet with leaders of the local al-Ajil Tribe early in the month in an attempt secure local assistance in rooting out the cells targeting Tabqa Airbase. Meanwhile, Iranian-commanded Afghans from Liwa Fatemiyoun deployed to the T3 Pumping Station southwest of Palmyra in order to conduct new sweeping operations northeast towards the Wadi Doubayat area, which has long been an ISIS safe zone. Elsewhere in Homs, Syrian Army units from the 17th and 18th Divisions continued patrols which began in September east of al-Tanf along the Iraq border. The regime believes this area is being used by ISIS cells to infiltrate Syria from Iraq. In Deir Ez Zor, NDF, tribal militias, and 4th Division fighters have been conducting sweeps in the Mayadin region. NDF fighters have also been conducting de-mining operations in east Hama throughout October.

These operations, which are focused on a mix of demining (particularly in east Hama and east Homs) and rooting out ISIS caches and hideouts (mostly in southeast Homs and Deir Ez Zor) have led to the discovery and destruction of several ISIS caches, particularly by Liwa al-Quds fighters in the mountains north of Palmyra.

Looking Ahead

October's recorded incidents somewhat bucked the more high-tempo trend set in August and September. While ISIS cells managed to conduct at least four serious attacks—the fighting in Kawm, which seized regime positions, and the IEDs and small arms attack in Khanasir and Tabqa, deep within regime territory—the largescale regime operation is clearly pressuring the group across the Badia. At least six of October's attacks can in some way be attributed to the anti-ISIS operations—units either encountering old mines or being hit by new mines/IEDs while venturing into ISIS hotspots.

The continued absence of more regular, complex attacks (i.e., the October 3 Kawm attack) compared with 2020 suggests that ISIS does not have a large number of fighters in central Syria, or at least they are not active at any one time. It could be that ISIS is still focusing its forces on northeast Syria (the group claimed 15 attacks here in October), or simply it does not have enough men to risk carrying out more brazen attacks since the regime flooded the Badia with more soldiers in 2021. As with northeast Syria, the group seems to have settled on



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a longer term, methodical approach, unwilling to risk too many assets at a time when they have no hope of returning to territorial control, but still working to keep pressure on local security forces while they recruit, train, and fundraise for the next generation of fighters. However, the continued activity around the Tabqa airbase should not go unheeded by policymakers, as such brazen attacks against a key regime and Russian security node suggests that ISIS believes its Raqqa cells are in a strong position, which could ultimately lead to increased security threats in SDF-held areas of Raqqa.



Map of locatable ISIS attacks (yellow pins) in October 2022 alongside attacks in 2022 and 2021. Not pictured is one attack that occurred somewhere in east Homs. To view an interactive version of this map, please click [here](#).

*High quality attacks are defined as attacks behind frontlines, those that result in seized positions, target regime officers, involve coordinated attacks on multiple positions, fake checkpoints, ambushes on military convoys, or attacks on checkpoints that kill at least three soldiers or lead to POWs.

Al-Qaeda, terrorism and threat to democracy

By M A Hossain

Source: <https://asianews.network/al-qaeda-terrorism-and-threat-to-democracy/>

Nov 04 – Long ago, on one fine autumn afternoon, my friends and I were discussing which one of our friends who had escaped the get-together in that café to penalize. An army general sitting next to us was intrigued by our excitement and dragged his chair closer to us, bringing his vaporized coffee mug.

With very friendly interaction he advised us his theory “channelize, canalize and penalize” as a solution. Two decades of my hawkish eye on the Islamic extremist movement, I find the general’s theory appropriate here.

After World War II, the dollar became the strongest and only international trade currency. In the early 1990s, the world started a reorientation that strengthened the dominance of the Western capitalist economic system, supplanted the primacy of the nation-state with transnational corporations and organizations and eroded local cultures and traditions through Western culture.

The Western nations have enjoyed supremacy in the military and economy and they have been ferrying their capitalistic and democratic ideologies around the world, which are consumerist and materialistic in nature.

Now, Western nations have reached the peak of their vertex in terms of lifestyle, consumerism and prosperity. This creates an ideological vacuum and people have become frustrated. We have found widespread cases of suicide and mass shootings in Western societies, which are flagrant examples of this claim. An Islamic ideology is starting to fill the void.



I will dwell upon one jihadist organization, al-Qaeda (AQ) which has spectacularly gained its capabilities in acting as a transnational militant organization. During my research, I find, interestingly, it is the AQ that lays down the gauntlet for the United States on the battlefield. A

Q founder Abdullah Azzam first accentuated global jihad among all militant organizations. Before that, various Islamic extremist organizations fought for sharia (Islamic rule) sporadically and locally. AQ members around the world gathered in Afghanistan to fight against Soviet occupiers.



Maximum escort: Counterterrorism squad Densus 88 personnel take a terrorist suspect onto a waiting bus inside the compound of the East Java Police headquarters in Surabaya on March 18, 2021. The squad relocated the detention of 22 suspected terrorists to Jakarta. (Antara/Didik Suhartono)

In 1989, after the death of Azzam, Osama bin Laden took the helm of AQ. He envisioned his global jihad as “striking the head of the snake” in which the head was America. He wanted to bring the US into a death trap and by compelling US troops to be deployed globally.

AQ carried out a number of attacks on US targets around the world to allure America into war. Laden struck the center of gravity in America on the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, which changed the landscape of global terrorism. After the attack on the Twin Towers, Laden expected US troops in Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria and Libya to achieve an asymmetric war of attrition.

Even the Bush and Obama administrations were unaware that the war on terror was nothing but a booby trap. America lost the war in Somalia, Libya, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. That is how the theory “channelize, canalize and penalize” works.

American political scientist Samuel Huntington asserted in his book *The Clash of Civilizations* that the future holds a series of clashes between “the West and the rest” and envisioned religion as “perhaps the central force that motivates and mobilizes people.”

AQ wanted the US military to use unilateral military action against Muslim countries, which paved the way for recruiting Muslim youths against US atrocities. Successful examples are the invasion of Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia.

Globally, democracy is declining. The war on terror, patronized by the US, gave opportunities to authoritarian rulers in several democratic countries. Nations in South Asia, the Middle East and Africa have experienced terrorism as a tool of suppression and intimidation against opposition. Terrorism is solely responsible for the world refugee crisis, which has affected the European Union and Western nations the most.

Even US citizens have experienced draconian anti-terrorist laws embodied in the so-called “USA Patriot Act” that have immeasurably increased government power of surveillance, arrest and detention. The construction of military prison camps for suspected terrorists, the abrogation of basic civil liberties and the call for military trials have undermined decades of progress in developing democratic policies.

Islamic extremist movements linked to AQ have achieved their goals in Afghanistan, Somalia, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger and are strongly emerging in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Pakistan, Nigeria and the



Caucasus region. AQ in the Indian subcontinent (AQIS) has started a hidden and secretive network in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Kashmir. AQ in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is going to capture the important port cities and very soon will take control of the Gulf of Aden.

In my opinion, within the next five years several African countries will announce Islamic rule within their country. AQ in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has strong bastions in Algeria and the Sahel.

Ideological conflict must be countered by ideology. If this simple equation is miscalculated, then there will be a catastrophic debacle. Some democratic rulers are trying to politicize terrorism and for God's sake, they are digging the grave for democracy with their own hands.

During my research, I found that AQ started its preparation on global savagery in 2002. AQ, from the beginning, targeted the dollar system as the enemy's center of gravity. Just think, if America was not involved in the war in Afghanistan, Iraq and Africa, where would they be now? The war on terror was nothing but a waste of money and lives.

The world is shaping into a multipolar world in 2022. America has used and abused the dollar system as a punitive tool and democratic frontliners have failed to exhibit a stable, executive, beatified ideology in the 21st century. We have seen the eccentric Trump in the US, Hindu extremist Modi in India and a pillow passing show in the United Kingdom.

The world is now considering an alternative trade currency system instead of the US dollar. But it is extremely important to be critical of state terrorism when one discusses this complex and sensitive topic. For decades, the US and Israel have been accused of state terrorism.

It is, therefore, neither the time for terrorism nor reckless unilateral military intervention, but for an ideological campaign against ideological conflict. This campaign should not accept militarism, violation of human rights, the establishment of a police or military state nor the undermining of democracy in the name of fighting terrorism.

No doubt, democracy is in the ICU and misjudgment of this ideological conflict will put the last nail in the coffin of democracy.

[M A Hossain](#) is a political and defense analyst based in Bangladesh.

Paris bomber Salah Abdeslam got married over the phone from prison

Source: <https://newsbulletin247.com/world/200747.html>

Nov 04 – The 33-year-old today Salah Abdeslam married over the phone, a woman chosen by his father and he does not know.

The only surviving terrorist bomber of November 13, 2015, attacks in Paris, with 130 dead, got married in prison.

The 33-year-old today Salah Abdeslam married over the phone, a woman chosen by his father and he does not know. The groom took part in the ceremony from the maximum security cell where he is being held, exchanging his vows with his wife over the phone.

Despite being under 24-hour surveillance at Fleury-Mérogis prison “he managed to form a bond with his new bride over the phone,” prison sources told RTL.

The terrorist's father is 73-year-old Moroccan Abteraman Abdeslam, who lives in Brussels. The terrorist's father chose his son's new bride, whose name and nationality have not been disclosed.

Salah remains a devout Muslim, so his marriage is believed to be a religious “obligation” rather than a political union. Abdeslam is serving multiple life sentences for carrying out a barrage of ISIS terror attacks at various locations in Paris. The attack with the most victims took place at the Bataclan Theater.



EDITOR'S COMMENT: Why is his father (and other relatives) still in Belgium?

Al Qaeda-Linked Lawyer Could Become Next Los Angeles City Attorney

By Benjamin Baird

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63772/al-qaeda-linked-lawyer-could-become-next-los>

Nov 04 – The [front runner](#) in the Los Angeles City Attorney's race is a former Republican operative who is deeply enmeshed in Islamist political circles. Now a far left progressive, attorney Faisal Gill has been the subject of [FBI surveillance](#) and [government scrutiny](#) thanks to his ties to individuals involved with Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups.



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – November 2022

Gill claims to be a changed man. His once [conservative views](#) on taxes, immigration, and marriage equality have evolved into a radically progressive platform that has cost him [endorsements](#) from mainstream Democrats in California.



Although he may have transformed himself politically, Gill maintains connections to the same Islamist networks that could have [cost him a job](#) with the Department of Homeland Security nearly two decades ago. [Friends, clients](#), and especially [donors](#) who have bankrolled the 50-year-old's campaign are known or alleged to be involved with foreign terrorists and extremist groups.

In July, Gill was the [overall winner](#) by four points in California's "jungle primary" system, where the top two vote-getters, regardless of party affiliation, advance to the general election. He will face off against Hydee Feldstein Soto, a lifelong Democrat and attorney specializing in financial law.

The [self-described](#) "civil rights attorney" has significantly outtraised his opponent, hauling in \$2.2

million dollars, including a noteworthy number of [large donations](#) originating from outside of California. Much of this money is tainted by Islamist special interests.

This includes two [donations](#) in August from Khaled Saffuri, an old associate of Gill's who [worked](#) at the American Muslim Council (AMC) in the 1990s and co-founded the Islamic Free Market Institute (IFMI). Both [organizations](#) employed Gill, as well, and were [closed down](#) amid allegations of foreign terrorist links.

[AMC](#), a Muslim civic action group, was founded by Abdulrahman Alamoudi, one of Al Qaeda's top fundraisers in the United States. Similarly, IFMI was established with [startup money](#) from Alamoudi and other prominent Muslim Brotherhood entities.

After cultivating close relationships with both Republican and Democratic lawmakers, Alamoudi was [sentenced](#) to 23 years in a terror finance case involving a plot to assassinate the Saudi crown prince on behalf of Libya.

Gill's ties to the Al Qaeda financier would come back to haunt him in 2004, after joining the Department of Homeland Security's Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection division. According to [Salon](#), he was "briefly removed from his job in March [2004] when the Federal Bureau of Investigation discovered he had failed to disclose his association with Alamoudi" during a routine background check.

Although the [DHS Inspector General](#) eventually found "no evidence to suggest" that Gill "falsified or intentionally omitted relevant information" on his application for a security clearance, he [admitted](#) that he failed to disclose his AMC affiliation when filling out this paperwork. He later [told investigators](#) that he only met Alamoudi three or four times and did not work closely with him at his nonprofit. In a June interview with [Law.com](#), Gill related that one of his "proudest accomplishments" came during his time with AMC. "So in the late '90s and early 2000s, I joined a coalition of activists and advocates who worked to end this practice that led to immigrants being deprived of their right to examine and confront witnesses and evidence against them," he said.

One of these "activists" was Sami Al-Arian, whose interest in [repealing](#) confidential evidence and sources became clear when he was [convicted](#) of providing material support to Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a designated terrorist group. Ultimately, Gill's [attempts](#) to stifle counter-terrorism prosecutions were unsuccessful, and classified evidence continues to represent a vital tool in the War on Terror.

If DHS officials thought they cleared their man of any wrongdoing, it seems the National Security Agency and FBI were not persuaded. "Whistleblower" Eric Snowden provided [documents](#) to the *Intercept* indicating that, soon after Gill left DHS, the FBI began secretly monitoring his email communications via a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court warrant.

Around the same time, Gill began raking in [campaign contributions](#) from troubling [sources](#) in his 2007 bid for the Virginia House of Delegates. This includes \$5,000 from four corporate entities belonging to the [Safa Group](#), a web of businesses and nonprofits whose offices were raided or investigated in 2002 in a sweeping terror finance probe.

Gill opened his [private practice](#), Gill & Gallinger, in 2005, just months before federal agents began hacking his emails. His [partner](#) at the new law firm was Asim Ghafoor, an old friend from IFMI whose emails the FBI also covertly monitored during the same period.



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Ghafoor was the [spokesman](#) for three separate "charities" that had their assets frozen and were closed down for allegedly funding Al Qaeda and other terrorist movements. As an attorney, he [represented](#) Osama Bin Laden's brother-in-law and an Islamic charity that authorities claim had "direct links" to the terrorist mastermind.

In 2007, Gill and Ghafoor travelled to Sudan, a state sponsor of terrorism at the time, to offer their [legal services](#) defending the country from lawsuits originating from the victims of Al Qaeda terrorist attacks. Sudan reportedly retained Ghafoor, and Gill contracted on at least one case.

Ghafoor and two family members have supported Gill's L.A. City Attorney race with several maximum \$1,500 [contributions](#). However, he isn't the only donor on a government watchlist to fund Gill's campaign.

Nihad Awad, who also gave a top contribution to Gill, was similarly hacked by the FBI in a years-long [probe](#). Awad is the founder and executive director of the [Council on American-Islamic Relations](#) (CAIR), a powerful Islamist nonprofit that Gill has [advised](#) and [defended](#) in various court [cases](#). In return, the city attorney candidate has received personal [contributions](#) from five members of CAIR's [national board of directors](#).

Awad's surveillance happened to coincide with CAIR's involvement in a landmark terror finance case, this one involving millions of dollars funneled through Islamic charities to Hamas, a Palestinian terrorist group. CAIR would emerge as an [unindicted co-conspirator](#) in that trial, with one of its senior officials [sentenced](#) to 65 years in prison.

After learning about the government surveillance of his emails, Gill was defiant, echoing Awad and Ghafoor's [concerns](#) that they were targeted because of their faith.

"Look, I've never made an appearance or been a lawyer for anyone who's been [associated with terrorism]," he told *the Intercept*.

Yet, Gill continues to earn his pedigree as an activist-lawyer serving Islamist interests. He is "working in tandem" with the Libyan American Alliance (LAA) as the [lead attorney](#) in two lawsuits targeting Libyan General Khalifa Haftar. The surviving family members of victims who were killed or tortured under Haftar in Libya's bloody civil war are seeking compensation from the general, who is a dual U.S. citizen.

Haftar represents Libya's secular [Tobruk faction](#) and has waged a merciless campaign against Islamists who seek to dominate the country. For LAA, which [favors](#) the Muslim Brotherhood and other [Islamist factions](#) in the war, punishing Haftar discredits the secular opposition and advantages jihadists.

LAA founder Esam Omeish is among 75 individuals that the government in Tobruk [labeled](#) as terrorists in 2017 for his status as an international Muslim Brotherhood operative. Likewise, LAA Director Mongi Dhaoudi is a [member](#) of Tunisia's official Muslim Brotherhood party. Both men are donors to Gill's campaign, with Omeish and his son handing over \$5,500 to the attorney.

Starting in 2018, Gill [defended](#) Fareed Khan, a Manchester, Connecticut, auto mechanic accused of lying to federal agents about his [fundraising activities](#) on behalf of the Islamic Circle of North America, a shady Islamic nonprofit with link to South Asian jihadists. Khan, who was suspected of involvement in a terror finance scheme, was convicted in 2019 of making false statements in regards to medical supplies he surreptitiously mailed to Pakistan.

Most recently, Gill rushed to the defense of his former partner and friend Asim Ghafoor, who was imprisoned in the United Arab Emirates after the Gulf country convicted him in absentia of money laundering and tax evasion. UAE officials [claim](#) that they initiated an investigation at the request of the US Embassy in Abu Dhabi, and investigators found that Ghafoor funneled nearly \$5 million through various bank accounts "with the intent to conceal or disguise the nature and origin of the funds obtained from illegal sources." News of Ghafoor's arrest prompted American Islamists to lobby for his release. Thanks in part to Gill's representation, his ex-partner's three-year prison sentence was [suspended](#), although the courts [confiscated](#) \$4.9 million from Ghafoor and forced him to pay \$1.36 million in fines. The [LA City Attorney](#) is responsible for advising the city government, defending the city from lawsuits, and prosecuting misdemeanor offenses. Gill's [critics](#) point to his progressive policy recommendations — including implementing a 100-day moratorium on certain criminal offenses and abolishing cash bail — and argue that he is unfit for a job as the city's top prosecutor.

Perhaps out of ignorance, or possibly because they fear being marked as anti-Muslim bigots, Gill's opponents have refused to discuss his recurring presence on the periphery of multiple intersecting terror finance cases. While he may have remained above the law in terms of his relationship with Islamist villains, Gill could soon find himself beholden to those same radical interests who financially backed his bid to become Los Angeles's top prosecutor.

[Benjamin Baird](#) is the director of Islamism in Politics, a project of the Middle East Forum.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Voters know. If they insist to vote him, they will accept the consequences – if any! No hard feelings!



Iran' Intelligence Chief Issues Veiled Threat Against UK

Source: <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202211098238>

Nov 09 – **Iran's intelligence minister has implicitly threatened the UK of terrorist operations after the country decried attempted menacing acts against two London-based Iran International journalists.**

In an interview with the official website of the Supreme Leader, published on Wednesday, Esmail Khatib said the Islamic Republic recognizes Iran International as "a terrorist organization," adding that its workers and anyone affiliated with the channel will be pursued by the Ministry of Intelligence.

In a statement on Monday, Volant Media -- the parent company of Iran International -- said that two of their journalists have recently been notified of the threats. "The Metropolitan Police have now formally notified both journalists that these threats represent an **imminent, credible and significant risk to their lives** and those of their families. Other members of our staff have also been informed directly by the Metropolitan Police of separate threats," read the statement.

Khatib did not explicitly state that the Islamic Republic will carry out attacks in the UK but said it "would not commit itself to countering insecurities," emanating from other countries.

"We will never sponsor acts of terrorism and insecurity in other countries, as Britain does, but we also have no obligation to prevent insecurity in those countries either. Therefore, Britain will pay for its actions aimed at making Iran insecure," the minister warned.

Echoing remarks by the Supreme Leader and other officials, he blamed the UK, US, Israel and Saudi Arabia for the current wave of protests across Iran -- ignited by the death in custody of a 22-year-old Kurdish woman, Mahsa Amini.

He claimed that a "hybrid war" has been launched against the Islamic Republic, including an "influence operation" to destabilize the country, adding that the role of Israel was more obvious in field operations while UK's role was more in terms of propaganda. He added that Saudi Arabia provided financial support for the operations against the Islamic Republic, especially for protests abroad, such as a huge **demonstration in Berlin** last month. The huge rally of diaspora Iranians in the German capital in October angered the government in Tehran which tried to belittle the opposition gathering.

"Unfortunately, the British government, which supports the BBC and Iran International satellite channels that operate within its media framework, has taken on a terrorist role today," he said, calling it "crossing the security red lines of the Islamic Republic."

His remarks came after the threat was discussed during a Tuesday **meeting of the British House of Commons** on whether to designate Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organization. "British-Iranian reporters who are now sited in the UK have been issued with credible information by the police that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps threatens their lives. What more does IRGC have to do before we proscribe them in their entirety?" Conservative British MP Bob Blackman said at the meeting.

Later on Tuesday, the Committee to Protect Journalists asked British authorities to strengthen their protection of threatened staff members of Iran International, demanding that they hold the Islamic Republic accountable for its transnational crimes.

"Time and again Iranian authorities have acted with impunity in attempting to silence journalists around the world," said Sherif Mansour, CPJ's Middle East and North Africa program coordinator.

"UK authorities must ensure the safety of Iran International's staff and send a message that threats to journalists on its soil will not be tolerated. Until foreign governments hold Iran accountable, this trend will only worsen, and journalists will continue to face unacceptable threats to their safety."



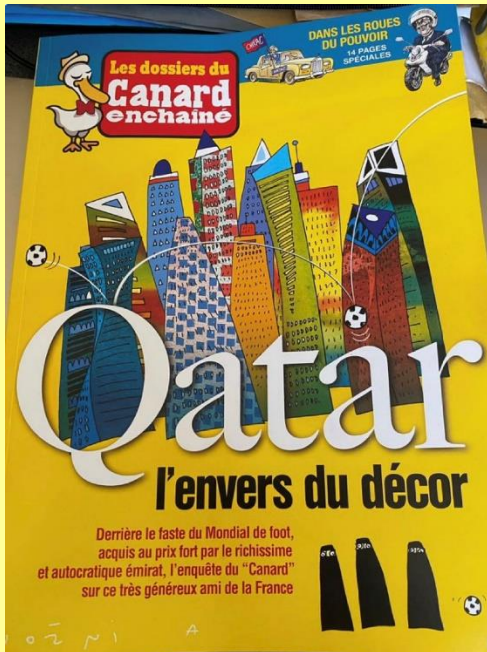
Islamic terrorists with weapons shown as football players: French satirical newspaper offends Qatar ahead of FIFA World Cup

Source: <https://www.opindia.com/2022/11/french-magazine-cartoon-depicts-qatari-football-players-as-islamic-terrorists-ahead-of-fifa-world-cup/>

Nov 10 – On Tuesday, Qatar which is all set to host this year's Football World Cup slammed a cartoon published by a French satirical newspaper showing Qatari football players as terrorists. The caricature has sparked outrage on social media with many Qatari users calling it 'racist and Islamophobic'.



According to the [reports](#), the cartoon was published by a French newspaper named Le Canard enchaîné in its October issue. The image specifically focused on Qatar and its role as the host of the FIFA World Cup 2022. The Qatari users on social media slammed



the cartoon and also questioned the ethics of the publication for illustrating a derogatory depiction of racism, supremacy, and Islamophobia.

The image published by the French newspaper shows seven bearded men with “Qatar” emblazoned across their shirts above large numerals. They appear to be playing football through the dunes, armed with machetes, rifles, and rocket launchers. One can also be seen wearing an explosive belt. Five are dressed in blue robes, while the other two are dressed in black shirts and trousers with black masks concealing their faces, resembling ISIS terrorists. Five guys in white robes stand on the sidelines, watching the game. One of the enraged users criticized the publication and said, “Le Canard Enchaîné published a despicable cartoon showing its blatant racism and hatred of Islam. They describe Qatar as an authoritarian emirate and its national team as terrorists”.

“A special issue issued by the French newspaper Cannar Enchaîne about Qatar. You cannot imagine the extent of the hidden French hatred, contempt and insult to Qatar, its people, its government and its symbols. I wonder why the Qatari ambassador is still in Paris”, another user tweeted.

Meanwhile, Hamad Al-Kawari, a minister of state and the president of Qatar’s National Library also took cognizance of the incident and asked France to show some sportsmanship. “Even caustic satire is welcome!!! But the Canard Enchaîné decided to resort to lies, hatred and grudges to attack Qatar and denigrate it,” he tweeted.

Earlier last month, Qatar’s Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani had [criticized](#) an ‘unprecedented campaign’ of criticisms against the country ahead of the World Cup. “It became clear to us that the campaign continues, expands, and includes fabrication and double standards until it reached a level of ferocity that made many questions, unfortunately, the real reasons and motives behind this campaign”, he had said. He also added that no other country had faced this level of criticism in the past.

He also [slammed](#) several Western countries like Germany on November 8 after they called for a boycott of the upcoming event in the Arab country for its position on LGBTQ+ rights and use of ‘slave labor’. “It is ironic when this tone is struck in countries in Europe that call themselves liberal democracies. It honestly sounds very arrogant and very racist,” the minister was quoted as [saying](#) to the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

Reports mention that several cities in France, including the capital Paris, will not broadcast World Cup matches, citing concerns about migrant workers’ rights and the game’s impact on the environment. Qatar’s management of migrant workers and human rights record have been under question since the country has been given the privilege to organize the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Recently, Qatar’s Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani [accused](#) Germany of ‘double standards’ over the reports of criticism for the country being allowed to host the World Cup. He also reminded the people that the European countries have no problem with Qatar when it comes to energy partnerships or investments. Qatar won the right to host the summer World Cup in December 2010 against all odds in 50 degrees celsius temperature, before FIFA moved the World Cup to winter for the first time in history to protect



players from that heat. The tournament will now be [held](#) in the small Arabian country and about 1.2 million international visitors are expected in Qatar during the Nov 20- Dec 18 tournament.

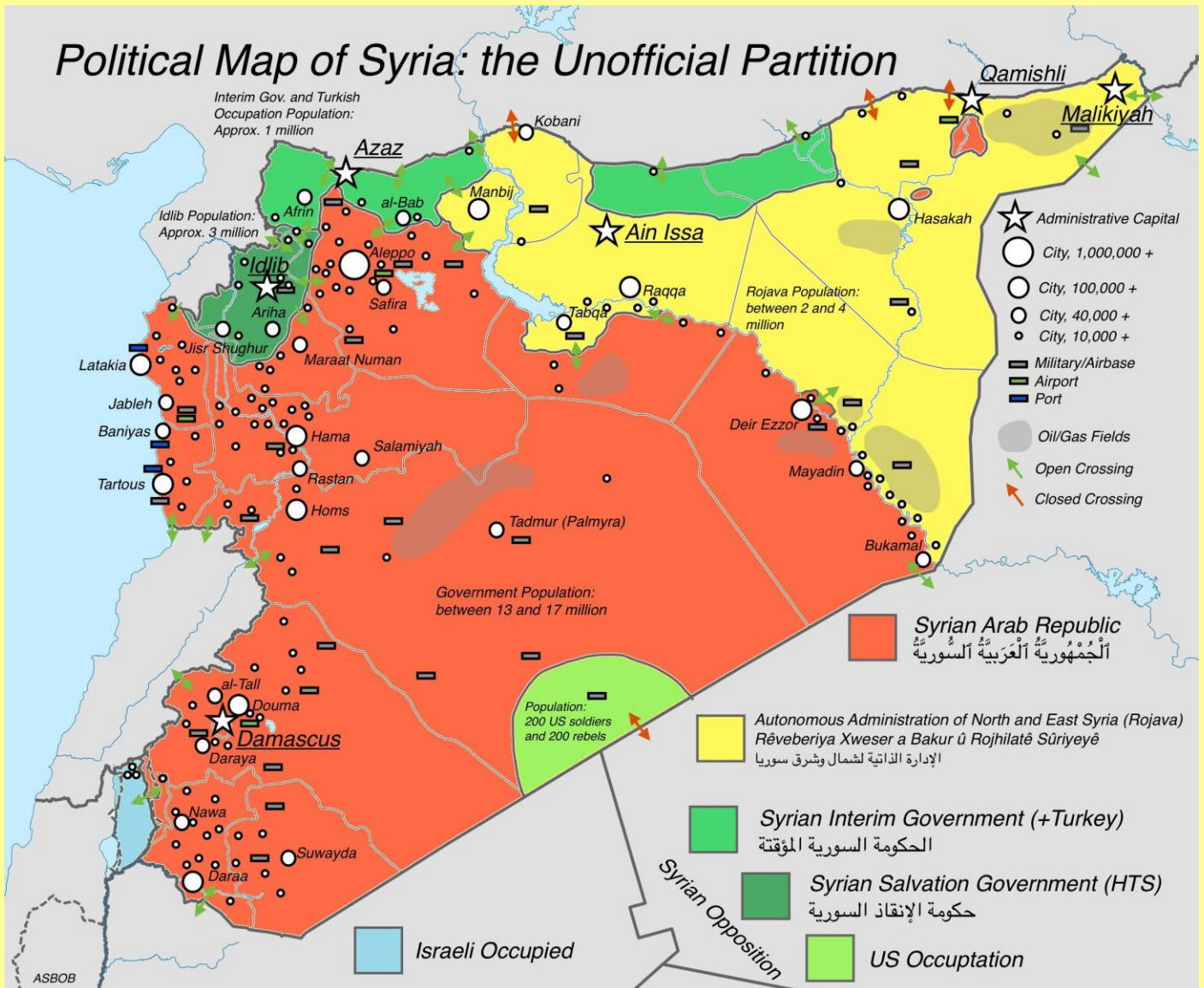
It is notable here that Qatar has been linked with Islamic terrorism and has been accused of spreading Wahabism by many sources. Its links to numerous organisations that fund the [Muslim Brotherhood](#), Hamas, Al Qaeda, etc. have been highlighted in recent times.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: It is supposed that sports promote civilization and connect people. Accusations without solid proof will ignite tensions and friction. Some may even think that all that is because the Qataris do not sell cheap gas to Europe. We live in turbulent times and logic is not a prevailing feature ...

Is Erdoğan's Turkey Aiding in a Jihadist Takeover of Northwest Syria?

By Marilyn Stern

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63776/jonathan-spyer-is-erdogan-turkey-aiding-in>



Nov 04 – Jonathan Spyer, director of research at the Middle East Forum and author of [Days of the Fall: A Reporter's Journey in the Syria and Iraq Wars](#), spoke to a November 4th Middle East Forum Webinar ([video](#)) in an interview with Cliff Smith, director of the Middle East Forum's [Washington Project](#), about the repercussions for the U.S. and Israel of Ankara's partnership with Jihadi and Islamist organizations fighting the Kurds in northwest Syria.



Spyer described the extremely complex conditions in northwest Syria in the context of a fractured war-torn country divided overall into "three power enclaves." The Assad regime controls 60 to 70 percent, the Kurds and U.S. control 25 to 30 percent, and Turkey, "in cooperation with a number of Islamist militias," operates in the remainder.

The Syrian territory controlled by Turkey, which President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan "is the essential guarantor of," is divided between two areas: (1) To the north, the enclave of Azaz is ruled by the Syrian National Army (SNA), a "notional" government entity controlled by Turkey and comprised of a number of rebel militias; and (2) To the south, the province of Idlib is controlled by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a "hard-liner" Sunni Jihadi organization and "former franchise of Al-Qaeda," and its "Syrian Salvation Government." Spyer said that even though Erdoğan does not "officially" cooperate with HTS, which Turkey as well as the U.S. and the European Union (EU) consider a terrorist organization, recent events Spyer has [reported](#) on indicate that "de facto, there is a tacit cooperation on the ground" between Turkey and HTS.

To fight the Kurds in northeast Syria, Turkey has populated the SNA (which it established) with Syrian refugees who fled Assad's civil war. The Kurdish Democratic Union Party's (PYD) fighting force (YPG) is broadly aligned with the PKK, Kurdish insurgents who have fought Turkey since the mid-1980s and whom Erdoğan regards as terrorists. Turkey's multiple invasions of northwest Syria's Kurds since 2016 were triggered by the Kurds' growing control over much of the "900 kilometer" long Syrian-Turkish border, which Erdoğan regarded as an "urgent" threat. His strategy was to "chip away" at Kurdish control of the border, separating them into enclaves, "and destroy[ing] them."

Spyer said Turkey's aim to "disempower" the Kurds is stymied by the SNA, an "unimpressive force" racked by conflict between tribal militia groups that are "mafia-like" and at war with each other "for petty criminal reasons." Turkey's enabling the HTS to fight and defeat part of the SNA in Afrin, a northwest Syrian area that had been under Kurdish rule until Turkey wrested control in 2018, caused a lot of speculation among foreign policy analysts. Spyer dismisses the idea that Erdoğan's opening the door for the HTS is a path to rapprochement with the Assad regime. Spyer said that Erdoğan is "an ideological man" and unlikely to abandon the "Sunni Arab rebels and Islamists and Jihad," since doing so "would be him essentially conceding defeat on a strategic level for a policy he's promoted over the last decade."

Instead, Spyer surmises that Erdoğan saw the "chaos" in the region under the SNA and reasoned that the HTS – jihadis who enforce Sharia law and strict governance to deal with any corruption or opposition – would be a "more stable and reliable partner" for the Turkish government to control. Russia, which until recently had restrained Erdoğan from launching additional offensives against the Kurds west of the Euphrates and is still "committed" to the Assad regime, is redeploying significant components of its forces from Syria to the war in Ukraine. In the meantime, the U.S. maintains a military presence east of the Euphrates to counter ISIS while also protecting the Kurds.

Erdoğan's support for the HTS is not a new development, given his history of supporting Jihadi and Islamist groups such as Hamas in Gaza, the short-lived Muslim Brotherhood (MB) government in Egypt, and the MB "franchise" Ennahda Party in Tunisia. Turkey is also "increasingly close" to "major non-NATO allies" Pakistan and Qatar, which also support Islamism and Jihadi groups. Spyer said the power plays in northwest Syria are of importance to the West because they are "part of a much larger picture." Consequently, Washington's and Jerusalem's foreign policy vis a vis Turkey should consider "the nature of the Turkish government."

This current Turkish government of Erdoğan and the AKP has basically made a strategic ally across the region of Sunni political Islam. ... The examples are countless, and they form part of a coherent regional strategy in which the Turkish government wishes to partner with anti-Western dangerous and violent Sunni Islamist forces.

By "hollowing out" Turkey's free media, its court system, and the top echelon of the Turkish military and security forces, Erdoğan's "support for political Islam" has had a chilling effect on the country. Spyer said Erdoğan's replacement of Kemalist nationalist officers with Islamists are part of his effort to create a "new Islamic Republic of Turkey." Turkey's membership in NATO and its support of an al-Qaeda affiliate are indicative of Erdoğan's double-dealing with the West while furthering his Islamist project.

Spyer said that Erdoğan's recent pursuit of a rapprochement with Israel is a result of his "pragmatic" calculations that it will enable him to recover from domestic problems that are putting his 2023 re-election bid at risk. Specifically, Turkey is facing "runaway inflation," with its economy "in an enormous mess." By "reconciling" with Israel and other U.S. regional allies, Erdoğan thinks he will get back in the good graces of the U.S.

Spyer, who is highly skeptical of Erdoğan's overtures, anticipates that Israel's newly elected prime minister Netanyahu will have little "patience" with Turkey's mercurial behavior towards the Jewish State and is loath to jeopardize the positive relationship Israel has forged with Cyprus and Greece, Turkey's adversaries. Turkey's rapprochement may be "on thin ice," despite Erdoğan's comments to stay the course towards Israel. Spyer believes that Erdoğan may resume his animus towards Israel after elections in Turkey pass, particularly when Hamas decides to act against Israel in the next round of relentless attacks on the Jewish State.



Spyer said in response to a question that since Israel wants to have "normal relations" with Turkey, "a NATO member and a U.S. allied country," it would not offer "overt support to the Kurds," but the survival of the Kurdish enclave in northeast Syria is in Israel's interest. "Apart from the moral reason" for Kurdish autonomy, "de facto," the enclave "forms a buffer against Iranian expansion east to west." If Iran attempted to smuggle fighters and weaponry across the Kurdish area, access to the enclave would enable Israel to "interdict at a time of war."

Spyer said that although Turkey, like Pakistan and Qatar, are "notional" close allies of the U.S. and the West, each actively supports Islamist Jihadi organizations committed to the destruction of the West by continuing to engage in duplicitous behavior that undermines the security of the U.S. and Israel, "largely cost free." He believes it "unwise" to continue the tolerance the U.S. and others have displayed in the past towards Turkey and its ideological Islamist allies. "I don't think it should be cost-free. ... I absolutely think that there should be a reckoning."

Jonathan Spyer is a Ginsburg/Milstein Writing Fellow at the Middle East Forum and director of the Middle East Center for Reporting and Analysis.

Belgium police stabbing suspect on a counterterrorism watch list

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/11/belgium-police-stabbing-suspect-on-counterterrorism-watch-list>

Nov 11 – A knifeman who killed one police officer and wounded another in Brussels was on a counterterrorism watch list, according to Belgium's authorities.

Federal prosecution magistrate Eric Van der Sypt said on Friday that the suspect, Yassine M – born in Brussels in 1990, carried out the attack around the city's Gard du Nord station after evening rush hour on Thursday. One of the police officers, identified only as 29-year-old Thomas M, was stabbed in the throat and died shortly afterwards. The second 23-year-old officer has been operated on for wounds to the right arm and is out of danger. The suspect, who had served six years in prison for "common law offences" between 2013 and 2019, went to a police station earlier on Thursday to express hatred for them.

Tim De Wolf, the head of the Brussels prosecutor's office, said the man made "incoherent remarks" at the station.

"He spoke of hatred against the police and asked to be taken care of psychologically," De Wolf said.

Yassine M was taken by officers to the psychiatric emergency room of a Brussels hospital but was not arrested or detained as he did not meet the criteria for involuntary committal, the officials said. "He was voluntary," De Wolf said, explaining that police had left the suspect at the hospital under the care of nurses. **"Later, the police contacted the hospital again to check whether the person had been kept under observation. It turned out that he had left the hospital,"** the Brussels prosecutor's office said.

Yassine was on a list drawn up by the Belgian observatory the Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis (OCAM), which monitors "extremism".

'Tragedy'

Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo posted a message of condolences to the family and friends of the dead officer. "Our police officers risk their lives every day to ensure the safety of our citizens," he said. "Today's tragedy demonstrates this once again."

After the stabbings, Yassine was almost immediately shot and wounded by another police officer who had rushed to the scene.

His condition was not disclosed, but authorities said he was still hospitalised on Friday and unable to be interrogated.

But he will now face charges of "murder and attempted murder within a terrorist context", Van der Sypt said. Authorities have come under fire for not arresting the suspect when he threatened the police. The Brussels prosecutor spokeswoman, Sarah Durant, said procedures stipulate that he had to be taken by police to a hospital since he had asked for psychological help.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS: (1) First of all, he is not a "knifeman" but a "terrorist". According to investigators, the perpetrator shouted "[Allahu Akbar](#)" as he attacked the patrolling police officers. (2) Whenever SOPs are not followed, bloodshed follows – in this case, all SOPs compromised. (3) What is the reason for the existence of OCAM if they cannot put aside extremists and terrorists.



The Jihad ... on Dogs

By Raymond Ibrahim

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63788/the-jihad-on-dogs>

Nov 10 – On Nov. 4, 2022, Khaled Abu Toameh, an Arab journalist, [tweeted](#): "The mayor of Hebron [a Palestinian city] offered 20 shekels to anyone who kills a dog in his city. Palestinians took to the streets, torturing and killing dozens of dogs."

The tweet was accompanied by a picture of what appeared to be Palestinians beating or striking to death a dog with sticks. Such barbaric behavior for what is otherwise considered in the USA as "man's best friend" is not uncommon in the Muslim world.

Iran Pitches in

Thus, on July 26, 2022, another, similar [tweet](#) appeared: "The savage rulers of the Islamic Republic of Iran decided to raid a dog shelter in the desert and kill all of the 300 dogs being taken care of by volunteers. Only a few dogs survived. The entire shelter turned into a bloodbath."

According to another [tweet](#) that appeared one day later, the bloodbath appears to have been much larger: "The ruthless regime in Iran has raided a dog shelter and killed more than 1700 stray dogs protected by volunteers. Very few dogs survived. This volunteer woman in tears holds a dead dog and says 'This was the most vulnerable & obedient one.'"



Baking to Death in Crates

And a few days before *that*, in [Qatar](#), on July 10, 2022:

A group of armed men stormed a secure facility in Qatar used to feed and shelter stray dogs, killing 29 of them and injuring others over claims that one of them had bitten one of the men's children.

One can go on and on with similar stories — in August, 2021, the Taliban [prevented](#) the rescue of 173 cats and dogs, preferring to see them "bake to death in their travel crates" — but the point should be clear.

No Religion Would Sanction This? Really?

To be sure, not all Muslims are inhumane to dogs. The Animal and Environment Association in Bethlehem, for example, the only animal shelter in the West Bank, [issued](#) a statement condemning the mayor of Hebron's recent "bloody campaign," which "resulted in killing many dogs, [by] shooting, hanging, abusing, running over them by cars. What

happened today is beyond humanity and ethics," the association continued, before adding, "No religion would accept such barbaric actions toward innocent animals."

Here we come to it: Is this true? Does *no* religion — including the one in question, Islam — "accept such barbaric actions toward innocent animals"?

Muhammad Hated Dogs. So Many Muslims Do

To answer this question, and as with all questions concerning what is and is not Islamic, we must turn to the prophet of Islam, Muhammad. And, as it happens, he detested dogs — to the point of calling for their



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arbitrary extermination. According Abdullah bin Omar, as recorded in the canonical (or *sahih*) hadith collection of [al-Muslim](#): "The Messenger of Allah used to order the killing of dogs, so we used to send [men] to Medina and its adjoining vicinity, and we spared no dog but rather killed it." [Translation of Arabic text.] Muhammad later revised his decision by allowing dogs that earn their keep — by herding, hunting, or guarding — to exist unmolested, though the hate for them remained: angels, the prophet of Allah warned, would never visit and therefore bless homes that keep dogs. In short, and as one anti-dog [fatwa](#), or Islamic decree, concludes:

We must ensure that Muslims continue to be averse to dogs, even in the midst of what the kuffaar [Western infidels] are used to do and what some Muslims have adopted of their habits.

Tough Luck for Blind Westerners with Guide Dogs

Despite all this, and because the West must pretend that any accusation against Islam must be false, it remains complicit in the abuse of dogs. According to one [report](#): "The U.S. government spends millions of dollars to train bomb-sniffing dogs essential to federal and local law enforcement capabilities but some are gifted to foreign countries that abuse them." The nations listed are Bahrain, Lebanon, Egypt, Indonesia, Morocco, and Syria — all Muslim-majority. Moreover, this hostility for dogs has reached and is causing problems in the West. Reports of Muslim cab drivers in Europe, Canada, Australia, and even the USA, refusing to service to blind passengers because they are accompanied by seeing eye-dogs are becoming increasingly common.

Nor do these Muslims shy away from admitting the source of their discrimination. For example, on [several separate occasions](#) in the UK, one blind man has been prevented from boarding taxi cabs because their Muslim drivers refused his seeing eye dog. One of them, Abandi Kassim, [cited](#) "my religion," as the reason for refusing him.

[Raymond Ibrahim](#) is the Judith Friedman Rosen Fellow at the Middle East Forum.

World Cup faces terrorist threat as Islamic State call for 'cleansing campaign' attacks

Source: <https://www.express.co.uk/sport/football/1696767/World-Cup-Qatar-England-Islamic-State-terrorist-attacks>



Nov 15 – Concerns have been raised about the safety of football fans and teams heading to Qatar for the [World Cup](#) after it emerged supporters of the Islamic State have encouraged its members to carry out [terrorist attacks](#) at the tournament in the Middle East, according to reports. Gareth Southgate's [England side](#) are one of the 32 teams heading for the month-long tournament in the Gulf despite issues relating to workers' human rights abuse and the country's ideology concerning the illegality of homosexuality in Qatar, and could be facing the threat of attacks whilst in the country.

According to Spanish outlet [Marca](#), messaging app Telegram has been used by supporters as a platform for IS supporters to send cryptic messages which involve detailed plans of attacks.

The report claims their plan is to plot attacks on the tournament by targeting individual nations that have attempted or successfully helped fight against the Islamic State, which would include teams from Western countries.

The attacks have been justified by the IS as "cleansing campaigns" to supporters, with terrorists told to carry out attacks by being encouraged to "be part of the World Cup in Qatar and score your goals. The goal is open." While some messages are more cryptic, others have referred to "violent and biological" acts against their perceived enemies.

Greatest Terrorism Threat to U.S.: Racially Motivated, Anti-Government, Anti-Authority, Domestic Violent Extremists Radicalized Online -- FBI

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221116-greatest-terrorism-threat-to-u-s-racially-motivated-antigovernment-antiauthority-domestic-violent-extremists-radicali>

Nov 16 – On Tuesday, 15 November, FBI Director Christopher Wray testified before the House Homeland Security Committee on global threats to the United States. The section in his presentation which discussed terrorist threats to the United States summarized an earlier [testimony](#) he made before the Senate Judiciary Committee, on 4 August.

Here is the section on terrorism from the 4 August testimony:



Top Terrorism Threats

Preventing terrorist attacks, from any place, by any actor, remains the FBI's top priority. The nature of the threat posed by terrorism – both international terrorism ("IT") and domestic terrorism ("DT") – continues to evolve.

The greatest terrorism threat to our Homeland is posed by lone actors or small cells who typically radicalize to violence online and look to attack soft targets with easily accessible weapons. We see these threats manifested within both Domestic Violent Extremists ("DVEs") and Homegrown Violent Extremists ("HVEs"), two distinct threats, both of which are located primarily in the United States and typically radicalize and mobilize to violence on their own. Individuals who commit violent criminal acts in furtherance of social or political goals stemming from domestic influences – some of which include racial or ethnic bias, or antigovernment or anti-authority sentiments – are described as DVEs, whereas HVEs are individuals who are inspired primarily by international terrorist actors but are not receiving individualized direction from Foreign Terrorist Organizations ("FTOs") or Specially Designated Global Terrorists ("SDGTs").

Domestic and Homegrown Violent Extremists are often motivated and inspired by a mix of social or political, ideological, and personal grievances against their targets, and more recently have focused on accessible targets to include civilians, law enforcement and the military, symbols or members of the U.S. Government, houses of worship, retail locations, and mass public gatherings. By selecting these types of soft targets, in addition to the insular nature of their radicalization and mobilization to violence and limited discussions with others regarding their plans, lone actors present a persistent challenge for law enforcement who work to detect and disrupt their activities before they occur.

The top domestic terrorism threat we face continues to be from DVEs we categorize as Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists ("RMVEs"), including those who advocate for the superiority of the white race, who were the primary source of lethal attacks perpetrated by DVEs in recent years. It is important to note that we have also recently seen an increase in fatal DVE attacks perpetrated by Anti-Government or Anti-Authority Violent Extremists, specifically Militia Violent Extremists and Anarchist Violent Extremists. Anti-Government or Anti-Authority Violent Extremists were responsible for three of the four lethal DVE attacks in 2020. Also, in 2020, we saw the first lethal attack committed by an Anarchist Violent Extremist in over 20 years. These Anti-Government or Anti-Authority Violent Extremists have specifically targeted law enforcement and the military as well as institutions or members of the U.S. Government.

The number of FBI investigations of suspected DVEs has more than doubled since the spring of 2020. In January, we marked the one-year anniversary of the January 6 siege of the U.S. Capitol, which has led to unprecedented efforts by the Department of Justice, including the FBI, to investigate and hold accountable all who engaged in violence, destruction of property, and other criminal activity on that day. To date, the Department has arrested and charged more than 850 individuals who took part in the Capitol siege.

The FBI uses all tools available at its disposal to combat domestic terrorism. These efforts represent a critical part of the National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism, which was released in June 2021, and which sets forth, a comprehensive, whole of government policy to address the many facets of the domestic terrorism threat.

The FBI assesses HVEs are the greatest, most immediate international terrorism ("IT") threat to the Homeland. As I have described, HVEs are people located and radicalized to violence primarily in the United States, who are not receiving individualized direction from FTOs but are inspired largely by foreign terrorist organizations including the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham ("ISIS") and al-Qa'ida and their affiliates to commit violence. An HVE's lack of a direct connection with an FTO or SDGT, ability to rapidly mobilize without detection, and use of encrypted communications pose significant challenges to our ability to proactively identify and disrupt potential violent attacks.

The FBI remains concerned that FTOs, such as ISIS and al-Qa'ida and their affiliates, intend to carry out or inspire large-scale attacks in the United States. Despite its loss of physical territory in Iraq and Syria, ISIS remains relentless in its campaign of violence against the United States and our partners – both here at home and overseas. ISIS and its supporters continue to aggressively promote its hate-fueled rhetoric and attract like-minded violent extremists with a willingness to conduct attacks against the United States and our interests abroad. ISIS' successful use of social media and messaging applications to attract individuals is of continued concern to us. Like other foreign terrorist groups, ISIS advocates for lone offender attacks in the United States and Western countries via videos and other English language propaganda that have, at times, specifically advocated for attacks against civilians, the military, law enforcement and intelligence community personnel.

Al-Qa'ida maintains its desire to both conduct and inspire large-scale, spectacular attacks. Because continued pressure has degraded some of the group's senior leadership, we assess that, in the near term, al-Qa'ida is more likely to continue to focus on cultivating its international affiliates and supporting small-scale, readily achievable attacks in regions such as East and West



Africa. Over the past year, propaganda from al-Qa'ida leaders continued to seek to inspire individuals to conduct their own attacks in the United States and other Western nations.

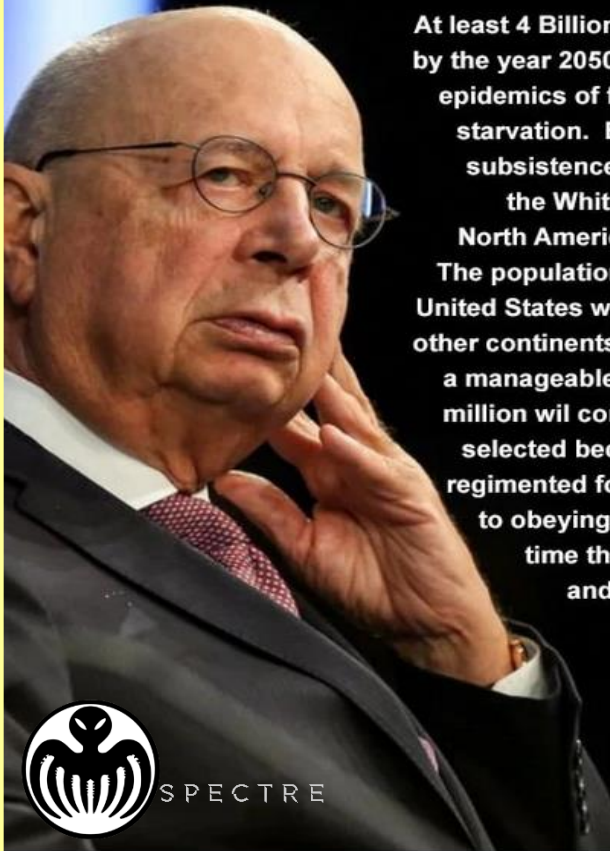
Iran and its global proxies and partners, including Iraqi Shia militant groups, continue to attack and plot against the United States and our allies throughout the Middle East in response to U.S. pressure. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force ("IRGC-QF") continues to provide support to militant resistance groups and terrorist organizations. Iran also continues to support Lebanese Hizballah and other terrorist groups. Hizballah has sent operatives to build terrorist infrastructures worldwide. The arrests of individuals in the United States allegedly linked to Hizballah's main overseas terrorist arm, and their intelligence collection and procurement efforts, demonstrate Hizballah's interest in long-term contingency planning activities here in the Homeland. Hizballah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah also has threatened retaliation for the death of IRGC-QF Commander Qassem Soleimani.

As an organization, we continually adapt and rely heavily on the strength of our federal, State, local, Tribal, territorial, and international partnerships to combat all terrorist threats to the United States and our interests. To that end, we use all available lawful investigative techniques and methods to combat these threats while continuing to collect, analyze, and share intelligence concerning the threat posed by violent extremists, in all their forms, who desire to harm Americans and U.S. interests. We will continue to share information and encourage the sharing of information among our numerous partners via our Joint Terrorism Task Forces across the country, and our Legal Attaché offices around the world.



WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

**Klaus Schwab is the
Founder & Chairman of the
World Economic Forum
Author of the book,
"Covid - 19: The Great Reset"**



At least 4 Billion "useless eaters" shall be eliminated by the year 2050 by means of limited wars, organized epidemics of fatal rapid acting-acting diseases and starvation. Energy, food and watershal be kept at subsistence levels for the non-elite, starting with the White populations of Western Europe and North America and then spreading to other races. The population of Canada, Western Europe and the United States will be decimated more rapidly than on other continents, until the worlds population reaches a manageable level of 1 billion, of which which 500 million wil consist of Chinese and Japanese races, selected because they are people who have been regimented for centuries and who are accustomed to obeying authority without question. From the time there shall be artificially contrived food and water shortages and medical care to remind the masses that their very existence depends on the goodwill of the Committee of 300.

**An Excerpt from his book,
"Covid - 19: The Great Reset"**



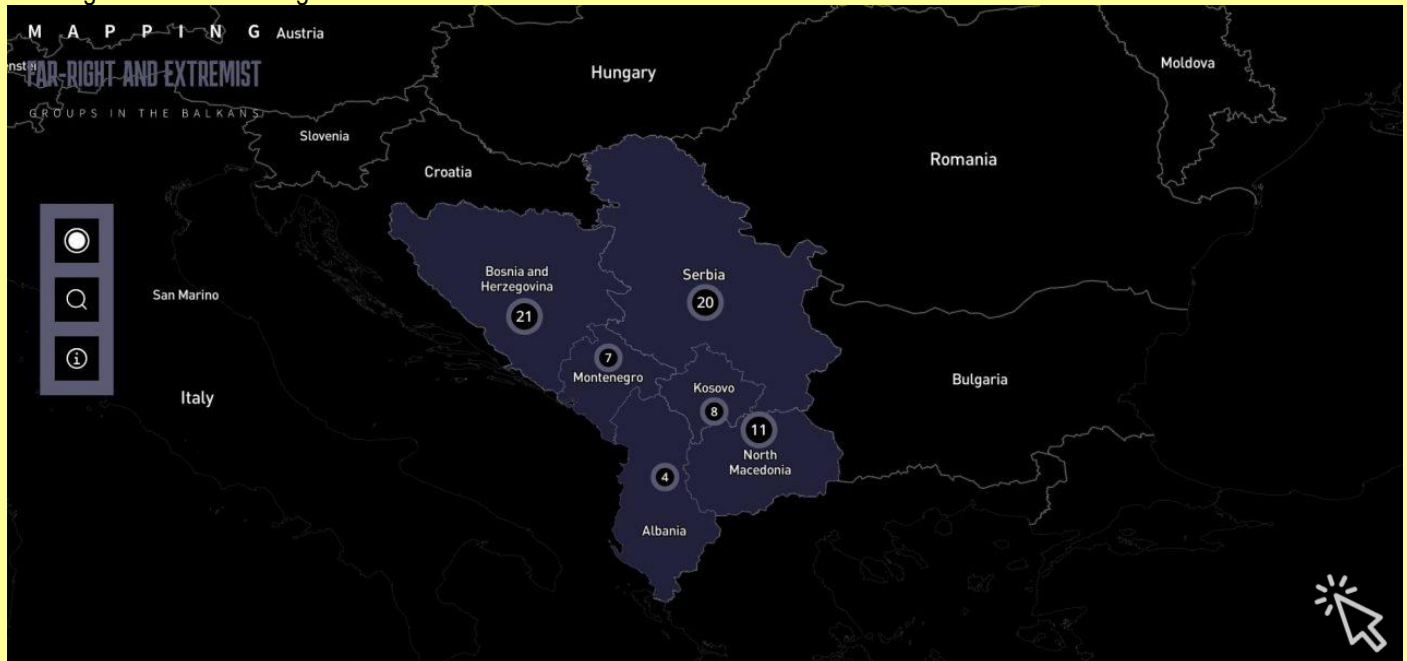
SPECTRE



BIRN Launches Interactive Map of Far-Right and Extremist Groups

Source: <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/11/16/birn-launches-interactive-map-of-far-right-and-extremist-groups/>

Nov 16 – The Balkan Investigative Reporting Network has published an interactive map providing detailed information about scores of far-right and extremist organisations in six countries in the Balkans.



BIRN on Wednesday launched [an interactive map](#) giving detailed information about 71 far-right and extremist groups and organisations operating in six countries in the Western Balkans.

The map, a joint effort between BIRN and independent investigative journalists and researchers, was launched at a conference in Sarajevo entitled 'Far-Right Extremism in the Balkans: Groups, Trends and Political Support'.

The map's database documents both formal and informal extremist and far-right groups and organisations, including 21 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 20 in Serbia, 11 in North Macedonia, eight in Kosovo, seven in Montenegro and four in Albania.

It includes details about their members, including names and aliases, as well as their official status and activities, sources of funding and affiliations with other organisations. It also includes details of court cases in which members of the organisations have appeared. BIRN Bosnia and Herzegovina's director Denis Dzidic said that the information presented in the interactive map provides the public with more information about far-right and extremist organisations and the potential threats that they pose.

"For the first time ever, we have a map that collects relevant information on far-right and extremist groups in the entire region," said Dzidic. "Their actions distort the process of building a stable and healthy society which we are fighting for every day. It is therefore important to us that this map be a source of information that will recognise all the threats that such organisations and groups may create," he added. Dzidic explained that Bosnia and Herzegovina has finally recognised the threat from far-right and extremist groups through its national Strategy for Prevention and Fight against Terrorism. This makes reporting on such organisations and groups' activities of even more important, he said. The map's database took several months to collate – a process that was complicated by the fact that the majority of these organisations and groups are not registered and their activities can only be monitored online.

The map is currently available in English, but will soon be published in the local languages of the countries included. It will also be updated when new organisations and groups are established and when new far-right or extremist activists emerge.

"One of our permanent missions is to contribute to a freer and safer world. By creating a thoroughly checked and researched tool for fighting the constant threat from far-right and extremist groups, especially in the Balkans, we want to contribute to those efforts as much as possible," Dzidic explained.

The interactive map was created as part of a project entitled 'The Future of Extremism in the Western Balkans', which is funded by the government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. During the course of the project, several studies and analysis pieces about far-right and extremist groups in the region have been published, as well as a number of articles about terrorism trials in Western Balkan countries.



Paris Will Host the 2024 Olympics. Now, France Has to Ensure They're Safe

Source: <https://time.com/4943235/paris-olympics-2024-terrorism-isis-security-threat/>



Please, reconsider!

The banks of the river Seine can accommodate 100,000 people who will have to buy tickets, while another 500,000 will be able to watch for free from the street level above. 35,000 security forces would be deployed for the opening ceremony, with organizers told to add 3,000 privately hired security staff.

Sep 15 – The timing in Paris early Friday morning could hardly have been more ominous. As the Mayor of Paris and top French officials were on a flight from Lima, Peru, where the International Olympic Committee had [awarded them the right to host the Summer Games](#) in 2024, events were unfolding on the ground.

As the airplane approached Paris, a man [wielding a knife lunged at a soldier in the heart of the city](#), in the heavily used Chatelet Metro station, while expressing support for ISIS, according to police. The timing was almost certainly unintended, and the attacker arrested before he inflicted any injuries. And yet, the assault served as a telling reminder—if any was needed—of a crucial question that will loom over the city ahead of August 2024: Just how safe will the Paris Olympics be?

Of course, these Games are still seven years away. But officials say they are already intently working on how to properly secure Paris for the hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people they expect to pour into the city for the Olympics.

The effort is particularly focused on the 35 sporting arenas where the Olympics will take place—including beach volleyball at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, swimming and rowing on the Seine River, and horse-jumping at the Chateau of Versailles. Another major site will be the Olympic Village, planned for about 14,500 athletes, that will be built in the low-income, northeast district of Seine-Saint-Denis. “We know that the Games constitute a target,” Etienne Thobois, Director General of the Paris 2024 committee, [told the French paper Libération on Thursday](#), hours after the International Olympic Committee awarded Paris the 2024 games in Lima. “We rely on very precise knowledge of our sites, the advice of police, and the experience of Euro 2016,” he said.

This was a reference to the [European soccer championships which took place in Paris and across France last year](#), little more than six months after ISIS-trained gunmen-suicide bombers rampaged through the capital, killing 130 people at sidewalk cafés and a music hall, on a balmy Friday evening.

Yet the Championships passed without major incident; the large contingent of soldiers and police faced more problems from brawling fans than from terrorists. For the Olympics, Paris will install extensive videosurveillance systems around sporting venues and the athletes’ housing, Thobois says.

All of that will cost money, though — and how much has become a matter of hot debate. Out of a budget of \$7.3 billion to host the Games—a fraction of the \$51 billion Beijing spent on the 2008 Games, and just over half the amount spent to hold last year’s Rio Olympics—the Paris organizing committee has so far budgeted only €186 million (\$221 million) for security.

Experts believe that total is far too low. They point to London, which budgeted almost exactly the same amount for security during the Olympic Summer Games in 2012. That was before a series of deadly attacks on the London transport network hit the U.K. capital, one day after they won that hosting bid in 2005. By the time the London Olympics opened in summer 2012, security costs had ballooned to about \$1 billion.



“Paris could find itself in a similar situation,” says Alexandre Delaigue, an economist who has heavily criticized the low-ball budgeting of the Paris Olympics organizers. “It is impossible to predict the security context of 2024,” [he told *Libération* on Thursday](#). Parisians have good reason to be wary. In the nearly two years since the Paris attacks of November 2015, France has been under a national state of emergency, with the military and police having broad powers to search and arrest suspects, and hold them for extended periods. The signs of alert security are everywhere in Paris: Armed soldiers and gendarmes now patrol major avenues and train stations, and security guards search shoppers’ bags at stores.

The specter of another major attack courses through Paris like a low background hum. Many here believe it's inevitable, but few discuss the possibility openly. Numerous attacks or attempted attacks have occurred this year alone, including at major tourist hubs like [Notre-Dame Cathedral](#), the [Louvre Museum](#), [Orly Airport](#), and [Champs-Élysée Avenue](#). Many mirror Friday’s attack, in which lone assailants target armed personnel with knives or firearms.

And the threat could be with France for years to come. Europe’s security forces fear that terrorist incidents could rise, and turn far more professional, as large numbers of ISIS’s foreign fighters from Europe begin drifting back home from battlefields in Syria and Iraq. The jihadist group’s “physical caliphate” has almost entirely been defeated by the U.S.-led coalition. Now the surviving fighters—well trained and battle-ready—are coming home, some slipping in unnoticed on their E.U. passports, in order to avoid arrest.

“This return migration has already started,” Otso Iho, senior analyst of Jane’s Terrorism and Insurgency Center in London told TIME on Thursday. In the years ahead, “they are likely to inject added capability to existing Islamic networks, combat experience, small-arms handling, ideological rigor, ability to construct explosives, etc.,” Iho says.

This presents a particular issue for France. About 1,800 French joined jihadist groups in Iraq and Syria over the past five years, the greatest number of any European contingent, [according to the Soufan Group](#), a terrorism research organization. Whether these returnees will still pose a threat in 2024 is impossible to predict. Parisians now have seven years to watch, wait and plan ahead.

UAE participates in international conference on combating financing of terrorism in New Delhi

Source: <https://www.bignewsnetwork.com/news/273114403/uae-participates-in-international-conference-on-combating-financing-of-terrorism-in-new-delhi>

Nov 19 – The UAE, represented by the Ministry of Interior, participated in the 'No Money for Terror' Ministerial Conference on Counter-Terrorism Financing held in the Indian capital, New Delhi, with the aim of mobilising efforts to combat terrorism and eliminate its financing.

The UAE delegation was headed by Maj. General Khalifa Hareb Al Khailli, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, and included Brigadier Abdul Aziz Al Ahmad, Deputy Director General of the Federal Criminal Police, and a number of representatives of the concerned authorities.

The opening of the conference was attended by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India; Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation; numerous country delegates; and representatives of a number of law enforcement organizations and specialised bodies, such as the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and regional and international organizations, including the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The conference, which aims to elevate international cooperation in the counterterrorism field, discussed ways to enhance international collaboration and coordination with regards to the technical, legal, and regulatory aspects of countering terrorist financing. It included a number of sessions on topics related to global terrorism trends and terrorist financing; the use of formal and informal channels, emerging technology, and the "dark web" by terrorists; international cooperation to address challenges in combatting terrorist financing; the misuse of financial institutions, remittances, and non-profit organizations; the link between organised crime and terrorist financing, and the role of public-private partnerships in countries working to combat terrorist financing.

This is the third edition of the conference, which was first held in Paris, in 2018, and held for the second time in Melbourne, Australia, in 2019.



At least 5 people killed, 18 injured in shooting at LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado Springs

Source: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/11/20/us/colorado-springs-shooting-gay-nightclub/index.html>



Nov 20 – At least five people were killed and 18 others injured in a mass shooting at an LGBTQ nightclub on Saturday in Colorado Springs, Colorado, according to police. Authorities received numerous 911 calls starting at 11:57 p.m. and responded to the scene at Club Q, said Colorado Springs Police Lt. Pamela Castro. “They did locate one individual who we believe to be the suspect inside,” said Castro. “At this point in time, the suspect is being treated, but is in custody.”

In a [statement](#) on social media, Club Q said it was “devastated by the senseless attack on our community” and thanked “the quick reactions of heroic customers that subdued the gunman and ended this hate attack.” Police did not release details of how the shooting ended, but Castro said, “this was not an officer-involved shooting.”

The location of the shooting is reminiscent of the 2016 attack at an LGBTQ nightclub in Orlando, Florida, in which a [gunman who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State killed 49 people](#) and wounded at least 53.

Colorado has been the site of some of the most heinous mass shootings in US history, including the [1999 shooting in Columbine High School](#) and the [2012 movie theater shooting in Aurora](#).

Police declined to speak about a possible motive in this latest shooting. Club Q posted earlier in the day that its Saturday night lineup would feature a punk and alternative show at 9 p.m. followed by a dance party at 11. The club also planned to hold a drag brunch and a drag show on Sunday for Transgender Day of Remembrance. The club’s website now says it will be closed until further notice. Castro did not clarify whether the suspect was included in the count of people who were injured in the shooting. Colorado Springs Fire Capt. Mike Smaldino said 11 ambulances responded to the scene after multiple 911 calls were received. “We will be here for many, many hours to come,” said Castro, adding that the FBI is on the scene and assisting. At least five patients are being treated at UCHealth Memorial Hospital Central, vice president for hospital communications Dan Weaver said. Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, the nation’s [first openly gay governor](#), issued a statement calling the attack “horrific, sickening and devastating” and offered state resources to local law enforcement. “We are eternally grateful for the brave individuals who blocked the gunman likely saving lives in the process and for the first responders who responded swiftly to this horrific shooting,” he said. “Colorado stands with our LGBTQ community and everyone impacted by this tragedy as we mourn together.”

EDITOR’S COMMENT: It would be no surprise to read an ISIS statement connecting the attack to LGBT restrictions at the FIFA World Cup 2022.

Qatar World Cup 2022: Al-Qaeda urges Muslims to shun 'immoral' tournament

Source: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/qatar-world-cup-al-qaeda-muslims-shun-immoral-tournament>

Nov 20 – Al-Qaeda’s regional branch has urged Muslims around the world to shun [the World Cup](#) in [Qatar](#), though it stopped short of threatening attacks or promoting violence in connection with the event, according to a statement reported by a monitoring group. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the group’s Yemen-based branch, criticized Qatar for “bringing immoral people, homosexuals, sowers of corruption and atheism into the Arabian Peninsula” and said the event served to divert attention from the “occupation of Muslim countries and their oppression”.



"We warn our Muslim brothers from following this event or attending it," said the statement, reported by the SITE Intelligence group on Saturday, a day before the tournament opens in a predominantly Muslim country for the first time.

Same-sex acts between consenting adults in private are a criminal offence in Qatar, punishable by up to seven years in prison.

World Cup organisers, in response to criticism over Qatar's human rights record, including LGBTQ+ rights as well as social restrictions, have said that everyone, no matter their sexual orientation or background, is welcome during the event.

Though alcohol consumption is legal in Qatar, it is banned in public places and can only be bought in a limited range of hotels and clubs, where a pint of beer can cost as much as \$18.

The country has opened up designated areas, including fan zones, for the sale of alcohol during the tournament.

Qatar's World Cup chief has potentially ruled out prosecuting drunk fans by saying anyone intoxicated would be sent to special areas to sober up, [and fans at one venue](#) will be allowed to drink for up to 19 hours a day.

Qatar, a small country with a population of about three million, mostly foreign workers, has said that it trained more than 50,000 people to provide security during the World Cup, with foreign forces helping out under Qatari command.

Many Children Returned from Syria Detention Doing Well

Source: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/11/21/my-son-just-another-kid/experiences-children-repatriated-camps-isis-suspects-and>



Nov 21 – Many children repatriated from detention camps for Islamic State (ISIS) suspects and their families in northeast [Syria](#) are successfully reintegrating in their home countries, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. Governments should remove any barriers to effective reintegration and ensure that their return policies are not causing unnecessary harm to their child nationals.

The 63-page report, "[My Son is Just Another Kid: Experiences of Children Repatriated from Camps for ISIS Suspects and Their Families in Northeast Syria](#)," documents the experiences of approximately 100 children who have been repatriated or returned to [France](#), [Germany](#), [Kazakhstan](#), [the Netherlands](#), [Sweden](#), [the United Kingdom](#), and [Uzbekistan](#) between 2019 and 2022. Human Rights Watch found that despite years of detention in life-threatening conditions with insufficient water, fresh food, and health care, and little to no access to education, many of the children appear to be adjusting well and performing well in school. Many have reintegrated smoothly and enjoy a wide range of activities with their peers, including football, skating, cycling, dancing, crafts, and music.

"Children rescued from the horrors of the camps are doing well in school, making friends, and building new lives in their home countries," said [Jo Becker](#), children's rights advocacy director at Human Rights Watch. "Despite enduring unimaginable suffering, many are reintegrating remarkably well."

Human Rights Watch surveyed 81 family members, foster parents, social workers, and teachers, and interviewed family members, lawyers, legal guardians, and mental health professionals about returned or repatriated children. When asked how the child is adjusting, 89 percent of survey respondents reported that the child was doing "very well" or "quite well." Seventy-three percent said the child was performing "very well" or "quite well" in school.

A grandfather of several children repatriated to Sweden in 2019 said: "It is possible, fully possible, for reintegration and recovery of children. My grandchildren are evidence of this. They have recovered in the most incredible way.... All children should have the opportunity to get a new chance in life."

Approximately 56,000 people, nearly all of them women and children, are arbitrarily detained in al-Hol and Roj, two large, locked camps primarily holding the wives and children of male ISIS suspects in northeast



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Syria. More than 18,000 are from Syria, approximately 28,000 are from neighboring Iraq, and more than 10,000 are from about 60 other countries. More than 60 percent are children.

Most were detained in February and March 2019, when regional fighters backed by a [United States](#)-led military coalition toppled the last remnant of the self-declared ISIS “caliphate” in northeast Syria. Their detention is clearly arbitrary and unlawful, Human Rights Watch said. None of them have been brought before a court to determine the necessity or legality of their detention.

Nearly 80 percent of the children in the camps are under age 12, and 30 percent are age 5 or younger. Many have spent the majority, if not all, of their lives unlawfully detained in northeast Syria in what amounts to collective punishment, a [war crime](#).

The regional authorities, the Kurdish-led Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, have repeatedly said they lack the resources to detain the foreigners and have appealed to countries to bring their nationals home. Top United Nations officials have also repeatedly called on governments to repatriate their nationals. But many countries have stalled or refused to take any or all of them back.

Human Rights Watch also identified policy choices by repatriating governments that made it more difficult for children to reintegrate, and in some cases, even caused additional harm. In some countries – including [Belgium](#), France, the Netherlands, and Sweden – authorities have immediately separated children from their mothers if the mother is being investigated or charged with ISIS-related offenses. That has caused children significant emotional and psychological distress, family members and mental health professionals said.

In some countries, extended family members, such as grandparents, face lengthy investigations before they are allowed to care for returned children or have contact with them, even if they have been in contact with the authorities for years. Human Rights Watch identified the case of a girl who arrived in France at age 5 but spent 3 years in foster care before her grandparents were allowed to care for her. Ensuring contact with family members as soon as possible can help provide stability and support successful reintegration, particularly if the child’s parents are deceased or detained, Human Rights Watch said.

Interviewees and survey respondents also said governments could improve children’s reintegration by quickly providing birth certificates, identity cards, and other documents.

Human Rights Watch found that some children exhibit emotional or behavioral issues related to trauma they experienced while living under ISIS or in the detention camps, or struggle to catch up in school. However, mental health professionals emphasize that the learning assistance and psychosocial support extended to other children who have survived war, loss of loved ones, and captivity, such as those who were refugees or trafficked, can facilitate their successful reintegration.

Since 2019, approximately three dozen countries have repatriated or otherwise helped bring home some or many of their detained nationals. Some countries, including [Denmark](#), [Finland](#), Germany, Kazakhstan, [Kyrgyzstan](#), [Russia](#), Sweden, [Tajikistan](#), the US, and Uzbekistan have now repatriated many or most of their nationals. Russia and Central Asian countries have collectively repatriated approximately 1,000 children, nearly twice as many as all Western nations combined.

By contrast, the UK has repatriated only 10 children, leaving an estimated 30 to 60 others in the camps, and has stripped several of the remaining 16 women of their citizenship. Canada has brought home or accepted the returns of only 4 children and 3 women, with an estimated 23 children and 19 women remaining in the camps.

France increased repatriations in the second half of 2022, bringing back 32 women and 77 children since July. In October, Australia brought back 4 women and 13 children, its first repatriation since 2019. The Netherlands repatriated 12 women and 28 children on October 31.

Security and humanitarian experts warn that the already dire conditions in the detention camps are deteriorating, and becoming increasingly dangerous, as detainees loyal to ISIS have attacked other detainees, camp authorities, and aid workers, and guards and detainees clash. Hundreds of children [have died](#) in the camps in the past three-and-a-half years, many from hypothermia, malnutrition, and preventable diseases.

“The greatest risk is not bringing the children home but leaving them in the camps where they risk death, illness, recruitment by ISIS, and indefinite detention for the suspected crimes of their parents,” Becker said. “Countries with nationals in the camps should urgently allow them to return home and do their best to keep mothers and children together.”

EDITOR’S COMMENT: Perhaps children up to the age of 12 are adapting well to their new environment. I doubt that this is the case with older children and adolescents especially those who have seen their fathers killed or captured. In addition, living in refugee camps with people/children with similar experiences and beliefs might seed revenge behavior that will flourish later in life.



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CHEM NEWS



Controlling Novichok nerve agents after the Skripal and Navalny incidents

By Dr. Stefano Costanzi, and Dr. Gregory D. Koblentz

NCT Magazine | October 2022 (5/17)

Source: <https://nct-magazine.com/nct-magazine-october-2022/controlling-novichok-nerve-agents-after-the-skripal-and-navalny-incidents>

Since Novichok nerve agents came to public attention following a high-profile assassination attempt in 2018, the international chemical weapons nonproliferation regime has taken important, but incomplete, steps to reduce the risk of these chemical weapons proliferating. The Chemical Weapons Convention has added some Novichok agents to its list of chemicals subject to declaration and verification and the Australia Group has included some Novichok precursors to its list of dual-use chemicals that should be subject to export controls. However, gaps in coverage of Novichok agents and precursors by the chemical weapon nonproliferation regime remain in a way that can be exploited by proliferators. We recommend adopting a family-based approach to controlling Novichok agents and precursors and leveraging advances in cheminformatics to facilitate implementation of this more comprehensive approach to nonproliferation and export controls.

Novichok agents are a class of nerve agents developed by the Soviet Union beginning in the 1970s. In recent years, these once obscure agents have become notorious due to their use in the assassination attempts of Sergey Skripal in 2018 and Alexei Navalny in 2020. The chemical structures of Novichoks, also called A-series agents, were publicly revealed in the 2009 book *State Secrets* by Vil Mirzayanov, an analytical chemist formerly involved in the Soviet chemical weapons program. Of note, these structures are different from those of the better known, canonical nerve agents of the G series, such as sarin or soman, and the V series, such as VX or VR. Because of these differences, Novichoks and precursors for their synthesis ended up not being included in lists of chemicals that support chemical weapons disarmament and nonproliferation frameworks. In fact, Mirzayanov suggests in his book that, as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), was under negotiation, one of the motives behind the development of the Novichok agents was the intention to the obligations of the forthcoming treaty.

The Chemical Weapons Convention Schedules and the Australia Group Chemical Weapons Precursors List

The CWC is an international disarmament and nonproliferation treaty that poses a complete ban on chemical weapons. It entered into force in 1997 and enjoys almost universal membership. To support its verification regime, the CWC uses a tiered system composed of three schedules. Going from Schedule 1 to Schedule 3, the schedules contain chemicals that, beyond their chemical-weapon-related role, have increasingly legitimate commercial applications. Nerve agents of the G and V series are listed in Schedule 1. Conversely, as mentioned above, Novichoks were not included in the original schedules. It must be emphasized that this does not mean that Novichok agents were not banned by the treaty. Article II of the treaty codifies the general purpose criterion, according to which any toxic chemical intentionally used or intended to be used against humans or animals to cause “death, temporary incapacitation or permanent harm” is to be considered a chemical weapon. However, listing chemicals of concerns in the CWC schedules indeed strengthens the treaty’s declaration requirements and verification regime.

●► [Read the full article at the source's URL.](https://nct-magazine.com/nct-magazine-october-2022/controlling-novichok-nerve-agents-after-the-skripal-and-navalny-incidents)

Dr. Stefano Costanzi is a Professor of Chemistry at American University, in Washington DC, with an educational background in both the chemical sciences and international affairs. His current teaching and research interests mainly focus on the countering of chemical weapons. He is particularly interested in the analysis of gaps in current policies and practices that allow the proliferation of chemical weapons and in the conceptualization and development of solutions and tools to narrow them, based on a blend of chemistry, information technology, and science-based policy. Moreover, Dr. Costanzi is interested in modeling the interactions of chemicals with living organisms, through computational chemistry techniques.

Gregory D. Koblentz is an Associate Professor and Director of the Biodefense Graduate Program at George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government. Dr. Koblentz is also an Associate Faculty at the Center for Security Policy Studies at George Mason and a member of the Scientist Working Group on Biological and Chemical and Security at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in Washington, DC. In 2016, he briefed the United Nations Security Council on the impact of emerging technologies on the threat posed by non-state actors armed with weapons of mass destruction. Dr. Koblentz is the author of *Living Weapons: Biological Warfare and International Security* (Cornell University Press, 2009) and co-author of *Editing Biosecurity: Needs and Strategies for Governing Genome Editing* (George Mason



University and Stanford University, 2018). He has published widely on issues related to biodefense, dual-use research, and the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. He received a PhD in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a MPP from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Novichok Terrorism: Prospect or Fever Dream

By Mr. Markus Binder

NCT Magazine | October 2022 (6/17)

Source: <https://nct-magazine.com/nct-magazine-october-2022/novichok-terrorism-prospect-or-fever-dream>

There has been an explosion of public and official interest in the so-called novichok family of fourth generation nerve agents following their high-profile use by state actors. The Islamic State's use of chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria, and chemical plots by other groups oblige us to consider whether terrorists, or other violent non-state actors, will attempt to obtain and use novichoks, and if so, could they do so successfully?

Drawing on the Profiles of Incidents Involving CBRN and Non-State Actors (POICN) database's unique record of terrorist CBRN events and START research we conclude that terrorists will likely develop an interest in novichoks. Unless they are gifted novichoks by a government this interest is unlikely to result in significant threats due to terrorists groups lacking the skills or resources to produce these agents themselves.

History of use of chemical agents by nonstate actors

Drawing on the START/UWT POICN database's unique record of terrorist CBRN events over the last thirty years we can form an adequately clear, at least for an audience without access to classified sources, understanding of the frequency and other characteristics of chemical pursuit and use. Firstly, chemical terrorism is extremely rare. From 1990 to 2020 there were 426 events in which terrorists considered, sought, or employed chemical agents compared to several hundred thousand conventional terrorist events. Of these 426 events only 225 involved the use of an agent and less than half of these resulted in even minor injuries. Only a handful of incidents involved the use of sophisticated agents (sarin & VX) with all but one of these being the work of the Aum Shinrikyo cult and the sole outlier involving the 2004 use of an abandoned CW shell as an IED in Iraq. In the period 2014 to 2016 the Islamic State was able to undertake limited deployments of mustard agent, which is not considered a particularly complex agent, that it had produced itself, apparently after considerable effort. All other agents employed were either prepackaged toxic industrial chemicals or other found chemicals. The clear message from this history is that chemical use is rare and typically unsophisticated, but does occur, and remains of interest to a range of extremists.

●► [Read the full article at the source's URL.](#)

Mr. Markus Binder is a Senior Researcher with the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism's (START) Unconventional Weapons and Technologies (UWT) division. His primary area of research is Violent Non-State Actor (VNSA) pursuit and use of CB agents. In this capacity he conducts research into the acquisition and use of CBRN agents or materials by VNSAs including their motivations. Mr. Binder also manages two START databases record ideologically motivated VNSA CBRN events and perpetrators. He is taking an increasing interest in the use of CBRN agents or materials by criminal actors.

Mr. Binder has been engaged in the study of VNSA CBRN use, and national-level WMD proliferation since 1999. He has been a START researcher since 2013. From 2004-2007 he was Deputy Director of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) in Monterey, California.

The Story and Functioning of Nerve Agents

By Mr. Bert Arissen

NCT Magazine | October 2022 (8/17)

Source: <https://nct-magazine.com/nct-magazine-october-2022/the-story-and-functioning-of-nerve-agents>

Organophosphorus-based chemical warfare agents (OP CWAs) are among the most toxic substances we know and, although the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the Hague has in the last 20 years succeeded in destroying 95% of the worldwide stock of chemical weapons, they are still a threat in 2022. There are several families of these substances which are discussed below. What makes them



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scary and as a potential weapon of mass destruction attractive is that they deregulate an important part of our neurotransmission and have neither smell nor taste. Therefore, they can enter our body relatively unnoticed via the respiratory, gastrointestinal tracts or via the skin.

In fact, the work on this started in Germany in the early 1930's. While studying insecticides the Germans discovered a very lethal substance which they called Tabun (after Taboo). In 1938 followed Substance 146, later changed in Sarin. They belong to the so-called G- series, associated with Germany. Besides Tabun (GA) and **Sarin** (GB) this series contains Soman (GD), Ethyl sarin (GE), Chlorosarin (GC) and Cyclosarin (GF).

In the 50's British military chemists continued research on these agents and created O-Ethyl-S-[2(diisopropylamino)ethyl] also known as VX. V stands for venomous. At that time it was seen as such an important weapon that the Americans were willing to share the secrets of the hydrogen bomb with the British in exchange for the recipe. Besides VX, 4 other organophosphate esters were developed, all belonging to the V-family. They are called VE, VG, VM and VR. The Russian newcomer Novichok is based on the latter, about which more later.

First a bit about the workings of all these agents, called nerve agents. In biochemistry we know reversible and irreversible inhibitors. The latter completely flatten enzymes and are therefore dangerous. And the above substances all belong to that category. The enzyme that is paralyzed by them is acetylcholinesterase (AChE). This enzyme normally breaks down the neurotransmitter Acetylcholine, which fulfills a whole range of important functions in our body, such as movement, breathing, heartbeat, production of stomach acid, etc

The AChE active site is composed of a catalytic triad, formed by the amino-acids serine, glutamine and histidine. This trio actually works really nicely together. The alcohol group on serine is not a very strong nucleophile, but it does cooperate with the other two. The resulting alkoxide on serine now becomes a strong nucleophile and will carry out a nucleophilic attack on a carbon atom of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, so that it is split into acetic acid and choline for reuse.

However, if organophosphates are available, such as the nerve agents, the AChE is blocked and the neural junctions are literally flooded with the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, telling your muscles to contract continuously (cholinergic crisis). So does your heart and lungs and a horrible death follows, mostly by asphyxiation or cardiac arrest.

●► **Read the full article at the source's URL.**

Mr. Bert Arissen is originally an agricultural engineer. In that capacity, he worked from 1991 to 1998 in second-line veterinary medicine, as a zootechnical expert at the Department of Veterinary Epidemiology. From 1998 to the present, he works as a chemistry en physics teacher in secondary education. He also has his own company as a nuclear radiation expert. His expertise lies mainly in the field of radiation protection in industrial and medical applications of radiation. Bert Arissen has worked a lot with organophosphates in the past and knows the risks of exposure from his own experience. That and a chemical accident in which he was involved about 10 years ago motivated him to delve deeper into substances that have a profound effect on our nervous system, including nerve agents and personal protective measures against them.

Planning and Decision Framework: Large-Scale Chemical Incident Consequence Management

By **Mr. Joselito Ignacio**

NCT Magazine | October 2022 (9/17)

Source: <https://nct-magazine.com/nct-magazine-october-2022/planning-and-decision-framework-large-scale-chemical-incident-consequence-management>

Large-scale chemical incidents present unique challenges. An incident may occur without notice. The size and complexity characterizing the incident may not be immediately evident which may overwhelm local and State resources over a short time. Large-scale chemical incidents crossing jurisdictional boundaries may lead to confusion regarding the specific authorities relevant to the incident, Incident Command System (ICS) leadership roles and responsibilities, processes for public warning and communication, etc. Additionally, law enforcement, forensic, and other attribution activities related to terrorist or criminal acts may impact consequence management activities and decision-making processes. Decisions will often have to be agreed upon by multiple agencies operating within a unified command structure. Further, although numerous standards and regulatory guidelines exist to shape consequence management strategies, there



is no absolute remediation or site clearance/reoccupation approach or level that is universally applicable to every chemical incident.

Need for Whole of Community Decision-Making Process

Consequence management decision-making should involve a flexible process that includes situation-specific considerations and the most current understanding of science and engineering available to fully inform senior leadership decisions.

According to FEMA, the decision-making process should incorporate the following characteristics:

- **Transparency** – The basis for consequence management decisions should be well understood by all key stakeholders and the public at large to the extent legally possible.
- **Inclusiveness** – Representative stakeholders should be involved in decision-making activities, including communities of color, low-income communities, and other underserved and historically marginalized communities.
- **Effectiveness** – Technical subject matter experts should analyze site remediation and clearance for re-use/re-occupation options, assess various technologies and methodologies, and inform goal/strategy development and specific courses of action developed to implement the strategies selected.
- **Joint Accountability** – Final decisions regarding the selection of appropriate consequence management goals, strategies, and implementing activities should be made jointly by FSLTT officials participating in the Unified Command, in concert with SLTT elected/appointed leadership, as appropriate.

●► **Read the full article at the source's URL.**

Mr. Joselito Ignacio is a retired Captain of the U.S. Public Health Service currently serving at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as the Public Health Advisor within the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Office. He previously served as the Deputy Program Director for Chemical Defense at DHS/Office of Health Affairs (OHA) from June 2010 to December 2014. From November 2000 to June 2010, CAPT (Retired) Ignacio was detailed to the U.S. Coast Guard in an Environmental Health and Industrial Hygiene officer capacity at the former Coast Guard Maintenance and Logistics Command Pacific (MLCPAC) and at Coast Guard Headquarters (CG-1133). He also served in the U.S. Army from 1992 to 2000 as an Environmental Science Officer. CAPT (Ret.) Ignacio has a Master of Arts in Security Studies at the Naval Postgraduate School in 2011, a Master in Public Health from UCLA in 1991, and a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology with a Chemistry Minor from California State Polytechnic University Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona) in 1989. CAPT (Ret.) Ignacio is a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH), Certified Safety Professional (CSP) and a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS).

Generational Curse: Implications of 4th Generation Chemical Weapons

By Frank Rando and Dee Ruelas

NCT Magazine | October 2022 (12/17)

Source: <https://nct-magazine.com/nct-magazine-october-2022/generational-curse-implications-of-4th-generation-chemical-weapons>

The Cold War between the former Soviet Union and the United States was never limited to the research and development of nuclear weapons and the race for nuclear superiority.

The Soviet military readiness posture also included the pursuit of biological and chemical weapons, including "fourth generation" chemical weapons and related mass casualty weapons, such as biotoxins and biological response modulators (BRMs). The Biopreparat (BWAs / toxins) and Foilant (CWAs / BRMs) programs were both components of a ubiquitous and elaborate, large scale military-industrial scheme, much of it under the guise of legitimate pharmaceutical, industrial and academic / scientific establishments. In the 1950s and 1960s, the US raced ahead of the game with the nerve agents Sarin and VX, respectively, and with full expectation that the Soviet chemical warfare (CW) program was being operated in full vigor. In 1969, following President Nixon's policy abolishing the research, development and production of offensive biological and chemical weapons, the US halted its CW program. While the US froze its CW capacity and capabilities, the Soviets marched on with their offensive biological and chemical weapons programs.

Historical perspective

The USSR, in pursuit of enhanced and novel CWAs, implemented an offensive R&D program known as "Foilant", which evolved under the typical Soviet cloak of secrecy and its propensity for disinformation and denial. The brilliant former Soviet chemist Vil Mirzayanov was one of the senior scientific research leaders attached to the



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Foilant program, and he has given an insightful view on the Soviet chemical warfare complex via personal interviews and his own account, in his book State Secrets.

Mirzayanov was subsequently arrested by the Russian Security Service for disclosing state secrets.

The nature of the Soviet bureaucracy was the impetus of the Foilant program and it was the main driving force of the scientific efforts of the military-industrial complex and the large scale production of both biological warfare agents (BWAs and chemical warfare agents (CWAs), including the fourth generation chemical weapons.

The Foilant program led to the development of the highly neurotoxic " Novichok " (loosely translated in Russian as ("newcomer").

The first Russian binary agent, Novichok-5, was derived from "V-gas". V-gas is a VX-type analogue also known as Substance-33. A test batch of 5-10 metric tons of Novichok-5 was produced at a pilot-scale plant in Volgograd and field tested at the chemical warfare testing ground at Nukus.

The Russian Federation Science Center State Research Institute of Organic Chemistry and Technology (GosNIIOKhT) developed a second binary form of Substance 33 that has no established name, but which Mirazyanov called Novichok-#. This agent was also field tested at Nukus and adopted as a chemical warfare agent in 1990.

Allegedly, and as per Mirzayanov, Russia developed a third binary agent called Novichok-7, which has a similar volatility to soman but is about 10 times as effective.

●► **Read the full article at the source's URL.**

Mr. Frank Rando currently serves as an allied health programs educator / lead instructor and healthcare emergency preparedness/medical readiness /public health preparedness and tactical, operational - disaster medicine and homeland security Subject Matter Expert, educator, instructor and curriculum designer. He has served in instructional, guest speaker and consultative roles for DHS-FEMA, various components of the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, DoD, industry, academia, health, safety and regulatory entities, emergency services organizations and healthcare. He recently served during the COVID-19 public health emergency as a clinician and clinical researcher and also served in medical and health care support as a clinician for US Customs and Border Protection. Frank is also an experienced clinician, first responder and an occupational – environmental health scientist with real world experience in hazardous materials management, hazards and pollution control, biosafety, industrial, environmental and inhalation toxicology, environmental epidemiology, exposure and risk assessment and emergency response. Frank has also received advanced training in Integrated Biological -Chemical Response from the US Army -Dugway West Desert Test Center and the National Ebola and Special Pathogens Training Centers.

Ms. Dee Ruelas possesses over 35 years of dedicated professional experience in various roles in public safety/ emergency services, teaching and instruction, healthcare, environmental health and safety, emergency preparedness, community resiliency and Christian ministry. Dee was also a decorated public safety-emergency medical communications specialist for the City of Tucson Fire Department and worked for the Tucson Municipal Court, where one of her roles was serving as the Fire Prevention and General Safety Officer for the municipal courts system. Currently, Dee has been serving as a clinical specialist in COVID-19 testing and vaccination services and served as a medical and healthcare support specialist for US Customs and Border Protection.

Turkish doctor detained for proposing chemical weapons probe

Source: https://journalstar.com/news/national/govt-and-politics/turkish-doctor-detained-for-proposing-chemical-weapons-probe/article_b87e93a9-8ed8-5d33-81da-286489b3ee60.html

Oct 26 — Police detained the **President of the Turkish Medical Association** after she called for an independent investigation into allegations that the Turkish military used chemical weapons against Kurdish militants in northern Iraq, Turkish media reported Wednesday.

Dr. Sebnem Korur Fincanci, 63, was detained on charges of disseminating "terrorist propaganda" as part of an investigation launched by anti-terrorism police, according to the Ankara chief prosecutor's office.

The prosecutor's office said it has also asked a court for her dismissal as president of the association.

Fincanci, a forensic expert, has spent much of her career documenting torture and ill-treatment, and is a leading human rights activist in Turkey. She has served as president of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey.

State-run Anadolu news agency and other media reported that she was detained in Istanbul following an early morning raid at her home and was being brought to Ankara for questioning.





Last week, Turkish officials strongly rejected allegations by Kurdish militants that the Turkish military used chemical weapons against the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, in northern Iraq, insisting the military doesn't have such weapons in its inventory.



In comments to a pro-Kurdish news outlet, Fincanci said she inspected a video purporting to show the use of chemical weapons and called for an "effective investigation." She later clarified in an interview with the Turkish-language Independent news website, that she did not say she believed chemical weapons were used. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused her of slandering Turkey's armed forces and of insulting her country "by speaking the language of the terrorist organization."



He vowed to take actions to clear the Turkish Medical Association and other professional organizations of “supporters of the terrorist organization.” Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of a nationalist party that is allied with Erdogan’s ruling party, also severely criticized Fincanci during a speech on Tuesday, demanding that she be stripped of her Turkish citizenship and the association shut down.

The Turkish Medical Association said Fincanci was the victim of a “lynching campaign” and said her detention was unacceptable. The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey called for her immediate release. The doctor’s detention came a day after police conducted raids in several Turkish cities and detained 11 journalists working with pro-Kurdish media. Police said the journalists were detained over news or other content “that incites the public to hatred and enmity” and accused their media outlet of having links to the PKK. The PKK has led an armed insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984. The group is considered a terrorist organization in Turkey, Europe and the United States. Critics say Turkey’s broad anti-terrorism laws, along with a vague [new law passed to fight disinformation](#) have led to a crackdown on the freedom of expression.

Italy has withdrawn the invitation of the Russian Federation to the conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Source: <https://odessa-journal.com/italy-has-withdrawn-the-invitation-of-the-russian-federation-to-the-conference-on-the-treaty-on-the-non-proliferation-of-nuclear-weapons/>

Oct 27 – On Wednesday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy announced a collegial decision to withdraw the invitation sent to Russia for a meeting of the group of experts on operational issues of the Initiative to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This is reported by [Rai](#).

The Italian foreign policy department emphasized that the decision to withdraw Russia’s invitation was made in agreement with the leading countries participating in the Initiative. Italy currently presides over this format.

“The exclusion is motivated not only by Russia’s brutal aggression against Ukraine, but also in light of the increasingly polarizing and unfavorable position that Moscow is taking at key international forums on disarmament and non-proliferation, having recently opposed the unanimous approval of the final document of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference weapons,” the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: And then we expect to negotiate for peace ...

When Artificial Intelligence and Robotics join CBRN preparedness and response

By the Editor of C²BRNE Diary | Manger, CBRN Knowledge Center @ ICI

This short article is an outline of a collaboration that was not meant to happen. Some definitions will help realize how new technologies can be incorporated into CBRN preparedness and response:

Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a field of computer science dedicated to the theory and development of computer systems that can perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, translation between languages, decision-making, and problem-solving. These intelligent systems can be, for instance, software applications, robots, and autonomous cars. AI is an umbrella term comprising many different sub-fields, the most prominent of which are machine learning and deep learning. *Machine learning* is a sub-field of AI that comprises algorithms that can “learn” from data, i.e., progressively improve performance on a specific task. In contrast with other computer software, machine learning algorithms do not require explicit instructions from humans. Instead, they extract patterns and learn implicit rules from a considerable number of examples included in a database.¹⁰ An AI system may therefore include a machine learning algorithm to perform a certain task, as well as sensors and external devices necessary to execute that task. For example, a computer vision AI system is composed of image recognition software and one or more cameras to capture the image that the algorithm will process. *Deep learning* is, in turn, a sub-field of machine learning that deals with a smaller family of algorithms, known as neural networks. These are algorithms inspired by the human brain that seeks to learn from large amounts of data by performing a task repeatedly, each time making minor modifications to its internal features to improve the outcome. The term “deep learning” comes from the several (or “deep”) layers of the neural network.



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AI	MACHINE LEARNING	DEEP LEARNING
A program that can sense, reason, act and adapt	Algorithms whose performance improves as they are exposed to more data over time	Subsets of machine learning in which multilayered neural networks learn from vast amounts of data

Robotics is an interdisciplinary branch of computer science and engineering. Robotics involves the design, construction, operation, and use of robots. The goal of robotics is to design machines that can help and assist humans.

Virtual reality is a simulated experience that employs pose tracking and 3D near-eye displays to give the user an immersive feel of a virtual world. Applications of virtual reality include entertainment, education, and business.

Augmented reality is an interactive experience that combines the real world and computer-generated content. The content can span multiple sensory modalities, including visual, auditory, haptic, somatosensory, and olfactory.

A *facial recognition system* is a technology capable of matching a human face from a digital image or a video frame against a database of faces, typically employed to authenticate users through ID verification services, which work by pinpointing and measuring facial features from a given image.

CBRN model

A “city-state” was chosen as a model to demonstrate how the above technologies can help CBRN preparedness and response due to its size, the available wealth necessitating expensive technologies, and the will to solve problems and fill gaps. The city has certain peculiarities: (1) it is very densely populated (~120 per Km²); (2) it has many skyscrapers; (3) it welcomes millions of international tourists all year round; (4) it has many mega-malls; (5) it has a big number of ex-pats and foreign workers; (6) it is a coastal city comprising by several big and small islands connected with bridges; (7) it has no strategic depth – meaning that all defenses should be exercised on-site/in place; and (8) it is predominantly a Muslim state with a ratio of ~250 males per 100 females in 1.5 million inhabitants.

CBRN incident

CBRN threats are a mixture of disruptive and destructive threats that are collectively called (wrong) weapons of mass destruction. It is helpful to realize that chemical weapons (CWAs), toxic industrial chemicals (TICs), radiological dispersal, and emission/exposure devices (RDD and RED) are causing disruption when released. On the other hand, nuclear weapons and biological weapons when progressing into a pandemic can cause destruction. In addition, chemical and radiological threats are acute emergencies that do not last long. In contrast, biological threats are gradually progressing emergencies that depending on the incubation period of the pathogen released might last for days or weeks, or more. In a chemical or radiological incident, there are zones of contamination (hot zone; warm zone – a gradually contaminated cold zone; cold zone). When a biological weapon is released an entire city or town, or village is becoming a hot zone that needs to be isolated. These clarifications are significant because they dictate different responses and modus operandi.

Since a nuclear weapons incident is difficult (but not impossible) to happen and a pandemic is already happening during the last 2.5 years, the following scenarios were addressed: (1) release of chemical warfare agents with or without explosives (IEDs); (2) radiological agents release with or without IEDs; (3) a radiological accident (natural or man-made) in a national or a neighboring nuclear power plant.

Problems and solutions

Triage

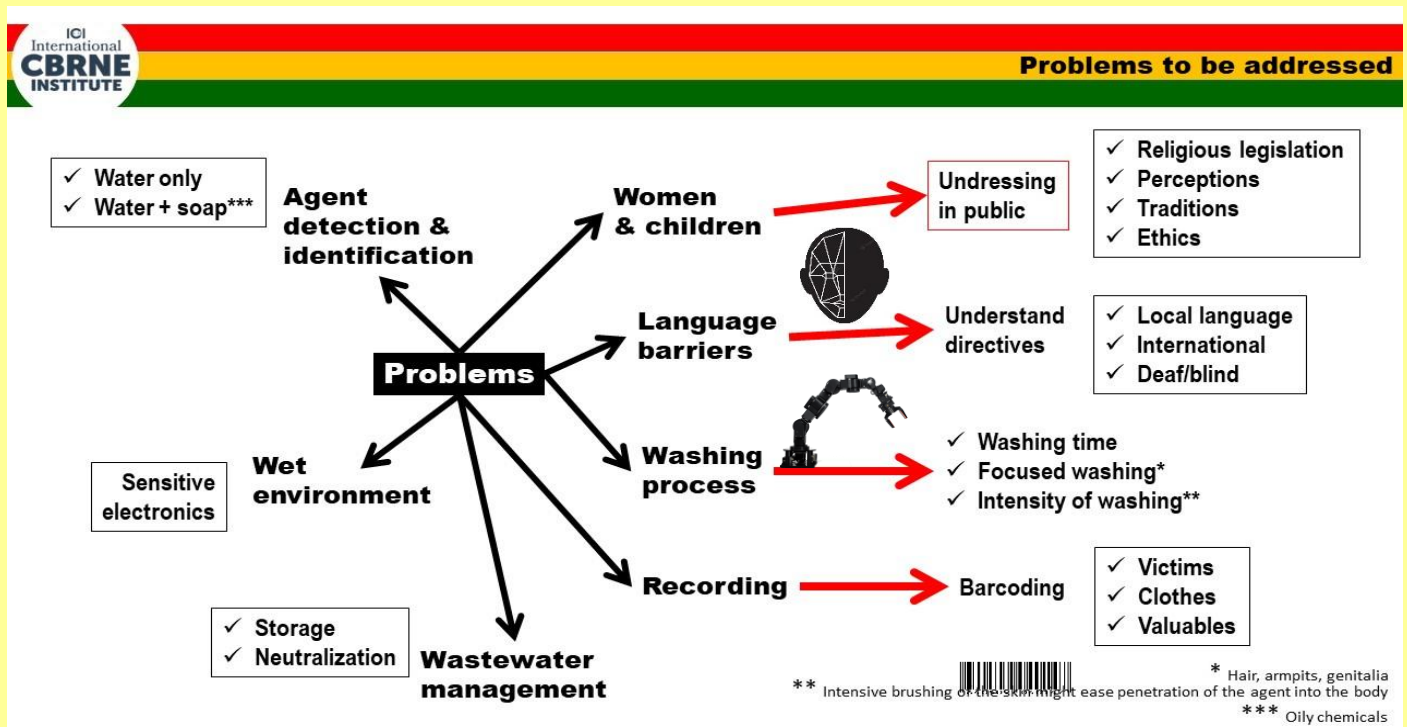
Triage is the prioritization of patient care (or victims during a disaster) based on illness/injury, severity, prognosis, and resource availability. There are four triage categories: (1) People who have already died, eliminating the need for immediate help. (2) People who need immediate medical attention for survival. (3) People who will need care, but it isn't urgent. (4) People with minor injuries can wait for medical care if they need it at all. Triage is a continuous process that should be repeated from time to time since the medical status might change or deteriorate. Each disaster has its peculiarities regarding the clinical picture of the victims that should be taken into account. In addition, certain disasters require special personal protection measures due to the agents released. Along with medical triage, priority triage is equally important for better management of the casualties and the best exploitation of available resources. Based on the above, it is important to be able to manage and evaluate all incoming information and data to take the best decisions possible. Due to the chaotic environment, it would be ideal to be able to stick a triage tag on the victim that will be able to collect vital signs, detect hazardous substances (CBRN/HazMat), categorize victims based on emergency medical protocols, sound alarms if status is changing, define transportation priority, choose destination hospital and availability, practice geolocation, maintain activity for 48 hours. In



other words, healthcare personnel would be happy to have only to stick a tag on the victim and transfer the person to the hospital while monitoring the medical status via their mobile or tablet. Artificial intelligence is the solution and since the size is not a problem for modern electronics, a tag smaller than a credit card is possible.

Decontamination

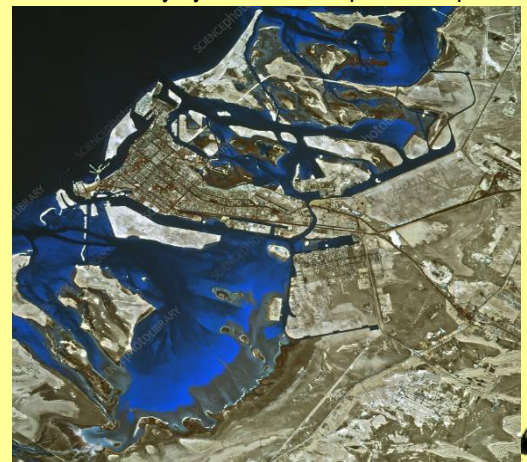
Decontamination is the mandatory first step when dealing with chemical agents' contamination. It should be performed as soon as possible and requires – if possible – the complete removal of clothing followed by washing with soap and water. Unfortunately, this procedure should be done in public, and while men might not hesitate to comply Muslim women will not even if this will threaten their lives. In addition, the vast majority of CBRN First Responders are men, and this complicated further the problem. One might propose



to wash them with all their clothes on, but it is easy to understand that this is not a viable solution that might intensify existing contamination. An autonomous decontamination system might be a good solution since artificial intelligence with elements of machine/deep learning, facial recognition, and robotics will be able to decontaminate women and children without the presence of human factors thus overcoming cultural and ethical constraints. Such systems can be strategically located in mass gathering places and be remotely activated in case of a real incident. An expensive solution for now but when many systems will be produced prices will be reasonable – besides, money cannot match a single life that could have been saved.

Floating decontamination

During a real CBRN incident, one of the major problems is the traffic jam caused when mass media announce a terrorist attack or a chemical accident. This problem can be effectively (though partially) overcome by using sea vessels able to approach the coastline and ride in the canals of the city approaching the hot zone deploying specialized personnel, vehicles, and equipment. Each vessel will be connected with an observation drone or swarm and all the data collected will be further analyzed via special algorithms that will determine the movement of the contaminated plume, the hospitals to be used or locked down (if in the route of the plume), the traffic control required, possible secondary deployment sites if weather conditions change (wind), etc. This network can be interconnected with a remote



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CBRN detection network comprised of drones, UGVs, and unmanned sea vehicles deployed in the Arab Gulf. Again, artificial intelligence will help speed decisions and propose the best alternatives.

Anti-CBRN clothing

A different approach to the decontamination problem is to use nanotechnology to integrate nanomaterials into fabrics that will have anti-CBRN properties – i.e., repelling chemical molecules from the outer surface of the fabric. Such fabrics can be used in daily-worn hijab/abaya and thobe/bisht/ghutra. These protective fabrics can be used for a new type of personal protective equipment for First Responders.



Antidotes

Autonomy in antidotes for chemical weapons and iodine pills is crucial for shelter-in-place defense. Why buy from abroad instead of making a factory to cover national needs? It takes time to deliver and in the case of CWAs time is life.



Head-up display on gas masks/hoods

Situational awareness is of utmost importance for First Responders in the field. Critical data, GPS information, proposals, and alternatives can all be displayed on the face shield of a gas mask. Head-up display technology is already available in warplanes and cars and it would be easy to be incorporated into personal protective equipment. Connection with the central operations center will allow artificial intelligence algorithms to solve problems and protect people working in hazardous environments.

CBRN First Responders training

Training is the basis of an effective response and the process that reveals gaps and problems to be fixed. Although training is common for field responders and healthcare personnel, medical responders face certain peculiarities that require specific skills that are difficult to perform while wearing personal protective equipment. Both groups can greatly improve their performance by participating in virtual/augmented reality training supported by artificial intelligence elements. CBRN scenario-based video games can simulate a variety of environments and a combination of threats and alterations to the medical status of victims depending on the agent exposed. Of course, virtual training is not enough if not coupled with field training using chemical or electronic simulants and even harmless pathogens. Live agent training is the final stage of training and the one that provides real-life confidence in a controlled environment.

CBRN Academy

All the above and a few more can be hosted under the roof of a National CBRN Academy that will cover the needs of both the military and the civilian sectors. The model used is ideal for unanimous training securing autonomy and economy in the long term. If the Academy focuses also on the training of the population, then the CBRN response has a big chance to be effective and save lives in case of a future real incident.

Epilogue

I am confident that one day soon we will read about the above innovations and be able to explore them in the field. I just wanted to be part of the development of the next generation of CBRN equipment and procedures. 😞

Library book is POISONED: Gardening manual from 1885 filled with ARSENIC dye is found on shelves

Source: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11365711/Library-book-POISONED-Gardening-manual-1885-filled-ARSENIC-dye-shelves.html>

Oct 28 – Librarians have stumbled across a rare book which is filled with the deadly poison arsenic - and an inscription on the first page reveals it was once gifted to a little girl by her own father. Leeds Central Library's copy of *My Own Garden: The Young Gardener's Yearbook* was published in 1855, the same year it was gifted to a child named Caroline Gott by her father William.



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Experts believe the vivid green colour in the book is actually a dye which contains the toxic chemical.

The library said tests would be carried out on the book, which had been hidden from visitors, to assess how much arsenic it contains. Arsenic can be lethal when ingested.

The toxin was responsible for more than 200 deaths in nearby Bradford in 1858 when sweets accidentally made with the toxin were sold from a market stall.

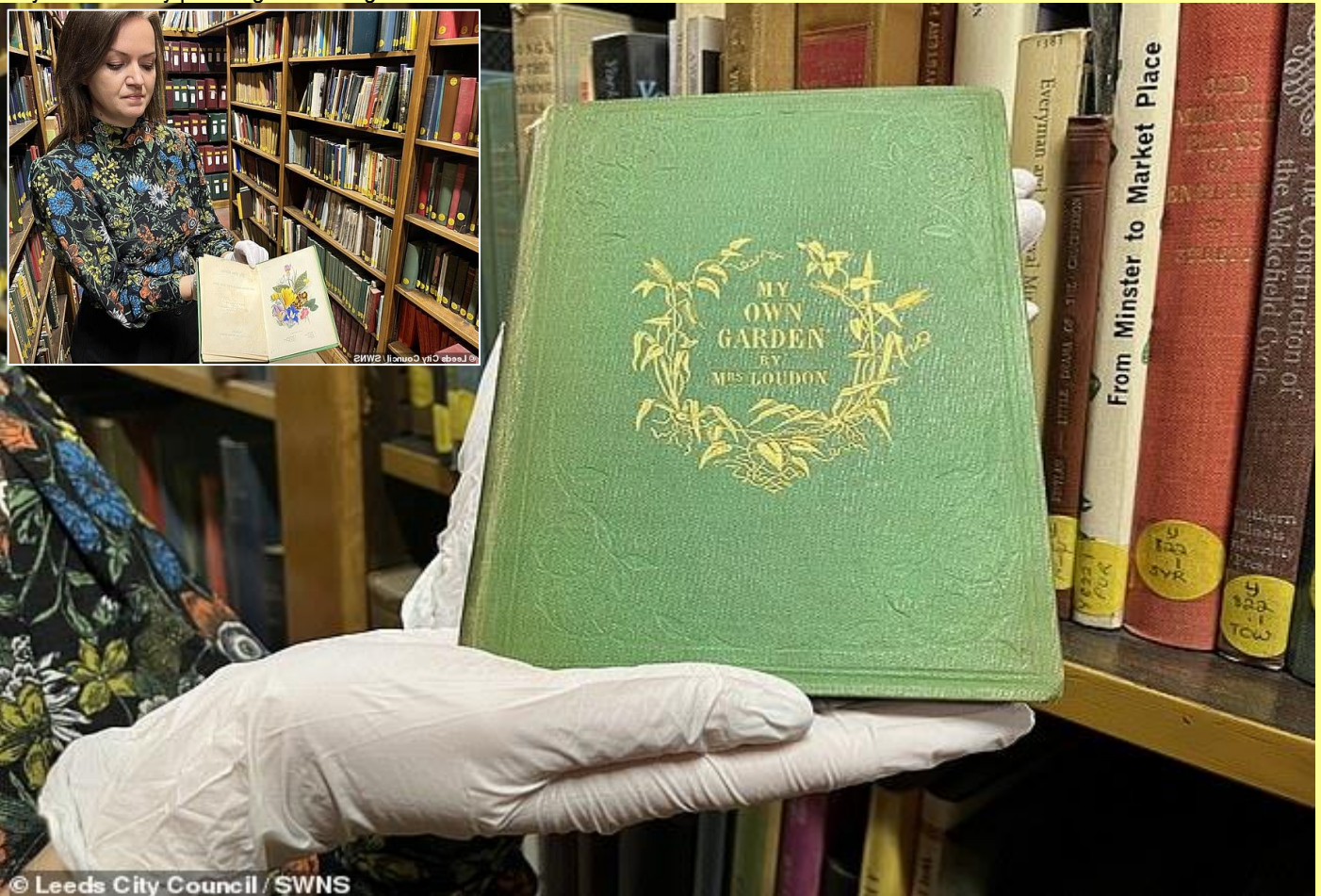
Senior librarian Rhian Isaac found the book while cross-referencing the library's collection against a global database from The Poison Book Project.

The project, started by the International Institute for Conservation in America, aims to find editions of historic books made using hazardous compounds and heavy metals.

Rhian added: 'As a librarian, it's always incredibly exciting to discover any sort of rare, or unusual book in our collection.'

'But this project is also really important as it helps librarians across the world work together and understand how and when these books were made as well as what steps we can take to keep track of them and make sure they are safely stored and cared for.'

'Amazingly, heavy metals were once quite commonly used in the production of books as a way to achieve what was considered a very aesthetically pleasing shade of green.'



An inscription in the book, which contains tips for budding young gardeners, shows it was gifted to Caroline Gott by her father William in 1855. Both were descendants of wool merchant Benjamin Gott, who once owned Armley Mills and whose family remained prominent local industrialists for generations.

It became part of the Leeds collection when Beryl Gott left a large part of her own library, mainly early botanical books, to Leeds Public Libraries.

Rhian added: 'Whilst people at the time were certainly aware substances like arsenic were harmful, they probably didn't understand the many different ways they could be accidentally ingested.' 'The fact that this particular book also once belonged to the Gott family means its story is also a part of Leeds's history and, with some careful handling and storage, it can continue to be part of our collection for many years to come.'



Bracing for the North's chemical weapons

By Choi Yun-hee

Source: <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2022/10/30/opinion/columns/chemical-weapons-North-Korea-WMD/20221030192444281.html>

After legislation in September authorizing a preemptive nuclear attack by North Korea, its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) pose a substantial security threat to South Korea. If the North deploys tactical nukes in battles after a seventh nuclear test, South Koreans must live under an existential nuclear threat. The Yoon Suk-yeol administration hopes to cope with this situation by ensuring the U.S. nuclear deterrence, but it stops short of underscoring the importance of a watertight security posture based on mobilization of all capabilities of the nation.

Many countries brace for such threats by ensuring an all-out security posture. North Korea repeatedly threatens to reduce South Korea to ashes with its WMDs. How should we defend ourselves? Regrettably, our perception of the threat — and defense posture — is full of loopholes. Many simply brush it off by pointing to the North's fear of a massive retaliation by the South Korea-U.S. alliance. Would North Korea really not use such weapons? If you think it wouldn't, that's a serious miscalculation — particularly given the way North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has behaved. He even ruthlessly assassinated his older half-brother to tighten his grip on power. Security research institutes, including the RAND Corporation, classifies WMDs into nuclear weapons and the rest, which includes chemical and biological weapons, electromagnetic pulse (EMP) weapons and cyberwar capability. But circumstantial evidence strongly suggests North Korea would use chemical weapons first before pushing the nuclear button.

After receiving know-how on chemical weapons from China and Russia in 1954, **North Korea is assumed to possess 2,500-5,000 tons of them. They can be fired by rockets or dropped by aircraft or loaded onto ballistic missiles at any time. If the North drops 1,000 tons of chemical weapons in Seoul and the capital area, it could cause approximately 125,000 casualties.** As North Korea did not sign the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), it thinks it can avoid criticism if it uses them. Because North Korea does not recognize chemical weapons as WMDs, it believes it can avoid U.S. retaliation, according to Gen. Leon LaPorte, former commander of the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command.

We are well aware of the fatality of chemical weapons. South Korea tries to deter the weapons based on the alliance, but realistically there are many risks. If the allies fail to block just a single chemical bomb, it will immediately send the whole country into a panic.

A bigger problem is the public's naïve dismissal of WMDs as a threat. Such a laidback attitude prevents the government from drawing up — and carrying out — countermeasures. The experience by South Koreans of incessant provocations from North Korea has made them oblivious to the threat. The government is also reluctant to publicize the danger for fear of provoking unnecessary fear among the public. The administration gives evacuation tips online to citizens to deal with earthquakes, but it does not say anything about threats from chemical weapons. Earthquakes cannot pose a graver threat than chemical weapons. The time has come to establish an effective PR system before it is too late so as to convince the public of the horrendous threat from chemical weapons.

For our collective protection, subways and other underground shelters should be greatly upgraded to defend against chemical weapons. Reliability of the protection system has never been scrutinized, and detailed evacuation guidelines have not been set. Those shelters only carry symbolic meaning. No consensus has been reached on the individual protection system either, as seen in a critical dearth of gas masks, decontamination equipment and related exercises. The government must hand out a gas mask to each citizen and teach them how to put it on. I was shocked to see North Koreans thoroughly preparing for a chemical weapons attack by South Korea even though the country does not have any intention to use such weapons. They do training as they know the lethality of chemical weapons.

A rapid decrease in military draftees in the South due to its low birthrate calls for an epochal change in the structure of our military and mobilization system. **Carlyle Institute research shows that South Korea's military manpower will dwindle to 150,000 by 2040 from 300,000 in 2027 and 400,000 in 2021.** The current soldier-based operation system cannot be sustained. The government must change it to an integral system encompassing a regular force, a mobilization force and a reserve force. The reserve force system must be improved to make the best of science and tech talent to meet the demands of modern warfare beyond the level of making up for losses in the regular force.

There is barely any difference between a regular force and a reserve force in Israel. During the 1967 Six-Day War, the country filled 23 of the 30 brigades of ground forces with members of its reserve army. In the Gulf War, the United States mobilized 360,000 soldiers from its reserve army to replace dead or wounded soldiers on the battlefields or to deploy them in logistics support. 28 percent of the Swiss people possess a firearm and receive combat trainings in peacetime. We must change our system in a similar way.

The mobilization system established in 1969 and the government's Chungmu Plan also need to be revamped to properly reflect the shifts in the economy and demographics. The Chungmu Plan, which



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specifies government roles for wartime support for the military, in particular, should be fundamentally upgraded. As the plan involves the declaration of martial law and mobilization of civilians — a pillar of military operations during war — it can hardly be carried out without effective support from local governments.

Since the January 21 infiltration of North Korean commandos to attack the Blue House in 1968, military drills have been augmented since 1976 after they changed into joint military-civilian drills. But a weakened sense of security among the public shakes the fundamentals of security. After being appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2013, I repeatedly stressed the importance of a joint drill, but unfortunately it became a nominal exercise for lower-level government officials. That led to a collapse of the security sense and obligation of civil servants. What more explanation do I need when the past administration even stopped military drills for the regular forces?

People who have participated in joint drills with the U.S. forces are amazed to see their sincere attitude. Even if they conduct simulation exercises, they sincerely discuss possible countermeasures just like in real battles. What matters is a sense of devotion, repeated exercises, and fixing any problems discovered.

I experienced an interesting development during the Ulchi-Freedom Guardian drill a decade ago. Controversy broke over the bombing of the **Hangang Bridge** — the first bridge built on the Han River [red arrow below] — to block North Korean forces from further



advancing to the South. During the 1950-53 Korean War, that was the only bridge on the river bisecting Seoul. But now, there are 33 bridges. And yet, the drill was conducted based on the hypothesis that we still have one bridge on the river. You cannot expect a success from such soulless exercises.

A country's nuclear development and operation plans are top secret. The information must not be disclosed. But North Korea is a country irrational enough to make public the legislation of a preemptive nuclear attack.






That's why we must accept the North's WMD stockpiles as an imminent threat. A minor mistake on our part can lead to the annihilation of the country. Who knew that a superpower could lose over 3,000 citizens from a terrorist attack in 2001? The government must build an integral security system to defend the country. At the same time, it must declare a stern response to the recalcitrant state across the border if it chooses to cross a line.

We coped with Kim Jong-un's threat to turn Seoul into a sea of fire — and the Yeonpyeong shelling — with cool heads. But chemical weapons cannot be compared to any of its past provocations. The government must accept this existential threat and devise effective measures to deal with it. Foreigners are often surprised to see South Koreans maintaining unrivaled calmness in the most dangerous country on earth. That is a two-edged observation.

Admiral (ret.) Choi Yun-hee is former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR EARLY WARNING INTELLIGENCE AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE FOR CBRN THREATS

 Rajesh Uppal
  June 3, 2022
  AI & IT, Threats, Weapons
 Comments Off on Artificial Intelligence for Early Warning Intelligence and effective response for CBRN threats
 929 Views

The threats of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) hazards continue to advance. CBRN weapons are some of the most indiscriminate and deadly weapons in existence today, with capability to affect large population in wide geographical area and in short time. The release of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) materials, whether deliberate or accidental, may have the potential to cause serious harm and severe disruption to the delivery of vital public services over a wide geographical area.



To Survive in a CBRN Hostile Environment: Application of CAVE Automatic Virtual Environments in First Responder Training

By Paweł Maciejewski, Jacek Lebieź, Małgorzata Gawlik-Kobylińska, et al.

APPIS 2020: Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Applications of Intelligent Systems (Pages 1–5)

Source: <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3378184.3378212>

Abstract

This paper is of a conceptual nature and focuses on the use of a specific virtual reality environment in civil-military training. We analyzed the didactic potential of so-called CAVE automatic virtual environments for First Responder training, a type of training that fills the gap between First Aid training and the training received by emergency medical technicians. Since real training involves live drills based on unexpected situations, it is expensive and difficult to organize. We propose the application of virtual environments of three different sizes to increase the effectiveness of First Responder training. Our findings show that using the CAVEs allows for easier adaptation of the learning environment to a specific scenario while reducing costs from preparing training fields. The environments are also safer for trainees who must perform tasks related to hazardous materials. The analysis was based on the facilities at the Immersive 3D Visualization Lab (I3DVL) at Gdańsk University of Technology in Poland. We believe that, in the context of emerging threats of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear terrorism, such training is a necessity. The application of artificial intelligence can be considered as a further step in the facility development to increase the training fidelity.

Unconventional Weapons and Technology division announces upcoming CBRN Data Suite and Portal

Source: <https://www.start.umd.edu/news/unconventional-weapons-and-technology-division-announces-upcoming-cbrn-data-suite-and-portal>



Oct 25 – START's Unconventional Weapons and Technology (UWT) division is announcing the creation of their new CBRN Data Suite and Portal, which will become accessible online in December.

The Data Suite includes an event-level and an actor-level dataset. The event-level dataset is based on UWT's [Profiles of Incidents Involving CBRN and Non-state Actors \(POICN\)](#) database, and is scheduled to be updated through May 2022 by the time the Data Suite and Portal goes live at the end of the year.

The actor-level dataset is a newly created dataset modeled after the [Chemical and Biological Non-State Adversaries Database \(CABNSAD\)](#) and the Radiological and Nuclear Non-State Adversaries (RANNSAD)



dataset, with the new CBRN Actor dataset subsuming both CABNSAD and RANNSAD. As with the event-level dataset, the actor-level dataset is scheduled to be updated through May 2022 by the time the Data Suite and Portal launch.

UWT Director [Steve Sin](#), who is the project's principal investigator, noted that the CBRN Data Suite and Portal represents a much-needed evolution for the non-state actor CBRN databases UWT has previously developed.

"This project not only allows us to bring the data up to date and continue to update the data going forward, but it also allows us to update the types of data being collected for these datasets – something we have always wanted to do but were previously unable to," Sin said. "Most importantly, this project will provide, to practitioners and researchers alike, increased accessibility to the datasets." Although the Data Suite and Portal are not scheduled to launch until December of this year, the UWT team is already taking advantage of the opportunity this project has provided. Project Technical Lead [Markus Binder](#) will be presenting a paper he authored that provides analysis of data contained in the event-level dataset at the [CBRNe Convergence 2022 Conference](#) in November. Until the Data Suite and Portal launch in December, the data is only available for government use. Those working on official government tasks who would require access to the data before December can reach out to Binder at poicn@umd.edu.

Chemical security experts call for multisector cooperation against terrorism

Source: <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2022/Chemical-security-experts-call-for-multisector-cooperation-against-terrorism>



[Chemical security experts participate in Global Congress.](#)

Nov 02 – The devastating impact of chemical weapons and explosives used in acts of terrorism continues to affect civilian populations and is well known for its destructive and long-term harm.

Last year over 1,000 improvised explosive device (IED) attacks were conducted by non-state actors, injuring over 7,150 people in more than 40 countries. Many attacks come from chemicals that criminals acquired through weak points in the supply chain – from manufacturing to storage and retail– and made into weapons.

To counter this threat, some 220 chemical security practitioners from more than 70 countries met at INTERPOL's 3rd Global Congress on Chemical Security and Emerging Threats (25-27 October) to find ways of reducing vulnerabilities by enhancing multisector cooperation and collaboration.

With a focus on acquisition, transportation, physical and cyber security of chemical materials, the meeting highlighted a range of security issues, such as detecting cross-border movements of regulated material and implementing regulatory frameworks.

Terrorists' misuse of e-commerce and new technologies

The Global Congress also explored ways to counter emerging threats including terrorists' misuse of e-commerce and new technologies to acquire toxic and precursor chemicals.



Due to the substantial growth and access to the Internet in recent years, so too we have seen an increase in digital content produced and shared through platforms such as instant messaging, social networking, blogs and online portals. The misuse of technologies can be seen as a result of this rapid growth in content, and with it a rise in suspicious activities.

Law enforcement agencies provided examples of investigative techniques that could be used to identify and prosecute the illicit purchase or sale of chemicals on the Dark Net. These lessons provided delegates with solutions to address the use of sophisticated technologies for nefarious purposes.

"As the ramifications of such heinous acts resonate beyond borders and touch every level of society, a committed transversal and global response is required." Greg Hinds, INTERPOL, Counter-Terrorism Director

"The concerted effort of global law enforcement, along with our partners, is key to combatting the use of explosive precursor chemicals and chemical weapons," Mr Hinds added.

Dual-use and precursor chemicals have a wide legitimate function in the production of consumer goods such as pharmaceuticals, cleaning supplies and fertilizers. This raises significant challenges to prevent and monitor, and remains one of the inherent threats to chemical security worldwide.

INTERPOL awareness video - 'The Watchmaker'

In this context, an INTERPOL-produced awareness video was premiered at the meeting to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders in understanding the importance of individuals and companies to secure dangerous toxic chemicals, including equipment.

Entitled '[The Watchmaker](#)', the video highlights the need for multisector cooperation to combat these threats and will be used in a series of INTERPOL capacity building workshops and other activities related to counter-terrorism and prevention.

"Multisector collaboration is essential for us to tackle the threats we face from criminals who gain access to dangerous chemicals with malevolent intentions. Morocco is committed to strengthening the engagement of these issues as part of our proactive approach to combating terrorism," said Mr. Mohammed Dkhissi, Head of National Central Bureau, Rabat.

Other measures proposed by the Global Congress Network include:

- Advocating chemical security recommendations such as increased retail reporting on suspicious activity;
- Expanding the INTERPOL-hosted Global Knowledge Hub, which allows members to engage in interactive discussions and access good practice guidance;
- Strengthening the Global Congress Network through greater diversity of expertise and activities across regions and sectors;
- Promoting decision-making tools such as a customer database, which can flag areas of security concern.

Since its inception in 2018, the Global Congress has been jointly led by INTERPOL, the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and implemented in cooperation with the G7 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

Germany Is Estimated To Hold 18.0% Of The Europe CBRN Protection Equipment Market In 2029

Source: <https://www.fmiblog.com/2022/10/31/germany-is-estimated-to-hold-18-0-of-the-europe-cbrn-protection-equipment-market-in-2029/>

Greater emphasis of governments on enhancing safety of military forces constitutes a major push to global sales of CBRN protection equipment. A new Future Market Insights (FMI) study suggests that the global [CBRN protection equipment market](#) will exhibit a healthy CAGR of more than 5% during the forecast period of 2022 – 2029. Germany is estimated to hold **18.0%** of the Europe CBRN protection equipment market in 2029. Germany was the third-largest military spender in Western Europe with the total military spending of about \$49.5 billion in 2018, representing 1.2 per cent of its GDP. Military spending of Germany was 9.0 % higher than in 2009. Increasing production of bioweapons, bio-agents, as well as chemical weapons has strengthened the demand for CBRN filtration systems, integrated COLPRO systems, and decontamination shelter systems. Demand for personal protective equipment such as gloves, boots, body suits, masks, and hoods is also rising, in line with rise in precautionary training practices.

► Request For Sample Report: <https://www.futuremarketinsights.com/reports/sample/rep-gb-11014>

Also, Europe is expected to remain key market for CBRN protection equipment over the forecast period owing to the presence of CBRN solutions manufacturers. It is estimated to register growth at **5.5%** across the assessment period.



Key Takeaways – CBRN Protection Equipment Market Study

- Personal protection equipment will continue to be bestselling throughout the forecast period. The rising focus on safety among military personnel has enhanced demand in countries such as the U.S., Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and the U.K.
- Demand for integrated COLPRO systems is anticipated to multiply, with rising requirement from developed economies such as the U.S., the U.K., and Germany.
- Decontamination shelter systems would gain significant traction, which will drive CBRN protection equipment market growth.
- With increasing CBRN attacks in developing economies, especially at airports, the demand for immediate response has enhanced the mandate for frequent CBRN protection training. Such CBRN training practices will further drive the global CBRN protection equipment market growth in following years.
- Rising investments in nuclear reactor projects, especially in countries like Russia, India, UAE, Turkey, China, and South Korea are expected to bolster demand for CBRN protection equipment.
- Rapid growth in production of chemicals and bio agents has resulted in greater demand for safety awareness. Regulatory bodies have formed numerous regulations to improve safety awareness among public, which is expected to fuel the growth of the CBRN protection equipment market.



The Ninth Anniversary of the Largest Chemical Weapons Attack by the Syrian Regime against Syrian Citizens in the Two Ghoutas of Damascus

Source: <https://snhr.org/blog/2022/08/21/the-ninth-anniversary-of-the-largest-chemical-weapons-attack-by-the-syrian-regime-against-syrian-citizens-in-the-two-ghoutas-of-damascus/>

August 2022 – The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) issued a report today on the ninth anniversary of the largest chemical weapons attack by the Syrian regime against Syrian citizens in the two Ghoutas of Damascus on August 21, 2013, in which SNHR reveals that this attack resulted in the deaths by suffocation of 1,144 individuals, including 194 women and 99 children, who constituted a third of all the victims, showing the Syrian regime's deliberate intention to kill the largest number of innocent people.



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The 12-page report notes that recent months have seen shameful efforts by Algeria, acting under Russian orders, aimed at returning the Syrian regime to the Arab League, despite the Syrian regime being responsible for carrying out 217 chemical attacks against the Syrian people. The report adds that the barbaric attacks on the two Ghoutas of Damascus remain the cruelest and most difficult of



all these attacks, stressing that the Syrian regime's apparent total impunity, in particular for its use of internationally prohibited chemical weapons, is one of the most prominent factors in leading many in Syrian society and among the peoples of the region to despair and to lose hope of ever attaining freedom or justice, and thus encouraging some to resort to joining extremist organizations and entering into a hopeless, endless cycle of violence and conflicts.

The report outlines the details of the two Ghoutas attacks and stresses that they showed the deliberate intention of the Syrian regime to kill the largest possible number of Syrians, including women and children, since the attacks, using large amounts of Sarin gas, took place in the early hours of the morning after midnight while people were asleep, thus minimizing their chances of survival, with the report noting that the relatively low temperature estimated in the area that

night and the lack of any breeze there during the period between 02:00 a.m. and 05:00 a.m. indicates that those launching the missiles knew that the **heavy poison gases** would settle and remain close to the ground rather than being dispersed or blown away by any wind.

As the report reveals, 1,144 individuals were killed by suffocation that day, including 1,119 civilians, amongst them 99 children and 194 women (adult female), and 25 Armed Opposition fighters, while 5,935 other people were injured, suffering respiratory and suffocation symptoms.

In addition, the report reveals that this death toll constitutes approximately 76% of the total victims killed as a result of the chemical attacks launched by the Syrian regime since December 2012 up until the most recent attack using chemical weapons which SNHR documented in al Kbaina in Latakia suburbs in May 2019.

The report documents a total of 222 chemical attacks on Syria since the first attack using chemical weapons documented by SNHR on

December 23, 2012, until August 20, 2022, with approximately 98% of these carried out at the hands of Syrian regime forces, and nearly 2% at the hands of ISIS, with the report also distributing the attacks by year as well as across the governorates. The analysis of the data showed that Damascus Suburbs saw the largest number of CW attacks of all the Syrian governorates experiencing 71 attacks, followed by Idlib governorate with 45. As the report further reveals, the Syrian regime's 217 chemical weapons attacks caused the deaths of 1,510 individuals, comprising 1,409 civilians, including 205 children and 260 women (adult female), 94 Armed Opposition fighters, and seven Syrian regime prisoners of war who were being held in the Armed Opposition prisons.

These chemical attacks also injured 11,080 individuals, including five Syrian regime prisoners of war who were being held in Armed Opposition prisons. ISIS, meanwhile, carried out five chemical attacks since its establishment on April 9, 2013, up until August 20, 2020, all of which were in Aleppo governorate, and resulted in the injury of 132 individuals. The report provides details of the distribution of the record of chemical attacks according to Security Council resolutions, with the attacks carried out by the Syrian regime divided into 33 attacks prior



to Security Council Resolution 2118 and 184 attacks after it, while 115 more attacks were carried out after Security Council Resolution 2209, and 59 additional attacks after the formation of the United Nations Mechanism and the Security Council Resolution 2235. As for the five attacks carried out by ISIS, they constitute, according to the report, a breach to Security Council Resolutions 2118, 2209, and 2235. The report ascribes the primary responsibility for moving and using chemical weapons to the head of the Syrian regime, Bashar al Assad, who is at the same time the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Armed Forces. The report stresses that it is impossible even to carry out tasks far smaller than this without his knowledge and approval, noting that International Humanitarian Law takes into account the hierarchical nature of the armed forces and the discipline imposed by leaders and holds commanders criminally responsible on the personal level, not only for the actions and breaches they have personally committed but also for the actions committed by their subordinates. The report adds that the relationship of the head of the regime and its leaders and the strict and centralized chain of command mean that the head of the Syrian regime Bashar al Assad and the higher-ranking leadership officials are all directly involved through their responsibility for the use of chemical weapons of mass destruction in committing violations that amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Syrian people. With regard to the use of chemical weapons, the report reveals that the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Armed Forces, his deputy, the Director of the Air Force, the Air Intelligence Department, the commanders of military airbases and the squadron directors and brigades of the Republican Guard, in addition to the directors of scientific research units bear the greatest responsibility for the use of this weapon. The report notes that the SNHR's database includes data on at least 387 prominent army and security officers, civil and military personnel in research and scientific studies centers which specialize in providing and supplying chemicals used militarily in Syria, who are accused of ordering or carrying out chemical weapons attacks in Syria, with the report identifying a few of the most prominent senior leadership officials amongst those involved particularly in the chemical attack on the two Ghoutas on August 21, 2013. The report calls on the United Nations and the UN Security Council to impose economic, political, and military sanctions on the Syrian regime on the anniversary of its use of chemical weapons in the Eastern and Western Ghoutas of Damascus, as a form of moral compensation for the victims' families, as well as to prosecute the individuals identified in this report, verify the extent of their involvement in the use of chemical weapons, and place them on the lists of sanctions and terrorism. The report recommends that the Syrian case should be referred to the International Criminal Court and all those who are responsible for crimes should be held accountable, further asserting that Russia must stop using its veto, as it is a party to the Syrian conflict, and the UNSC states' veto power should be withheld in cases where crimes against humanity and war crimes are committed, as well as making other additional recommendations.

●► [Download the full report](#)

EDITOR'S COMMENT: There is no doubt that chemicals were released in Ghouta. But the photos and videos published indicate that the agent released most probably was chlorine or similar causing difficulty in breathing because it remains very close to the ground (heavier than air). In addition, healthcare personnel dealing with such casualties might not need to wear PPE. Chlorine itself is not a chemical weapon. It's a toxic industrial chemical that is very useful to purify water. It's really very important to have clean water to avoid water borne diseases. But chlorine is a chemical agent that effects the eyes and the ability to breath. When mixed with water it produces hydrochloride acid. It's not a very efficient chemical weapon because we can sense it when it's not very toxic yet. So, you can run away. Using chlorine gas is not prohibited as such but using chlorine gas as a weapon is prohibited.

Turkey Using Chemical Weapons Against the Kurds?

By Uzay Bulut

Source: <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/19058/turkey-chemical-weapons-kurds>



- "I have examined the images and obviously, one of the toxic gasses, poisonous gasses, chemical gasses that directly affect the nervous system has been used." — Şebnem Korur Fincancı, professor of forensic medicine, and president of the Turkish Medical Association, and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, interview with Medya Haber TV, October 2022.
- The question is: If the Turkish army does not use any chemical weapons, why does the Turkish government not allow an independent committee to investigate the claims?
- Turkish prosecutors have not initiated any investigation to find out whether the Turkish military used chemical weapons -- but they have taken legal action against those who have called for an investigation. A lawyer, Aryen Turan, currently being investigated by prosecutors over the speech



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she delivered on October 22 at an Izmir Bar Association Meeting. "Allegations," she had said, "that the Turkish Armed Forces used chemical weapons against the PKK should be investigated".

- The government of Turkey, which is legally obliged to serve and protect Kurds the same as its other citizens, uses every tool to silence and oppress them and to destroy their political will. Yet, they are the ones accused of being "terrorists" and "criminals".
- The tyrannical political environment in Turkey does not allow any dissenting persons -- particularly Kurds -- to breathe freely. The international organizations and governments urgently need to cease ignoring the Kurds and investigate the allegations regarding the Turkey's use of chemical weapons.



Şebnem Korur Fincancı, a professor of forensic medicine who is also president of the Turkish Medical Association and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, said this month that allegations of the recent use of prohibited chemical weapons by the Turkish military should be examined by independent committees in accordance with the principles of the UN's Minnesota Protocol. In response, on October 26, Fincancı was arrested on charges of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" and "insulting the Turkish nation, the State of the Republic of Turkey, state institutions and organs." Pictured: Fincancı speaks to journalists on July 17, 2019 in front of Istanbul's courthouse, after the court acquitted her on charges of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization." (Photo by Ozan Kose/AFP via Getty Images)

Nov 09 – The Kurdish Firat News Agency (ANF) released on October 18 a [video](#) showing, according to the ANF, two PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) members suffering from exposure to prohibited chemical weapons being used by the Turkish military. The two individuals were allegedly caught in a Turkish chemical weapons attack in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq; they eventually died. "It is seen that the chemical weapon paralyzes the nervous and respiratory systems and causes memory loss," the ANF [reported](#). The People's Defence Forces (HPG), the military wing of the PKK, [claimed](#) that 17 PKK members were killed by Turkey's chemical weapons.

Citing a PKK statement, the [ANF report](#) stated that the Turkish Army has used banned bombs and chemical weapons at least 2,476 times within the last six months of its military operation against the Kurdish group.

The PKK, which was established in 1978 for the purpose of seeking Kurdish independence, has long accused Turkey of using chemical weapons.

Şebnem Korur Fincancı, a professor of forensic medicine who is also president of the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV), [stated](#) in an interview with Medya Haber TV that such allegations should be examined by independent committees in accordance with the principles of the UN's Minnesota Protocol.

"I have examined the images and obviously, one of the toxic gasses, poisonous gasses, chemical gasses that directly affect the nervous system has been used," Fincancı [said](#).

After this interview, Ankara's Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against Fincancı on charges of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" and "insulting the Turkish nation, the State of the Republic of Turkey, state institutions and organs".

On October 26, Fincancı [was arrested](#) in a house raid by anti-terror branch police officers.

The members of the Central Council of the TTB who wanted to follow the process of taking testimony were not [allowed to enter courthouse](#) and were [battered](#) by police. The next day, the police once again [attacked](#) the representatives of labor and professional organizations who went to the courthouse, and detained five people.



Prior to Fincancı's arrest, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan [targeted her](#) and the Turkish Medical Association, saying: "The judiciary has taken action regarding the President of the Turkish Medical Association. Steps will be taken against both this person and this institution. I believe that the fact that such a person is the head of an institution whose name starts with 'Turkish' disturbs all members of our nation."

Erdogan added that he has "instructed the ministers that the legislative work towards the transition to a new structure in professional organizations, particularly in the Turkish Medical Association, should be accelerated. If necessary, we will ensure that this name is changed [that Fincancı will be replaced by someone else] by legal regulation."

The head of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), Devlet Bahçeli, who is Erdogan's political ally, [demanded](#) that the Turkish Medical Association be closed and Fincancı stripped of her Turkish citizenship.

The footage of Fincancı's house raid [was broadcast with music](#) on the government-funded TRT channel, which alleged that "a terror organizational book and bullets were found in Fincancı's house."

The footage once again reignited the question as to whether the Turkish army has used prohibited chemical weapons in its military operations against the PKK in the north of Iraq. Many Kurdish activists across Europe [took to the streets](#) to protest the Turkish government.

Meanwhile, international experts have agreed with Fincancı. The Scientific Advisory Board Member of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), Dr. Jan Van Aken, visited the Federal Kurdistan Region of Iraq to investigate the alleged use of chemical weapons by Turkey. "There is a lot of evidence that a chemical attack took place, and an investigation needs to be started," he [told](#) Mesopotamia News Agency.

According to the [Customary International Humanitarian Law](#) (IHL) Database of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), "The use of chemical weapons is prohibited in international armed conflicts in a series of treaties, including the Hague Declaration concerning Asphyxiating Gasses, the Geneva Gas Protocol, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Statute of the International Criminal Court."

After the news reports, Kurdish members of parliament called on prosecutors to start an investigation.

The pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) [released](#) a written statement, calling on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations to examine the claims:

"Since 2021, [Turkey's] use of chemicals has been in the news periodically. It is claimed that Turkey acts in violation of the international conventions, to which it is a party. These developments cause concern among the peoples of the region and lead the way to possible massacres. We emphasize once again that the use of chemicals is against the Geneva Convention, is a war crime and is clearly a crime against humanity."

The former HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş (who has been jailed since 2016), said on Twitter that an independent, international delegation [should travel](#) to the region to study the claim: "[No one should forget](#) for a moment that the use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity and there is no statute of limitations for crimes against humanity. Those who commit such a crime will definitely be held accountable before an independent judiciary." Meral Daniş-Beştas and Saruhan Oluç, deputy chairs of the HDP, [submitted a parliamentary question](#) to Minister of Defense Hulusi Akar:

"Did the Turkish armed forces or some unconventional forces acting together with them use non-official weapons or ammunition in northern Syria and within the borders of Iraq?"

"Considering the fact that the use of chemical weapons and/or weapons or tools of mass destruction and vehicles is regarded by laws and international conventions as war crimes and crimes against humanity, do you as the Minister of National Defense plan to invite international delegations to the operation areas to investigate the allegations?" Sezgin Tanrikulu, an MP for the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) also [called for an investigation](#) on Twitter and submitted a motion to parliament.

Turkey's government authorities including the Ministry of National Defense rejected the allegations [in a written statement](#):

"The allegations that 'chemical weapons' are used by the Turkish Armed Forces, which are periodically brought up by circles who want to tarnish the fight against terrorism... and to cast a shadow on the success of the Turkish Armed Forces, are completely baseless and unrealistic," the statement said.

The Turkish Armed Forces do not use ammunition "prohibited by international law and agreements," and do not have such ammunition in its inventory, according to the ministry.

The question is: If the Turkish army does not use any chemical weapons, why does the Turkish government not allow an independent committee to investigate the claims?

Turkish prosecutors have not initiated any investigation to find out whether the Turkish military used chemical weapons -- but they have taken legal action against those who have called for an investigation.

One is lawyer Aryen Turan, [currently being investigated](#) by prosecutors over the speech she delivered on



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October 22 at an Izmir Bar Association Meeting. "Allegations," she had said, "that the Turkish Armed Forces used chemical weapons against the PKK should be investigated".

Meanwhile, detentions of those who demand answers from the government are ongoing. On October 20, Turkish police detained several HDP members, including its Istanbul co-chair Ferhat Encü, who had attempted to hold a press conference regarding the allegations.

"The press statement we wanted to hold in (Istanbul's) Şirinevler district regarding the use of chemical weapons was faced with efforts to prevent it by the blockade of thousands of police. Dozens of our friends, including our co-chair Ferhat Encü, were detained. This aggression is an attempt to cover up chemical weapons, which are crimes against humanity," HDP Istanbul Branch [announced](#). On October 26, 11 journalists working for Kurdish media outlets [were arrested](#) by police in simultaneous house raids. According to reports, police [tortured](#) at least one of them, Öznur Değer, in reverse handcuffs, and dragged her on the ground while in detention. On the same day, the police [prevented](#) Kurds and other pro-democracy activists in Kadıköy, Istanbul from making a statement to the press and protesting the detention of Fincancı. Police also stopped journalists from taking pictures or videos and removed them from the area. Dozens of protesters were detained.

Here is a summary of the Kurdish issue in Turkey: Kurds are traumatized by images that reportedly show their compatriots dying from banned chemical weapons. Their political leaders are arbitrarily arrested and jailed. Their journalists are violently targeted and put behind bars. Their language and ethnic identity are still not officially recognized. With every word they utter that might challenge a government narrative, they face the risk of arrest, torture and even death. The government of Turkey, which is legally obliged to serve and protect Kurds the same as its other citizens, uses every tool to silence and oppress them and to destroy their political will. Yet, they are the ones accused of being "terrorists" and "criminals".

The tyrannical political environment in Turkey does not allow any dissenting persons -- particularly Kurds -- to breathe freely. International organizations and governments urgently need to cease ignoring the Kurds and investigate the allegations regarding the Turkey's use of chemical weapons.

[Uzay Bulut](#), a Turkish journalist, is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: There are photos, videos, and statements that chemical weapons are used and there is no doubt that Turkey possesses chemical-based weapons. The point is that after so many accusations we still do not have proper identification of the chemicals used – i.e., sarin. Do they use a new class of CWAs?

Position paper on the results of CERIS CBRN session 4th May, 2022, Lille, France



Introduction

The Community for European Research and Innovation for Security (CERIS) organised a CBRN session on May 4, 2022 at the CBRNe Research & Innovation conference in Lille, France. The session opened with state-of-the-art presentations by representatives of DG HOME, DG ECHO and FPI, and continued with two panel discussions of thirteen current EU-funded CBRN projects - eNOTICE, INCLUDING, NO-FEAR, FIRE-IN, PROACTIVE, HoloZcan, ECCOFEX, RESIST, VERTigO, JA TERROR, Bullseye, EU-RADION and PANDEM-2.



UAE CBRN HUB

Source: <https://www.knowledgegroup.co/en-us/solutions/training-development/cbrn-hub>



The CBRN Hub is in the UAE under the directorship of Knowledge Group in partnership with Orbrix Technical and Occupational Skills Training and the cooperation of the EU CBRN CoE Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council Region.

Knowledge Group is the consulting and training solutions arm of Abu Dhabi University to the MENA community – both private and government.

Through the synergy between the CBRN HUB and the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence (CoE) Secretariat for the GCC in Abu Dhabi and its experts, we believe such cooperation will be mutually beneficial and help elevate the outreach of both the CBRN HUB and of the CoE Regional Secretariat for the Gulf Cooperation Council in Abu Dhabi.

The Hub will provide a “one-stop-shop” for all aspects related to CBRN education, training, exercises and research. By combining a broad spectrum of expertise, knowledge, experience and resources under one roof, including national and international experts from the Knowledge Group and Orbrix, the Hub will provide focused management and prioritization of capabilities development in line with national and regional policies and priorities.

The UAE CBRN Hub will work in close cooperation with the EU CoE Initiative, and International Organizations such as the IAEA, OPCW, WHO and INTERPOL, to ensure that the training is relevant, adapted to the constantly evolving security threat basis and in line with up-to-date doctrines, practices and safety standards in the area.

The UAE CBRN Hub will raise the prestige and leadership of the UAE in CBRN preparedness and response by becoming a regional centre for CBRN training and research. Working with all stakeholders in CBRN, the CBRN Hub could open its training and education programme to the CBRN community in the GCC countries, and eventually to organizations from the entire Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.



The UAE has the technological knowledge and the de facto role to be the regional leader in CBRN field of Training, Development and Research, and this CBRN Hub being launched by Knowledge Group in partnership with Orbrix in the UAE will fill a regional gap and the long overdue training needs of the Middle East will therefore be met.

A CBRN emergency calls for cooperation of a very wide spectrum of organizations and could very well require transborder and international collaboration. Interoperability and a consistently high level of response capabilities are key factors in ensuring an efficient and effective response. The UAE CBRN Hub will promote standardization, consistent high-level preparedness and high-quality response performance through individual, single-organization, multi-disciplinary and regional training and research activities.



The Hub will serve the following critical requirements:

- Hosting of International CBRN, Emergency Management and Crisis Management Events in the Region (MENA).
- Training & Development in line with finalising a National Training Strategy with all Government entities and stakeholders.
- Our Portfolio for the hub will include, but will not be limited to, support in the following areas:

The Hub has plans for a series of research projects to support national and regional policy development in areas such as:

- Development of the incident management system for mass casualty events in the UAE.
- Development of local and national response plans.
- Evaluation of service responses to individual crises.
- Risk assessments for a variety of areas, activities and infrastructure elements.
- The role of social media in the UAE during crisis and major emergencies and public perception.
- Security of water reservoirs and supplies.
- Nuclear safety and risk perception.
- Threats to essential industries and their vulnerabilities.
- Potential economic impacts on the UAE (Dubai, AD) from CBRNe acts of terrorism.
- Common safety and security concerns in the Gulf and the need for a coordinated regional strategy.
- Radiological threats and vulnerabilities in the rapidly expanding nuclear sector.
- Nuclear smuggling and the geopolitical role of the UAE.
- Effectiveness of public communication on CBRN response.

Virtual and augmented reality is becoming the new standard in command and control training for critical emergencies. AR/VR offers an efficient, effective and state-of-the-art tool for education, team and individual training. Such training can be on-site but it also offers a unique and unequaled capability to train teams and organizations in different locations and different countries, together. The UAE CBRN Hub plans to establish an AR/VR learning centre in the UAE. This will be the first of its kind in the Gulf Region and the Middle East and will join the ranks of the world's top AR/VR training academies for civil protection and emergency responders, including those in Singapore, Korea and Coventry University, UK.

Bnai Zion Hospital opens medical center for atomic, chemical, and biological warfare

Source: <https://www.jpost.com/health-and-wellness/article-722093>

Nov 11 – [Bnai Zion Medical Center in Haifa](#) has opened emergency rooms to deal with the possibility of atomic, chemical or biological warfare in the future, the hospital announced on Wednesday.

The emergency rooms, which will also treat patients dealing with injuries and physical trauma as a result of earthquakes, were dedicated by [philanthropist George Schaeffer](#) at a cost of NIS 100 million. The nearly 3,000 square meter facility contains **over 100 treatment beds**.

“We are thrilled to inaugurate the emergency room building and protected day hospital. During times of peace as well as during times of emergency,” said Bnai Zion Medical Center CEO Ohad Hochman. “Haifa and the north (of Israel) will be able to access urgent care and day hospitalization with the most advanced hospital standards.”



Nuclear rhetoric rising

The inauguration of the emergency rooms comes as the possibility of nuclear warfare rises to heights not seen since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1967. Vladimir Putin's Russia, embroiled in conflict with Ukraine since February, has had multiple officials speak of or threaten to use nuclear weapons – including Putin himself.



"Those who are trying to blackmail us with nuclear weapons should know that the wind can turn in their direction... [This is not a bluff](#)," Putin said in a pre-recorded speech in September. "As a child of Holocaust survivors, there is nothing more important to me than the security, safety and prosperity of the State of Israel," said Schaeffer, who also serves as Bnai Zion's Chairman. "In recent years, the North of Israel had a vital and urgent need: A hospital in Northern Israel with a state-of-the-art emergency room with reinforced concrete able to sustain missile attacks, chemical attacks and yes, even nuclear attacks," Schaeffer declared.

Bnai Zion Medical Center has experience dealing with combat wounds, as it was a major hospital during the 2006 Lebanon War. With over 500 wounded civilians treated during the war, the hospital itself became a hot target for enemy missiles –even suffering a direct rocket attack on its territory. "Bnai Zion Medical Center's latest building is this ethic of collective kindness personified. It represents a commitment by one of Israel's best hospitals to protect those in need even in the face of terroristic threats," Rabbi Dr. Ari Lamm, CEO of the Bnai zion organization, concluded.

New NSM Aims to Prepare Food Sector for Threats Including CBRN, Pathogens, and Cyber Attacks

By Bridget Johnson

Source: <https://www.hstoday.us/featured/new-nsm-aims-to-prepare-food-sector-for-threats-including-cbrn-pathogens-and-cyber-attacks/>

Nov 11 – A new security directive from the White House will require the Department of Homeland Security and other stakeholder agencies to collaboratively develop plans in partnership with the private sector to better protect the food supply from a range of natural and deliberate threats.

President Biden signed National Security Memorandum-16 (NSM-16) Thursday to "identify and assess the threats of greatest consequence" to this critical infrastructure sector, the White House said, citing as



recent examples the 2021 ransomware attack on JBS Foods, the highly pathogenic avian influenza that has spread across the United States over the past year, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine that caused grain shortages.

“Federal entities, food and agriculture systems and supply chains are vulnerable to disruption and damage from domestic and global threats,” and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats “may result in high-consequence and catastrophic incidents affecting the food and agriculture sector” including toxic contaminants, pests and pathogens, pandemics that affect the workforce, climate change, cyber attacks, and “physical effects of nuclear detonations or dispersion of radioactive materials,” the [memorandum](#) notes.

“The evolving threat environment requires the sector and its essential workforce to better prepare for and respond to incidents with broad impacts on our national and economic security,” it adds.

Interagency implementation of the memorandum will be coordinated by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, with a progress report due to the president in a year.

Within 60 days and then on an annual basis “or more frequently as warranted,” the attorney general and the secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the secretary of Defense and the heads of other relevant agencies, will provide to the secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, and Health and Human Services “a threat assessment on potential actors and threats, delivery systems, and methods that could be directed against or affect the food and agriculture sector.”

Within 180 days the secretaries of Agriculture and HHS “shall assess the vulnerabilities of the food and agriculture sector to the threats identified” in consultation with the private sector and federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) partners. Vulnerability assessments will be updated when “there are emergent, credible, and actionable threats or events necessitating reassessment” or “agencies determine that it is appropriate to do so, such as when significant changes have been made to assessment-specific food production or processing steps.”

Within a year, the secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the attorney general, the secretaries of Agriculture and HHS, and the heads of other relevant agencies are required to produce a comprehensive risk assessment for the food and agriculture sector that is “informed by the threat and vulnerability assessments” required at earlier stages of implementation, “data-driven, sector-specific, and founded on interagency coordination,” “inclusive of CBRN and cyber threats, and in later iterations other threats that may result in high-consequence and catastrophic incidents such as energy disruption, pandemics impacting the food and agriculture sector’s critical infrastructure and essential workforce, catastrophic weather events, and consequences of climate change,” and “prioritized by the highest risks for the food and agriculture sector.”

Then, within 180 days after that risk assessment is finished, Agriculture and HHS will submit a strategic action plan to the president that will “leverage results from the risk assessment, as well as information on security and resilience capabilities, costs, and benefits” and include a risk mitigation analysis that “contains high-level actions for mitigating threats that may result in high-consequence and catastrophic incidents, and a proposed timeline for their completion,” “identifies strategies, capabilities, and areas for research and development (R&D) that prioritize mitigation of the greatest risks,” and “identifies approaches to determine the effectiveness of national risk reduction measures undertaken” including a communication plan for sharing information with public- and private-sector partners along with the general public.

While Agriculture and HHS are the co-Sector Risk Management Agencies (SRMAs) for the food and agriculture sector, the Department of Homeland Security will “provide strategic guidance, promote a national unity of effort, and, in coordination with the Attorney General, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the heads of other relevant agencies, integrate food and agriculture sector efforts into the overall effort to promote the security and resilience of the Nation’s critical infrastructure.”

DHS, the State Department, DoD, the Interior Department, the Commerce Department, and other relevant agencies will “provide support domestically and globally to strengthen the security and resilience of the food and agriculture sector and other critical infrastructure sectors,” according to the memorandum.

Relevant departments are tasked developing, maintaining, assessing, enhancing, and encouraging the adoption of “risk-informed and coordinated domestic and global surveillance and monitoring systems that provide early detection, awareness, and warning of CBRN, cyber, and other threats that may result in high-consequence and catastrophic incidents,” “systems that track specific animals, plants, food, and other commodities to inform timely decision support,” and “coordinated nationwide laboratory networks for food, animal, and plant health; environmental response that integrates existing Federal, SLTT, academic, and, as appropriate, private laboratory resources toward adequate surge capacity; standardized diagnostic and reporting protocols, procedures, and mechanisms; and timely information and analysis sharing.”

Agriculture and HHS are tasked with maintaining and enhancing a National Veterinary Stockpile (NVS) “containing sufficient amounts of veterinary countermeasures, including vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics, many of which could be deployed within 24 hours to begin to respond to a high-consequence



or catastrophic animal disease outbreak affecting human health or the economy” and a National Plant Disease Recovery System (NPDRS) “capable of responding to a catastrophic plant disease with disease control measures and the use of resistant or tolerant plant material to sustain a reasonable level of production for economically important crops.” Agencies will also share information on available funding opportunities and tools “to help SLTT and private sector partners prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from CBRN, cyber, or other threats that may result in high-consequence and catastrophic incidents within the food and agriculture sector.” DHS and partner agencies will also be tasked with strengthening “interdiction, inspection, and identification of suspect items related to food and agriculture both entering and within the United States” and expanding “development of appropriate screening criteria and laboratory analysis of interdicted items.” Customs and Border Protection [reported](#) in the first quarter of FY 2022 that agricultural enforcement actions were taken in response to 1,148 contaminated imported cargo shipments.

Bridget Johnson is the Managing Editor for Homeland Security Today. A veteran journalist whose news articles and analyses have run in dozens of news outlets across the globe, Bridget first came to Washington to be online editor and a foreign policy writer at The Hill. Previously she was an editorial board member at the Rocky Mountain News and syndicated nation/world news columnist at the Los Angeles Daily News. Bridget is a terrorism analyst and security consultant with a specialty in online open-source extremist propaganda, incitement, recruitment, and training. She hosts and presents in Homeland Security Today law enforcement training webinars studying a range of counterterrorism topics including conspiracy theory extremism, complex coordinated attacks, critical infrastructure attacks, arson terrorism, drone and venue threats, antisemitism and white supremacists, anti-government extremism, and WMD threats. She is a Senior Risk Analyst for Gate 15 and a private investigator. Bridget is an NPR on-air contributor and has contributed to USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, New York Observer, National Review Online, Politico, New York Daily News, The Jerusalem Post, The Hill, Washington Times, RealClearWorld and more, and has myriad television and radio credits including Al-Jazeera, BBC and SiriusXM.

TOXICOLOGY AND FORENSIC MEDICINE

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A Novel Hospital-Based Mass Casualty Decontamination Facility for Hazardous Material Disasters

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Article information

Received: June 29th, 2019; Revised: July 15th, 2019; Accepted: July 18th, 2019; Published: July 26th, 2019


MUST READ!


Skin decontamination procedures against potential hazards substances exposure

By Greta Camilla Magnano , Francesca Rui, and Francesca Larese Filon

Chem Biol Interact. 2021 Aug 1;344:109481.

Source: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34051209/>

Abstract

Decontamination of unprotected skin areas is crucial to prevent excessive penetration of chemical contaminants after criminal or accidental release. A review of literature studies was performed to identify the available decontamination methods adopted to treat skin contamination after chemical, radiological and metal exposures. In this bibliographic review, an overview of the old and recent works on decontamination procedures followed in case of potential hazards substances contaminations with a comparison between these systems are provided. Almost all data from our 95 selected studies conducted in vitro and in vivo revealed that a rapid skin decontamination process



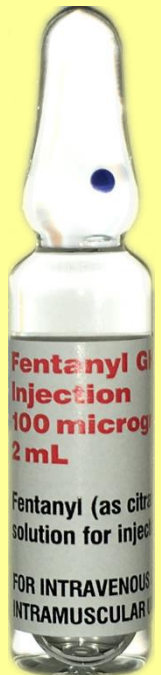
is the most efficient way to reduce the risk of intoxication. The commonly used or recommended conventional procedures are simple rinsing with water only or soapy water. However, this approach has some limitations because an easy removal by flushing may not be sufficient to decontaminate all chemical deposited on the skin, and skin absorption can be enhanced by the wash-in effect. Other liquid solutions or systems as adsorbent powders, mobilizing agents, chelation therapy are also applied as decontaminants, but till nowadays does not exist a decontamination method which can be adopted in all situations. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop more efficient and successful decontaminating formulations.

Experimental fentanyl vaccine stops the drug from entering the brain

Source: <https://newatlas.com/health-wellbeing/fentanyl-vaccine/>

Nov 15 - A hapten is a small molecule which, when combined with a larger carrier protein, elicits the production of antibodies which bind to it. In the case of this vaccine, that protein is in fact a genetically deactivated diphtheria toxin known as CRM197 – it is already used in multiple FDA-approved vaccines. Once the antibodies have been produced, they bind not only to the fentanyl-like hapten molecules, but also to any *actual* fentanyl molecules present in the bloodstream. Those molecules are thus unable to enter the brain, so they don't produce any feelings of euphoria. They ultimately end up being passed from the body via the kidneys. Also present in the vaccine is an adjuvant molecule called dmLT, which is derived from *E. coli* bacteria. Like other adjuvants, it boosts the immune response produced by vaccines, making the medications more effective. In tests performed on rats, the vaccine was shown to be effective at keeping fentanyl from reaching the brain, while not producing any significant side effects. And importantly, the antibodies which it produces specifically target the fentanyl and hapten molecules, leaving all others alone. This means that other types of opioids, such as morphine, are still effective for pain relief. Plans call for human clinical trials of the vaccine to begin soon. "We believe these findings could have a significant impact on a very serious problem plaguing society for years – opioid misuse," said the lead scientist, Assoc. Prof. Colin Haile. "Our vaccine is able to generate anti-fentanyl antibodies that bind to the consumed fentanyl and prevent it from entering the brain [...] Thus, the individual will not feel the euphoric effects and can 'get back on the wagon' to sobriety."

A paper on the research – which also involved scientists from Tulane University, the Baylor College of Medicine, and the Veteran's Affairs Medical Center in Houston – was recently published in the journal [Pharmaceutics](#).



Equals 125 monthly salaries (2,500 euros/mo)

Mr. Johnson was paid **£276,130** (314.830 €) for a speech five weeks after leaving Downing Street. On 14 October - a few days after visiting Mr. Murdoch (paid **£11,000**) – Mr. Johnson spoke to the Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers in Colorado Springs. He gave a 30-minute speech and a 45-minute "fireside chat" at the event. The former PM worked for eight-and-a-half hours, meaning he was paid an hourly rate of more than **£32,400**. Mr. Johnson and two members of staff also received free transport and accommodation.



Celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards (CFATS) Program

Source: <https://www.cisa.gov/blog/2022/11/17/celebrating-15th-anniversary-chemical-facility-anti-terrorism-standards-cfats>



**CYBERSECURITY
& INFRASTRUCTURE
SECURITY AGENCY**



Nov 17 – This Sunday marks the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the [Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards \(CFATS\) regulations](#). Since the publication of the [CFATS final rule](#) on November 20, 2007, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and its predecessor have been committed to the mission of securing high-risk chemical facilities and the nation from the threat of chemical terrorism.

Securing our nation's highest-risk chemical facilities and protecting the nation from the weaponization of chemicals is no easy feat. The growth of the CFATS program reflects this and its success has required foresight and commitment from the nation's best security experts, risk analysts, and policy writers. It has also required a purposeful and thoughtful partnership between the program and the regulated community to achieve security and risk reduction goals.

Through these partnerships, and the incredible work of the chemical security teams at CISA, the program has demonstrated that a novel approach to regulation can be a success. The nonprescriptive, risk-based CFATS regulation has led to the adoption of tens of thousands of security measures at high-risk facilities, from physical perimeters to cybersecurity, training, and exercises.

Over the last 15 years, more than 40,000 facilities have reported their chemical holdings to CISA under the CFATS program. As of today, just over 3,000 of those facilities are considered "high risk," though that number fluctuates regularly as facilities change their chemical holdings and modify their business practices.

Since the program began, we have conducted more than 14,000 inspections at high-risk sites and performed more than 10,000 compliance assistance visits. Today, more than 95% of current high-risk sites have approved security plans in place. When it comes to moving the needle on chemical security, CFATS is making a difference. Three out of every four high-risk chemical facilities implement new security measures in order to reach CISA's standards, and those improvements are not inconsequential—on average, facilities increase their security measures by 57% between their initial security plans and the plans that are ultimately approved by CISA.

Over the past six months, under the vision and leadership of Associate Director Kelly Murray, CISA's Chemical Security team has published a series of blogs and videos recounting the successes, and, at times, some of the growing pains that have helped the CFATS program become the global standard for chemical security. This series on the history of CFATS is available now at the [CFATS 15th Anniversary webpage](#). I hope you will join me in taking a few minutes to learn more about the CFATS program, its history, and its impact. Additionally, I highly encourage you to set aside time this afternoon at 3 pm ET to join us live on Microsoft Teams for the [Live CFATS 15 Celebration Event](#).

.It will feature members of the chemical security team, videos from staff who have contributed to the growth of the program, and a dialogue with some of our industry stakeholders.

I am proud to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of CFATS, as well as the 1st anniversary of [ChemLock](#), CISA's voluntary chemical security program, during [Infrastructure Security Month](#). These programs, and the partnerships that form their foundation, truly speak to CISA's ability to drive down risk and ensure the security of our nation's chemical facilities. I look forward to celebrating the next fifteen years, and beyond, of CISA's commitment to chemical security.

Dr. David Mussington

Executive Assistant Director for Infrastructure Security

CBRNE Training & Simulation

Source: <https://sensorycots.com/cbrne>

To provide proper security and training for CBRNe response personnel by emphasizing the importance of identifying unseen, or unidentified substances, through sampling and intelligence collection.

Specific sensory training aids for CBRNe, such as scent generators and smoke systems, used in CBRNE instruction add realism to live immersive training scenarios that will better prepare response teams to meet and recognize unknown dangers.



Sensory Effects Add Realism To CBRNe Training Scenarios

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense and explosives (CBRNe) pose large-scale real-world threats that present extremely dangerous conditions and risk of mass injury, contamination, or loss of life. CBRNe events are, usually, deliberate or aggressive acts with the specific intent of inciting terror or causing targeted physical or environmental harm. CBRNe incidents have the potential to escalate and disrupt society if not identified, prevented, and contained.

According to an article written by Steve Pike for Argon Electronics *Global pioneers of CBRNe / HazMat training solutions*, “CBRNe missions involve unknown or unidentified substances, with a greater emphasis on the need to identify the substance through sampling and intelligence collection.” Sensory training aids for CBRNe can enhance an individuals’ ability to recognize an odor, malodor as well as assist in visually identifying a harmful toxic cloud if they know what to see, smell, or feel.



Sensory Training Aids for CBRNe Prepare Field Teams

Strange smell is an indicator of a CBRNE attack. Biological and environmental odors and malodors can be associated with clandestine graves, food spoilage, and chemicals in fire debris with evidence of arson.

It is integral to engage personnel in live immersive training that recreates detailed aroma's with nuances that affect human mind and body reactions. Introducing foul smells often associated with ominous scenarios triggers the olfactory sensory system to recognize that odor in the future. Once exposed to a simulated odor, technicians that must perform in real life operations will have a significant advantage in detecting potentially toxic or noxious odors using a “familiar” warning signal to avoid physical harm.

This idea is supported in H. Scherer, A. Quast, in [International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences](#), 2001, “The olfactory system belongs to the chemical senses (smell, taste). This sensory function essentially serves the purpose of self-preservation by enabling individuals to recognize food, assess its quality, and receive warning signals (burnt smell, poisons).” SensoryCo has a complete library of replicated harmful and lethal odors and malodors that imitate toxic compounds, radionuclides or biological weapons that can unleash sensory assaults as well as contaminate environments. Chemical agents such as chlorine gas, mustard gas, cyanide, diesel gas and meth lab smell as well as trauma odors found in medical settings are infused into our aroma cartridges to be dispersed by our specialty scent generators.

In addition, vapor and smoke systems can mimic gaseous releases or create whiteout conditions which can be unforeseen issues in an actual field event. When modeled in a simulated immersive training environment SensoryCo aroma generators and smoke systems become a useful sensory training aid for CBRNe.

CBRNE Missions Require Appropriate Levels of Preparedness

The weaponization of chemical, biological radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) agents and the manipulation of computers or other technological devices in order to cause death, destruction, and infrastructure disruption of a principal target require extensive research, study, and training to understand, measure, limit proliferation, maintain responder safety, and limit exposure to threats.

In fact, Chemical, Biological & Nuclear Warfare Magazine, CBNW Issue January 2020 discusses the importance of support, response and recovery training stating, “Comprehensive and common equipping and adequately trained manpower for CBRN security depends on such exercises to provide realistic training to stakeholders. The more practice, the better response.”

Specific CBRNE smoke generation and scent generation training aids add real sensory experience to live immersive training scenarios. The visual cues provided by the presence of a simulated vapor cloud or the introduction of a biological or environmental odor or malodor in an instruction environment directly affects critical mission support services. Increased targeted training and the implementation of first responder field mitigation techniques will allow for better damage control, impact evaluation, threat analysis and vulnerability assessment (TAVA), decontamination, clean up and recovery of probable, likely or current events. SensoryCo products, including aroma and scent generators as well as vapor clouds and smoke systems, provide custom sensory training aids for CBRNe to anticipate and identify specific disaster components.

Examples of atmospheric effects used for CBRNE training include:

Smells: ammonia, nitric acid, IED manufacturing, lewisite, mustard gas, decaying flesh, blood.



Smoke effects: laboratory vapors, car bomb, smoldering café, dense tunnel smoke.

Sprays and vapors: low lying vapors, leaking pipes, de-contamination, chemical spray, WMD gas release.

Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation, and Education Conference (I/ITSEC) 2010 Paper No. 10030

The U.S. Army Simulation and Training Technology Center (STTC) performed research to improve the realism of the look, feel and smell of trauma simulations where it was determined that olfactory cues play an important role in memory and training. The study reviewed the idea that the addition of olfactory simulation in immersion training simulations could potentially enhance the perception of engagement, facilitate learning and expand the breadth of skills that can be trained. While the research involved medical trauma settings, the application could be extended to “training combat medics within realistic warfighting scenarios”, and thus, pertain to CBRNe training programs. “Exposing trainees to particular smells may help avoid the shock of first smelling the odors on the battlefield. Preparing for all the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings associated with combat may help provide Soldiers with the strength required to face adversity, fear and hardship.”

Human Patient Simulator based CBRN Casualty Management Training

By Sima Gautam, Navneet Sharma, Rakesh Kumar Sharma, and Mitra Basu

Defence Life Science Journal, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2017, pp. 80-84

Source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318363773_Human_Patient_Simulator_based_CBRN_Casualty_Management_Training

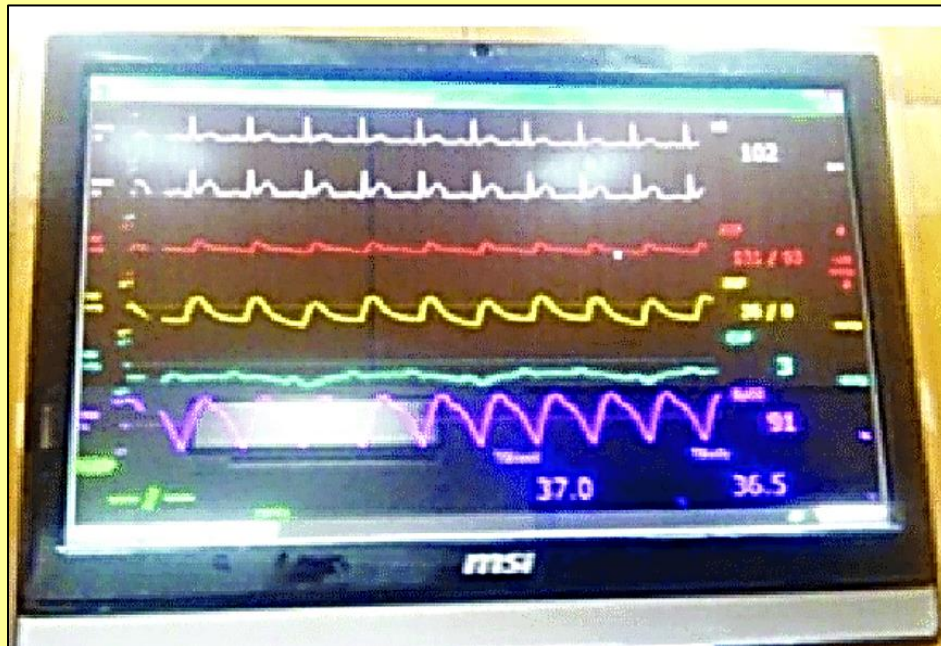
Abstract

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) emergency are becoming an impending threat. Effective preparedness needs to be raised for prompt response of CBRN incidents. During mass casualty incidents the strategy of the first responders must be beyond the triage, evacuation and medical first aid. Response process is advanced by the presence of CBRN contaminants and it becomes more complex when the rescue operations have to be performed immediately after the incident. Methodological approach is required to identify and decontaminate the CBRN victims. To manage CBRN emergencies, skill-based training of appropriate

degree is a key to the right level of preparedness. Intervention by first responders requires specialised inputs in knowledge, skills and aptitude. In India, CBRN defence training has traditionally been a military oriented domain, involving the quick reaction team, quick reaction medical team, rapid action medical team, etc.

Monitor displaying vital parameters after sarin gas attack.

The training concept discussed in this study contemplates around standardised simulated CBRN casualty referred to as CBRN human patient simulator (HPS), which conceptualised in the division of CBRN Defence, Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied



Sciences, Delhi. HPS provides an opportunity to learn about the health impact of CBRN contaminants and practise medical management. Simulation as training and planning tools, offers repeatability, controllability, possibility for evaluation and provides a platform to learn from costly mistakes. Group training and demonstrations conducted on the HPS offers an additive benefit to enhance performance as a team and also help to reduce errors. This paper provides the information on the potentials of simulation-based training of emergency response teams in the management of CBRN victims.



Soldiers deployed to protect World Cup from nuclear and chemical threat

Source: <https://metro.co.uk/2022/11/21/soldiers-sent-to-protect-world-cup-from-nuclear-and-chemical-threat-17798161/>



Turkish soldiers were seen in protective gear in preparation for any nuclear or chemical attacks (Picture: Getty)

Nov 21 – Special forces have been deployed in [Qatar](#) in case of any nuclear or chemical attack at the [World Cup](#). Turkish members of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defense Division were pictured ahead of the first World Cup game yesterday.

They were seen suited in up protective gear with gas masks. The CBRN is responsible for passive protection during events where chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear warfare, including terrorism, is a possible threat.

Turkey is one of several countries that agreed to help the Qatar Armed Forces prepare for security during the spectacle.



Others include the UK, the US, Italy, France, and Pakistan.

The UK has tasked [three Royal Navy ships](#) with patrolling sea lanes around the Gulf state, checking for bombs and mines.





The Ministry of Defence is also providing advanced venue search training, operational planning support and RAF air patrols through the joint Typhoon Squadron. Brits were warned [terrorists are 'likely' to try and target the World Cup](#) – although security experts say the risk of a large-scale attack is low. Travel advice from the British government currently states: 'Terrorists are likely to try to carry out attacks in Qatar. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places visited by foreigners.' Analysts told Metro.co.uk that this internationally-assisted security blanket will make any sophisticated attack unlikely in the oil-rich state. Security expert [Will Geddes](#) said: 'Qatar is a reasonably secure location given it is a small country and it is pretty easy to control

that environment. 'The Qataris not only have their domestic security but they have brought in US and UK security advisors and personnel to assist.

'One thing you can say about Qatar is that they can throw money at security, making it very difficult for anyone to carry out an attack with any degree of sophistication.

'They will obviously be very conscious of the fact that they are now in the world's glare when they have been striving for a long time to be the equivalent of Dubai. 'If they get this wrong, it will not aid their journey in trying to increase their profile.'



EDITOR'S COMMENT: The big lesson learned regarding CBRN preparedness taken from World Cup 2022 is the importance of autonomy. They had enough time to be prepared but they preferred the easy solution of asking Turkish CBRN to cover the gap. Qatar is a geographically small country that is ideal for a model CBRN preparedness and response plan. Since money is not the problem, a CBRNe Academy could provide unanimous training to both civilian and military first responders. Unfortunately, the norm is that after an uneventful mega event all the agony for "exotic" threats is forgotten and life is getting back to normal "it will not happen to us! (though the Qataris do worry about the radiation threat from their neighbors and are doing things in advance).

Nonwoven Cotton Wipe Proven Innovation for Decontamination and Security

Source: <https://www.cottongrower.com/cotton-news/nonwoven-wipe-is-a-proven-innovation-for-decontamination-and-security/>

Nov 22 – With heightened political tensions in some regions of the world, high-tech sectors like defense, personnel protection, and semiconductors are gaining due attention. Likewise, advanced textiles are finding applications such as decontamination wipes, body armor, medical textiles, wearables, and more.

Investment in science and technology to boost innovation and grow the economy is recognized as a high priority in the United States and United Kingdom amidst dire economic situations. The Chips Act in the United States and the recent Autumn Statement by the United Kingdom's Chancellor of Exchequer reinforce the need.

First Line Technology (FLT) has been working to develop multiple applications for the nonwoven wipe FiberTect that can help contribute to global security. FiberTect, which evolved out of research and development at Texas Tech University, is a platform technology based on its universality to wipe away



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – November 2022

different CBRN agents, as well as its use of different fibers such as cotton, polyester, and blends as absorbent layers, depending on the application and need. “FiberTect was one of the first patented technologies out of Texas Tech University, and through industry partnership with First Line Technology and Hobbs Bonded Fibers, it has proven to be one of the most widely commercialized technologies from TTU over the past two decades,” stated Cameron Smith, Director of Commercialization for the TTU System. FLT’s continued efforts are taking FiberTect to the next level, making it a universal wipe for chemical, biological, and radiological protection. Recent work by the U. S. Army has shown that FiberTect is able to efficiently wipe away toxic microbes such as bacterial spores just using the dry FiberTect wipe. This method is advocated for cold weather regions of the world such as Siachen glacier and other high-altitude regions where liquid freezing makes wet decontamination methods inefficient. This study also showed that the FiberTect dry wipe can decontaminate *Bacillus atrophaeus* var. *globigii* (BG) spores up to 94.93%.

This research proves the applicability of the FiberTect nonwoven wipe against biological toxins, in addition to its efficacy against chemical agents like mustard gas and fentanyl particles.



FLT demonstrating the use of FiberTect to wipe away toxins from the skin of an animal. (Photo: First Line Technology)

“FiberTect was originally developed for toxic liquid chemicals such as chemical warfare agents, but it has proven equally effective at the physical removal of fine powders like fentanyl and weaponized bio-agents,” stated Corey Collings, Director of Research and Development at FLT. “There is a need to develop functional products that can sense and wipe away opioids and fentanyl products,” stated Dr. Vaclav Trojan of the International Clinical Research Center at Masaryk University, Czech Republic. “These products, although used in pain treatments, are regulated items that need good control, and hence there is a need to develop effective decontamination products such as wipes.” Adsorbent and absorbent wipes like FiberTect can play a vital role in wiping away fine particles that contain fentanyl compounds, added Trojan. The need for such high-tech wipes has been expressed by Dr. Jan Halamek, Director of the Institute for Forensic Science at Texas Tech University. “The United States is going through an unparalleled opioid crisis where fentanyl and its analogs represent the deadliest drug threat we have ever encountered,” he stated. “Highly porous and absorbent wipes like FiberTect can be used as a decontamination countermeasure for fentanyl, which gives forensic scientists a tool to detect and decontaminate illicit drugs.” FLT is advocating a “**Blot-Apply-Remove**” method that uses dry FiberTect wipes to wipe away bulk toxic agents. A small amount of reactive agent is applied, followed by again wiping with FiberTect. “The highly absorptive nature of FiberTect makes it far superior to paper towels or other absorbents in this procedure,” stated Collings. Translating research from laboratory to the marketplace is critical these days for national security, economic growth, and job creation. FiberTect is a good model for such an activity, showcasing public-private partnerships. Initial applied research was supported by the United States government, and the private sector picked up the

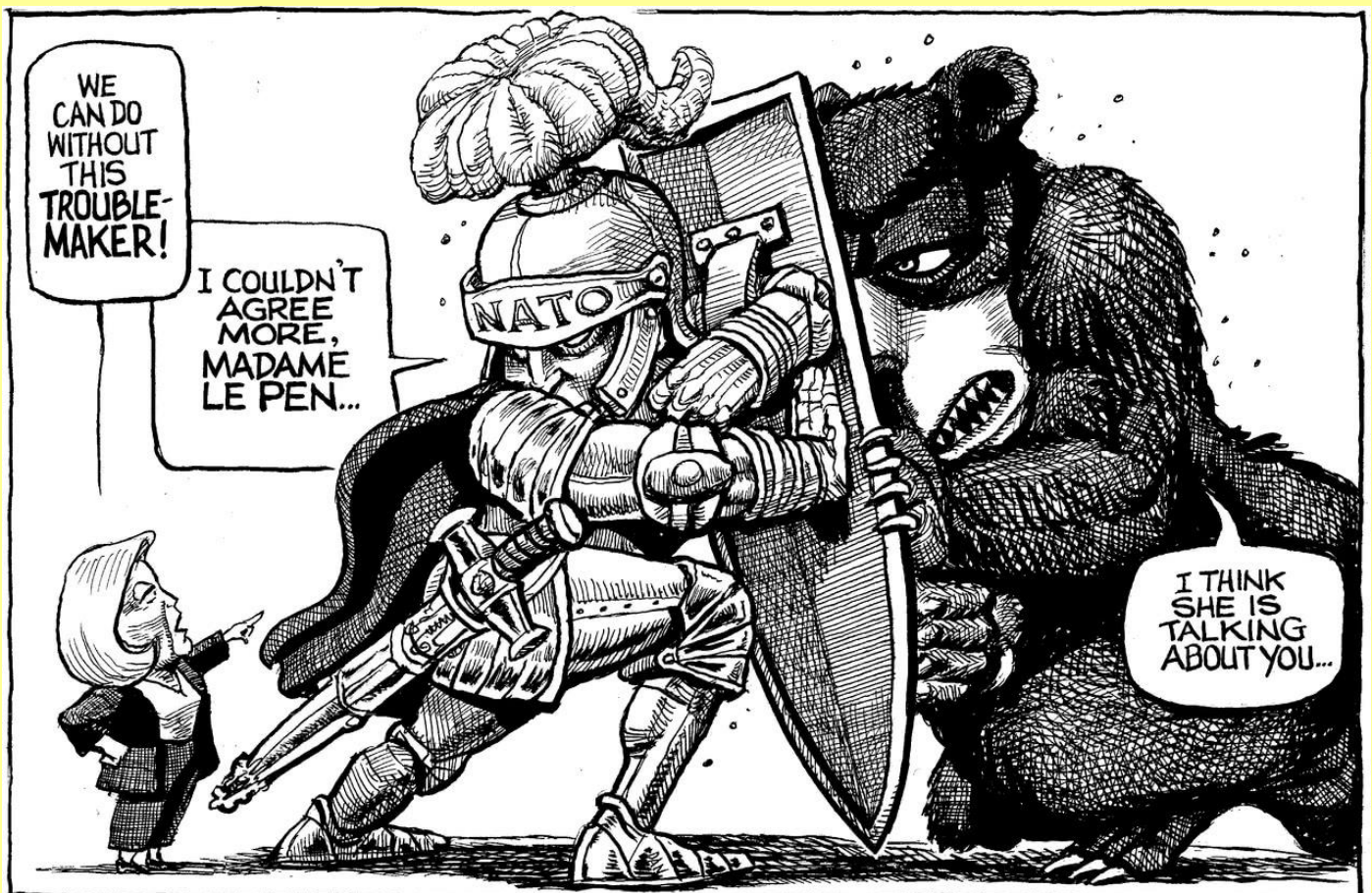


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technology after robust evaluation by a United States National Laboratory. “Universities are critical to the technology commercialization process, providing not only foundational research but also translational research, directly impacting the commercial market and economy with new technologies,” stated Smith.

Sources

- ✓ Jana Kesavan et al., Evaluation of Cold Weather Decontamination Methods, American Journal of Disaster Medicine, Vol. 17 (1), 2022, pp. 13-21.
- ✓ S. S. Ramkumar, “Process for Making Chemical Protective Wipes and Such Wipes,” U. S. Patent 7,516,525, April 2009.
- ✓ A Better Method for Self-Decontamination, Lawrence Livermore National laboratory, S & TR, March 2009, pp. 20-22.



Economist.com

Kal



2022-23 CBRNe-related conferences



NCT Events 2022

<https://nct-events.com/>

NCT is back! After the stop imposed on us by the pandemic, we have a large calendar of events coming up in 2022. We will start in Abu Dhabi, February 7th and 8th. We will then reach almost every continent: NCT is scheduled for Brazil, Germany, Thailand, Croatia, the United States, and South Korea. [Visit our website](#) for the latest news regarding dates and locations!



EMIRATES SOCIETY OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE CONFERENCE

7 - 10 Dec, 2022

Conrad Abu Dhabi Etihad Towers, UAE



East and South-East Europe – Security Threats and Challenges

Belgrade, Serbia | December 2, 2022.

●▶ Contact: *Prof.dr Darko TRIFUNOVIĆ*, Director, Institute for National and International Security-INIS (galileja@yahoo.com)

2023 events

More details will follow in due time

13-15 February: Nuclear Deterrence Summit

Arlington, VA

www.exchangemonitor.com/go/nuclear-deterrence-summit-2023/

4-11 March: NCT Middle East

Riyadh, KSA

<https://nct-events.com/event>

21-24 March: DSI Joint Civil and DoD CBRN Forum

National Harbor, Washington DC.

dsigroup.org

25-27 July, NDIA Annual CBRN Symposium and Exhibition

Baltimore Civic Center, Baltimore, MD

www.ndia.org/events

04-08 September: NCT USA

Aberdeen Proving Ground, Edgewood MD

04-11 November: NCT Asia

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

31 Jan – 1 Feb NCT South America

Lima, Peru

<https://nct-events.com/event>

28-30 Mar Behavioral Analysis 2023

Prague, Czech Republic

<https://behaviouralanalysis.com/>

13-15 February: Nuclear Deterrence Summit

Arlington, VA

www.exchangemonitor.com/go/nuclear-deterrence-summit-2023/

21-24 March: DSI Joint Civil and DoD CBRN Forum

National Harbor, Washington DC.

dsigroup.org

19 April: NDIA Quarterly Forum “Medical CBRN RDT&E”

NDIA HQs, Alexandria, VA

www.ndia.org/events

21-26 May: International CBRN Commandants and Commanders Conference (ICCC) 2023

Rotterdam, The Netherland

<https://nct-events.com/event>

24-26 May: NCT Europe

Rotterdam, The Netherland

<https://nct-events.com/event>

26-30 June: NCT Pro Challenge Thailand

Bangkok, Thailand

<https://nct-events.com/event>

2-6 October: NCT Pro Challenge Croatia

Zagreb, Croatia

<https://nct-events.com/event>





WWW.THESECURITYEVENT.CO.UK #TSE2023

<https://www.thesecurityevent.co.uk/>

The wait is over, The Security Event's registration is now open and will be returning to **NEC Birmingham** on **25-27 April 2023**. Featuring thousands of product launches and security solutions, a stellar line-up of career-enriching accredited CPD seminars, and unrivalled networking opportunities – TSE2023 is the **ONLY** event you will want to attend next year.

The UK's AWARD WINNING no.1 commercial, enterprise and domestic event commits to building upon the formidable foundations paved in 2022. Register for your **FREE PASS** today and join thousands of security leaders and professionals at what is guaranteed to be our best show yet!



8⁰ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟ
**Διαχείριση Κρίσεων
 στον Τομέα Υγείας**
10-11 Φεβρουαρίου 2023
 Ξενοδοχείο President, Αθήνα
 Αίθουσα Europe

Διοργάνωση Ελληνική Εταιρεία Διαχείρισης Κρίσεων στον τομέα Υγείας



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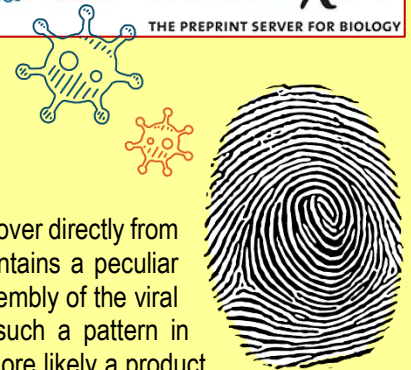


Endonuclease fingerprint indicates a **synthetic origin** of SARS-CoV-2

By Valentin Bruttel, Alex Washburne, and Antonius VanDongen

This article is a preprint and has not been certified by peer review

Source: <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.10.18.512756v1.full.pdf>



Abstract

To prevent future pandemics, it is important that we understand whether SARS-CoV-2 spilled over directly from animals to people, or indirectly in a laboratory accident. The genome of SARS-CoV-2 contains a peculiar pattern of unique restriction endonuclease recognition sites allowing efficient dis- and re-assembly of the viral genome characteristic of synthetic viruses. Here, we report the likelihood of observing such a pattern in coronaviruses with no history of bioengineering. We find that SARS-CoV-2 is an anomaly, more likely a product of synthetic genome assembly than natural evolution. The restriction map of SARS-CoV-2 is consistent with many previously reported synthetic coronavirus genomes, meets all the criteria required for an efficient reverse genetic system, differs from closest relatives by a significantly higher rate of synonymous mutations in these synthetic-looking recognitions sites, and has a synthetic fingerprint unlikely to have evolved from its close relatives. We report a high likelihood that SARS-CoV-2 may have originated as an infectious clone assembled *in vitro*.

Lay Summary

To construct synthetic variants of natural coronaviruses in the lab, researchers often use a method called *in vitro* genome assembly. This method utilizes special enzymes called restriction enzymes to generate DNA building blocks that then can be "stitched" together in the correct order of the viral genome. To make a virus in the lab, researchers usually engineer the viral genome to add and remove stitching sites, called restriction sites. The ways researchers modify these sites can serve as fingerprints of *in vitro* genome assembly. We found that SARS-CoV has the restriction site fingerprint that is typical for synthetic viruses. The synthetic fingerprint of SARS-CoV-2 is anomalous in wild coronaviruses, and common in lab-assembled viruses. The type of mutations (synonymous or silent mutations) that differentiate the restriction sites in SARS-CoV-2 are characteristic of engineering, and the concentration of these silent mutations in the restriction sites is extremely unlikely to have arisen by random evolution. Both the restriction site fingerprint and the pattern of mutations generating them are extremely unlikely in wild coronaviruses and nearly universal in synthetic viruses. Our findings strongly suggest a synthetic origin of SARS-CoV2.

Is the US facing a potential 'triple-demic' of flu, RSV and COVID-19?

By Mary Kekatos

Source: <https://www.yahoo.com/gma/us-facing-potential-triple-demic-flu-081211159.html>

Oct 26 - As summer ended and the United States headed into the fall and winter, doctors were worried Americans would see a "[twindemic](#)" — a situation in which both flu and COVID-19 spread at the same time.

But experts told ABC News the country may now be facing the threat of a "triple-demic" as doctors see an early rise in other pediatric respiratory viruses, particularly respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, respiratory illnesses are appearing earlier, and in more people, than in recent years.

The federal health agency says there has also been early increases in flu activity across most of the U.S. with indications that this season could be much more severe than the previous two seasons.

As of Monday afternoon, pediatric bed occupancy in the U.S. is the highest it's been in two years with 75% of the estimated 40,000 beds filled with patients, according to an ABC News analysis.

COVID-19 infections have not yet begun to spike, CDC [data](#) shows. But in prior years, the virus has started to pick up around Thanksgiving.

Experts said a combination of waning immunity to COVID and lack of exposure to other viruses, combined with close gatherings indoors, is fueling a "perfect storm."

"Mostly the issue is there's low population immunity and kids are, once again, gathered again, and this is facilitating rapid spread of viruses like RSV," said Dr. John Brownstein, an epidemiologist and chief



innovation officer at Boston Children's Hospital and an ABC News contributor. "And because of the sheer volume of infection, when you have that larger denominator, you have a situation where a portion of those kids are going to require hospital treatment. And because of that, our hospitals are spread thin, not only for bed capacity, but also for critical staffing, of those beds."

He added, "So the combination of shortages, bed capacity and rising viral illness all make for an unfortunate perfect storm that we're seeing happen everywhere right now."

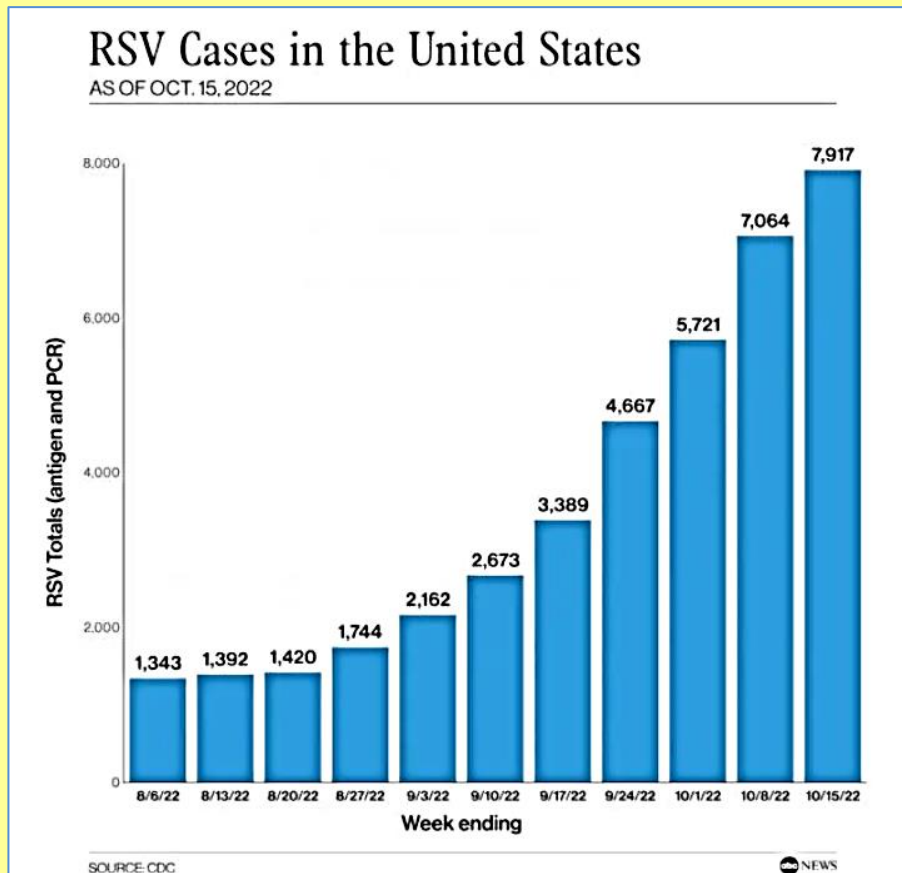
[RSV Cases in the United States \(ABC News Photo Illustration\)](#)

Resurgence of respiratory viruses

Over the last two years, there were more restrictions such as masking, social distancing, capacity limits and school closures. This meant fewer Americans were exposed to other viruses as well, including the flu and RSV.

Now, with few to no mitigation measures in cities and states across the country, this is leading to a resurgence of these viruses.

"That just leaves a lot of children, young children in particular, that have been born since March of 2020 who haven't yet encountered RSV infections," Dr. Larry Kocielek, medical director of Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago, told ABC News. "And so that will increase the ability of the virus to spread and increase the number of children who will get infected."



According to the [CDC](#), flu test positivity rates have increased from 1.27% for the week ending Sept. 24 to 4.38% for the week ending Oct. 15, higher than usual for this time of year, experts said.

Brownstein said another challenging issue for hospitals is staffing shortages.

"We have already an overworked and overstressed workforce, you have many that have left the health care industry because of burnout," he said. "And then on top of that, you have infection among health care staff."

Importance of vaccination

The doctors told ABC News it is vital for children to get vaccinated to prevent severe complications. Children can be hospitalized from any of these infections and those with underlying conditions are at the highest risk.

"If your child has not yet received the influenza vaccine, it is imperative that he or she [gets one] as soon as possible," Dr. Federico Laham, medical director of pediatric infectious disease at Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children, told ABC News. "It takes, as we know, a few weeks to mount a response. With some children who, especially after these past two years with very little flu circulation, the immune system gets a little bit lazy and forgetful. So it's important to 'remind' it."

Laham went on, "The same thing applies to COVID vaccine. Some children developed COVID early on in the pandemic and then didn't get the vaccine. We know that it works, we know that it's extremely safe."

In addition, experts say that parents may consider having their children wear masks and make sure they're practicing good hand hygiene, washing hands thoroughly with soap and water.

"The other thing that schools can do, and kids can do, is make sure you bring hand sanitizer with you to school so you can clean your hands and wipes to wipe down surfaces," Dr. Tom Murray, an associate professor of pediatrics in the section of infectious diseases at Yale University School of Medicine, told ABC News. "And again, common touch points, though the wiping down of contaminated surfaces is especially important with viruses like RSV."



To fix America's biodefense strategy, think smaller

By Al Mauroni

Source: <https://breakingdefense.com/2022/10/to-fix-americas-biodefense-strategy-think-smaller/>

Oct 25 – It's a natural reflex for the US government to try to develop strategies to deal with issues as broadly as possible, to handle a wide array of contingencies. But in the op-ed below, Al Mauroni of Air University's Center for Strategic Deterrent Studies argues that the Biden administration's biodefense strategy, expanding on past strategies, has grown too cumbersome and is in need of a cure of its own.

The senior administration official stared grimly at the assembled reporters.

"We appreciate your attendance here today as we discuss the release of the National Strategy to Counter Radiation Threats. As you know, the impact of radiological threats on national security interests is a critical issue today," the official said. "The Fukushima incident in 2011 demonstrated the potential mass impact of radiation threats on a modern society. Increasing solar threats enhanced by climate change, proliferation of nuclear weapons, and potential accidents at nuclear power reactors and nuclear-powered satellites need to be addressed by a single national strategy. Whether radiation exposure is natural, deliberate, or accidental, the US government will execute a coordinated interagency effort to protect our nation against these threats."

The reporters exchanged glances. How could a single strategy ever hope to be applicable to such disparate problems, from rogue nuclear states to solar storms? There were already numerous government agencies responsible for addressing these different nuclear and radiological threats. Would the Defense Department's Nuclear Weapons Council, for instance, take on the challenges of nuclear accidents and natural radiological exposure? In addition, Congress would never permit the consolidation of these topics under one portfolio, as their oversight function was aligned along the separate execution of energy, defense, and health policy.

Luckily the above is a fiction, and such a counter-radiation policy does not exist. But the scenario serves to illustrate how misplaced another major US policy objective has become over the last few administrations: executing a national biodefense strategy.

Likewise, that strategy prescribes a single approach to natural disease outbreaks, deliberate biological incidents and accidental biological releases. There is no doubt that the Biden administration wants to [improve the nation's pandemic preparedness](#), and a strategy limited to that topic would be much more appropriate, given the significant size and complexity of US health care. There are at least three major obstacles to this effort: poorly defined terms of reference, the lack of context of how these biological threats are addressed, and the challenges inherent to an interagency response to complex issues. None of these are new challenges.

Four administrations have released national biodefense strategies, each one building upon the former. The Bush administration's "Biodefense for the 21st Century" in 2004 provided direction for the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Defense to develop new programs focused on the threat of biological terrorism. This strategy was replaced by the Obama administration's "National Strategy to Counter Biological Threats" which expanded the vision to a more global platform and included the broader scope of biological threats. The Trump administration developed a "National Biodefense Strategy" in 2018 as directed by Congress, building upon the Obama strategy by adding an implementation plan and activities. Now we have the Biden administration's "National Biodefense Strategy and Implementation Plan" [\[PDF\]](#) which focuses on pandemic preparedness but has to include the threats of biological weapons and biological laboratory accidents because it's now a matter of sheer rote.

Each administration has seen significant challenges in implementing these policies, in no small part due to the failure to carefully define terms of reference and to appreciate the political constraints of executing such a broad strategy. The Bush administration's strategy was well-focused and provided funds to respond to the threat of biological terrorism. Unfortunately, after 2009, homeland security had other priorities, and both the executive and legislative branches largely lost interest in advancing the strategy's goals to improve US preparedness for bioterrorism incidents. The Obama and Trump administrations' strategies failed from lack of oversight and direction. The executive agencies with biodefense responsibilities had no new direction or funds other than for global health security [\[PDF\]](#). Health and Human Services was appointed as the lead for the interagency but had no authority other than to convene working meetings. Nothing new [came from these efforts](#), in part because there is no drive for collaboration across the interagency for these three different biothreats. The Biden administration has promised \$88 billion over five years for pandemic preparedness along with the development of specific goals and an implementation plan that identifies specific agencies to lead and support its efforts. Certainly the continued impact of COVID-19 has demonstrated the [need for improvements](#) in US public health. At the same time, the administration still wants a coordinated response on biological incidents that come from accidental and deliberate sources, just as the past two administrations have attempted. This desire unnecessarily confuses the plan's execution. The definitions in the Biden strategy inhibit the development of good policy. The very term biodefense is defined as all actions that address bioincidents, which includes all natural, deliberate, or



accidental biological releases. A bioincident is when a biothreat causes harm to humans, animals, plants, or the environment. A biothreat is an entity that can potentially cause a bioincident. And the biodefense enterprise is any federal, state, local, tribal, territorial government agency, nongovernmental or private sector entity, or international partner with a role in prevention, preparedness, response or recovery from a bioincident. That certainly doesn't leave anyone out. But as a result of this circular logic, it becomes impossible to develop discrete solutions for policy implementation. Biosurveillance, for instance, is not just focused on biothreats to humans, including all hazards to human, animal, plant and environmental health. Those seeking a "near-real time" situational awareness through biosurveillance [\[PDF\]](#) are asking for an incredibly expensive system with significant challenges of data management. Context is particularly important when the US government develops policy and funds specific programs to address critical national issues. One can identify at least five different sectors within a national biological preparedness effort. These include:

- Disease prevention, managed by public health to protect the public from natural diseases
- Bioterrorism response, managed by law enforcement and emergency responders to protect the public from deliberate biological incidents
- Biowarfare defense, managed by the US military to protect its servicemembers from biological weapons
- Biosurety, managed by laboratory directors to protect its workers and the environment from accidental releases
- Agricultural biosecurity/food biosafety, managed by farms and ranchers to protect food and livestock from biologics

While there are overlaps between these sectors, each has a different mission, different customer base, and different priorities as to what constitutes a "biothreat." Each has a different lead federal government agency with its own funds and authorities. The overwhelming majority of federal funds goes to disease prevention, and the large number of Congressional committees and interest groups addressing this area reflect that fact.

Even as every presidential administration's strategy emphasizes "all natural, deliberate, or accidental biological releases" must be addressed, these are sharply distinct factions that execute their programs separately from each other. While the details in this strategy's implementation plan demonstrate this complexity, it's difficult to say why putting all of them under a single policy makes it any stronger, and the US any safer. There's also the chronological framework of the plan, which again builds on previous iterations and emphasizes prevention, protection, response and recovery. That's not unexpected — it's a familiar framework that allows the many US government agencies to coordinate their efforts responding to national incidents.

But this is where the national biodefense strategies have made a consistent failure. While there may be a common response to biothreats (natural, deliberate, and accidental), there is no commonality in the prevention against the threat sources (nature, nation-states, industry) or protection of discrete populations (general public, military servicemembers, workers) against these same threats. Health and Human Services is the agency responsible for coordinating these interagency strategy efforts, but getting the US government agencies to collaborate [\[PDF\]](#) on a common biodefense vision and assessing their progress toward a myriad number of policy objectives [\[PDF\]](#) remains elusive.

The potential for confusion and overreach extends to within the walls of the Pentagon. The Department of Defense has a unique situation in that it does have "biodefense" activities in four of the five sectors listed above. Its [force health protection program](#) addresses natural infectious diseases, while a [Chemical-Biological Defense Program](#) is supposed to focus on biowarfare agents. The Department operates a few high security biosafety laboratories and [supports bioterrorism response](#). The overwhelming majority of DoD funds is spent on addressing natural diseases, even as the Department talks about [biological weapons](#). The US military views biodefense as protecting servicemembers from nation-states using biological weapons during major combat operations. As that definition is blurred, there is the danger of mission creep by defense agencies seeking to broaden their portfolio, allegedly in line with national policy. Military doctrine can become confused as those [typically dealing](#) with counter-WMD missions increasingly intrude on the health community's programs. COVID-19 has made us hyperaware of the dangers of natural disease outbreaks, but the national security community's interest in [global health security](#) is not necessarily a good thing.

Strategies, by definition, are expected to diagnose a discrete problem, offer guiding policy, and direct measurable actions. Many of the goals and objectives listed in the implementation plan are activities already being executed, as noted by the numerous legal and policy authorities listed in Annex IV of the strategy. Certainly, the US government is responsible for developing policies and programs that address biological threats, but not all biological threats are national security issues. Without proper oversight and clear assessments of the five biothreat sectors, the Biden administration could move this boulder up the hill only to have it roll back down in time, much as Sisyphus was doomed to do.

Al Mauroni is the director of the US Air Force Center for Strategic Deterrence Studies and author of the book *BIOCRISIS: Defining Biological Threats in US Policy*. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the US Government.






















WHO fungal priority pathogens list to guide research, development and public health action

[Download \(1.8 MB\)](#)

Overview

Oct 25 – The WHO fungal priority pathogens list (WHO FPPL) is the first global effort to systematically prioritize fungal pathogens, considering their unmet research and development (R&D) needs and perceived public health importance. The WHO FPPL aims to focus and drive further research and policy interventions to strengthen the global response to fungal infections and antifungal

Critical group	High group	Medium group
 <i>Cryptococcus neoformans</i>	 <i>Nakaseomyces glabrata</i> (<i>Candida glabrata</i>)	 <i>Scedosporium</i> spp.
 <i>Candida auris</i>	 <i>Histoplasma</i> spp.	 <i>Lomentospora prolificans</i>
 <i>Aspergillus fumigatus</i>	 Eumycetoma causative agents	 <i>Coccidioides</i> spp.
 <i>Candida albicans</i>	 Mucorales	 <i>Pichia kudriavzevii</i> (<i>Candida krusei</i>)
	 <i>Fusarium</i> spp.	 <i>Cryptococcus gattii</i>
	 <i>Candida tropicalis</i>	 <i>Talaromyces inarneffei</i>
	 <i>Candida parapsilosis</i>	 <i>Pneumocystis jirovecii</i>
		 <i>Paracoccidioides</i> spp.



resistance. The WHO FPPL list is divided into three categories: critical, high and medium priority. The report presents these categories and proposes actions and strategies for policymakers, public health professionals and other stakeholders; targeted at improving the overall response to these priority fungal pathogens including preventing the development of antimicrobial resistance. Three primary areas for action are proposed, focusing on: (1) strengthening laboratory capacity and surveillance; (2) sustainable investments in research, development, and innovation; and (3) public health interventions.

Ivermectin for COVID-19: Final Nail in the Coffin

By F. Perry Wilson, MD, MSCE

Source: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/982852>

Oct 25 – Welcome to *Impact Factor*, your weekly dose of commentary on a new medical study. I'm Dr F. Perry Wilson of the Yale School of Medicine.

It began in a petri dish.

[Ivermectin](#), a widely available, cheap, and well-tolerated drug on the WHO's list of essential medicines for its critical role in treating [river blindness](#), [was shown to dramatically reduce the proliferation of SARS-CoV-2 virus](#) in cell culture.

You know the rest of the story. Despite the fact that the median inhibitory concentration in cell culture is about 100-fold higher than what one can achieve with oral dosing in humans, [anecdotal reports](#) of miraculous cures proliferated.

[Cohort studies](#) suggested that people who got ivermectin did very well in terms of COVID outcomes.

A narrative started to develop online — one that is still quite present today — that authorities were suppressing the good news about ivermectin in order to line their own pockets and those of the execs at



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Big Pharma. The [official Twitter account of the FDA clapped back](#), reminding the populace that we are not horses or cows. And every time a study came out that seemed like the nail in the coffin for the so-called horse paste, it rose again, vampire-like, feasting on the blood of social media outrage.

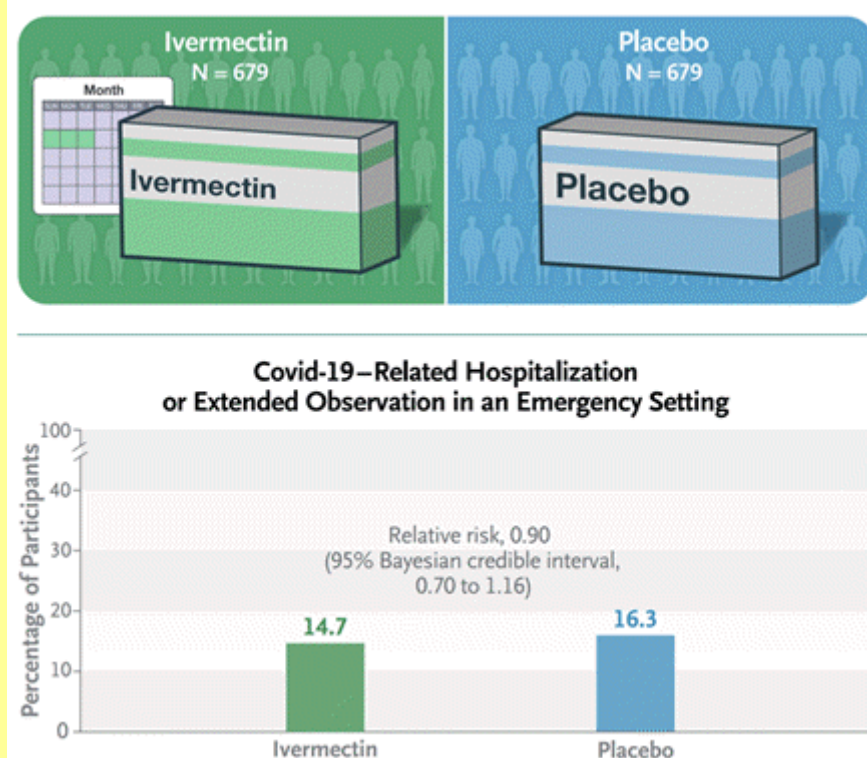
The truth is that while excitement for ivermectin mounted online, it crashed quite quickly in scientific circles. Most [randomized trials showed no effect of the drug](#). A couple of larger trials which seemed to show dramatic effects were [subsequently shown to be fraudulent](#).

Then the [TOGETHER trial](#) was published. The 1400-patient study from Brazil, which treated outpatients with COVID-19, found no significant difference in hospitalization or ER visits — the primary outcome — between those randomized to ivermectin vs placebo or another therapy.

But still, Brazil. Different population than the United States. Different health systems. And very different rates of *Strongyloides* infections ([this is a parasite that may be incidentally treated by ivermectin, leading to improvement independent of the drug's effect on COVID](#)). We all wanted a US trial.

And now we have it. [ACTIV-6 was published last week in JAMA](#), a study randomizing outpatients with COVID-19 from 93 sites around the United States to ivermectin or placebo.

A total of 1591 individuals — median age 47, 60% female — with confirmed symptomatic COVID-19 were randomized from June 2021 to February 2022. About half had been



vaccinated.

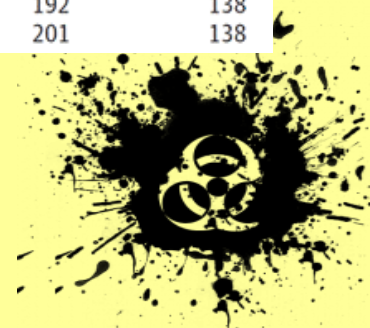
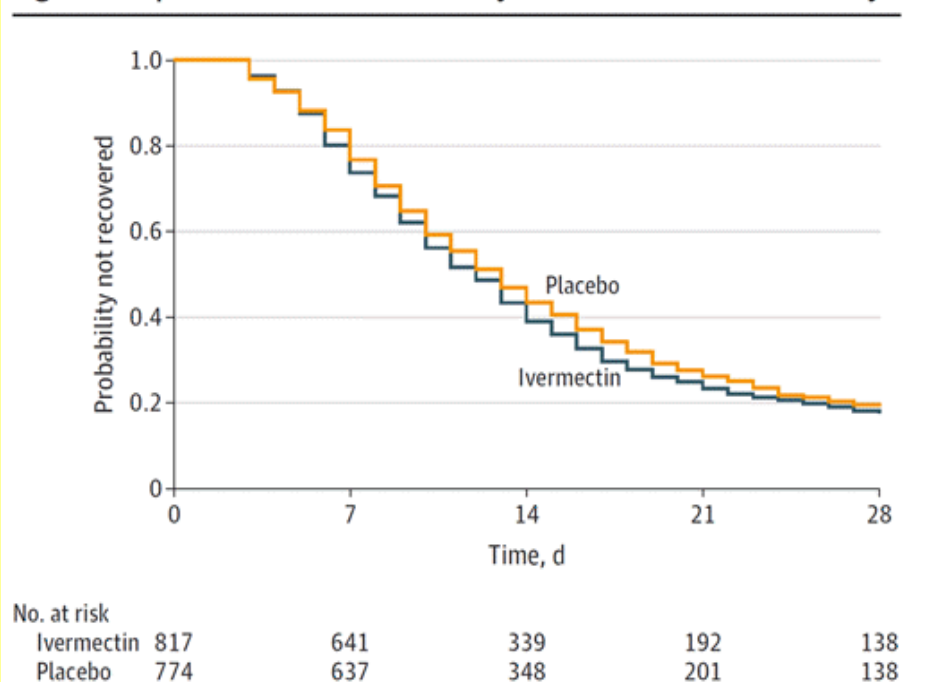
The primary outcome was straightforward: time to clinical recovery. Did ivermectin make people get better, faster?

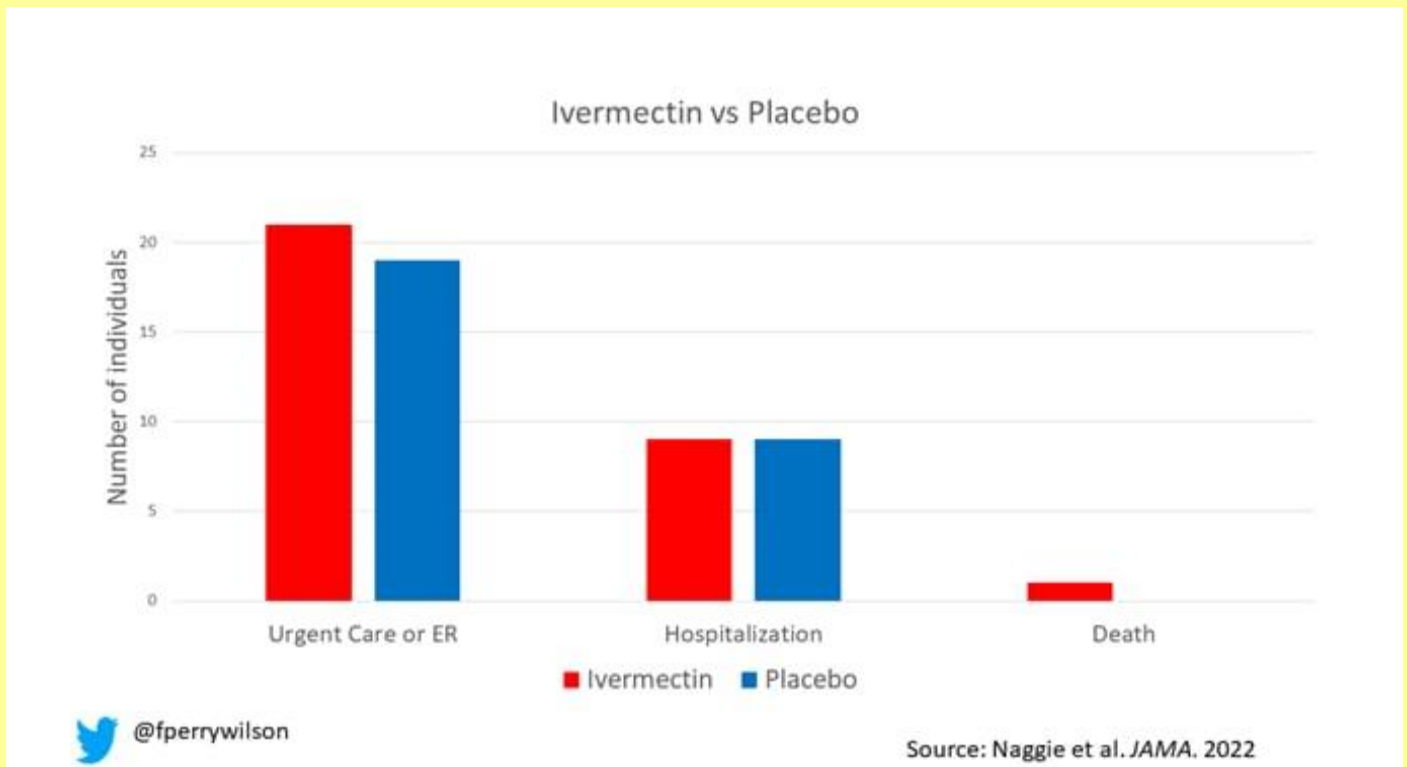
It did not. The time to recovery, defined as having three symptom-free days, was 12 days in the ivermectin group and 13 days in the placebo group — that's within the margin of error.

But overall, everyone in the trial did fairly well. Serious outcomes, like death, hospitalization, urgent care, or ER visits, occurred in 32 people in the ivermectin group and 28 in the placebo group. Death itself was rare — just one occurred in the trial, in someone receiving ivermectin.

OK, are we done with this drug yet? Is this nice US randomized trial enough to convince people that results from a petri dish don't always transfer to humans, regardless of the presence or absence of an evil pharmaceutical cabal?

Figure 3. Kaplan-Meier Curve for Primary Outcome of Time to Recovery





No, of course not. At this point, I can predict the responses. The dose wasn't high enough. It wasn't given early enough. The patients weren't sick enough, or they were too sick. This is motivated reasoning, plain and simple. It's not to say that there isn't a chance that this drug has some off-target effects on COVID that we haven't adequately measured, but studies like ACTIV-6 effectively rule out the idea that it's a miracle cure. And you know what? That's OK. Miracle cures are vanishingly rare. Most things that work in medicine work OK; they make us a little better, and we learn why they do that and improve on them, and try again and again. It's not flashy; it doesn't have that allure of secret knowledge. But it's what separates science from magic.

F. Perry Wilson, MD, MSCE, is an associate professor of medicine and director of Yale's Clinical and Translational Research Accelerator.

West says no biological weapons in Ukraine, Russia disagrees

Source: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-europe-united-nations-moscow-biological-weapons-1be19cf3a7f5459a4dfbadbc3c1dc078>

Oct 28 — The U.S. and its Western allies on Thursday dismissed Russia's claims that banned biological weapons activities are taking place in Ukraine with American support, calling the allegation disinformation and fabrications.

Russia's U.N. ambassador said Moscow will pursue a U.N. investigation of its allegations that both countries are violating the convention prohibiting the use of biological weapons.

The dispute came in the third U.N. Security Council meeting on Ukraine-related issues that Russia has called since Tuesday. This one focused on a 310-page document that Russia circulated to council members this week alleging there is "military biological" activity in Ukraine with support of the U.S. Defense Department.

The document includes an official complaint to the council, allowed under Article VI of the 1972 biological weapons convention, and a draft resolution that would authorize the Security Council to set up a commission to address Russia's claims.

Russia's allegation of secret American biological warfare labs in Ukraine has been disputed by independent scientists, Ukrainian leaders and officials at the White House and Pentagon. An Associated Press investigation in March found the claim was taking root online, uniting COVID-19 conspiracy theorists, QAnon adherents and some supporters of former President Donald Trump.



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Ukraine does have a network of biological labs that have gotten funding and research support from the U.S. They are owned and operated by Ukraine and are part of an initiative called the Biological Threat Reduction Program that aims to reduce the likelihood of deadly outbreaks, whether natural or manmade. The U.S. efforts date back to work in the 1990s to dismantle the former Soviet Union's program for weapons of mass destruction.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield called Thursday's meeting "a colossal waste of time," rejected Russia's allegation as "pure fabrications brought forth without a shred of evidence." She said the claim is part of a Moscow "disinformation campaign" that is attempting "to distract from the atrocities Russian forces are carrying out in Ukraine and a desperate tactic to justify an unjustifiable war."

"Ukraine does not have a biological weapons program," she said. "The United States does not have a biological weapons program. There are no Ukrainian biological weapons laboratories supported by the United States."

British Ambassador Barbara Woodward told the council that since Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine it "has repeatedly spread disinformation, including wild claims involving dirty bombs, chemical weapons and offensive biological research."

"How much more of this nonsense do we have to endure?" she asked.

Norway's ambassador, Mona Juul, said: "The sole purpose of these false allegations is to provide a smoke screen ... that's sowing confusion and drawing attention from Russia's unprovoked, illegal and brutal warfare in Ukraine."

French Ambassador Nicolas De Riviere condemned "this umpteenth attempt made by Russia to make us forget that it is violating the United Nations Charter" and accused Moscow of again "using the Security Council as a propaganda platform."

Other council members including China and India focused on a key problem with the biological weapons convention: Unlike the convention banning the use of chemical weapons, it has no provision to verify compliance and investigate complaints.

China's deputy U.N. ambassador, Geng Shuang, urged a late November conference of the 197 state parties to the convention to restart verification negotiations "that have been stalled for more than 20 years."

Last month, the state parties met at Russia's request on the activities at biological laboratories in Ukraine, but a final report said it wasn't possible to reach consensus.

Adedeji Ebo, the U.N. deputy high representative for disarmament, told the council that this was the first time Article VI of the convention had been invoked with a complaint to the Security Council.

He repeated statements in March and May that the United Nation "is not aware of any such biological weapons programs" and "currently has neither the mandate nor the technical or operational capacity to investigate this information."

But Ebo said: "Should the council initiate an investigation, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to support it."

In his briefing, Russia's Nebenzia accused the U.S. of conducting work in Ukraine with deadly pathogens — including cholera, plague, anthrax and influenza — that couldn't be justified under the guise of public health. He said documents and evidence recovered by Russian authorities suggested a military application.

Nebenzia said the Russian military had recovered drones capable of spraying bioagents as well as documents that he said related to research on the possibility of spreading pathogens through bats and migrating birds.

Thomas-Greenfield called Russia's claims "absurd for many reasons, including because such species, even if they could be weaponized, would pose as much a threat to the European continent and to Ukraine itself as they would to any other country."

Nebenzia took the floor for a second time at the end of the meeting, saying Western ambassadors routinely accuse Russia of sounding "a false alarm," disseminating "disinformation" and distracting the Security Council from discussing more important issues.

At the same time, he said, "our Western colleagues have nothing to say on the substance" of Russia's claims.

He said Russia will move ahead on the resolution calling for a Security Council investigation. He said a second meeting of council experts is the next step, "and then we will be deciding when we'll put it to the Security Council."

Afraid of needles? China using inhalable COVID-19 vaccine

Source: <https://apnews.com/article/health-china-shanghai-covid-73054086e649140d3cf6edf77ae4ef73>

Oct 29 — The Chinese city of Shanghai started administering an inhalable COVID-19 vaccine on Wednesday in what appears to be a world first.

The vaccine, a mist that is sucked in through the mouth, is being offered for free as a booster dose for previously vaccinated people, according to an announcement on an official city social media account.



Scientists hope that such “needle-free” vaccines will make vaccination more accessible in countries with fragile health systems because they are easier to administer. They also may persuade people who don’t like getting a shot in the arm to get inoculated. China wants more people to get booster shots before it relaxes strict pandemic restrictions that are holding back the economy and are increasingly out of sync with the rest of the world. As of mid-October, 90% of Chinese were fully vaccinated and 57% had received a booster shot.



A [video posted](#) by an online Chinese state media outlet showed people at a community health center sticking the short nozzle of a translucent white cup into their mouths. The accompanying text said that after slowly inhaling, people hold their breath for five seconds, with the entire procedure completed in 20 seconds.

“It was like drinking a cup of milk tea,” one Shanghai resident said in the video. “When I breathed it in, it tasted a bit sweet.”

The effectiveness of non-needle vaccines has not been fully explored. Chinese regulators approved the inhalable one in September, but only as a booster shot after studies showed it triggered an immune system response in people who had previously received two shots of a different Chinese vaccine.

A vaccine taken as mist could fend off the virus before it reaches the rest of the respiratory system, though that would depend in part on the size of the droplets, one expert said.

Larger droplets would train defenses in parts of the mouth and throat, while smaller ones would travel further into the body, said Dr. Vineeta Bal, an immunologist in India.

The inhalable vaccine was developed by Chinese biopharmaceutical company CanSino Biologics Inc. as an aerosol version of the company’s one-shot adenovirus vaccine, which uses a relatively harmless cold virus.

The traditional one-shot vaccine has been approved for use in more than 10 markets including China, Hungary, Pakistan, Malaysia, Argentina and Mexico. The inhaled version has received a go-ahead for clinical trials in Malaysia, a Malaysian media report said last month.

Regulators in India have approved a nasal vaccine, another needle-free approach, but it has yet to be rolled out. The vaccine, developed in the U.S. and licensed to Indian vaccine maker Bharat Biotech, is squirted in the nose.



About a dozen nasal vaccines are being tested globally, according to the World Health Organization.

China has relied on domestically developed vaccines, primarily two inactivated vaccines that have proven effective in preventing death and serious disease but less so than the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines at stopping the spread of the disease.

Chinese authorities also have not mandated vaccination — entering an office building or other public places requires a negative COVID-19 test, not proof of vaccination. And the country's strict "zero-COVID" approach means that only a small proportion of the population has been infected and built immunity that way, compared to other places.

As a result, it's unclear how widely COVID-19 would spread if restrictions were lifted. The ruling Communist Party has so far shown no sign of easing the "zero-COVID" policy, moving quickly to restrict travel and impose lockdowns when even just a few cases are discovered.

Authorities on Wednesday ordered the lockdown of 900,000 people in Wuhan, the city where the virus was first detected in late 2019, for at least five days. In remote Qinghai province, the urban districts of Xining city have been locked down since last Friday.

In Beijing, Universal Studios said it would close its hotels and attractions "to comply with pandemic prevention and control." The city of more than 21 million people reported 19 new cases in the latest 24-hour period.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: The delivery method is not the problem. The content is!



I'm a Physician Battling Long COVID. I Can Assure You It's Real

By Monica Verduzco Gutierrez, MD

Source: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/983069>

Oct 27 – One in 5. It almost seems unimaginable that this is the [real number of people](#) who are struggling with long COVID, especially considering how many people in the US have had COVID-19 at this point ([more than 96 million](#)). Yet I continue to hear of people who are struggling, and we continue to see a flood of people in the long COVID clinic. It isn't over, and long COVID is the new pandemic.

Even more unimaginable at this time is that it's happening to me. I've experienced not only the disabling effects of long COVID, but I've also seen, firsthand, the frustration of navigating diagnosis and treatment. It's given me a taste of what millions of other patients are going through.

Vaxxed, Masked, and (Too) Relaxed

I caught COVID-19 (probably Omicron BA.5) that presented as sniffles, making me think it was probably just allergies. However, my resting heart rate was up on my Garmin watch, so of course I got tested and was positive.

With my symptoms virtually nonexistent, it seemed, at the time, merely an inconvenience because I was forced to isolate away from family and friends, who all stayed negative.

But 2 weeks later, I began to have [urticaria](#) — hives — after physical exertion. Did that mean my [mast cells were angry](#)? There's some evidence these immune cells become overactivated in some patients with COVID. Next, I began to experience lightheadedness and the rapid heartbeat of tachycardia. The tachycardia was especially bad any time I physically exerted myself, including on a walk. Imagine me — a lover of all bargain shopping — cutting short a trip to the outlet mall on a particularly bad day when my heart rate was 140 after taking just a few steps. This was [orthostatic intolerance](#).

Then came the severe worsening of my migraines — which are often vestibular, making me nauseated and dizzy on top of the throbbing.

I was of course familiar with these symptoms, as professor and chair of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long School of Medicine at University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio. I developed a post-COVID recovery clinic to help patients.

So, I knew about post-exertional malaise (PEM) and postexertional symptom exacerbation (PESE), but I was now experiencing these distressing symptoms firsthand.

Clinicians really need to look for this cardinal sign of long COVID as well as evidence of [myalgic encephalomyelitis](#) or chronic fatigue syndrome ([ME/CFS](#)). ME/CFS is marked by exacerbation of fatigue or symptoms after an activity that could previously be done without these aftereffects. In my case, as an All-American Masters miler with several marathons under my belt, running 5 miles is a walk in the park. But now, I pay for those 5 miles for the rest of the day on the



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couch or with palpitations, dizziness, and fatigue the following day. Busy clinic day full of procedures? I would have to be sitting by the end of it. Bed by 9 PM was not always early enough.

Becoming a Statistic

Here I am, one of the leading experts in the country on caring for people with long COVID, featured in the national news and having [testified in front of Congress](#), and now I am part of that lived experience. Me — a healthy athlete, with no comorbidities, a normal BMI, vaccinated and boosted, and after an almost asymptomatic bout of COVID-19, a victim to long COVID.

You just never know how your body is going to react. Neuroinflammation occurred in studies with mice with mild respiratory COVID, and could be happening to me. I did not want a chronic immune-mediated vasculopathy.

So, I did what any other hyperaware physician-researcher would do. I enrolled in [the RECOVER trial](#) — a study my own institution is taking part in and one that I recommend to my own patients.

I also decided that I need to access care and not just ignore my symptoms or try to treat them myself.

That's when things got difficult. There was a wait of at least a month to see my primary care provider — but I was able to use my privileged position as a physician to get in sooner.

My provider said that she had limited knowledge of long COVID, and she hesitated to order some of the tests and treatments that I recommended because they were not yet considered standard of care. I can understand the hesitation. It is engrained in medical education to follow evidence based on the highest-quality research studies. We are slowly learning more about long COVID, but acknowledging the learning curve offers little to patients who need help now.

This has made me realize that we cannot wait on an evidence-based approach — which can take decades to develop — while people are suffering. And it's important that everyone on the front line learn about some of the manifestations and [disease management](#) of long COVID.

I left this first physician visit feeling more defeated than anything and decided to try to push through. That, I quickly realized, was not the right thing to do.

So again, after a couple of significant crashes and days of severe migraines, I phoned a friend: [Ratna Bhavaraju-Sanka](#), MD, the amazing neurologist who treats patients with long COVID alongside me. She squeezed me in on a non-clinic day. Again, I had the privilege to see a specialist most people wait half a year to see. I was diagnosed with both [autonomic dysfunction](#) and intractable [migraine](#).

She ordered some intravenous (IV) fluids and IV magnesium that would probably help both. But then another obstacle arose. My institution's infusion center is focused on patients with cancer, and I was unable to schedule treatments there.

Luckily, I knew about the concierge mobile IV hydration therapy companies that come to your house — mostly offering a hangover treatment service. And I am thankful that I had the health literacy and financial ability to pay for some fluids at home.

On another particularly bad day, I phoned other friends — higher-ups at the hospital — who expedited a slot at the hospital infusion center and approval for the IV magnesium.

Thanks to my access, knowledge, and other privileges, I got fairly quick if imperfect care, enrolled in a research trial, and received medications. I knew to pace myself. The vast majority of others with long COVID lacks these advantages.

The Patient with Long COVID

Things I have learned that others can learn, too:

- Acknowledge and recognize that long COVID is a disease that is affecting 1 in 5 Americans who catch COVID. Many look completely "normal on the outside." Please listen to your patients.
- Autonomic dysfunction is a common manifestation of long COVID. A 10-minute stand test goes a long way in diagnosing this condition, [according to this consensus statement](#) from the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. It is not just anxiety.
- "That's only in research" is dismissive and harmful. Think outside the box. Follow guidelines. Consider encouraging patients to sign up for trials.
- Screen for PEM/PESE and teach your patients to pace themselves because pushing through it or doing graded exercises will be harmful.
- We need to train more physicians to treat postacute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection ([PASC](#)) and other postinfectious conditions, such as ME/CFS.

If long COVID is hard for physicians to understand and deal with, imagine how difficult it is for patients with no expertise in this area.



It is exponentially harder for those with fewer resources, time, and health literacy. My lived experience with long COVID has shown me that being a patient is never easy. You put your body and fate into the hands of trusted professionals and expect validation and assistance, not gaslighting or gatekeeping. Along with millions of others, I am tired of waiting.

New Pan-Coronavirus Vaccine Passes Key Experiments, Demonstrates Protection

Source: <https://corporate.dukehealth.org/news/new-pan-coronavirus-vaccine-passes-key-experiments-demonstrates-protection>



Oct 27 – In laboratory and primate tests, a new pan-coronavirus vaccine developed by the [Duke Human Vaccine Institute](#) (DHVI) has demonstrated wide protection against SARS-CoV-2 viruses and variants, including Omicron BA.5. Publishing in the journal [Nature Communications](#), the DHVI and collaborating researchers reported that three doses of the pan-coronavirus vaccine induced neutralizing antibodies against Beta, Delta and Omicron variants, including the subvariant BA.5. The vaccine was also tested by exposing vaccinated animals to various SARS-CoV-2 strains. It demonstrated protection against infection from the original SARS-CoV-2 strain, as well as Beta and Delta variants. “This provides proof-of-concept for a first generation pan-SARS-like virus vaccine,” said [Barton F. Haynes](#), M.D., director of the DHVI. The vaccine candidate is a combination of a nanoparticle antigen developed at Duke, along with an adjuvant – an ingredient that boosts a vaccine’s effects – formulated by the Access to Advanced Health Institute. The adjuvant formulation, 3M-052-AF, significantly enhanced the immune responses in the animals when combined with the antigen. “While SARS-CoV-2 continues to mutate during the ongoing pandemic, there are conserved regions on the virus that our vaccine will continue to successfully bind to, regardless of mutations,” Haynes said. “That will be critical for present and future protection.” The vaccine candidate will now move to production and an initial Phase I clinical trial in humans. Ongoing research will focus on developing the vaccine as a booster for the currently vaccinated population, aiming to optimize the induction of antibodies that would neutralize new variants.

New Hybrid Virus Discovered as Flu and RSV Fuse Into Single Pathogen

Source: <https://www.sciencealert.com/new-hybrid-virus-discovered-as-flu-and-rsv-fuse-into-single-pathogen>



Hybrid virus made up of influenza A and respiratory syncytial virus. (Haney et al., Nature Microbiology, 2022)

Oct 31 – Researchers have witnessed two [viruses](#) – influenza A and respiratory syncytial [virus](#) – fuse together to form a single, hybrid virus. While competition between viruses has been researched in some



detail, this new finding provides researchers with an unusual example of one virus coopting another for its own benefits.

"This kind of hybrid virus has never been described before," virologist and senior author Pablo Murcia [told](#) *The Guardian*. "We are talking about viruses from two completely different families combining together with the genomes and the external proteins of both viruses. It is a new type of virus pathogen."

The hybrid virus looks like a gecko's foot under the microscope, with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) forming the legs and influenza A virus forming the toes.

It was discovered during a lab-based experiment designed to analyze interactions between viruses during infection to better understand clinical outcomes, pathogen behavior, and transmission.

Human lung cells were exposed to both viruses, as well as each virus individually as a control group. An assortment of microscopy techniques then revealed filamentous structures consistent with a hybrid of both virus particles.

When these two viruses join forces, influenza A appears to infect a higher number and broader range of human cells. The influenza A particles were found to evade the immune system by displaying the RSV surface proteins, giving the virus a survival advantage.

The hybrid also spread into cells that lacked influenza receptors, which could allow influenza A to move further down the respiratory tract into the lungs and lead to more severe infections.

Sadly for RSV, this merger isn't such a great deal, with influenza A's presence significantly reducing its capacity for replication.

The experiment was limited to a lab setting, which "cannot fully capture the spatial and physiological complexity of the whole respiratory tract," the researchers [say](#).

However, the improved fitness of influenza when merged into a hybrid virus suggests that such blatant theft of another virus's toolkit may play a role in viral [pneumonia](#).

"RSV tends to go lower down into the lung than the seasonal flu virus, and you're more likely to get more severe disease the further down the infection goes," [says](#) Dr Stephen Griffin, a virologist at the University of Leeds who was not involved in the study.

"It is another reason to avoid getting infected with multiple viruses, because this [hybridisation] is likely to happen all the more if we don't take precautions to protect our health," he [says](#).

Influenza A alone causes over 5 million hospitalisations each year, while RSV is the most common cause of acute lower respiratory tract infections in infants, with reinfection common in later life.

The study "raises questions about fundamental rules that govern viral assembly," and there could be other hybrid viruses out there yet to be discovered, the researchers [write](#).

"Respiratory viruses exist as part of a community of many viruses that all target the same region of the body, like an ecological niche," [says](#) virologist and lead author Joanne Haney.

"We need to understand how these infections occur within the context of one another to gain a fuller picture of the biology of each individual virus."

●► This paper was published in [Nature Microbiology](#).

UK scientists created mutant Covid strains in 'high-risk, low-benefit' lab experiments: SAGE-linked team comes under fire amid calls for more regulation over controversial 'gain-of-function' research

Source: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-11357387/UK-scientists-mutant-Covid-strains.html>

Oct 28 – British scientists intentionally created hybrid Covid strains in risky experiments judged to be like 'playing with fire', MailOnline can reveal.

Hamsters were infected with mutant viruses, blends of the original Wuhan strain and parts of either [Omicron](#) or Delta.

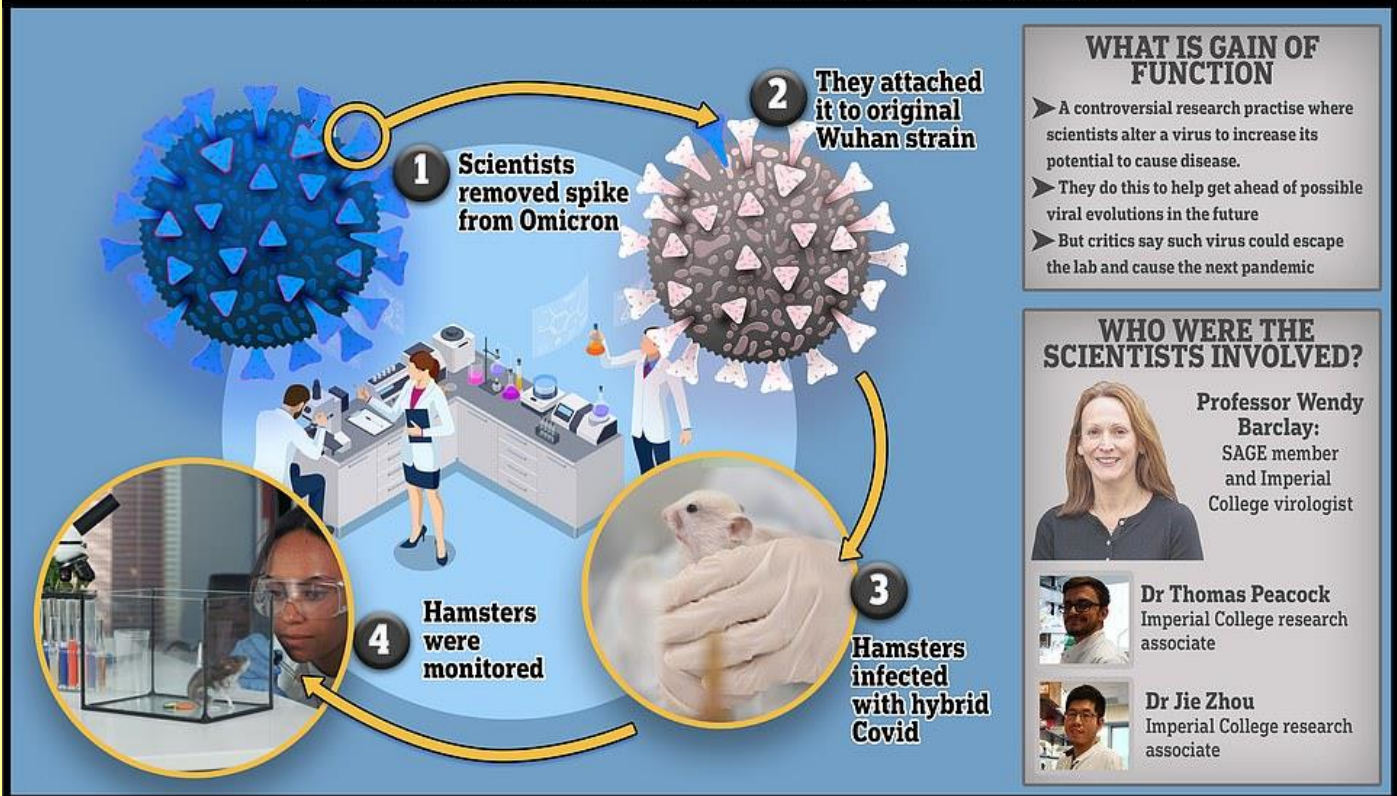
Critics of the research, carried out by Imperial College [London](#), called it 'insanity' and warned the lab trials could, in theory, unleash a new viral threat. Twenty scientists were involved in the project, including one who sits on the Government's advisory panel [SAGE](#). But the university insists the study, part-funded by the taxpayer, followed British regulations and was entirely safe.

Our revelation comes amid ongoing furore over similar experiments in the US, where authorities have proposed a crackdown on virus manipulation research.

Earlier this month, DailyMail.com, MailOnline's US equivalent, revealed academics at Boston University combined different parts of the Omicron and the original Wuhan Covid strains.



UK SCIENTISTS CREATE COVID CHIMERA OF WUHAN AND OMICRON STRAINS



WHAT IS GAIN OF FUNCTION

- A controversial research practise where scientists alter a virus to increase its potential to cause disease.
- They do this to help get ahead of possible viral evolutions in the future
- But critics say such virus could escape the lab and cause the next pandemic

WHO WERE THE SCIENTISTS INVOLVED?



Professor Wendy Barclay:
SAGE member and Imperial College virologist



Dr Thomas Peacock
Imperial College research associate



Dr Jie Zhou
Imperial College research associate

Hamsters were infected with mutant viruses, blends of the original Wuhan strain and parts of either Omicron or Delta. Critics of the research, carried out by Imperial College London, called it 'insanity' and warned the lab trials could, in theory, unleash a new viral threat. Twenty scientists were involved in the project, including one who sits on the Government's advisory panel SAGE

Critics say this combined the higher lethality of the ancestral SARS-CoV-2 version, which triggered the pandemic in early 2020, with the extreme transmissibility of the milder Omicron strain. Omicron is said to be just contagious as measles, although the claim is disputed.

The hybrid virus they created killed 80 per cent of infected mice.

Boston University defended its research, saying it proved less lethal than the Wuhan type on its own.

It vehemently denied the experiments could be considered 'gain of function', a controversial field of science that sees virologists intentionally manipulate pathogens to make them more infectious or deadly to prepare for future pandemics — allowing them to develop vaccines and therapies in case diseases naturally evolve to become more dangerous.

A leak of such an engineered virus from the Wuhan Institute of Virology is one of the main theorised origins of the pandemic. The infamous lab carried out similar research involving coronaviruses found in bats, with some arguing this work constituted gain of function experiments, though others refute this.

But others argued the Boston University research was unquestionably gain of function as it had the potential of increasing its transmissibility — even if the end result appeared to be the opposite.

Professor Shmuel Shapira, former director of the Israeli Government's Institute for Biological Research, stated any similar research should be banned because it is effectively 'playing with fire'.

This is due to the potential, albeit tiny, risk that such a virus could escape strict biosecurity measures in a lab and go on to infect people.

MailOnline's investigations have uncovered a similar experiment that has flown under the radar here in the UK.

In a trial eerily akin to that of the Boston project, Imperial researchers infected hamsters with two chimera Covid hybrids, the results of which were [published online](#) on May 13. It was carried out in a biosafety level-3 lab, which requires doors to be sealed and workers to wear hazmat suits.



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One virus, like in the Boston experiment, was the original Wuhan strain given an Omicron spike protein — the tiny structure on the surface of the virus that it uses to infect human cells.

The second was a Wuhan strain given the spike protein of the Delta variant, which analyses suggested was even deadlier than the original type of Covid.

Each major variant of SARS-CoV-2 — the virus behind Covid — carries mutations in its spike protein, which is why some prove more immune-evasive than others.

This is, in part, due to the original batch of vaccines being designed to specifically target the Wuhan strain's spike protein, as opposed to strains that emerged later in the pandemic.

After infecting the hamsters, scientists then monitored them for weight loss — a sign they were becoming weaker.

This allowed them to see if certain attributes of each strain, such as Delta's severity or Omicron's infectiousness, were linked to their spike proteins or to other elements of their genetic make-up.

Results were compared to rodents infected with unmodified strains.

Nasal swabs were also regularly taken to measure the viral loads — a measure of how much the virus was in their body — of the hamsters.

Over the next 10 days, hamsters hosting the hybrid viruses either lost more or didn't put on as much weight and had higher viral loads than those infected with their regular versions.

It is not detailed whether the hamsters survived or were euthanised after the project finished. Imperial refused to provide this information.

Professor Wendy Barclay, a member of SAGE, the panel that guided No10 through the Covid pandemic, was the lead author of the project.

Presenting the results of the hamster experiment, her team said the results suggested that Omicron's mild nature was linked to genetic mutations other than those located on its spike protein.

Imperial's study was partly funded by the Government, through an offshoot of an agency called UK Research and Innovation.

The Imperial study was not published in a peer-reviewed journal. Instead, it was made available as a preprint.

Dr Richard Ebright, a chemist at Rutgers University in New Jersey and a vocal campaigner against gain of function research, described the study uncovered by MailOnline as sheer 'insanity'.

'The Imperial preprint reports an additional example of the construction of non-natural, lab-generated chimera that combines the spike gene of Omicron SARS-CoV-2 with the rest of the genetic information of an original 2018-2020 SARS-CoV2,' he said.

He said the resulting virus, like the Boston experiment, combined the high immune-escape abilities of Omicron with the higher severity of other Covid variants.

Dr Ebright, an expert in molecular biology who focuses on developing drugs to treat infectious diseases, added that, as the research has no 'foreseeable practical applications', it was extremely high risk for little reward.

'This is insanity, both in terms of the redundancy and waste,' he told this website. 'And, especially, in terms of the risk of triggering a new pandemic wave upon accidental or deliberate release of the laboratory-generated viruses.'

'This should be a wake-up call.'

'If the world wishes to avoid new pandemic waves and pandemics caused by lab-generated enhanced potential pandemic pathogens, then it is urgently necessary to restrict senseless high-risk, low-benefit research that creates enhanced potential pandemic pathogens and to implement effective national oversight, with force of law, on such research.'

Imperial defended its research. A spokesperson said: 'This government-backed research used viruses no more pathogenic than those already circulating within the population and will provide crucial insights that support government decision-making on how to manage the pandemic.'

'It was conducted in a biosafety level three laboratory in line with strict government regulations, and received ongoing approval from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).'

The HSE, Britain's workplace safety watchdog, must be informed of any experiments which involve biological agents.

However, it does not assess or consider the ethical or political basis of whether work should be undertaken in the first place. A spokesperson said: 'Such considerations are outside of HSE's regulatory remit.'

Gain of function research was halted in the US from 2014 to 2017 over safety fears. But five years ago it was allowed to restart, with proponents arguing it could help the world prepare for the next severe illness.

No restrictions have ever been put in place in Britain.

MailOnline approached the Department of Health for comment.

One British expert also acknowledged such research could theoretically create a more dangerous strain of Covid but insisted that the risk was minor.



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Professor Robert Dingwall, a sociologist at Nottingham Trent University and ex-Government coronavirus adviser, said the scientists doing the experiments themselves had no desire to be patient zero of a new pandemic.

'There is a very small risk of creating a more dangerous variant,' he said.

'However, I have observed lab scientists at work and they are very aware that the first risks are to themselves. This is a strong incentive to follow safe working practices.'

There is debate among scientists on if studies like the Imperial experiment constitute gain of function research, as they had not set out to create a more dangerous version of Covid intentionally.

'It is difficult to draw the line between "gain of function" and "exploration of potential for variation" in advance of experiments being completed,' Professor Dingwall said.

However, he said such experiments should be more tightly controlled, possibly on a global scale.

'There should certainly be a formal, independent, review before they go ahead. This may require new regulations to promote a globally shared approach,' he said.

The Imperial study was approved by the university's internal genetic manipulation safety committee and the HSE.

Boston's study, also performed in a BSL-3 lab, wasn't cleared by the US' National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which had part-funded the study.

Professor Francois Balloux, an infectious disease expert at University College London, said such experiments can carry the risk of creating a virus that is 'marginally more dangerous'.

However, he added: 'Such variants emerged multiple times through recombination between strains in circulation.'

'None of those recombinant variants reached high frequency and they are all extinct now, but there were concerns at the time they could be more virulent than Omicron.'

In regards to whether the research could be classified as gain of function, Professor Balloux said: 'It is not always easy to decide what exactly falls under gain of function research.'

'Given that essentially the same recombinants emerged naturally and circulated at low frequency for a while, I do not deem those specific experiments to represent gain of function research, but I appreciate others will disagree with my call on this in good faith.'

Gain of function experiments allow scientists to effectively see 'around the corner' and anticipate how a pathogen might evolve naturally.

It also gives scientists a chance to better understand its effects on humans, and how it behaves. This can, in theory, speed up the development of drugs and vaccines, especially for infectious diseases that are currently untreatable.

Despite being thrust into the limelight during the Covid pandemic, SARS-CoV-2 isn't the only pathogen to have been experimented on in this way.

Gain of function has been used for years, including by creating more drought-resistant plants and modifying E. coli so that it break down plastic waste.

Gain of function research: Everything you need to know about the risky lab experiments

What is gain of function?

It is a highly controversial research practise that involves intentionally altering a pathogen, in order to improve its ability to cause disease.

At its most basic level, scientists modify them to make them more infectious or lethal.

Usually, trials are carried out on human cells or rodents — to see how they behave under tightly-controlled lab settings.

Why is it done?

The reason for such experiments is they allow scientists to effectively see 'around the corner' and anticipate how a pathogen might evolve naturally.

It also gives scientists a chance to better understand its effects on humans, and how it behaves.

This can, in theory, speed up the development of drugs and vaccines, especially for infectious diseases that are currently untreatable.

Is it dangerous?

Gain of function research — despite being carried out in biocontainment facilities with workers in hazmat suits and sealed doors — is hugely controversial.

Critics argue the benefits of the research are not worth the potential risks, however tiny they are.

Some scientists fear the development of mutant viruses could lead to the next pandemic, if they were to ever accidentally leak from a lab.

Such an event is one of the origin theories for the original Covid virus, which was first spotted in Wuhan, near the now infamous Wuhan Institute of Virology.



Defenders insist that such changes can, however, occur naturally.

Is it only done on Covid?

Despite being thrust into the limelight during the Covid pandemic, SARS-CoV-2 isn't the only pathogen to have been experimented on in this way.

Gain of function has been used for years, including by creating more drought-resistant plants and modifying E. coli so that it break down plastic waste.

What constitutes gain of function?

There is huge debate among experts about what exactly constitutes 'gain of function' research.

Some studies do not set out to intentionally create a more dangerous pathogen but may do so while modifying it to learn more about how it infects cells.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Who gave them permission to conduct this research? Unless they are free to do whatever they want just for the scientific competition ...

COVID-19 Triggers Brain Inflammation Similar to Parkinson's and Other Neurodegenerative Conditions

Source: <https://www.insideprecisionmedicine.com/coronavirus-2/covid-19-triggers-brain-inflammation-similar-to-parkinsons-and-other-neurodegenerative-conditions/>

Nov 01 – COVID-19 activates the same inflammatory response in the brain as Parkinson's disease and other neurodegenerative conditions, according to research led by University of Queensland (UQ), Australia. This group's findings may explain why some people who have had COVID-19 are more vulnerable to developing neurological symptoms. The team also found a potential treatment for this condition.

The UQ team was led by Trent Woodruff and Eduardo Albornoz Balmaceda from the university's School of Biomedical Sciences and virologists from the School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences. It was published in Nature's *Molecular Psychiatry*.

"We studied the effect of the virus on the brain's immune cells, 'microglia' which are the key cells involved in the progression of brain diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's," Woodruff said.

Microglial NLRP3 inflammasome activation is known to be a major driver of neurodegeneration. The UQ group looked at whether SARS-CoV-2 can promote microglial NLRP3 inflammasome activation.

"Our team grew human microglia in the laboratory and infected the cells with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. We found the cells effectively became 'angry', activating the same pathway that Parkinson's and Alzheimer's proteins can activate in disease—the inflammasomes," Woodruff said.

Triggering the inflammasome pathway sparked a "fire" in the brain, which begins a chronic and sustained process of killing off neurons, said Balmaceda. "It's kind of a silent killer, because you don't see any outward symptoms for many years," he added.

The researchers found the spike protein of the virus was enough to start the process, which was further exacerbated when there were already proteins in the brain linked to Parkinson's.

"So, if someone is already pre-disposed to Parkinson's, having COVID-19 could be like pouring more fuel on that 'fire' in the brain," Woodruff said. "The same would apply for a predisposition for Alzheimer's and other dementias that have been linked to inflammasomes."

The study also suggests a potential treatment.

The researchers administered a class of UQ-developed inhibitory drugs, which are currently in clinical trials with Parkinson's patients. They found that SARS-CoV-2 infected hACE2 mice treated orally, post-infection, with the NLRP3 inhibitory drug MCC950, have significantly reduced microglial inflammasome activation, and increased survival in comparison with untreated SARS-CoV-2 infected mice.

"We found it [the drug] successfully blocked the inflammatory pathway activated by COVID-19, essentially putting out the fire," Balmaceda said.

"The drug reduced inflammation in both COVID-19-infected mice and the microglia cells from humans, suggesting a possible treatment approach to prevent neurodegeneration in the future," he added.

The authors write that, "These results support a possible mechanism of microglial innate immune activation by SARS-CoV-2, which could explain the increased vulnerability to developing neurological symptoms



akin to Parkinson's disease in COVID-19 infected individuals, and a potential therapeutic avenue for intervention.” Woodruff said while the similarity between how COVID-19 and dementia diseases affect the brain was concerning, it also suggested a possible treatment was already in existence. “Further research is needed,” he added, “but this is potentially a new approach to treating a virus that could otherwise have untold long-term health ramifications.”

SARS-CoV-2 Disruption of the Microbiome Increases Risk of Other Infections

Source: <https://www.genengnews.com/virology/coronavirus/sars-cov-2-disruption-of-the-microbiome-increases-risk-of-other-infections/>

Nov 02 – Researchers have shown, over the past two years, that certain microbial populations are associated with [COVID-19](#) severity. However, other impacts of the microbiome on COVID-19—including causal ones—have remained unknown. Now, a study provides important new information regarding the relationship between the two.

First, researchers used a mouse model to show that SARS-CoV-2 alone causes gut microbiome dysbiosis (disruptions) and gut epithelial cell alterations. In addition, the team analyzed human stool samples from patients at NYU Langone Health and Yale New Haven Hospital. In doing so, they found results similar to what they had observed in mice: COVID-19 is associated with severe microbiome injury characterized by loss of diversity and anaerobe taxa. Lastly, through sequencing data from the stool samples and blood cultures, they found that gut dysbiosis in COVID-19 patients is associated with secondary bloodstream infections by gut bacteria. It has remained unclear, until now, which came first—a SARS-CoV-2 infection disrupting the gut microbiome or an already weakened gut making the body more vulnerable to the virus. This study favors the former explanation. The new investigation also revealed that antibiotic-resistant species can escape into the bloodstream, putting patients at greater risk for life-threatening secondary infections. “Our findings suggest that coronavirus infection directly interferes with the healthy balance of microbes in the gut, further endangering patients in the process,” said Ken Cadwell, PhD, professor of microbiology, department of microbiology at NYU Grossman School of Medicine. “Now that we have uncovered the source of this bacterial imbalance, physicians can better identify those coronavirus patients most at risk of a secondary bloodstream infection.”

The study involved samples from 96 men and women hospitalized with COVID-19 in 2020 in New York City and in New Haven, CT. The majority of patients had low gut microbiome diversity, with a full quarter dominated by a single type of bacteria. And populations of several microbes known to include antibiotic-resistant species increased. These antibiotic-resistant bacteria found in the gut were also observed to have migrated into the bloodstream in 20% of patients. The study authors noted that further research is needed to uncover why this group was at higher risk for a secondary infection while others remained protected.

The new study is the first to show that the coronavirus infection alone, and not the initial use of antibiotics to treat the disease, damages the gut microbiome, said Cadwell. He added the study also provides the first evidence that the very same bacteria in the gut are also entering the bloodstream of patients, causing dangerous infections. The findings, the authors wrote, reveal “an unappreciated link between SARS-CoV-2 infection, gut microbiome dysbiosis, and a severe complication of COVID-19, BSIs [bloodstream infections].” “Our results highlight how the gut microbiome and different parts of the body’s immune system are closely interconnected,” said Jonas Schluter, PhD, an assistant professor in the department of microbiology at NYU. “An infection in one can lead to major disruptions in the other.” Schluter cautioned that since the patients received different kinds of treatments for their illness, the investigation could not entirely account for all factors that may have contributed to the disruption of their microbiome and worsened their disease. According to Schluter, the study team next plans to examine why certain microbial species are more likely to escape the gut during COVID-19. The researchers said they also intend to explore how different microbes interact, which may contribute to this migration into the bloodstream.

●► This work is published in *Nature Communications*, in the article, [“Gut microbiome dysbiosis in antibiotic-treated COVID-19 patients is associated with microbial translocation and bacteremia.”](#)

‘The great pandemic fraud’ – bioterrorism expert and internist Dr Meryl Nass draws parallels between the Ebola, anthrax, and Covid-19 epidemics

Source: <https://www.biznews.com/health/2022/11/02/biological-warfare>

Nov 02 – As far back as March 2020, Dr Meryl Nass, a board-certified internist and a biological warfare epidemiologist and anthrax expert, proposed that the pathogen we know today as “SARS-CoV-2” was likely [made in the](#) Wuhan Institute of Virology lab. BizNews spoke to Nass to discuss the basis of her lab



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origin theory and whether the virus escaped or was deliberately engineered and released as a biological warfare weapon. In January, after over 40 years as a practising internist with a stellar reputation, Nass' medical license was suspended without a hearing and she was ordered to submit to a neuropsychological evaluation by the state medical board in Maine for "spreading misinformation" and prescribing [ivermectin](#) and hydroxychloroquine. Nass, however, has not backed down. In this long-form interview, Nass, who studied anthrax and bioterrorism for the past 26 years, drew parallels between the Ebola and anthrax outbreaks and Covid-19 and explained the fascinating but frightening concept of original antigenic sin and the disastrous way in which it could manifest as more and more people continue to get Covid-19 boosters. – Nadya Swart



Excerpts from the interview with Dr Meryl Nass

Dr Meryl Nass on how she became a bioterrorism and anthrax expert and how this experience prepared her for Covid

I was in the wrong place at the wrong time about 34 years ago and wound up being asked to look into a contract with a researcher at University of Massachusetts and the Defence Department. And it turned out it was a contract to develop a sort of primitive, genetically engineered strains of anthrax. But the title of the contract was 'Studies for a Better Vaccine', and the body of the contract was not that. So the title did not reflect what the contract was. So I thought, "Well, that's pretty curious. That's not supposed to happen in government contracts." And I started looking into anthrax as a result and pretty quickly discovered that the world's largest anthrax epidemic had not looked anything like all the others. And so I spent some time investigating that and showing it was due to biological warfare that occurred in Rhodesia between 1978 and 1981. And I published a paper on it in 1992, 30 years ago. And that and the Gulf War launched me as an anthrax expert.

I also wrote a paper on how to detect episodes of biological warfare and distinguish them from natural epidemics. And then later, when the US instituted a mandatory anthrax vaccine program for soldiers, I was involved with trying to fight that, because it turned out to be a dangerous vaccine, harming a lot of soldiers. And there was no good reason to use it since no army had ever been attacked with anthrax.

At the same time, I've also been practising medicine all of this time and writing and researching and looking into other epidemics. When this particular pandemic arose, I of course knew how to study them. I tried to explain to people what was needed to protect themselves. But then after that, by late March, I realised something wasn't right. A couple of papers had been published that were basically cover ups of a lab origin, trying to throw people's attention away from the possible lab origin by saying that those who claimed it might be were conspiracy theorists, were interfering with the US relationship with China, which was necessary to be peaceful and happy so that we could work together on fighting the pandemic. And a bogus scientific paper was published saying, "For these theoretical reasons, there's no way it could have been a lab origin."

And when I read those two papers, I thought, "This is obvious propaganda. There's no science to this." So, I immediately started looking more into the possibility of lab origin. I had already written a little blog post pointing out that there are frequent escapes from labs of potential pandemic pathogens. In fact, in the United States, we have about 100 reported accidents with these pathogens every year. They get reported to the CDC and in other countries it's probably the same, although they probably aren't required to publish the results.

So I knew a lab origin was likely, but when there was a concerted cover up, I thought it was more likely. And then I started researching and looked at all these different aspects of the pandemic over the last two and a half years and found there were a lot of lies, fake statistics, poorly conceived tests with wrong specifications for how to perform them. There were all sorts of crazy things going on that caused doctors to diagnose COVID more frequently. Hospitals were paid more money if they could diagnose it, paid more money if they put someone on a ventilator, paid more money if someone died with COVID. And the CDC and Medicare that were giving hospitals instructions for how to do these things, were saying, "Oh, well, you don't even need a positive test. You know, if you just think the patient had COVID, that's okay. We'll still pay you this bonus." And that was also so unlike Medicare and CDC.

So anyway, I came to understand that there was a great fraud involved with the entire pandemic. Not that it doesn't exist. There's definitely a virus. People are sick and I'm just getting over my second episode of COVID. We know how to deal with it, but the government suppressed that information.



On distinguishing between episodes of biological warfare and natural epidemics

My methodology works for some infections and not others because it's based on comparing the characteristics of the epidemic in question to the known characteristics of normal epidemics. So, there have been a bunch of Ebola outbreaks in Africa, but the largest was the West African Ebola outbreak. It had never occurred in West Africa before. And interestingly enough, at Ground Zero, near the meeting of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, was a lab sponsored by the United States. The routine characteristics of the outbreak, the way it spread, the severity, the organs it affected, those were not much different from other Ebola outbreaks. So, I am not going to say that the viral strain that caused the outbreak was made in the lab or was selected as a biological warfare agent. But Ebola itself, even without being created in a lab, is designated as a potential pandemic pathogen, a potential biowarfare agent by the US CDC. And so, it's like anthrax. You don't really need a particularly dangerous strain. You know, the garden variety strains are pretty much good enough to create a biological warfare event. Maybe it won't be the most virulent you could get, but it will still be quite virulent. So was the West African Ebola due to biological warfare? I don't know. But it shared the characteristic with the pandemic that basically there was neglect. In the case of COVID, there was actually suppression of use of effective medications. With Ebola, there was just neglect. Something was wrong with the way that epidemic started and meandered for three months. I don't think we have enough evidence yet to say whether this COVID leaked from a lab or whether it was deliberately spread. We don't know when it started. That's controversial. You know, many people are saying it started in September of 2019. Some people are saying it started before that. It depends what data you look at. If it was a lab escape by accident, it would presumably come from the Wuhan lab. But if it were a deliberate spread, where would you put it to make it look like a lab escape? You'd put it near the Wuhan lab or near the North Carolina lab or near the Galveston lab. These are all BSL-4 labs that specifically work on coronaviruses. So, I don't know whether it was deliberately spread. When you look at the way countries responded to COVID in lockstep, with somewhat nonsensical approaches like the suppression of hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin, it appears that there was pre-planning.

On original antigenic sin and boosters

Original antigenic sin is a sexy term that everyone can remember. And what it refers to is the fact that in certain circumstances, when a person is first exposed to an antigen, to something your body is going to produce an immune response against, it imprints on that original exposure, whether it be to a vaccine or to a virus or bacterium. And [with] any further, later exposures to viruses or vaccines or bacteria that are related but similar, the response will not be as effective to them because it will be focused on responding to the original pathogen or the original vaccine. So that's what that means. And I think it is true that that is happening.

So, for example, the new bivalent booster, which has an Omicron spike in it as well as the original Wuhan strain spike, is not generating antibodies at higher levels than if you had just given the old Wuhan spike, even though it supposedly is showing you a much more well-developed later variant that theoretically should give you better protection against the COVID viruses in circulation at the moment. But in fact, it doesn't seem to be giving you better protection. So why is that? We call it original antigenic sin. But there are a lot of other things that may be going on in the immune system that don't fall under that category but are also not good. So, the more boosters you give, the shorter the response.

'No choice' but cholera water for Lebanon's poor

Source: <https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/293532-no-choice-but-cholera-water-for-lebanon-s-poor>

Nov 11 – Marwa Khaled's teenage son was hospitalized with cholera after drinking polluted water in Lebanon's impoverished north -- yet she still buys the same contaminated water, the only kind she can afford.

"People know (the water is contaminated), but they don't have any other choice," said 35-year-old Khaled, standing near her son, who is bedridden at a cholera field hospital.

"Everyone will end up with cholera"

Last month Lebanon recorded its first cholera case since 1993, in the nearby Syrian refugee camp of Rihaniye -- weeks after an outbreak in Syria, which lies about 20 kilometers (12 miles) away.

Now the World Health Organization warns the waterborne disease is spreading "rapidly" as Lebanon struggles with crumbling infrastructure, poor sanitation and limited access to clean water following three years of economic meltdown.

Over a quarter of the country's more than 400 recorded cases are from Khaled's hometown of Bebnine, where people resort to unsafe water sources as the state fails to provide clean water.



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The actual number of cases could be much higher, with the health ministry recording more than 2,400 suspected and confirmed infections.

The mother-of-six and her family drink contaminated water, trucked to their home from nearby wells and water sources, because they lack access to running water and cannot afford bottled water.

Like much of Lebanon's marginalized north, Bebnine suffers from dilapidated infrastructure and government neglect.

A quarter of the town's residents are Syrian refugees living in squalid conditions.

"Sewage water"

Only 500 of Bebnine's households are registered with the state water network, in an overcrowded town of 80,000 people, according to engineer Tareq Hammoud of the North Lebanon Water Establishment.

But even these do not receive round-the-clock water supply.

A branch of the sewage-polluted Nahr al-Bared river flows through



the town and has been contaminated with cholera, infecting nearby wells and water sources, field hospital director Nahed Saadeddine said.

Around 450 patients attend the hospital for treatments every day, she said.

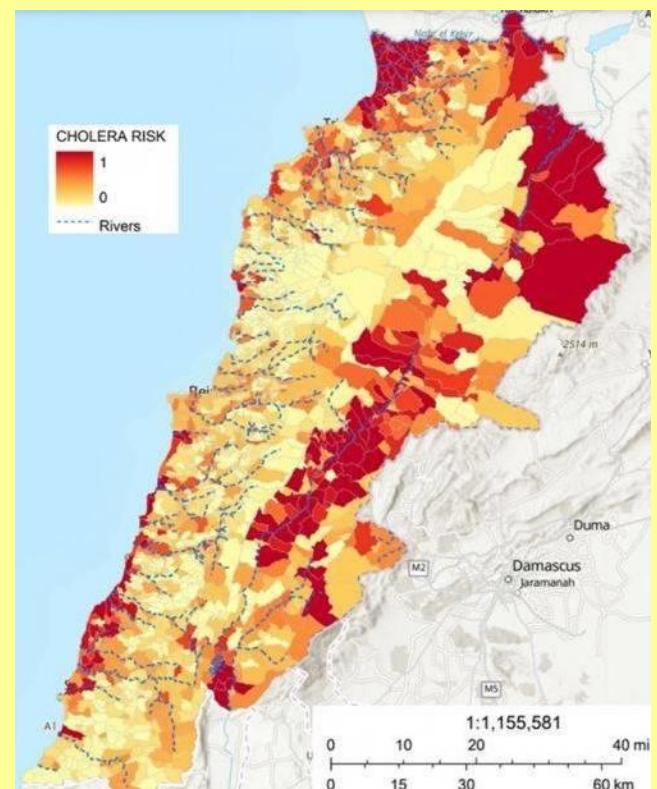
The contaminated stream "provides water for all the crops in the area... There are wells, tanks, and springs pulling water from it, even water filtration sites," Saadeddine told AFP.

Cholera is generally contracted from contaminated food or water, and causes diarrhea and vomiting.

It can also spread in residential areas lacking proper sewerage and drinking water systems.

"The infrastructure must be changed, the wells and water sources improved" to eradicate the disease, Saadeddine said.

"We want a long-term solution. Otherwise, we will see a lot more disasters." The disease can kill within hours if left untreated, according to the WHO, but many of those infected will have no or mild symptoms. It can be easily treated with oral rehydration solution, but more severe cases may require intravenous fluids and antibiotics.



“Diapers”

Some patients at the hospital have contracted the disease more than once, among them Rana Ajaj's nine-year-old daughter. "Five of us are sick at home. Even after the treatment, we will be sick again from drinking the same water," the 43-year-old said, passing a cup of water to her 17-year-old daughter who lay in bed, while her younger daughter sat close by. In the next bed, 10-year-old Malek Hamad was struggling to drink his medicine, exhausted from losing 15 kilograms (33 pounds) after two weeks of illness. His mother is terrified that her 10 other children may also be infected. Outside the hospital, school supervisor Sabira Ali walked along the banks of the polluted stream, gazing at the water. "Coronavirus didn't scare me as much as cholera," said the 44-year-old who lost two members of her family to cholera last month. Bebnine resident Jamal al-Sabsabi, 25, blamed local authorities for failing to act as disease struck the town. "What is the municipality doing?" he asked. "Sewage water, diapers, waste... everything gets dumped into the stream," al-Sabsabi said, pointing to the murky brook running a few meters (yards) from his home. "No wonder the disease is spreading."

CRISPR's Second Decade: Jennifer Doudna Looks Forward and Back

In a candid conversation with *GEN* senior science writer Julianna LeMieux during "The State of Biotech" forum, Nobel Laureate Doudna discussed a wide range of topics-what excites her most about CRISPR, where she sees genome editing making an impact on society, what it is like to win the Nobel, and much more. [+ MORE](#)

Man With COVID Finally Tests Negative After 411 Days

Source: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/983557>

Nov 04 – A man in England who was infected with an early strain of COVID-19 was finally cleared 411 days after first testing positive, according to experts in the United Kingdom.

The man was treated with a mixture of neutralizing monoclonal antibodies, King's College London [said in a news release](#).

The man, 59, tested positive in December 2020 and tested negative in January 2022. He had a weakened immune system because of a previous kidney transplant. He received three doses of vaccine and his symptoms lessened, but he kept testing positive for COVID.

To find out if the man had a persistent infection or had been infected several times, doctors did a genetic analysis of the virus.

"This revealed that the patient's infection was a persistent infection with an early COVID variant — a variation of the original Wuhan variant that was dominant in the U.K. in the later months of 2020. Analysis found the patient's virus had multiple mutations since he was first infected," King's College said.

The doctors treated him with a Regeneron treatment that is no longer widely used because it's not effective against newer COVID variants.

"Some new variants of the virus are resistant to all the antibody treatments available in the U.K. and Europe. Some people with weakened immune systems are still at risk of severe illness and becoming persistently infected. We are still working to understand the best way to protect and treat them," Luke Snell, MD, from the King's College School of Immunology & Microbial Sciences, said in the news release.

This is one of the longest known cases of COVID infection. Another man in England was infected with COVID for 505 days before his death, which King's College said was the longest known COVID infection.

Debate Over COVID Origins Continues

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221105-debate-over-covid-origins-continues>

Nov 05 – Last week, [Pandora Report](#) reviewed an article published earlier in the week in *ProPublica*, in which two researchers claim to have found new evidence to support the lab-leak theory of the origins of the COVID virus. Scientists criticized the researchers' assumptions, methodology, evidence, and conclusions – and, in fairness, the researchers themselves admitted that their approach is highly conjectural. Other critics, however, pointed out other factors which tripped the two researchers: their lack of knowledge of recent Chinese history and



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politics, their unawareness of research policies in China, and their ignorance of the Chinese language and how it is being used in official communication.

Here is the *Pandora Report's* article”

Late last week, *ProPublica* and *Vanity Fair* released a [piece](#) in conjunction with the Senate HELP Committee minority's [interim report](#), claiming to have unveiled new information from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) supporting the lab leak theory of COVID-19's origin. In it, Katherine Eban and Jeff Kao rely heavily on the work of a single self-proclaimed polyglottal State Department political officer to translate Chinese Communist Party (CCP) “party speak,” which he claims native speakers “can't really follow...” Now, the piece some have described as a [train wreck](#) is being heavily criticized for having faulty translations, mis-matched dates, misrepresenting the sources of the documents discussed in it, not understanding how common VPN usage is in China-related research, and more. Now *ProPublica* is reportedly [scrambling to review critical details](#) of their piece, but is it too late? Let's talk about some core issues with the article and they might mean long term.

‘Party Speak’ or Just Lost in Translation?

The first half of the *ProPublica* piece is dominated by glowing discussion of Toy Reid, a former RAND Corporation and East Asia political officer at the US Department of State, covering his blue collar origins and attendance at Harvard. They then discuss how Reid spent over a year working for the Senate HELP Committee, using a VPN to search “dispatches” on the WIV's website from Hart Senate Office Building and his Florida home. They write, “These dispatches remain on the internet, but their meaning can't be unlocked by just anyone. Using his hard-earned expertise, Reid believes he unearthed secrets that were hiding in plain sight.”

Plain sight is right! These “dispatches” were updates posted to the Wuhan Institute of Virology's (WIV) homepage on the general news tab. In fact, you can go look through this whole tab [here](#) to see mundane entries ranging from a recent day reflecting on the 20th National Congress to a July post about WIV celebrating the 101st anniversary of the Party, to general updates about different trainings and publications related to the institute. Therein lies one of the fundamental problems with this piece-these were not secretive dispatches internal to the Party. These are essentially press releases meant to face outward. Yes, they are laden with mentions of comrades, references to struggles and frontlines, and key Chinese leaders, including Xi Jinping and the recently ousted Li Keqiang. They are, after all, written by Party members in a major facility of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. They are going to have this kind of language by default, especially around times like national congresses and major anniversaries.

To be clear, the CCP does use euphemisms and round-about language at times to describe high-level concepts and goals. In fact, some scholars spend the bulk of their careers conducting [political discourse analysis](#) and understanding leaders' officialese or government-speak. Some do focus on CCP party speak, which has become especially interesting in the [Xi years](#). However, this is definitely not unique to the CCP as one can find scholars dissecting and analyzing any number of world leaders' speeches and government lexicons. It is also important to recognize that this concept is not some niche or extremely esoteric concept known only to a few in China watching circles. Students studying Chinese politics overwhelmingly have to learn things like “crossing the river by touching the stones” or “socialism with Chinese characteristics” as a Chinese-specific form of Marxism-Leninism throughout the periods of Dengism, Three Represents, Scientific Outlook on Development, and now Xi Jinping Thought. It is core to understanding national agendas throughout different leadership periods.

However, with this comes the understanding that Party documents are laden with this kind of jargon and narrative furthering. This also is not unique to the CCP. In fact, [Harry Hodgkinson wrote](#) an entire guide in 1955 on Soviet jargon and unique meanings Communist parties gave to particularly terms. While this jargon and overarching nationalistic narratives offer important context for the WIV posts, they do not represent some in-between-the-lines version of Chinese that “even native Mandarin speakers can't really follow...” Rather, they help explain why the language in the posts seems so dramatic and nationalistic.

What's in a Narrative?

In October 1949, Mao Zedong declared the official founding of the People's Republic of China. With Chiang Kai-shek and the remainder of the KMT exiled to the island of Taiwan and the decades long civil war over, Mao was left to figure out how to actually lead the new PRC. Central to this was narratives of overcoming the century of habilitation, protecting the sovereignty and integrity of Chinese territory, bringing justice for China against those who subjugated, and building a strong, advanced



country. These ideas were central to nationalism at the time and drove pushes to modernize like the infamous Great Leap Forward. As Dr. Kerry Brown of King's College London [writes](#), "That self-designated task of bringing about justice for China was the main justification for the Party's many mistakes under Mao when the second resolution on its own history was produced a few years after his death in 1981." Themes of struggle against western imperial powers and self-determination were critical political tools wielded by the Party, even in the face of wildly unpopular, destructive policies.

Though it looks different today, narratives of national struggle and rejuvenation are still important features of CCP rhetoric, even for Party members at a CAS laboratory. Brown discusses the power of narrative in modern China, writing, "For the current dominant leader Xi Jinping, the notion that the Party is a kind of epistemic community, one uniquely placed to carry China forwards to the fulfilment of its great quest for a just outcome to history, is becoming more powerful by the day. Seen in these terms, the Party is not so much about power per se – but power to deliver this historic outcome. That perhaps explains why, despite the many challenges and problems with its practice and its own history, it still remains so dominant in China." Today, concepts like the [Chinese dream](#), national [rejuvenation](#), and the goal of becoming [fully modernized by 2049](#) are central themes Party rhetoric uses, even in discussing day-to-day work at different lower-level organizations.

In the context of the Wuhan Institute of Virology posts, this is seen in the framing of work at the lab as some kind of grand struggle. In one of the first [WIV posts](#) referenced by *ProPublica* and Vanity Fair (available [here](#) in its original format), the authors claim to have found a dispatch that "...referenced inhumane working conditions and "hidden safety dangers." On Nov. 12 of that year, a dispatch by party branch members at the BSL-4 laboratory appeared to reference a biosecurity breach: "These viruses come without a shadow and leave without a trace."

However, as a number of Mandarin speakers and China watchers have [pointed out](#) online, this was actually a very general post about how the facility went from humble beginnings at its founding to now being a [training hub](#) and "fighting fortress" of China's research and public health. It is written not unlike other fictional and non-fictional works describing BSL-4 facilities in other countries (*The Hot Zone*, anyone?)-hours are long in these space suit-like positive pressure suits, the pathogens are unimaginably dangerous, and those doing the work are brave, hardworking, brilliant scientists.

Much of Toy Reid's interpretation of this post depends on a misinterpretation of "每当这时" (Měi dāng zhè shí, "whenever") in the context of a description of Party members leading by example whenever handling BSL-4 pathogens. Reid instead took this as "whenever there are biosafety breaches," and not some inspirational statement about Party members. Other portions of the article focus on visits from Chinese Academy of Sciences officials and seminars on the importance of biosafety and commonly noted issues during safety inspections. However, these were updates about high-level visitors and general efforts to ensure the facility maintained safety standards, much like those any organization anywhere might make.

James Palmer

@BeijingPalmer [Follow](#)

a lot of it is like reading a corporate newsletter that says 'This year, we all remembered that there's no I in Team!' and then concluding that this mysterious 'I' was removed from the team. What happened to him? What are they concealing? <https://t.co/OG6AV9Z5Es>

— James Palmer (@BeijingPalmer) [October 31, 2022](#)

Law Boy, Esq.

@The_Law_Boy

so it sort of seems like *propublica* put out a report purporting to validate the lab leak theory based entirely on the claims of a guy who claimed to know a secret version of chinese

[6:59 PM · Oct 31, 2022](#)

[Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

James Palmer, deputy editor at *Foreign Policy* and author of *Foreign Policy's China Brief*, discussing the normal workplace nature of the WIV posts

The Wuhan Institute of Virology boasts the PRC's first BSL-4 (P4) facility, which [opened in 2018](#), marking a major milestone for the country. A boastful post about how it came from humble beginnings but, through the work of very dedicated personnel, is now doing important, taxing work and striving to always be better is very par for the course. There is even a corny word play in the post about how Party members "infect" (Gǎnrǎn, "感染") others with their practical actions and safety-conscious attitudes. As many have now pointed out, this is just the Party bragging about how dedicated their members are, how far the



facility has come, and how personnel are constantly working to better themselves and their organization. In other words, it is furthering the Party narrative, not hinting at secret internal problems.

References throughout the posts cited by *ProPublica* to General Secretary Xi Jinping and his discussion of technology as a weapon make sense in the context of Party-authored news posts. Xi Jinping has achieved power unlike any previous leader, capturing himself a historic third term after the country [removed presidential term limits](#) in 2018. Xi Jinping Thought (“Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era”) was also formally enshrined in the Party’s constitution that year, further cementing Xi’s unique power over the Party with the Party [describing](#) it as “Marxism of contemporary China and of the 21 century.” With this context in mind, it makes sense for Party members at WIV to frequently reference Xi and his national goals and speeches. However, Reid instead took this as literal input directly from Xi to the lab following the biosafety incident he claims a previous post references.

Zhихua Chen

[@zhihuachen](#) [Follow](#)

Issues with the senate minority report on covid origins and the latest vanity fair/prorepublica piece that covers it. Two issues.

- 1) Bad translation of a sentence in a Nov 12 WIV news release.
- 2) Bad interpretation of events leading to the Nov 17 safety training at WIV. 1/n

[4:20 AM · Oct 29, 2022](#)

[Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

Zhихua Chen’s thread on translation and dating issues in the ProPublica article

Finally, even if this was all true—the WIV had a 2019 biosafety incident and Xi Jinping was personally concerned enough to send an urgent message about it to WIV himself—why would any of that be posted on the institute’s website? As was just discussed, the narrative matters a lot in Chinese politics; image is everything and the Party is [very secretive](#) as a result. As the country continues to compete internationally in all areas, including the [bioeconomy](#), it does not make sense for the Party to air dirty laundry about a supposed biosafety incident and workers’ concerns in a public space. If the core argument is that China is covering up a lab leak, the question of “Why would the Party allow the facility in question to publicly hint at mismanagement and safety issues on its own website?” must be answered.

Implications

Ultimately, bad faith takes on China, COVID-19, and biosafety hurt us all. There is a fundamental difference between calling for an in-depth investigation, holding the PRC accountable for its failures, working towards making sure we are better prepared for the next time something like this happens, and inappropriately equating mischaracterized and poorly translated press releases to some kind of damning evidence of a lab leak origin of SARS-CoV-2. The US-PRC relationship is in a very dangerous place and, while criticism of the CCP’s handling of COVID-19 is absolutely warranted, this article is likely to become political fodder for the Party. In fact, the Chinese government has already [condemned](#) the piece, claiming that it was driven by US politics.

While *ProPublica* claimed to have corroborated Reid’s work with unnamed “experts” on CCP communications, the swift backlash and *ProPublica*’s moves to [reach out](#) to other translators cast further doubt on the caliber and motivations of those consulted initially. This is in addition to concerns about the experts they claim to have consulted on the WIV’s claims about biosafety and time researchers spend in BSL-4. In the end, one can be both critical of the CCP and its practices while not resorting to an overly hawkish view that leads to finding suspicion in the mundane.

Finally, this points to a need for interdisciplinary collaboration and competent understanding of the political realities of the PRC in assessing issues like biosafety. What may look to someone with little knowledge of Chinese political discourse as alarming messages are pretty par for the course in terms of statements and news updates on an official website. Outside of debates on SARS-CoV-2 origin in the scientific community, scholars in the social sciences and humanities and experts working in all sorts of fields can offer important context that, in this case, marks the difference between recognizing standard Party rhetoric and sounding alarm bells over normal updates on the WIV’s website.

For more on this, including discussions of the scientific debate about COVID-19’s origin as discussed in the Senate report and *ProPublica* article, check out Michael Hiltzik’s [opinion piece](#) on this article in the *LA Times* and Max Tani’s [work](#) in Semafor.



I spent 10 days in a secret Chinese Covid detention centre

What I learnt when I was 'taken away' to an island quarantine facility in the middle of the night

By Thomas Hale (Financial Times' Shanghai correspondent)

Source: <https://www.ft.com/content/77622627-9433-445a-a763-a547b77b58ed>



The 'close-contact' quarantine facility somewhere north of Shanghai where Thomas Hale was sent, after visiting a bar where a case of Covid-19 was later detected. He never tested positive before or during his stay.

Study tracks airborne spread of COVID between different hotel floors

Source: <https://newatlas.com/health-wellbeing/airborne-spread-covid-between-floors-cdc-study/>

Nov 06 – A striking new case study published in the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases* illustrates just how pervasive SARS-CoV-2 aerosol transmission can be, describing a trio of infections in a Taiwan quarantine hotel with the virus likely traveling through walls and floors in a poorly ventilated building.

Perhaps the most significant shift in thinking regarding this novel coronavirus since the pandemic began has been around how viruses spread from one person to another. Back in early 2020, soon after SARS-CoV-2 first emerged, the traditional paradigm was these kinds of viruses spread through respiratory droplets. Hence all the early pandemic messaging was focused on how we should wash or sanitize our hands and keep six feet away from others.

But as time passed, and [case studies of infection clusters](#) began to emerge, it became quickly clear that SARS-CoV-2 has the propensity to [spread through the air](#) across large distances. By 2021 scientists





described the [evidence for airborne spread as "overwhelming."](#) Nevertheless, entrenched paradigms are slow to change, and even now, nearly three years into the pandemic, there are still debates over how prevalent aerosol transmission is for SARS-CoV-2.

A new case study, published in a journal managed by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), offers some of the strongest evidence to date of long-distance SARS-CoV-2 aerosol spread. The report looks at a trio of COVID cases from December 2021, in a Taiwan quarantine hotel.

All three cases tested positive to a PCR test after finishing their 10-day quarantine hotel stay. During their hotel stay they lived in nonadjacent rooms, with one of the cases on the floor above the other two cases. Genomic testing linked all three cases with one another so it was clear the infections took place in the hotel, and the primary case was suspected to be a guest arriving from the US. So, how did one person infect two other people in different rooms and on different floors of the same hotel?

A team of researchers set out to study the architecture of the hotel in granular detail. The primary case's room (510) was found to have spaces in the walls and ceiling that connected airflow to other rooms in the building, in this instance to room 503 and to 611, on the floor above.

"We found truncated pipes above the ceiling in the room 510 bathroom, which might have connected to room 610, and a residual tunnel above the ceiling that might connect room 610 to room 611," the researchers explained in the study. "A residual tunnel in the same location was also found in the middle of room 510 and room 511, and another tunnel connected room 511 and room 503."

This all suggested plausible routes of airflow between the non-adjacent rooms, but to actually test whether aerosols could move this way the researchers conducted a tracer-gas experiment. Ethanol was used as the tracer, and released from the primary case room. Within minutes, traces of ethanol aerosols were detected in both secondary case rooms, including the room on the floor above.

The researchers are cautious to stress ethanol molecules are smaller than virus particles so they can't be considered a direct proxy for viral aerosol transmission. However, what this tracer test does reveal is structural defects in the building confirming aerosol movement between distant rooms.

"The Omicron variant is highly transmissible, so aerosol transmission was the most plausible route in this investigation of what we determined to be a poorly ventilated quarantine hotel," the researchers concluded in the study. "The special setting of this and other quarantine hotels (that is, facilities used to place persons



in closed and separated rooms) provided a unique opportunity to see that the highly transmissible Omicron variant can cause infections between floors and through wall defects."

This new case study is certainly [not the first epidemiological report](#) looking at the possibility of SARS-CoV-2 transmission from room to room in a large building. Some earlier reports have even studied transmission between floors of a building potentially through drains and sewer pipes. **What this case study does highlight is how potent and widespread SARS-CoV-2 aerosol transmission can be, particularly in badly ventilated apartment buildings.**

► The new report was published in [Emerging Infectious Diseases](#).

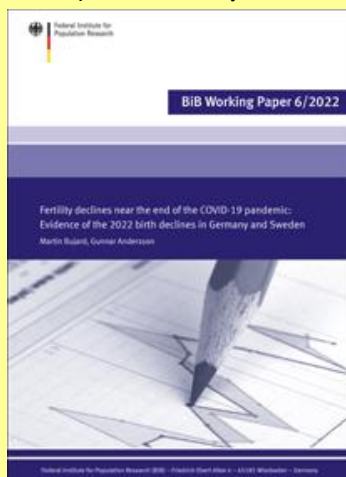
Fertility declines near the end of the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence of the 2022 birth declines in Germany and Sweden

By Bujard, Martin and Andersson, Gunnar (2022)

BiB Working Paper 6/2022. Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung

Source: <https://www.bib.bund.de/Publikation/2022/Fertility-declines-near-the-end-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic-Evidence-of-the-2022-birth-declines-in-Germany-and-Sweden.html>

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, several countries faced short-term fertility declines in 2020 and 2021, a development that did not materialize in Scandinavian and German-speaking countries. However, more recent birth statistics show a steep fertility decline in the aftermath of the pandemic in 2022. We aim to provide data on the unexpected birth decline in 2022 in Germany and Sweden and relate these data to pandemic-related contextual developments which could have influenced the post-pandemic fertility development. We rely on monthly birth statistics and present seasonally adjusted monthly Total Fertility Rates (TFR) for Germany and Sweden. We relate the nine-month lagged fertility rates to contextual developments regarding COVID-19 mortality and morbidity, unemployment rates, and COVID-19 vaccinations.



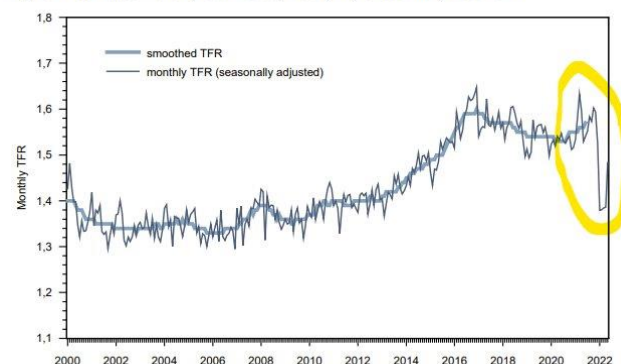
[Publikation herunterladen \(pdf, 1MB\)](#)

The seasonally adjusted monthly TFR of Germany dropped from 1.5-1.6 in 2021 to 1.3-1.4 in 2022, a decline of about 14%. In Sweden, the corresponding TFR dropped from about 1.7 in 2021 to 1.5-1.6 in 2022, a decline of almost 10%. There is no association of the fertility trends with

changes in unemployment, infection rates, or COVID-19 deaths. However, there is a strong association between the onset of vaccination programmes and the fertility decline nine months after of this onset. The fertility decline in the first months of 2022 in Germany and Sweden is remarkable. Common explanations of fertility change during the pandemic do not apply in its aftermath. The association between the onset of mass vaccinations and subsequent fertility decline indicates that people adjusted their behaviour to get vaccinated before becoming pregnant, as societies were opening up with post-pandemic life conditions.

Our study provides novel information on fertility declines in countries previously not affected by any COVID-19 baby bust. We provide a first appraisal of the COVID-19-fertility nexus in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic.

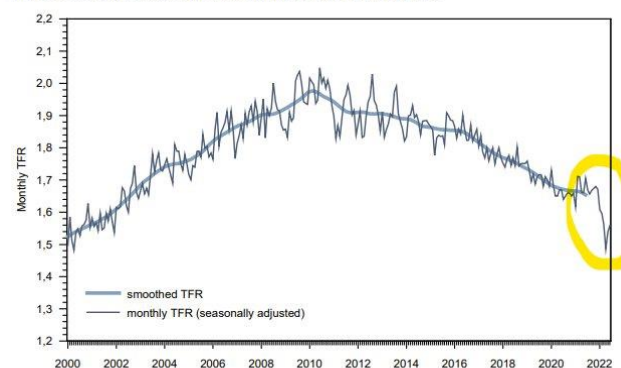
Figure 1: Estimated monthly Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for Germany, 2000-2022



Note: The TFR is seasonally adjusted.

Source: Own calculations based on Germany's birth statistics.

Figure 2: Monthly Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for Sweden, 2000-2022



Note: The TFR is seasonally adjusted.

Source: Own smoothing of monthly TFR data produced by Statistics Sweden.



SARS-CoV-2 Protein That Damages Heart Found

Source: <https://www.insideprecisionmedicine.com/coronavirus-2/sars-cov-2-protein-that-damages-heart-found/>



Nov 08 – Researchers have found how a specific protein in SARS-CoV-2 damages heart tissue in lab models. The group then used the drug **2-deoxy-D-glucose (2DG)** to reverse the protein's toxic effects on the heart.

The team is from the University of Maryland School of Medicine's (UMSOM) Center for Precision Disease Modeling. Their findings, based on research with fruit flies and mouse heart cells, were published in [Communications Biology](#), a *Nature* journal.

People infected with COVID-19 are at a significantly higher risk for developing inflammation of the heart muscle, abnormal heart rhythms, blood clots, stroke, heart attacks, and heart failure for at least a year after infection, compared to those who have not been infected with the virus. Although vaccines and medications to lessen the severity of COVID-19 disease rapidly emerged, these therapies do not protect the heart or other organs from the damage that can be done by even a mild infection.

"To treat patients in the long run, we must first understand the mechanism behind what is causing the disease. Our research shows that individual SARS-CoV-2 proteins can each do major damage to specific tissues in the body—similar to what has been found for other viruses like HIV and Zika," said senior author Zhe Han, PhD, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Center for Precision Disease Modeling at UMSOM.

Last year, Han and his research team [identified the most toxic SARS-CoV-2 proteins](#) in studies using fruit flies and human cells.

They found a the drug selinexor reduced the toxicity of one of these proteins, but not the other one, known as **Nsp6**.

In their latest study, they found that Nsp6 turned out to be the most toxic SARS-CoV-2 protein in the fly heart. Next, they determined that the Nsp6 protein turned on the glycolysis process, which enables cells to burn the sugar glucose for energy. Typically, heart cells use fatty acids as an energy source, but switch over to sugar metabolism during heart failure as these cells try to repair the damaged tissue. The researchers also found the Nsp6 protein did added damage by disrupting mitochondria.

The team then blocked sugar metabolism in fruit flies and mouse heart cells using the drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2DG). They found that the drug reduced the heart and mitochondria damage caused by the Nsp6 viral protein.

"We know that some viruses hijack the infected animal's cell machinery to change its metabolism to steal the cell's energy source, so we suspect SARS-CoV-2 does something similar. The viruses can also use the byproducts of sugar metabolism as building blocks to make more viruses," said Han. "So, we predict this drug that changes the metabolism in the heart back to what it was before infection would be bad for the virus, by both cutting off its energy supply and eliminating the pieces it needs to replicate."



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The researchers said that fortunately 2DG is inexpensive and is used regularly in laboratory research. Although 2DG has not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat disease, the drug is currently in clinical trials for treatment of COVID-19 in India.

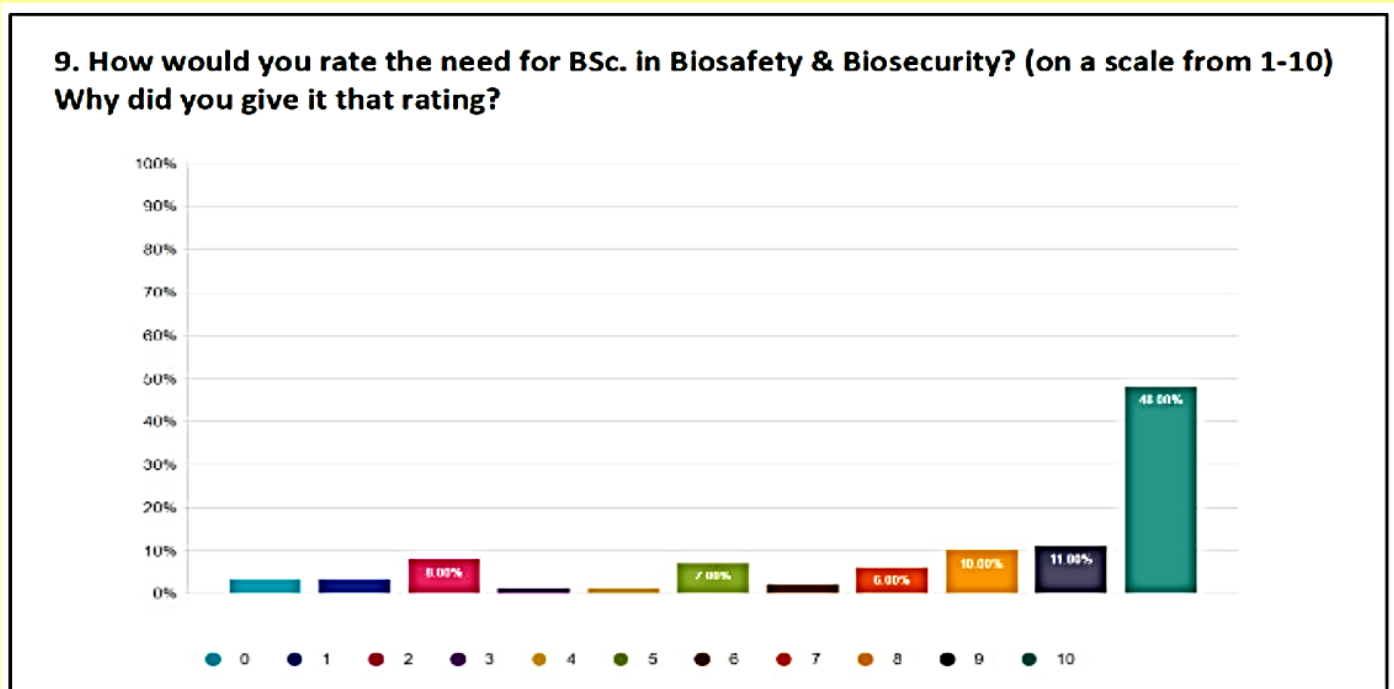
“Too many Americans who have recovered from COVID wind up with dangerous heart conditions weeks or months later, and we need to learn the fundamental reasons for why this is happening,” said Mark T. Gladwin, MD, Vice President for Medical Affairs at University of Maryland, Baltimore and Dean, UMSOM.

“With this research elucidating the pathways of the Nsp6 protein, we can refine the treatments we target for future research with the ultimate aim of reversing further heart damage in these patients.”

Bolstering Biosafety Education to Address Biosecurity Professionals Shortfalls

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221108-bolstering-biosafety-education-to-address-biosecurity-professionals-shortfalls>

Nov 08 – The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into focus the significant demand on the biosafety and biosecurity profession and many countries face an overall shortage of these specialized individuals. To address this gap, the IFBA is leading a multisectoral effort towards a future sustainable workforce by formalizing a biosafety & biosecurity career path within the higher education system. The development of this new BSc. undergraduate program is an important step forward to solving the overall global shortage of these professionals. This multisectoral, collaborative approach to building capacity through education is long-term, creating the biosafety and biosecurity professionals of the future. We must continue to forge strong partnerships across sectors to create a universal call to action for biosafety and biosecurity education as a formal degree program in higher learning institutions. Now is the right time to seize the opportunity and lessons learned from the recent pandemic to boldly reimagine and reboot the biosafety and biosecurity profession.



●▶ [Click here to read the IFBA's white paper "Addressing the Global Shortage of Biosafety & Biosecurity Professionals through Education: Establishment of a New Undergraduate Degree Program"](#)

Here are excerpts from the paper:

Executive Summary

Biosafety and biosecurity professionals provide an essential role in safeguarding infectious disease agents in clinical and research laboratories and other settings where biological materials are handled. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into focus the significant demand on the



profession and many countries face an overall shortage of these specialized individuals. Given that biosafety and biosecurity professionals work in laboratories behind the scenes of the frontline response, the profession remains largely unknown to students interested in pursuing a career in the sciences. As such, students tend to be steered towards more visible education paths in the biological and health sciences.

To address this gap, the IFBA is leading a multisectoral effort towards a future sustainable workforce by formalizing a biosafety & biosecurity career path within the higher education system. Now is the right time since the recent lived COVID-19 experiences of youth have motivated them to become involved. Over the past 6 months, and with funding support from Global Affairs Canada, the IFBA has been collaborating with Kenya's Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) to develop and pilot a new undergraduate BSc degree program specifically in Biosafety and Biosecurity. This new BSc program leverages MMUST's existing programs in the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences. All students undertake related core courses in microbiology and related disciplines in the first two years followed by specialized biosafety & biosecurity courses, practical laboratory and field experience and a capstone project in their later academic years.

The lessons learned from this pilot program will be used for future program roll out to additional universities across Africa and globally. This project presents a recommended solution towards a sustainable future global workforce of biosafety and biosecurity professionals. Supporting this approach are multisectoral partnerships committed to biosafety and biosecurity education and our common vision of more graduates and young scientists entering the profession.

Problem Statement

Competent biosafety & biosecurity professionals are a foundational element in global health security, preparedness and response to outbreaks of infectious disease, and the safe and secure handling of biological materials in laboratories and other settings. Despite this central role, recent experience and lessons learned from the COVID 19 pandemic confirms an overall global shortage of these professionals. This white paper formally approaches the scope and determinants to the current shortages facing the biosafety and biosecurity workforce, and to recommend solutions towards a sustainable, diverse and sufficient future global workforce of biosafety and biosecurity professionals.

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A Call to Action

The development of a BSc. undergraduate program in biosafety and biosecurity is an important step forward to solving the overall global shortage of these professionals. This multisectoral, collaborative approach to building capacity through education is long-term, creating the biosafety and biosecurity professionals of the future. We must continue to forge strong partnerships across sectors to create a universal call to action for biosafety and biosecurity education as a formal degree program in higher learning institutions. Now is the right time to seize the opportunity and lessons learned from the recent pandemic to boldly reimagine and reboot the biosafety and biosecurity profession.

How to Detect a Man-Made Biothreat

Source: <https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-detect-a-man-made-biothreat/>

A new, highly transmissible strain of influenza emerges. A pesticide-resistant insect decimates huge swaths of crops. A patient winds up in the emergency room with a bacterial strain that doesn't respond to any available antibiotics. Any of these scenarios could happen due to natural evolutionary changes among pathogens or pests. But as [genetic engineering](#) gets cheaper and easier, it's becoming increasingly plausible that they might one day be the product of deliberate manipulation.

To guard against these potential threats, the US government is funding the development of tests to detect dangerous bioengineered organisms before they have a chance to cause significant harm. The effort was announced in 2017 by the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity, or Iarpa, within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. In a [livestreamed update](#) in October, Iarpa program manager David Markowitz announced that two platforms developed under the program were both 70 percent accurate at identifying the presence of bioengineering. "We simply never know what sample is going to come through the door in a government lab, and we need to be prepared for anything," Markowitz said during the news briefing.

One of the platforms, created by the nonprofit Draper, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is a rapid, handheld testing device that uses a thumbnail-sized chip to detect engineered genetic material. The other is software developed by Boston biotech company Ginkgo Bioworks that uses machine learning to identify engineering in genomic data generated from sample organisms. (The companies haven't yet published their results in a peer-reviewed journal, and their platforms are still in development.)





Draper is developing a chip capable of identifying genetically engineered organisms in soil, water, and other samples. (Courtesy of Draper Laboratory of Boston)

Crops and animal feed are already widely screened to determine the presence of genetic traits that can't be found in nature or created through conventional breeding. Scientists use a test called PCR, or polymerase chain reaction, to identify whether bioengineered DNA is present and in what amount. When it comes to food labeling, scientists usually know what genetic change they're looking for. But no general-purpose tool exists for detecting engineered genetic material in bacteria, viruses, or other organisms that could appear in any context.

Until now, detecting the presence of bioengineering relied on manual analysis, which is labor-intensive and slow. Through a process called sequencing, researchers can generate a readout of an organism's entire genetic code: a series of As, Cs, Gs, and Ts, or bases, which make up the building blocks of life. Every microbe, plant, animal, and human has a unique configuration of these letters. To determine whether an organism's genetic code has been tinkered with, scientists need to know what its genome—and those of its close relatives—normally look like. Then they can search for areas that look out of the ordinary.

DNA can be manipulated through at least a half dozen processes. A conventional method involves adding a gene from one species to another—usually for bioengineering crops. Chunks of DNA can also be moved from one part of an organism's genome to another part, a type of change called a translocation. [Crispr gene editing](#), which is being explored as a way to treat diseases in people, and to improve plants and animals bred for human consumption, can delete chunks of DNA. Older editing techniques, such as [zinc finger nucleases and Talens](#), have also been used for these purposes but haven't been as successful as Crispr.

Any of these processes may leave behind signatures of bioengineering. For example, scientists can tell if a gene has been added or moved by comparing that organism's genome to a reference sample. When using Crispr, deletions sometimes turn up in other parts of the genome that look like the targeted section,



but aren't. Talens and zinc finger nucleases also have a tendency to produce these "off-target" effects. The deliberate use of radiation can also produce traceable DNA mutations.

Draper and Ginkgo's technologies are designed to detect these common signatures of engineering. Ginkgo's software also relies on algorithms that compare the genome being analyzed against those in a huge database to determine whether it looks like an engineered or natural one. Draper's device is meant to be deployed quickly in the field on single samples, while Ginkgo's is designed to do large-scale analysis of many samples.

"Genetic engineering has been happening for quite a while now, and it's become increasingly easy to do it," said Laura Seaman, principal scientist at Draper, during the livestream. "It's important to understand how these tools are being used and to identify them in an unknown situation."

When Iarpa launched the [Felix program](#) (short for Finding Engineering-Linked Indicators) that produced these efforts, the agency had set the ambitious goal of developing technologies that would be 90 percent effective at detecting the presence of engineering. In that regard, the Iarpa awardees have some improving to do.

In a test Iarpa ran this spring and announced October 17, government scientists evaluated the technology on 100 samples of both engineered and natural organisms taken from a variety of places, including soil, mouse feces, and a cow's stomach. Among these were 73 samples of bioengineered organisms, many of which were mixed with other organisms that weren't engineered. "We tried to make these batches representative of the real-world challenges that the biosecurity community faces every day," Markowitz says. According to Markowitz, the Draper and Ginkgo teams correctly identified 70 percent as being bioengineered. Draper had no false positives, while Ginkgo had one—results stating that bioengineering was detected when it was actually not present. A bigger problem for both teams was the rate of false negatives, or failing to identify bioengineering when it was in fact present. For one thing, the platforms didn't perform well on samples that contained very subtle genetic modifications, such as a single A or T that got swapped. These types of modifications can be made with a relatively [new technique called base editing](#), which makes single base-letter changes instead of cutting whole genes or chunks of genes, like classic Crispr editing does.

The platforms also had a harder time detecting evidence of engineering in samples from organisms with large genomes, according to Markowitz. "The larger the genome of the organism is, the more training data you need to get a statistical model, and the more you have to sift through in order to find the signatures of engineering," Markowitz says.

Making the technology more accurate will require a bigger, more diverse dataset—more reference genomes of the organisms all around us. "We should be sequencing everything that is around us and monitoring what is there," says Joshua Dunn, head of design at Ginkgo. "It will help us understand the baseline of what is normal, so that if we see any deviation from that we can zero in on the parts of the sample that are the most interesting."

(Iarpa did not release performance data for technologies developed by the program's four other participants: The Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Harvard University's Wyss Institute, Noblis, and Raytheon.)

But even if the platforms' accuracy improves, it's hard to know whether they would be able to detect a completely new organism that scientists have never seen before. Richard Ebright, a molecular biologist at Rutgers University, is skeptical that any technology will be able to definitively identify a bioengineered organism. "There is no technology—none—that comprehensively and reliably can distinguish between an engineered genome sequence and a natural genome sequence, and there never will be," he says. "There are too many ways to manipulate a genome without leaving signatures of manipulation."

This includes a technique developed more than a decade ago called seamless ligation of nucleic acids, or Slice, which uses bacterial enzymes to join DNA fragments. Older methods, such as selective breeding or serial passage—repeatedly growing viruses or bacteria in new environments over time—also would be unlikely to leave signatures of engineering, he says.

And Gigi Gronvall, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health who focuses on biosecurity, says the genetic sequence of a new pathogen isn't the only factor to consider when determining whether a biothreat has been engineered. "If there was suspicion of deliberate misuse, attributing that to a particular actor is going to rest on lots of pieces of evidence," she says. Factors such as where a new pathogen emerges, who it initially infects, and how it spreads, need to be considered. "Being able to identify these signatures that indicate bioengineering is important, and I hope we continue to get better at it. But it's never going to be 100 percent of the picture," she says.

Not all engineered organisms are dangerous, of course. Companies are engineering bacteria, viruses, plants, animals, and human cells with benefits that might help treat diseases or create new foods. Markowitz says bioengineering detection could help these companies protect their intellectual property.

But governments will likely be the main users of the technology. Markowitz says Iarpa has already made the platforms available to other US government agencies. ("I can't speak to how these tools are being used currently, but I will say that for several months they have been in the hands of a very large number of both domestic and international partners," he says.)



And he confirmed that early on in the Covid-19 pandemic, Iarpa used technology from the Felix program to determine that the SARS-CoV-2 virus was not bioengineered. The idea that SARS-CoV-2 was engineered in a lab has since been [thoroughly discredited](#), but at the time some scientists had questioned whether a part of the virus called the furin cleavage site, which is responsible for its high infectivity, was evidence of engineering, because some of the virus's closest relatives don't have this feature.

Gronvall says the theory flourished in part because of scientists' limited knowledge of coronaviruses. It turns out [other coronaviruses have these sites](#) as well. "It only seemed suspicious until we looked at more of the coronavirus family and realized that our n was just really low. We were only sampling a very tiny portion of what was out there," she says. "Now that our field of knowledge is greater, it's not so unusual anymore."

Ultimately, these testing platforms might not only detect future engineered biothreats, but help deter labs from creating them in the first place. "Any would-be bad actor, just by virtue of knowing that the tools to rapidly detect what they're trying to do are out there, might think twice," Markowitz says.

Chapter 4: Operations Management and Decision-Making in Deployment of an On-Site Biological Analytical Capacity

By Olga Vybornova and Jean-Luc Gala

Center for Applied Molecular Technologies, Institute for Experimental and Clinical Research, Université Catholique de Louvain, Brussels, Belgium

Source: [file:///C:/Users/User/Desktop/Chapter Operations Management and Decisi.pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Desktop/Chapter%20Operations%20Management%20and%20Decisi.pdf)

Deployment of an on-site laboratory to contain an expanding outbreak and protect public health through rapid diagnosis of infected patients and identification of their contacts is a challenging and complex response, further complicated by time limitations and dramatic consequences of failure. Effective operations management and decision-making are critical for a successful Fieldable Laboratory (FL) mission at each phase of the mission. To analyze the principles and challenges of the operations management and associated decision-making process, the FL mission has been broken down into five successive interlinked phases defined as the "FL mission cycle" (FL-MC). Each phase comprises a set of operational functions (OFs) corresponding to the mission activities. Some decisions are associated with a single OF, whereas others are taken across different OFs and FL-MC phases. All decisions are treated as logical entities inherently linked to each other and the whole situational context within the FL operational domain. Being part of the laboratory information management system (LIMS), the FL domain ontology is developed as the main knowledge management tool supporting the decision-making process. This is an essential way to promote interoperability and scalability between different FL modules and healthcare capacities during cross-border biological crises.

Are COVID Nasal Vaccines Our Ticket Out of the Pandemic?

Source: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/983754>

Nov 08 – In the not-so-distant future, protection against COVID-19 may become easier, more complete — and sting less.

We'd walk to our mailbox, collect a small package there, and self-administer a nasal vaccine booster dose, meant not only to prevent us from getting sick but from getting infected at all and transmitting the virus.

The scenario is possible, according to David T. Curiel, MD, PhD, distinguished professor of radiation oncology at Washington University in St. Louis. His vision of the future sounds especially credible given his track record. He's widely known as the father of the mRNA vaccines against COVID developed by Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech, as he first published [research](#) that was the foundation for those vaccines in 1995.

When he approached pharmaceutical companies, well before the pandemic, showing them his "beautiful vaccine data," he was told there would be no use for them, he said.

Now, of course, those mRNA vaccines have saved millions of lives. But the pandemic is still here, despite public fatigue and sentiment that it's over, and more needs to be done. While the intramuscular vaccines prevent severe illness and death, with the advent of each new variant they increasingly don't prevent transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID.

And that's where nasal vaccines could come in, according to Curiel and numerous other experts.

As of November 4, Airfinity, a health data company, is tracking 116 intranasal vaccines in development, including 23 in clinical stages. Seven of those 23 are in phase 3 trials. Nasal vaccines are already approved elsewhere, including India, Russia, and Iran. China has an inhaled COVID vaccine.



Some research is investigating nasal vaccines as boosters; others as the original vaccination in those not yet vaccinated.

The Power of Mucosal Immunity

Nasal vaccines provide what's known as mucosal immunity, stopping the virus at the entry point to the body. "The whole idea is, you are building up protection at the entry level of the upper airway," said Eric Topol, MD, executive vice-president of Scripps Research, La Jolla, California. (Topol is editor-in-chief of Medscape.) With the nasal vaccine, "it's much harder for the virus to get rooted in the mucosa, which is where it has to enter. So that's how we protect against infections and that's how we protect against spread," he said. And if the virus can't infect people, of course, it can't spread.

"That's what we need right now," Topol said. "That's the missing link to get us out of the pandemic." He has long urged the development of nasal COVID vaccines, often explaining their benefits in [editorials](#) and on [Twitter](#).

The idea is gaining ground among infectious disease experts, and for good reason. "The mucosal immune system and the circulatory immune system are separate," said Michael W. Russell, PhD, professor emeritus of microbiology and immunology at the University at Buffalo, New York, who has also written about the [value of mucosal immunity](#) in fighting the pandemic. "There is some cross talk, but they are largely independent."

"If you generate antibodies in the blood, these generally don't reach mucosal secretions in any significant amount," he said. "The antibodies in the mucosal secretions don't reach the blood."

The most robust immunity against COVID-19, according to Russell, comes when infection in the mouth and upper respiratory tract results in the secretion of immunoglobulin A (IgA) antibodies, giving mucosal immunity.

For the nasal vaccines in development, the goal of all is to induce mucosal immunity. Some of the vaccines are live attenuated (weakened virus) versions of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which elicit an immune response. Others use an inactivated (or replication-incompetent virus incapable of infecting cells) version of a common cold virus, or adenovirus, to deliver an antigen and trigger an immune response.

"Prime and Spike" Approach

With the nasal vaccines, scientists are studying a new vaccination approach, known as "prime and spike." As protection from the intramuscular vaccine injections, which most people have received, wanes after a few months, breakthrough infections occur.

But, by following up that shot with a nasal vaccine, mucosal immunity at the entry point of the virus can be achieved.

"We are leveraging preexisting immunity from the vaccine," said Benjamin Goldman-Israelow, MD, PhD, assistant professor of medicine and infectious disease physician at Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut, who with his colleagues recently published the [results](#) of the approach in animal studies.

Those animals given a nasal vaccine after an mRNA vaccine had a stronger immune response than those given just the mRNA vaccine or those not vaccinated. In some instances, the researchers were also able to show some decrease in transmission, Goldman-Israelow [said](#).

Progress, or Lack of, So Far

One nasal vaccine, developed by scientists at the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca, has not panned out. The vaccine uses a weakened version of a common cold virus, or adenovirus, genetically modified so it can't replicate in people.

In a [report](#) on its phase 1 trial, researchers said they administered the nasal spray to 30 participants who had not yet been vaccinated, but found the mucosal antibody responses were only seen in a minority of them.

Systemic immune responses [were also weaker](#) when compared with what is seen in intramuscular vaccines. In mid-October, the researchers said they will halt research on it.

Among other research under way:

Ocugen: Ocugen has an exclusive license agreement with Washington University in St. Louis to develop its nasal vaccine, created there by Curiel and Michael S. Diamond, MD, PhD, professor of medicine, molecular microbiology, and pathology and immunology. It's the same vaccine already authorized for emergency use in India, said Shankar Musunuri, PhD, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and cofounder of Ocugen In., Malvern, Pennsylvania.

Now, Ocugen has initiated discussions with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to design the clinical trial in America. It's an adenovirus-vectored vaccine with a stabilized spike protein.

"It's a single booster, so development will be fast," Musunuri said. It will be tested in those who already had a primary series of COVID vaccines.

Codagenix: CoviLiv, a live-attenuated (weakened form of the virus) intranasal vaccine, performed well in a phase 1 study, according to J. Robert Coleman, PhD, cofounder and Chief Executive Officer of



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – November 2022

Codagenix, Farmingdale, New York. He said in phase 1, "[I]t was as safe as placebo and we saw a 100% seroconversion or antibody response rate." Because the vaccine expresses all the SARS-CoV-2 proteins, not just the spike, the hoped-for result is to induce broad immunity against variants.

Now, the company has initiated dosing in phase 3, in collaboration with the Serum Institute of India. The research is part of the World Health Organization's Solidarity Trial Vaccines effort to evaluate COVID vaccines.

Meissa Vaccines: Meissa is involved in a phase 1 study of its nasal vaccine, which it initially investigated as a primary vaccine but now is testing as a booster, said Marty Moore, PhD, chief scientific officer and founder of Meissa Vaccines, Redwood City, California. [Initial data](#) in the trial's 49 participants show the nasal can stimulate an IgA antibody response similar to what is seen after infection with COVID, but safely.

"We should be wrapping this up in the next quarter or two. What we are seeing so far is outstanding safety and good immune responses," Moore said.

Few Precedents

The United States has little experience with nasal vaccines. Consumers are likely most familiar with FluMist, a nasal spray for [flu](#) prevention approved for [ages 2 through 49](#).

In a recent [study](#), from 2019, researchers found the nasal spray inferior to the flu shot in youth ages 2 to 17. However, in an earlier [study](#), published in 2007, the nasal flu vaccine worked better than the shot in young children up to about 5 years old.

FluMist "did blaze the trail," Coleman of Codagenix said. "Usually the first in class is not the best in class." However, he said, the research on FluMist shows you can have high efficacy with lower antibody rates compared with an injectable.

Barriers

A lack of funding is a huge barrier to nasal vaccine development. Observers say Operation Warp Speed 2.0, meant to promote development of new COVID vaccines, has [fallen flat](#). Without funding, experts worry, the United States will fall far behind other countries.

Company officials involved in nasal vaccine research said they are waiting on more specific guidance from the FDA on criteria that must be met to get an emergency use authorization (EUA) for the nasal vaccines. The FDA issued its [guidance](#) on EUAs for COVID vaccines in 2021 and 2022.

Another barrier is vaccine fatigue, but proponents of the nasal vaccines say the new delivery method will be more appealing and more convenient, and especially more attractive to needle phobics and children.

How Soon?

Experts' predictions vary on how soon that nasal vaccine could be at the pharmacy (or your mailbox). Topol is optimistic. If all goes well, a nasal vaccine could be authorized by early next year, he predicted.

The nasal vaccine's role in the United States will be to take the place of boosters, he and others said.

Musunuri of Ocugen said its vaccine may be ready for the 2023-2024 season. Coleman of Codagenix, a self-described pragmatist, estimates availability by late 2023, if all goes well.

Acceptance of the nasal vaccines, then, would also hinge on turning around public perception that the pandemic is over and that another shot — or spray — will provide more protection.

Curiel, who's faced pessimism before, thinks it will be accepted. "I think the user-friendly aspect of a non-invasive vaccine will be a way to traverse vaccine hesitancy," he said.

What Plagues of the Past Have to Tell Us About Current Crises

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221110-what-plagues-of-the-past-have-to-tell-us-about-current-crises>

Nov 10 – As the COVID-19 pandemic settled in over the course of the first half of 2020, few authors enjoyed as much renewed interest as the Algerian-born French existentialist Albert Camus. His classic 1947 novel *The Plague* tells the story of a town beset and isolated by an outbreak of the bubonic plague. The plague drags on and health authorities struggle to contain it. The population experiences a breakdown of civic order, a crumbling trust in institutions and the gradual onset of general paranoia. Sound familiar?

[Joel Bothello](#), associate professor of management at [Concordia University's John Molson School of Business](#), recently published a paper on the topic in [The Academy of Management Review](#). In it he asserts that Camus's fictional plague, along with the very real Black Death of the 14th century and the lethal waves



that followed, can be better understood using event system theory (EST). This relatively new theory to management studies reframes societal disruptions from isolated events to being the result of slowly unfolding chains of connected events: what happened prior to the pandemic or Chernobyl or the 9/11 attack, and what came after?

The long lead-ups and aftermaths of a calamity can provide a deeper understanding than just the study of the disruption itself, argue the authors. “Rather than it being about one event, we should look at each of these disruptions as an accumulation of events leading toward transformation,” says Bothello, who co-wrote the article with Thomas Roulet from the University of Cambridge.

Similarities Across the Ages

Bothello and Roulet studied four books about past plague outbreaks, two fiction — *The Plague* and Daniel Defoe’s *A Journal of the Plague Year* — and two nonfiction — *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West* by David Herlihy and *In the Wake of the Plague: The Black Death and the World It Made* by Norman Cantor.

They found that the distance of centuries has not changed the fundamental nature of human responses to disruptions or the profound changes that follow them. In all four books they found evidence of societal stagnation, disorientation, polarization and repudiation.

Stagnation refers to a population not recognizing or understanding the events within a chain and so fail to engage with it appropriately. Once the disruption occurs, the population experiences *disorientation* and no one knows how long it will take for life to return to normal. *Polarization* occurs when attempts to assign responsibility are shifted onto a particular group, often resulting in scapegoating and xenophobia. And then comes the *repudiation* of an existing system of beliefs and erosion of confidence in authorities, be they religious, civic or scientific. These in turn lead to macro-level changes to economic, political and cultural norms.

“Even though we are supposedly more sophisticated now, the patterns that we see of human behaviour are very similar,” Bothello notes.

Subjective and Objective Perspectives of End Times

“We chose these particular books because they look at the Black Death through different levels of analysis,” he explains. “The novels capture the subjective experiences that, even though they are fictional, draw upon real events and real people. The nonfiction books look at the larger societal effects as well as the individual experiences of the people living through them.”

There is much to be learned from the disasters of the past, says Bothello, Concordia University Research Chair in Resilience and Institutions, given the right framework.

“EST helps us reconceptualize disruption, because disruption has usually been treated as a one-time jolt,” he adds. “If we apply this new lens to it, we can look at how events happen at different levels, how they connect with one another and how they even intersect with different event chains. We can look at disruption from a holistic perspective to see how it leads to changes in organizations and societies.”

How to End COVID-19 as a Public Health Threat

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20221110-how-to-end-covid19-as-a-public-health-threat>

Nov 10 – SARS-CoV-2 continues to circulate among us. Although some governments have moved on, a new study published today in the journal [Nature](#) says that specific efforts and resources are still required to save lives. This is one of six main themes for action identified by a large panel of experts from different disciplines and over 100 countries to recommend actions to end COVID-19 as a public health threat. Worldwide, over 180 organizations from 72 countries have already endorsed the findings of the consensus study, which was led by the [Barcelona Institute for Global Health](#) (ISGlobal), an institution supported by “la Caixa” Foundation.

As of October 2022, more than 630 million COVID-19 cases and over 6.5 million deaths were reported (although the real death toll has been estimated to be upwards of 20 million). In addition, millions of patients with cancer and chronic disease have experienced dangerous healthcare delays, and Long COVID continues to elude definitive treatment, posing an ongoing threat to survivors. In addition, the virus also continues to accumulate mutations that can make it better at evading previous immunity. This is why many public health leaders, including the authors of this study, continue to regard COVID-19 as a persistent and dangerous global health threat.

Despite notable scientific and medical advances, the world’s response to COVID-19 has been hindered by broader political, social, and behavioral factors such as false information, vaccine hesitancy, inconsistent global coordination, and the inequitable distribution of equipment, vaccines and treatments. “Each country has responded differently, and often inadequately, which is partly due to a serious lack of coordination and clear goals,” says Jeffrey V Lazarus, head of the



Health Systems Research Group and co-director of the Viral and Bacterial Infections Programme at [ISGlobal](#), Associate Professor at the University of Barcelona, and coordinator of the study.

To develop global consensus on how to address these issues going forward, Lazarus and colleagues carried out a Delphi study, a well-established research methodology that challenges experts to garner consensus on answers to complex research questions. A multidisciplinary panel of 386 academic, health, NGO, government and other experts from 112 countries and territories took part in three rounds of structured consultation. The result is a set of 41 statements and 57 recommendations across six major areas: communication; health systems; vaccination; prevention; treatment and care; and inequities.

Three of the highest-ranked recommendations are: i) adopt a whole-of-society strategy that involves multiple disciplines, sectors and actors to avoid fragmented efforts; ii) whole-of-government approaches (e.g. coordination between ministries) to identify, review, and address resilience in health systems and make them more responsive to people's needs; and iii) maintain a vaccines-plus approach, which includes a combination of COVID-19 vaccination, other structural and behavioral prevention measures, treatment, and financial support measures. The panelists also prioritized recommendations for developing technologies (vaccines, therapies and services) that can reach target populations. Other recommendations with at least 99% agreement were: communicating effectively with the public, rebuilding public trust, and engaging communities in managing the pandemic response. Only six recommendations had more than 5% disagreement, including that which considers further economic incentives to address vaccine hesitancy or a symptoms approach to diagnose COVID-19 in settings with low access to testing. The 57 recommendations are directed at governments, health systems, industry, and other key stakeholders. "To the greatest degree possible, our results place emphasis on health and social policy recommendations that can be implemented in months, not years, to help bring this public health threat to an end," says Quique Bassat, ICREA professor at ISGlobal, co-author of the study and member of the University of Barcelona.

"Our study does echo some earlier recommendations, such as the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response and WHO's 2022 plan on Strategic Preparedness," says Lazarus, "but what makes this work unique is the very large number of experts consulted, the wide geographical representation, and the study design, which emphasizes consensus building and identifies areas of disagreement. It may prove to be a model for developing responses to future global health emergencies."

Ferrobot-Based Lab Kit Could Improve Pandemic Testing

Source: <https://www.insideprecisionmedicine.com/topics/molecular-dx-topic/infectious-disease-diagnostics/ferrobot-based-lab-kit-could-improve-pandemic-testing/>

Nov 11 – An all-in-one lab kit comprised of many pinhead-sized magnets inside a handheld unit has been developed by UCLA researchers. They say it could significantly increase the speed and volume of infectious disease testing, while reducing the costs and usage of scarce supplies. The researchers say these kits can be easily manufactured and deployed. The tests can be quickly and easily performed at a doctor's office, health clinic, or at mass testing sites in airports and schools at the onset of any major infectious disease. The UCLA-led research team said they were motivated by the lack of equitable access to testing during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic when only a handful of clinical laboratories were authorized to run tests. This technological breakthrough could help the authorities better prepare for future pandemics by decentralizing testing and maximizing the use of resources. As [a recent editorial](#) in the *New England Journal of Medicine* said, "Success [against pandemics] depends on tracking viral spread rapidly from its early stages to identify people who are infected and protect those who aren't."

Dino Di Carlo, PhD, UCLA Samueli School of Engineering professor, and Sam Emaminejad, PhD, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering, [co-authored this study, which was published in Nature](#). The paper outlined how the lab kit works and included findings from a clinical study with test samples from individuals who experienced COVID-19 symptoms. More than 100 test results using the lab kit were compared to the same samples tested for COVID-19 using PCR-based molecular diagnostics performed as part of UCLA Health's routine clinical care. "Our handheld lab technology could help overcome some of the barriers of scarcity and access to tests, especially early in a pandemic, when it is most crucial to control disease spread," said Emaminejad, who also holds a faculty appointment in bioengineering. "And beyond its potential to address issues of short supplies and high demand, it could be broadly adapted to test for many types of diseases in the field and with lab-grade quality."

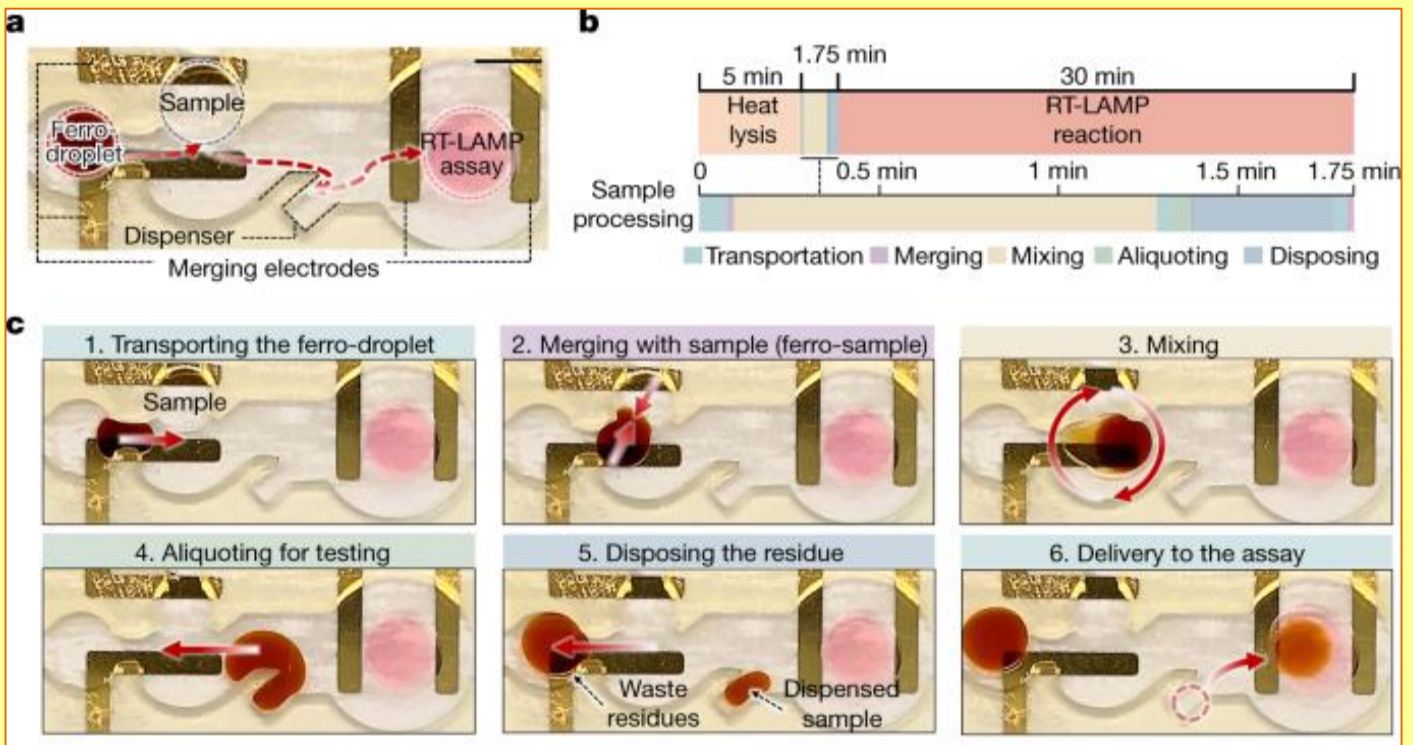
Using a circuit board that controls a set of movable, 1-mm-sized magnetic discs known as "ferrobots" to transport samples through the diagnostic workflow of a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), the researchers' ultra-sensitive lab kit was able to detect the presence of genetic material from a virus—in this case, SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19. The steps to separate, sort, mix, and amplify testing samples are all automated and performed at a miniaturized level inside the kit.

"This platform's compact design and automated handling of samples enable easy implementations of pooled testing where you can test dozens of patient samples at the same time, and all with the same



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – November 2022

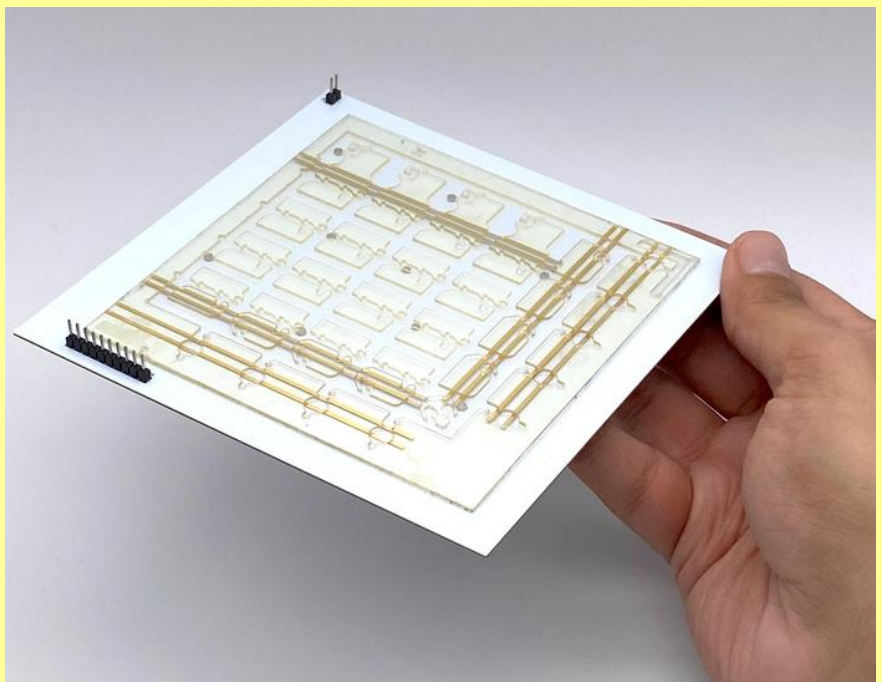
materials it currently takes to test just one patient,” said Di Carlo, who also holds UCLA’s Armond and Elena Hairapetian chair in engineering and medicine. “For example, you could test students in an entire college residence hall with just a few dozen test kits.”



a, The microfluidic chip for individual sample testing (scale bar, 5 mm). **b**, The timeline of the streamlined on-chip operations for automated individual testing, which includes active ferrobolic sample processing operations over a time window of 1.75 min. Heat lysis and the RT-LAMP reaction were performed at 95 °C and 65 °C, respectively. **c**, Sequential optical images of the active ferrobolic sample processing operations (performed automatically).

By designing the kit for pooled testing, the system requires much lower amounts of reagent chemicals than those needed for testing the samples individually. Up to 16 samples were combined and tested at once in the team’s study. If the pooled test showed a positive result, subsequent tests would automatically take place within the same platform until the actual positive samples were identified. This entire process took between 30 to 60 minutes, depending on whether there were positive samples. Thanks to the technology’s assay miniaturization and pooled-testing capabilities, the chemical reagent costs could be reduced by 10 to 300 times.

Aside from being able to test for several diseases simultaneously, the platform also offers precision and robust automation. For example, in a [pooled-testing with 16 samples](#), more than 300 lab operations, including mixing and sorting, were automated by the ferrobots—that is more than 3,000 individual movements, or actuations. In their reliability studies, the researchers showed that the ferrobots could perform more than eight million actuations without mistakes.



This Cancer Treatment Actually Works Better After COVID Vaccination

Source: <https://www.sciencealert.com/this-cancer-treatment-actually-works-better-after-covid-vaccination>

Nov 11 – Clinicians have been concerned that [COVID-19](#) vaccines would lessen the effectiveness of drugs used to treat nasopharyngeal [cancer](#), a type of cancer that affects the throat, but a new study shows the opposite: The COVID-19 vaccine actually helps with treatment.

[Nasopharyngeal cancer](#) is often treated with immunotherapy known as **anti-PD-1 therapy**, which blocks [PD-1 receptors](#) on the surface of immune cells whose job it is to hunt down invaders.

Blocking these receptors [frees immune cells to do their bidding](#), but cancer cells co-opt these receptors to effectively shut down the body's natural defense systems against tumors.

Since vaccination against COVID-19 stimulates the body's immune response via these same cell signaling pathways, scientists needed to know how COVID-19 vaccines might interact with this type of cancer treatment due to the similarities between the drugs. "It was feared that the vaccine would not be compatible with anti-PD-1 therapy," [says bioinformatics scientist Jian Li](#) from the University of Bonn in Germany.

"This risk is especially true for nasopharyngeal cancer, which, like the [SARS-CoV-2 virus](#), affects the upper respiratory tract."

The team analyzed the records of 1,537 patients being treated for nasopharyngeal cancer across 23 hospitals. Of that cohort, 373 individuals had been vaccinated with the [SinoVac COVID-19 vaccine](#) used in China before starting their cancer treatment.

"Surprisingly, they responded significantly better to anti-PD-1 therapy than the unvaccinated patients," [says Christian Kurts](#), an immunologist at the University of Bonn.

"Furthermore, they did not experience severe side effects more often."

For the time being, we don't know why this is happening; more research is required to assess the biological and chemical processes causing patients vaccinated with SinoVac to respond better to anti-PD-1 therapy.

"We assume that vaccination activates certain immune cells, which then attack the tumor," [says Qi Mei](#), a cancer researcher at Shanxi University Hospital in China. "We will now investigate this hypothesis further."

One benefit of the study is that patients from so many different Chinese hospitals were involved in it, so a variety of demographics and regions were covered. However, the data is only for one type of vaccine and one type of cancer.

While nasopharyngeal cancer is rare in countries such as the US and the UK, it's widespread in southeast Asian countries and southern China. Scientists think the frequent use of air conditioning and nutritional factors might play a role, and it has also been linked to the Epstein-Barr virus.

In Taiwan, the [disease is now one of the leading causes of death among young men](#), and the hope is that this link between improved treatment effectiveness and COVID-19 vaccination might help develop better ways of tackling the cancer.

"Future studies are warranted to elucidate underlying mechanisms," the researchers write in their [published paper](#).

"The association of COVID-19 vaccination with increased efficacy of anti-PD-1 therapy with chemotherapy in recurrent metastatic nasopharyngeal cancer is interesting but needs to be validated in a larger cohort study."

●► The research has been published in the [Annals of Oncology](#).

Europe approves GSK and Sanofi's next-gen COVID-19 booster vaccine VidPrevtyn Beta

Source: <https://www.drugdiscoverytrends.com/europe-approves-gsk-and-sanofis-next-gen-covid-19-booster-vaccine-vidprevtyn-beta/>

Nov 10 – The European Commission has approved the **VidPrevtyn Beta COVID-19 vaccine** as a booster for individuals who are at least 18. The vaccine is the first next-gen protein-based adjuvanted COVID-19 booster to win European approval.

[Sanofi](#) (Nasdaq:SNY) developed the vaccine based on the beta variant using [GSK's](#) (NYSE:GSK) pandemic adjuvant.

After announcing the news, Sanofi shares were up 1.45% to \$43.97 in early afternoon trading. GSK shares were up 2.42% to \$33.21. VidPrevtyn Beta is a monovalent, recombinant-protein vaccine developed by Sanofi, modeled on the Beta variant and including GSK's pandemic adjuvant. The vaccine uses recombinant-protein technology found in Sanofi's seasonal flu vaccines.

In July, GSK and Sanofi announced that their adjuvanted bivalent version of its vaccine was 72% efficacious against omicron in adults in a Phase 3 study.



GSK and Sanofi noted that the vaccine performed well in registrational trials when the omicron variant was predominant, including a Phase 3 primary efficacy study and two separate immunogenicity trials.

Sanofi tested VidPrevtyl Beta in two immunobridging trials to measure the immune response from the new vaccine relative to a previously approved vaccine.

In the COVIBOOST VAT013 study, the vaccine was administered to participants who had received two prior doses of Pfizer-BioNTech's Comirnaty vaccine (BNT162b2).

In that study, VidPrevtyl Beta was also pitted against BNT162b2 as a booster. VidPrevtyl Beta offered a superior performance against the omicron BA.1 variant one month after administration. VidPrevtyl Beta led to approximately 2.5 times more neutralizing antibodies against the BA.1 variant and in an exploratory analysis involving the BA.4/BA.5 sublineages of omicron.

VidPrevtyl Beta offers protection against multiple strains of COVID-19, according to Thomas Triomphe, executive vice president of Sanofi Vaccines.

"The approval from the European Commission is an important step in providing further vaccine solutions to Europe for the coming autumn and winter," said Phil Dormitzer, global head of vaccines R&D, GSK, in a news release.

The U.S. government contributed to the development of the vaccine through federal funds from Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA).

In 2021, Sanofi announced that it halted the development of an mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccine.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Tested in a small [number](#) of people – again! Sorry, I will pass! After announcing the news, Sanofi shares were up 1.45% to \$43.97 in early afternoon trading. GSK shares were up 2.42% to \$33.21. Good for them but not on my expense. Perhaps in 2025 we will have enough data to support a vaccine as we know it in the past – safe and effective.

Recommended modifications and applications of the Hospital Emergency Incident Command System for hospital emergency management

By Arnold JL, Dembry L, Tsai MC, et al.

Prehosp Disast Med 2005;20(5):290–300.

Source: https://www.academia.edu/21604009/Recommended_modifications_and_applications_of_the_Hospital_Emergency_Incident_Command_System_for_hospital_emergency_management



The Hospital Emergency Incident Command System (HEICS), now in its third edition, has emerged as a popular incident command system model for hospital emergency response in the United States and other countries. Since the inception of the HEICS in 1991, several events have transformed the requirements of hospital emergency management, including the 1995 Tokyo Subway sarin attack, the 2001 US anthrax letter attacks, and the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreaks in eastern Asia and Toronto, Canada.

Several modifications of the HEICS are suggested to match the needs of hospital emergency management today, including: (1) an Incident Consultant in the Administrative Section of the HEICS to provide expert advice directly to the Incident Commander in chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN) emergencies as needed, as well as consultation on mental health needs; (2) new unit leaders in the Operations Section to coordinate the management of contaminated or infectious patients in CBRN emergencies; (3) new unit leaders in the Operations Section to coordinate mental health support for patients, guests, healthcare workers, volunteers, and dependents in terrorism-related emergencies or events that produce significant mental health needs; (4) a new Decedent/Expectant Unit Leader in the Operations Section to coordinate the management of both types of patients together; and (5) a new Information Technology Unit Leader in the Logistics Section to coordinate the management of information technology and systems. New uses of the HEICS in hospital emergency management also are recommended, including: (1) the adoption of the HEICS as the conceptual framework for organizing all phases of hospital emergency management, including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery; and (2) the application of the HEICS not only to healthcare facilities, but also to healthcare systems. Finally, three levels of healthcare worker competencies in the HEICS are suggested: (1) basic understanding of the HEICS for all hospital healthcare workers; (2) advanced understanding and proficiency in the HEICS for hospital healthcare workers likely to assume leadership roles in hospital emergency response; and (3) special proficiency in constituting the HEICS ad hoc from existing healthcare workers in resource-deficient settings. The HEICS should be viewed as a work in progress that will mature as additional challenges arise and as hospitals gain further experience with its use.



The World is Unprepared for the Unthinkable

By Brian McCloskey, Jennifer B. Nuzzo, and David Heymann

Source: <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/world-unprepared-unthinkable>

Oct 20 – As Russia continues to attack Ukraine this week, targeting civilian locations in Kyiv using drones, the risk of deployment of a biological attack—the deliberate use of an infectious agent to cause harm—is an increasing concern in Ukraine, and throughout Europe and North America. It also adds to the existing threat of the use of nuclear weapons.

If a biological attack were suspected, it would require a rapid public health response and if investigation suggested it was not a naturally occurring outbreak, a forensic investigation would be required to determine its source. While mechanisms for investigating a possible chemical or nuclear attack largely exist, there is no comparable mechanism for biological agents. Failing to establish clear processes to investigate and determine blame for a biological attack may inadvertently encourage the use of these weapons. The world makes clear: no one gets to use a biological weapon and gets away with it.

International law clearly forbids the use of biological weapons

A biological attack in Ukraine or anywhere would have profound and far-reaching political, military, and health consequences. The immediate impact would be to exacerbate the already profound human suffering that is occurring in the country and it would place further strain on already struggling health systems. Depending on the pathogen used, a biological attack could present risks beyond Ukraine. Unlike other weapons, biological agents have the potential to spread widely. Neighboring countries could be at immediate risk, but, as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has shown, diseases can travel widely around the globe before they are noticed.

International law clearly forbids the use of biological weapons. The Geneva Protocol adopted in 1925 prohibits the use of chemical and biological weapons during war. Later, the Biological Weapons and Toxins Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) extended the prohibition against biological and chemical weapons to also include their development, production, stockpiling, and transfer. While legal prohibitions of the use of biological weapons are clear, it is less certain what countries and the United Nations (UN) should do if a violation is suspected.

In 1987, the UN General Assembly established the Secretary General's Mechanism (UNSGM) to investigate allegations of the possible use of chemical or biological weapons. To support the UNSGM, countries nominate experts to a roster of potential investigators for possible chemical and biological attacks, and the UNSGM calls upon these experts as needed.

The only time the UNSGM has been activated was for a chemical event in Syria in 2013. In that instance, the UN Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the implementing arm of the Chemical Weapons Convention, led the UNSGM's investigation with support from international experts on the UNSGM roster, and from the World Health Organization (WHO). If a suspected chemical attack were to occur again, the OPCW would once again lead an investigation.

Unlike the CWC, the BWC has no equivalent implementing arm and there is no clear understanding of where leadership for an investigation would sit. Negotiations on the implementation of the BWC have been stalled for over 20 years because of disagreements among countries. Some experts on the UNSGM roster to investigate a possible biological attack come from national public health agencies, but if there were a biological attack in Ukraine, experts on the roster could be considered politically biased and unacceptable by other countries. At the same time, if WHO were called upon to participate in the investigation, its independence and neutrality might also be questioned, as has occurred (rightly or wrongly) during investigation of the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic. Deliberately caused chemical events may spread locally, but in general, their impact is limited geographically around the original source. Conversely, biological events, whether deliberately caused or naturally occurring, have the potential to spread widely beyond the original source. COVID-19 and the H1N1 influenza virus strain are the most recent examples of widely spread, naturally occurring infectious agents. The deliberate release of an engineered biological agent has the same potential to spread widely across the globe. COVID-19 also showed that global collaboration and cooperation is more difficult in the face of individual national security considerations.

Overcoming the gap created by the lack of an implementing arm of the BWC requires advanced planning and effort. The following steps will be necessary should a biological attack be suspected:

- confirm what pathogen is responsible for observed outbreak
- implement measures to manage and contain the spread of the outbreak to save lives and prevent spread to other countries
- identify the source of the outbreak and determine whether it is naturally occurring, accidentally released from a legitimate laboratory, or deliberately released in an attack
- examine forensic evidence and intelligence to determine attribution to establish blame if deliberately caused



The first three steps are similar to the routine public health response to outbreaks by national public health agencies, coordinated internationally by WHO. An important question is whether experts from the UNSGM roster and WHO have the capacity and resources to commit to these otherwise routine steps. The lagging interest in responding to COVID-19 does not bode well for marshalling resources for another biological emergency—especially one that is engineered and intended—or for the difficulty addressing the challenge of a surge of disinformation such as the disinformation related to vaccines.

It would be extremely challenging to determine a biological attack in Ukraine is deliberate in the current political environment. The public health and medical response to a suspected biological attack may be hindered by the absence of a standard protocol to determine whether an infectious disease event was natural, accidental, or deliberate. The global community needs to develop agreements and protocols for responding to a health emergency that is suspected of being a deliberate attack. This will ensure that medical and public health organizations can respond quickly and work to save lives and prevent the pathogen from spreading. These actors will need to work with security agencies who will be trying to gather information related to the possible deliberate origins of the event. If the investigation determines the event is deliberate, establishing blame would require authority and credibility, as attribution is a legal process with implications and consequences under international law. In the current political environment, and in the absence of any pre-existing organizational infrastructure or forensic and legal protocols, this step would be extremely challenging should a biological attack be suspected in Ukraine or in another country.

The challenges outlined above need to be debated and considered within the international community now so that, should there be a biological attack, a rapid and effective investigation that will save lives and minimize spread nationally and internationally will occur. Even the allegation that a biological attack has occurred could generate fears that further stress health systems and it may prompt national leaders to take actions that do more harm than good. Failing to address this challenge now is a lost opportunity.

Brian McCloskey is a senior consulting fellow in the Global Health Programme at Chatham House.

Jennifer Nuzzo is a senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR).

David Heymann is a distinguished fellow in the Global Health Programme at Chatham House, and a professor of infectious disease epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: It seems that the chemical and nuclear weapons propaganda did not work as expected so the next step would be BWA threats and fear. Not impossible to happen, cheaper and easier to produce than CWAs and nukes. All advanced nations worldwide can produce biological weapons and accidents can happen in all biosafety labs. So, focusing on Russia the moment US labs in Ukraine are still under investigation, is not a bright idea. Besides, weapons of mass disruption and distraction are delivered via covert operations to avoid retaliation. It would be great when scientists, experts, and academicians write articles and papers to be as objective as possible not to lose face.

Cruise ship with 800 Covid cases docks in Sydney after touring NZ

Source: <https://www.1news.co.nz/2022/11/12/cruise-ship-with-800-covid-cases-docks-in-sydney-after-touring-nz/>

Nov 12 – A cruise ship carrying an estimated 800 Covid-19 cases has docked in Sydney after finishing a two-week tour of New Zealand.

The **Majestic Princess cruise liner** docked in Sydney this morning with hundreds infected after departing from the same port two weeks ago, [Nine News reports](#).

The ship had just finished a 12-day tour of New Zealand - having dropped anchor in ports around Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, Bay of Islands, and Fiordland National Park.

In a joint statement, the Ministry of Health and Te Whatu Ora told 1News that health officials were aware of cases onboard when the ship visited Auckland on Tuesday.

"The last port visited in New Zealand was Auckland on 8 November when 180 cases on board were reported before the ship departed for Australia," it said.

The operator of the ship, Princess Cruises, said that the number of cases was "reflective of the increase in community transmission" in Australia.

"We too have seen more guests test positive for Covid-19 on the current voyage of Majestic Princess," the company said in a [statement](#).

"These guests are mildly symptomatic or asymptomatic and are isolating in their staterooms."





In their statement, Kiwi health authorities reiterated the requirement for cases onboard cruise ships to isolate if they test positive for Covid-19. "While in New Zealand Covid cases on the ship were managed on-board by the ship's medical team and the situation was monitored on shore by local public health staff. "There has been considerable consultation between the National Public Health Service and the cruise companies ahead of this cruise season to ensure that cruise liners are well prepared and have robust protocols in place for managing Covid-19 and minimising any public health risk to the local community."

It added there was a legal requirement for captains to show "they are taking the necessary isolation and quarantine action including keeping anyone who is sick or who has tested positive for Covid-19 in isolation."

Covid risks posed by cruise liners

Several cruise liners have reported Covid-19 outbreaks onboard since ships were allowed to tour the country again after border restrictions were lifted.

Two weeks ago, Covid Response Minister Ayesha Verrall responded to 130 cases reported on another cruise liner that was one of the first to visit New Zealand. "There is going to be a risk that we have to accept while we have our borders open - both air travel, cruise ships, the works," [she told RNZ](#).

In late October, Verrall reiterated that New Zealand had a highly vaccinated population alongside its open border. She also stated that health officials had plans tackling cruise ships with "high numbers of Covid cases on board".

"The process for the management of cruise ships has been worked over thoroughly between health officials, and I think they've come up with a process that can be implemented and is alert to when there are high numbers of Covid cases on board."

At the time, Otago University epidemiologist Michael Baker said cruise ships were an environment that had a heightened risk of transmission.

"Even prior to Covid-19, cruise ships were notorious for outbreaks of infectious disease," he told the [Science Media Centre in October](#).

"Much of this heightened risk is from having thousands of people spending days at a time living in a densely packed confined environment with many shared facilities where gastroenteritis and respiratory infections can spread easily.

"The generally older demographic of cruise ship passengers makes them more vulnerable to infection and becoming seriously ill."

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Cruise companies care for profit. Passengers care for pleasure. Governors pass the message that the pandemic is over or almost over. Let's see who would be the lucky ones to enjoy money and pleasure now and in the near future.



A Canadian study on vaccine cardio-side effects

Source: https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2022/11/07/myocarditis-COVID-mRNA-vaccines-study/1131667835861/

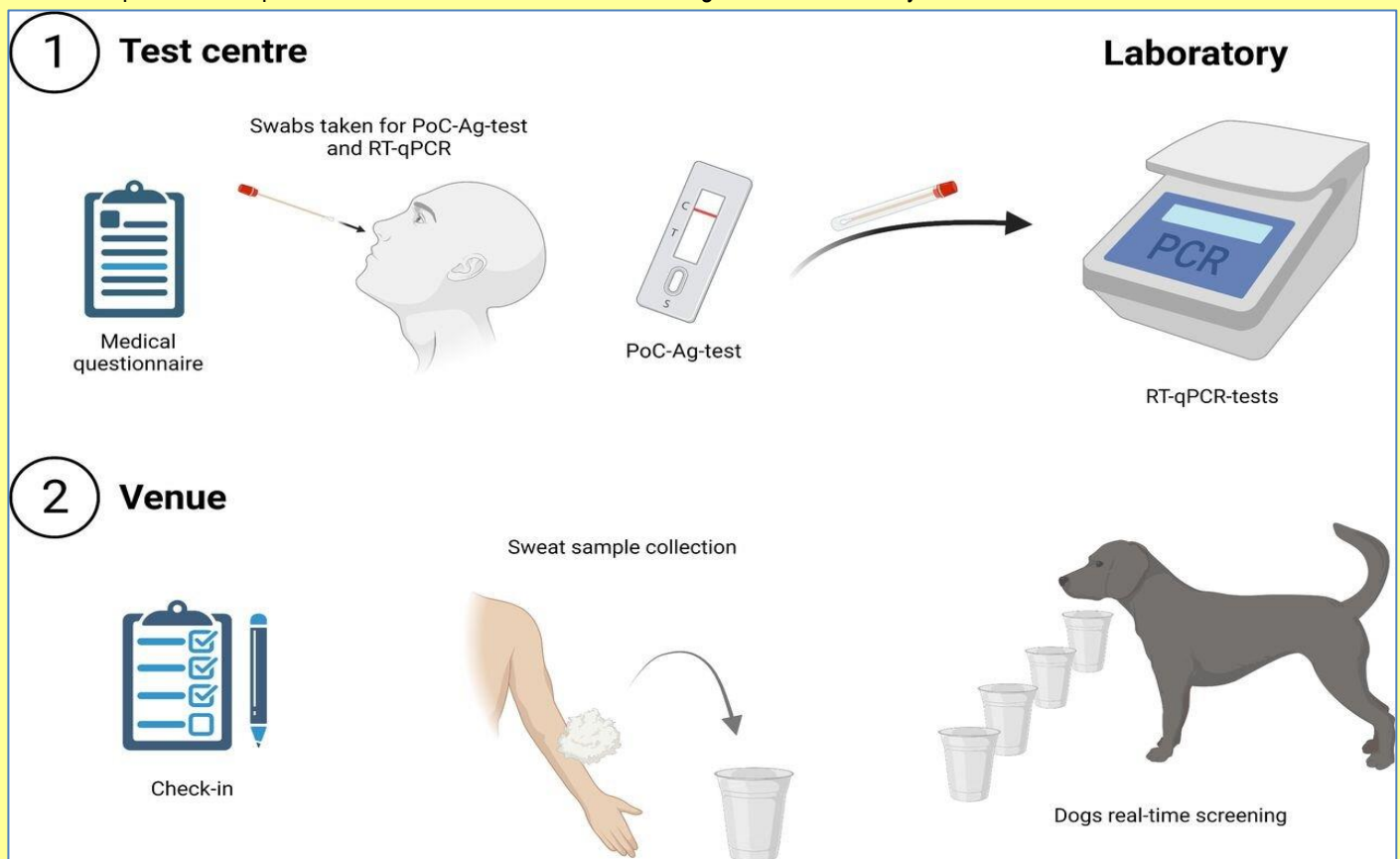
Nov 07 – Overall, more than 2.2 million second Pfizer doses were given and more than 870,000 Moderna doses. Within 21 days of the second dose, there were a total of 59 myocarditis cases, 21 after Pfizer and 31 after Moderna; and there were a total of 41 pericarditis cases: 21 after Pfizer and 20 after Moderna. Researchers analyzed rates per million doses and the rate was 35.6 cases per million for Moderna and 12.6 cases per million for Pfizer, almost threefold higher.

Rates of myocarditis and pericarditis were higher with the Moderna vaccine in both males and females between the ages of 18 and 39, with the highest per million rates in males ages 18-29 after a second dose of Moderna.

COVID sniffer dogs' real-life feasibility study is successful

By Sonja von Brethorst (Stiftung Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover)

Source: <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-11-covid-sniffer-dogs-real-life-feasibility.html>



Schematic representation for test procedure (created with BioRender.com). PoC, point of care. (Credit: *BMJ Global Health* (2022). DOI: 10.1136/bmjgh-2022-010276)

Nov 11 – Research led by University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover (TiHo), in cooperation with Hannover Medical School (MHH), Robert Koch Institute, Hannover Concerts, ProEvent Hannover and AWiAS Aviation Services GmbH, examined whether trained corona detection dogs can be used in everyday life. For the first of its kind study, the project team held four concerts at the end of 2021, at which the medical detection dogs sniffed sweat samples from all visitors at the entrance to detect SARS-CoV-2 infections. The research team published their results today in the *BMJ Global Health*. The Lower Saxony Ministry for Science and Culture supported the study. "I am delighted with the success of the 'Back to Culture' feasibility study," said Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture, Falko Mohrs. "It shows that using dogs can be an option for infection control. This study is a further proof of Lower Saxony's creativity and innovative strength." The overall rate of concordant results was almost 100%. Eight dogs had been trained in advance to recognize



SARS-CoV-2-positive samples by smell. To evaluate how well the corona detection dogs' performance of screening people for SARS-CoV-2 works in an everyday situation, the project team organized four concerts with Fury in the Slaughterhouse, Bosse, Alle Farben and Sido. A total of 2,802 participants came to the four events. They all provided sweat samples, which were presented to the dogs in a line-up scenario where the visitors had no direct contact with the dogs. In addition, all participants had been tested with a SARS-CoV-2-specific rapid antigen test and an RT-qPCR before the respective concert. They also provided information on age, gender, [vaccination status](#) and their medical history.

The SARS-CoV-2 detection dogs achieved a diagnostic specificity of 99.93% (detection of negative samples) and a sensitivity of 81.58% (detection of positive samples). The overall agreement rate was 99.68%. The majority of the participants had been vaccinated with different vaccines and vaccination schedules, several visitors suffered from [chronic illnesses](#) and were treated with chronic medication. This did not affect the decisions and working behavior of the dogs.

Professor Holger Volk, head of the TiHo's small animal clinic, said, "Our results show that SARS-CoV-2 detection dogs can achieve high diagnostic accuracy in a real-world scenario. Vaccination status, previous SARS-CoV-2 infection, [chronic illness](#) and medication of the participants had no impact on the dogs' ability to detect an acute infection. The study also demonstrates how corona detection dogs can be used in [everyday life](#)."

The project 'Back to Culture'

As early as July 2020, a research team from the Clinic for Small Animals had shown in a [pilot study](#) that dogs, with their exceptional sense of smell, are able to distinguish between samples from SARS-CoV-2-infected and healthy people under laboratory conditions with around 94% certainty. A follow-up study showed that sweat and urine are also suitable sample materials.

The aim of the joint project 'Back to Culture' was to examine how and whether major events can be made safer by using corona detection dogs. The study results also provide a statement as to whether corona detection dogs could also be used in other everyday situations.

Canine real-time detection of SARS-CoV-2 infections in the context of a mass screening event

By Nele Alexandra ten Hagen, Friederike Twele, Sebastian Meller, et al.

BMJ Global Health | 2022;7:e010276

Source: <https://gh.bmj.com/content/7/11/e010276>

Abstract

Introduction Previous research demonstrated that medical scent detection dogs have the ability to distinguish SARS-CoV-2 positive from negative samples with high diagnostic accuracy. To deploy these dogs as a reliable screening method, it is mandatory to examine if canines maintain their high diagnostic accuracy in real-life screening settings. We conducted a study to evaluate the performance of medical scent detection dogs under real-life circumstances.

Methods Eight dogs were trained to detect SARS-CoV-2 RT-qPCR-positive samples. Four concerts with a total of 2802 participants were held to evaluate canines' performance in screening individuals for SARS-CoV-2 infection. Sweat samples were taken from all participants and presented in a line-up setting. In addition, every participant had been tested with a SARS-CoV-2 specific rapid antigen test and a RT-qPCR and they provided information regarding age, sex, vaccination status and medical disease history. The participants' infection status was unknown at the time of canine testing. Safety measures such as mask wearing and distance keeping were ensured.

Results The SARS-CoV-2 detection dogs achieved a diagnostic specificity of 99.93% (95% CI 99.74% to 99.99%) and a sensitivity of 81.58% (95% CI 66.58% to 90.78%), respectively. The overall rate of concordant results was 99.68%. The majority of the study population was vaccinated with varying vaccines and vaccination schemes, while several participants had chronic diseases and were under chronic medication. This did not influence dogs' decisions.

Conclusion Our results demonstrate that SARS-CoV-2 scent detection dogs achieved high diagnostic accuracy in a real-life scenario. The vaccination status, previous SARS-CoV-2 infection, chronic disease and medication of the participants did not influence the performance of the dogs in detecting the acute infection. This indicates that dogs provide a fast and reliable screening option for public events in which high-throughput screening is required.

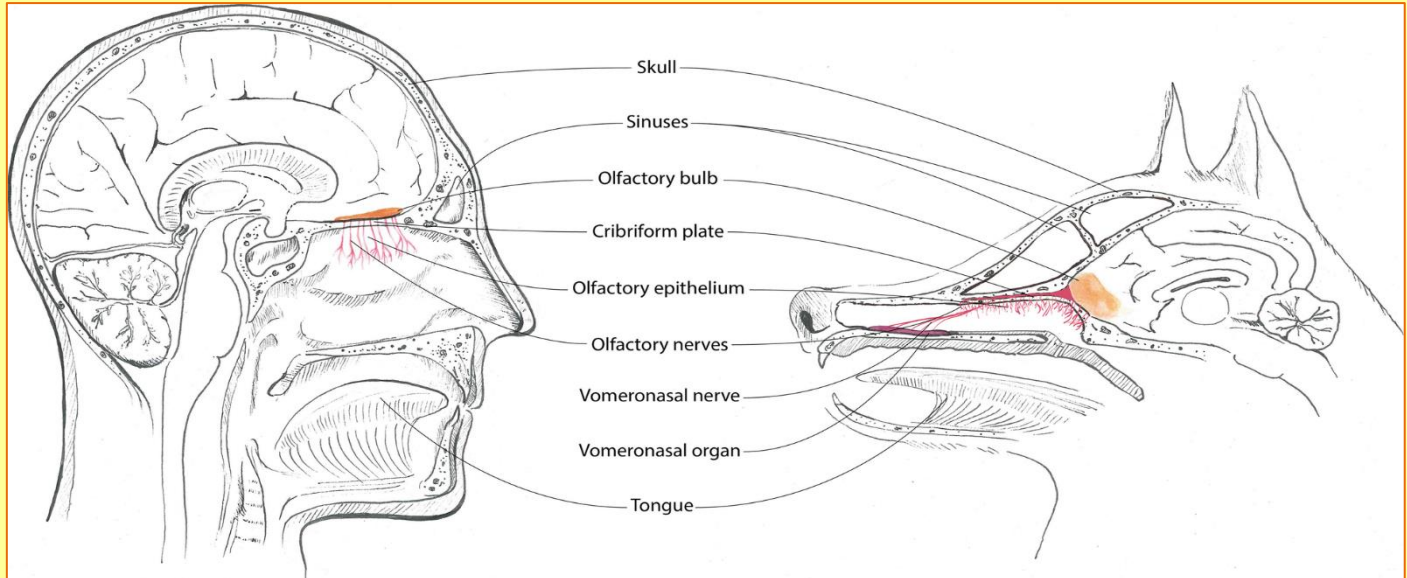


Canine olfactory detection and its relevance to medical detection

By Paula Jendry, Friederike Twele, Sebastian Meller, et al.

BMC Infectious Diseases / Volume 21, Article number: 838 (2021)

Source: <https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-021-06523-8>

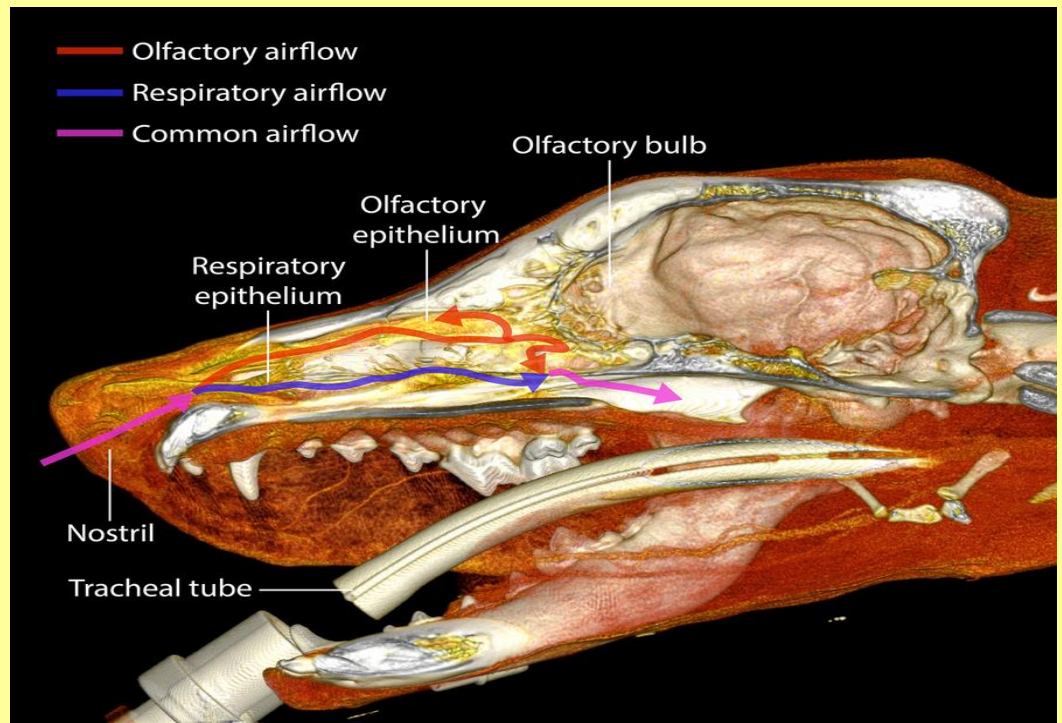


Schematic structure of the olfactory system in dogs and humans

Abstract

The extraordinary olfactory sense of canines combined with the possibility to learn by operant conditioning enables dogs for their use in medical detection in a wide range of applications. Research on the ability of medical detection dogs for the identification of individuals with infectious or non-infectious diseases has been promising but compared to the well-established and-accepted use of sniffer dogs by the police, army and customs for substances such as money, explosives or drugs, the deployment of medical detection dogs is still in its infancy.

Three-dimensional computed tomographic reconstruction of a canine skull. The arrows represent the airways, with the pink arrow showing the common airflow and the red and blue arrows showing the olfactory and respiratory airflow, respectively. The nostrils, the olfactory and respiratory epithelium as well as the olfactory bulb, and the tracheal tube are labeled. During inhalation the air flows from the nares and the nasal vestibule to the maxilloturbinate, then into the ethmoturbinate and the paranasal sinuses towards the pharynx. There is a major difference between breathing and sniffing in dogs. While breathing, most of the inspired air flows through the nasopharynx into the lungs but only a small percentage (12–



12–15%) of the inspired air flows through the olfactory epithelium into the olfactory bulb. During sniffing, the air flows through the nasal vestibule to the maxilloturbinate, then into the ethmoturbinate and the paranasal sinuses towards the pharynx. There is a major difference between breathing and sniffing in dogs. While breathing, most of the inspired air flows through the nasopharynx into the lungs but only a small percentage (12–



13%) reaches the olfactory areas. The sniffing process generates external (outside the nostrils) and internal (within the nasal cavity) fluid dynamics. The ambient air is inhaled from the front and exhaled to the side for efficient odorant sampling, whereas each nostril samples separately. A sniff is the first critical step of the olfactory process with the function of generating unique unidirectional laminar airflow patterns to transport environmental odorants into the nasal cavity to the olfactory epithelium. Furthermore, sniffing increases odour sensitivity and affects the intensity of odorants.

There are several factors to be considered for standardisation prior to deployment of canine scent detection dogs. Individual odours in disease consist of different volatile organic molecules that differ in magnitude, volatility and concentration. Olfaction can be influenced by various parameters like genetics, environmental conditions, age, hydration, nutrition, microbiome, conditioning, training, management factors, diseases and pharmaceuticals. This review discusses current knowledge on the function and importance of canines' olfaction and evaluates its limitations and the potential role of the dog as a biomedical detector for infectious and non-infectious diseases.

COVID-19 and Cancer May Have Common Drug Target in GRP78

The chaperone protein GRP78 is known to play an essential role in the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Now, a new study suggests that blocking the production of GRP78, or inhibiting its activity with a new targeted drug, greatly reduced the replication of SARS-CoV-2. This suggests that this drug could potentially offer a new type of protection against COVID-19, one that might remain effective even as new strains develop. **+ MORE**

How a deliberate pandemic could crush societies and what to do about it

By Kevin Esvelt



Nov 11 – Pandemics can begin in many ways. A wild animal could infect a hunter, or a farm animal might spread a pathogen to a market worker. Researchers in a lab or in the field could be exposed to viruses and unwittingly pass them to others. Natural spillovers and accidents have been responsible for every historical plague, each of which spread from a single individual to afflict much of humanity. But the devastation from past outbreaks pales in comparison to the catastrophic harm that could be inflicted by malicious individuals intent on causing new pandemics.



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Thousands of people can now assemble infectious viruses from a genome sequence and commercially available synthetic DNA, and numerous projects aim to [find](#) and [publicly](#) identify new viruses that could cause pandemics by [characterizing](#) their growth, transmission, and immune evasion capabilities in the laboratory. Once these projects succeed, the world will face a significant new threat: If a single terrorist with the necessary skills were to release a new virus equivalent to SARS-CoV-2, which has [claimed 20 million](#) lives worldwide, that person would have [killed more people](#) than if they were to detonate a nuclear warhead in a dense city. If they were to release numerous such viruses across multiple travel hubs, the resulting pandemics could not plausibly be contained, and would spread much faster than even the most rapidly produced biomedical countermeasures. And if one of those viruses spread as easily as the omicron variant—which rapidly infected millions of people within weeks of being identified—but had the lethality of smallpox, which killed about [30 percent](#) of those infected, the subsequent loss of essential workers could trigger the collapse of food, water, and power distribution networks—and with them, societies.

To avoid this future, societies need to rethink how they can delay pandemic proliferation, detect all exponentially growing biological threats, and defend humanity by preventing infections. A comprehensive set of directions detailing how we can build a world free from catastrophic biological threats is required. That [roadmap](#) now exists.

The threat

Each year, universities and labs around the world train more people in laboratory skills important for biomedical research and the bioeconomy, but many of those same skills can also be used to assemble viruses. Judging from [records](#) of doctoral degrees awarded in different fields that acquire the relevant skills, at least 30,000 individuals can successfully follow public step-by-step [protocols](#) to obtain any influenza virus with a published genome sequence from commercially available synthetic DNA. Coronaviruses and paramyxoviruses such as MERS and measles require synthetic genes to be [assembled](#) into larger genomes, likely cutting the number of people with the requisite skills and resources to the single-digit thousands. Only one or two hundred are likely capable of [assembling](#) huge poxviruses such as variola, the causative agent of smallpox.

While it's unlikely that any of the people capable of acquiring infectious samples will decide to unleash a pandemic in a given year, history strongly suggests that someone eventually will. In the 50 years since the [dawn of recombinant DNA](#), at least one murderer possessed a background that today would confer the necessary skills: the [cult member](#) and virologist Seichi Endo, who sought to obtain the Ebola virus and later helped commit mass murder against civilians using chemical weapons. His existence alone suggests that we should expect to see one deliberate pandemic event every 50 years. Other terrorists and mass murderers who may have received a relevant education or could plausibly have acquired the necessary training include [multiple al Qaeda](#) operatives, a [neuroscience](#) graduate student who opened fire in a crowded theater, and the Unabomber, a brilliant Berkeley mathematics professor who [wrote](#) of the “immense power of biotechnology” and sought to bring down industrial civilization.

What these historical murderers lacked, and we still do not yet know, is which specific viruses are likely to cause new pandemics. The genomes for virtually all known human pathogens are freely available online, but the variola smallpox, which causes smallpox, is the sole disease that almost certainly would spread if released. Fortunately, it is also one of the least accessible viruses, and one that societies have successfully controlled and eradicated using already-stockpiled vaccines. Other frequently-cited agents include the 1918 influenza virus, MERS-CoV, and Nipah virus, but any terrorist who attempts to cause global catastrophe by unleashing one of these is likely to fail. [MERS-CoV](#) and [Nipah](#) have spilled over on numerous occasions and failed to spread indefinitely, suggesting that they are not currently pandemic-capable. Viruses such as 1918 H1N1 influenza would face preexisting population-level immunity because most people have recently been exposed to related strains that share at least one surface marker. But as soon as anyone credibly identifies novel viruses that are likely capable of igniting new pandemics and adds them to a [public list](#) of the greatest threats—the goal of many well-meaning [nonprofits](#) and [government agencies](#)—the number of individuals capable of single-handedly causing more than a million deaths will grow dramatically.

For maximum effect, a nefarious person or group probably wouldn't release a pathogen in just one place. The best public health systems in the world—even with draconian lockdowns—couldn't reliably stop a pandemic virus released in multiple travel hubs. Though COVID vaccines were produced in record time, even the [100 Days Mission](#) vaccine moonshot wouldn't match the speed of a future omicron, which spread from a single region in Africa to infect a [quarter](#) of Americans within 100 days of being identified. Since a pathogen released in multiple travel hubs would spread much faster, even rapidly produced biomedical countermeasures would arrive too slowly. And if a virus is sufficiently contagious and lethal, workers with inadequate protection may reasonably decline to risk their lives, causing food and power distribution networks to collapse—and with them, societies.

The roadmap to defense

On the surface, our prospects for indefinitely avoiding a deliberate release scenario appear bleak. But there is a silver lining. Public officials have long taken national defense issues far more seriously than



public health, and our current vulnerability to malicious biology is an eminently solvable problem when paired with the resources of an organization like the Pentagon.

The first step is to delay pandemic proliferation for long enough to build adequate defenses. That starts with avoiding the handful of laboratory experiments that can assess pandemic capability, none of which is required to develop countermeasures. Unfortunately, this is not the direction that well-meaning US health and development agencies are moving in. The US National Institutes of Health (NIH) [funds controversial](#) efforts to learn which mutations could render highly lethal but poorly transmitted zoonotic viruses capable of causing a pandemic, while the US Agency for International Development (USAID)—which deserves tremendous credit for recognizing the importance of pandemic prevention long before COVID-19—aims to learn which animal viruses that haven't yet spilled over could cause a pandemic if they did. Its [DEEP VZN](#) program doesn't just aim to discover and sequence new animal viruses, which is a comparatively low-risk endeavor that can help develop broad-spectrum vaccines and antivirals, but also to characterize them in the laboratory to assess pandemic capability and add the winners to a public [list](#), rank-ordered by perceived threat level. Because these agencies [require](#) their researchers to share complete viral genome sequences, any successful pandemic virus identification effort will lead to widespread access.

But health and development agencies are not the only ones interested. The international community has successfully kept nuclear weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists for 77 years. Once fully cognizant of how many people could obtain infectious samples of any identified pandemic viruses, security agencies, state departments, and legislators may step in. For example, defense agencies could request external security reviews of pandemic-related research, while state departments could push for a new pandemic test-ban treaty that would narrowly prohibit the handful of experiments capable of substantially increasing our confidence that any given virus will cause a pandemic.

Congress could address catastrophic risks by clarifying that individuals and institutions will be held liable for direct and indirect actions leading to any catastrophe causing more than a million American deaths—including sharing blueprints later used by terrorists—and requiring insurance to cover at least part of this liability. There is precedent: While [capped](#) by the Price-Anderson Act, nuclear power plant operators are already liable for the consequences of terrorist sabotage. Catastrophe liability and insurance can ensure that low-probability, high-consequence risks are factored into decision-making, allowing formal insurer risk assessments to shift costs from taxpayers to those who would perform or fund the research. Any project posing so much catastrophic risk that funders are unwilling to cover the extra insurance premiums should not proceed.

Another way to delay a deliberate release scenario is to ensure that only legitimate researchers can access synthetic DNA permitting catastrophic misuse. Hundreds of companies sell synthetic genes, reagents that increasingly power the bioeconomy, but [many](#) smaller providers do not screen orders for hazardous sequences that could be readily misused. This is primarily due to the substantial cost of hiring expert humans to scrutinize the false alarms generated by current similarity search algorithms. Newly [precise](#) exact match screening methods that choose random critical fragments of hazardous sequences, predict functional variants, and remove any that match harmless genomes can fully automate screening while making it extremely difficult for adversaries to evade. Crucially, these methods employ [oblivious cryptography](#), which screens orders without disclosing what is ordered or considered hazardous, in order to protect trade secrets and control information that could be used by terrorists. Secure screening can also be built into next-generation “benchtop” synthesis and assembly machines that many expect future laboratories will use to make their own DNA, thereby ensuring that every synthesis company and local device will refuse to produce the genomes of new pandemic agents without authorization. The [Secure DNA](#) Project intends to make screening freely available in 2023, which may reduce unauthorized access by up to a hundredfold.

Eventually, these delaying tactics will fail. When they do, reliable detection and defensive systems must be capable of fending off the worst-case scenarios—especially those that could otherwise cause civilizational collapse. The first collapse scenario has already been described: a highly lethal and contagious pandemic could disrupt essential services, leading to inadequate food, water, power, and law enforcement.

The second scenario is more subtle, and arises from viruses that can spread without causing any clinical symptoms. Consider HIV, which can remain contagious for years before causing rapid decline and death in untreated individuals. A faster-spreading pathogen that causes a disease characterized by a long asymptomatic period could spread quickly enough to infect most of the world before anyone starts showing symptoms. Without a swiftly developed cure, nations may not be able to recover.

The solution to subtle biological threats is a detection system tuned to [recognize](#) the universal signature of all pandemic agents: their ability to spread exponentially. Untargeted metagenomic sequencing can flag all such exponentially growing sequence fragments for close analysis. Once a pathogen is identified as harmful, the extent of its spread can be monitored using targeted wastewater sequencing and rapid nucleic acid diagnostics. Ideally, defense agencies, public health systems, and philanthropies will all build and operate such detection systems in order to provide the world with as much early warning as possible.



Once a threat has been recognized, the challenge is to halt infections, especially in the essential workers who would need to continue to distribute food, water, power, law enforcement, and health care during a catastrophic pandemic. They are likely to judge N95s, which offer at best 95 percent protection, to be inadequate in a high-lethality scenario. That makes defense against the overt threat straightforward: Create comfortable personal protective equipment (PPE), demonstrate that it reliably prevents untrained users from being infected with the most contagious pathogens known without requiring fit-testing, and arrange for delivery to all essential workers within days of a new pandemic, thereby preventing the worst-case scenario. For example, a powered respirator protects all mucus membranes from exposure by combining a transparent helmet with an air pump that delivers sterile air. Crucially, it can be worn by untrained users without fit-testing. Even at \$250 per unit, protecting 40 million essential workers in the United States would cost \$10 billion—a pittance when compared to investments in nuclear security, especially since this intervention would directly solve the problem.

But perhaps the most promising defense is passive.

Wavelengths of light below 230 nanometers are strongly absorbed by proteins and do not appear to penetrate the surfaces of human skin and eyes. That makes “low-wave” or “far-UVC” light hundreds of times safer than slightly higher wavelengths, yet still germicidal to single-celled pathogens and viruses. At the current levels [approved](#) by the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists, overhead fixtures emitting 222 nanometer light can [eliminate](#) 90 percent of airborne pathogens each minute – significantly better than aircraft ventilation systems that filter one volume of air every three minutes – while also cleansing surfaces. And [preliminary studies](#) suggest that it might even be safe at levels that would inactivate 90 percent of viruses within one second, which is fast enough to inactivate airborne viruses emitted from one person’s mouth before they spread to a conversation partner. If safety and efficacy can be confirmed to the world’s satisfaction—and especially if we can develop efficient and inexpensive low-wave LED lights—ubiquitous installation wouldn’t just block transmission of measles, the most contagious known pathogen. It would locally eliminate virtually every other respiratory and contact-transmitted infectious disease, from the common cold to influenza. The resulting productivity gains could pay for installation many times over, suggesting a market-based path to improved public health.

All of these threat-agnostic detection and defensive systems are clearly within the purview of defense agencies, which traditionally excel in physical technologies and engineering. In contrast, the traditional vaccines and antivirals relied upon by health agencies would take too long to produce and distribute in the event of a deliberate high-lethality pandemic. Drawing on lessons from cybersecurity, we can also expect biomedical countermeasures to be less reliable because they allow adversarial agents to infect critical systems—in this case the human body. Still, when the threat is catastrophic, it’s wise to invest in layered defenses, especially when we are uncertain of the exact form of future attacks, which is why vaccines will still be a vital part of our defensive portfolio, especially if broad-spectrum or rapidly manufactured on-site. It’s encouraging that the recently released [US National Biodefense Strategy](#) doesn’t just articulate the need for faster vaccines, but also includes many elements of the roadmap that I developed with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. The world needs them all, and haste is paramount.

Blueprints for newly identified pandemic agents could be posted at any time. The pace of recent advances in biotechnology, including self-spreading constructs such as [CRISPR-based gene drive systems](#), suggests that it would be foolish to bet against the development of new and unanticipated pandemic-class agents. The task for society is to assume that pandemic proliferation is coming, to delay its onset for as long as possible, to build systems capable of detecting all catastrophic threats, and to prepare comprehensive defenses against deliberate attacks by competent adversaries.

[Kevin Esvelt](#) is an associate professor of media arts and sciences at MIT. As director of the Sculpting Evolution group, Esvelt leads efforts to invent new ways to study and influence ecosystem evolution.

IL-26 Potential Biomarker for Acute COVID-19

Source: <https://www.insideprecisionmedicine.com/topics/patient-care/coronavirus/il-26-potential-biomarker-for-acute-covid-19/>

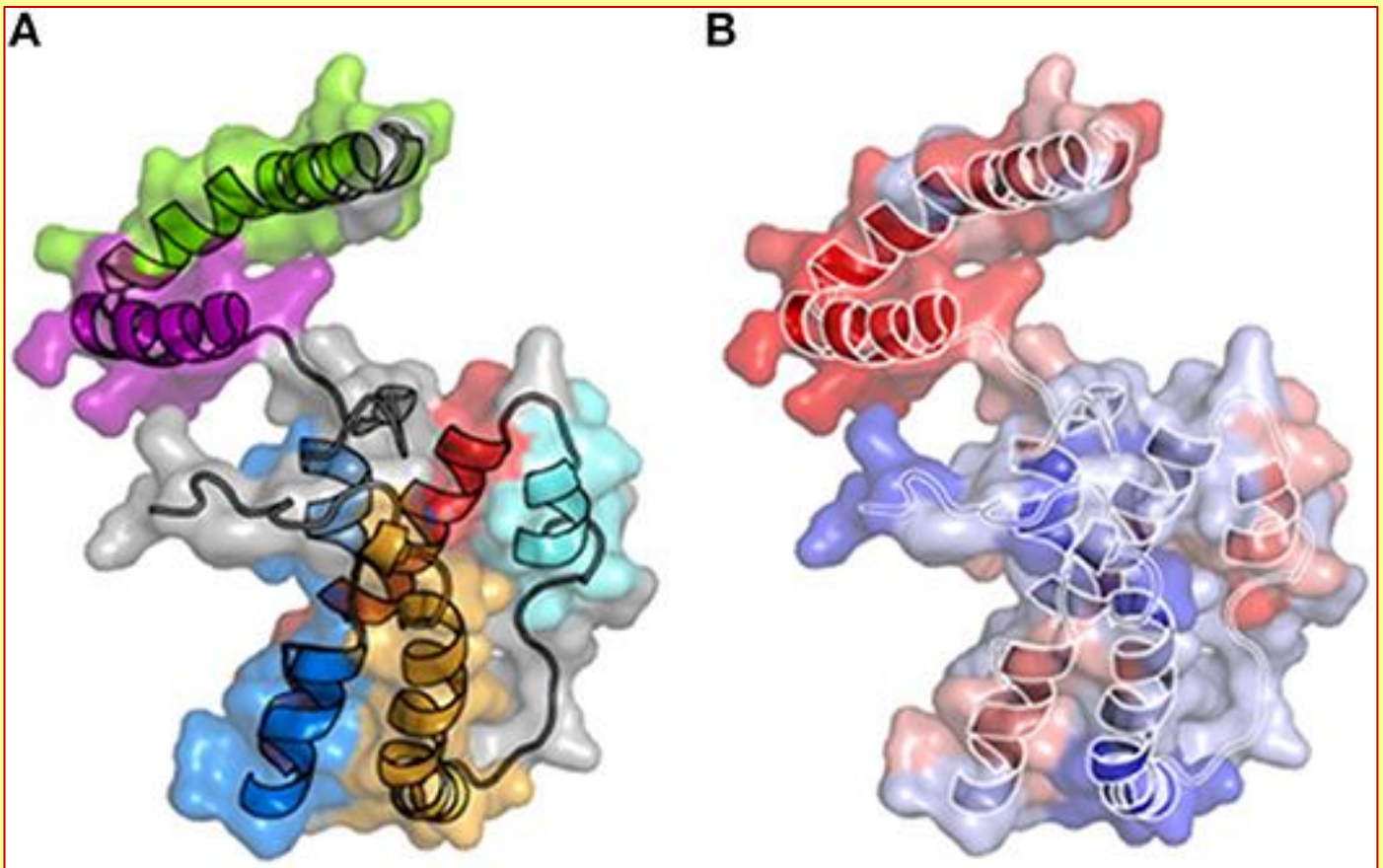
Nov 17 – The cytokine IL-26 may be a biomarker of acute COVID-19 according to a preliminary study by researchers at Karolinska Institute. It may also be a good new target for drug discovery.

“We can show for the first time that blood levels of the cytokine IL-26 [interleukin-26] are much higher in patients with COVID-19 than in healthy controls,” says Eduardo Cardenas, postdoc researcher at the Institute of Environmental Medicine, Karolinska Institute, and principal author of [the new pilot study](#), which appeared in *Frontiers in Immunology* today.

Researchers also observed that the increase was associated with the cytokine storm—an excessive and dangerous inflammatory response that signifies severe cases of COVID-19. [A growing body of evidence](#) suggests this reaction is associated with disease severity and death.



“Our discovery gives us a potential biomarker for severe COVID-19, but given the antiviral effects of IL-26, we may also have identified a new therapeutic target,” says Anders Lindén, senior author, consultant and professor at the Institute of Environmental Medicine, Karolinska Institute.



3-D structural models of IL-26. (A) A three-dimensional structure of IL-26 has been modeled using the IL-10 crystal structure as a template. The six alpha-helices are colored. (B) Electrostatic potential on the molecular surface of IL-26 is colored from red (+210 kBT/ec) to blue (+10 kBT/ec). The alpha-helices are shown.

Vaccines for SARS-CoV-2 have effectively reduced the number of cases of severe COVID-19. However, there have been many breakout infections, some leading to death. [In New York alone](#), over two million people have experienced breakthrough infections, resulting in almost 90,000 hospitalizations. There are [few approved treatments](#) for COVID-19 so far, and the emergence of new viral variants, limited distribution of the vaccine, and declining immunity are additional problems driving the search for more efficacious treatments for the disease. Also, although many people will suffer no symptoms or only mild disease, already over 6.6 people have died from the disease worldwide. Identifying those at risk of severe disease is thus a priority but so far, [there is no reliable way to do this](#). “We need to understand more about underlying immunological mechanisms in order to find better treatments. There is also a need for improved diagnostics in COVID 19-patients,” says Cardenas. These researchers set out to ascertain whether immune signaling via IL-26 is involved in severe COVID-19.

“We already know that IL-26 is engaged in mobilizing immune cells that combat bacterial infections in the lungs and also in chronic respiratory disease in humans,” says Lindén. “What’s more, IL-26 has antiviral and antibacterial effects.”

In this study, the scientists recruited 49 patients who had been hospitalized with SARS-CoV-2-infection, 44 of whom had severe symptoms and needed oxygen therapy. The patients were recruited at a hospital in Stockholm from June 2020 to January 2021. A control group of 27 healthy individuals was also recruited during the same period. The researchers then measured levels of IL-26 protein and other inflammatory compounds in the blood. They found that the levels of the protein were much higher among patients with COVID-19 than the healthy controls. In addition, they found that the blood concentration of IL-26 correlates with that of increased lactate dehydrogenase, an established



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marker of tissue damage, and decreased mean corpuscular hemoglobin (MCH), a previously verified hematological aberration in COVID-19. Both of these markers are associated with severe disease.

According to Cardenas, the results are promising but are preliminary and warrant further study with a larger patient cohort.

"Such a study is on the way and can give more information on the clinical value of measuring IL-26 in COVID-patients, such as whether the levels reflect the severity of the disease.

Tweet

Paul Mitchell
@PaulMitchell_AB

Bombshell Video: Dr. William Makis states that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario 🇨🇦 is suggesting to Ontario doctors that "unvaccinated" people are mentally ill and in need of psychiatric medication.

Makis: "That is a very dangerous slippery slope that we're on."

29 views

0:13 / 0:45

At-home Births Rose During the Pandemic, CDC Reports

Source: https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/984346?src=wnl_edit_tpal&uac=82598DG&impID=4888884&faf=1

Nov 18 – More women gave birth at home in America last year, continuing a pandemic trend and reaching the highest level in decades, according to figures released Thursday by the CDC.

The report said that almost 52,000 births occurred at home in 2021 out of 4 million total births in the country. This was an increase of 12% from 2020. The figure rose by 22% in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, over 2019.

There were several possible reasons for the increase in home births. Infection rates and hospitalizations were high. Vaccinations were not available or were not widely used, and many people avoided going to hospitals or the doctor, said Elizabeth Gregory, [the report's](#) lead author.

Also, some women didn't have health insurance, lived far from a medical facility, or could not get to a hospital fast enough. About 25% of home births are not planned, the [Associated Press](#) reported.

Increases in home births occurred across all races, but home births were less common among Hispanics.



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The AP reported that home births are riskier than hospital births according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The organization advises against home births for women carrying multiple babies or who have previously had a [cesarean section](#).

"Hospitals and accredited birth centers are the safest places to give birth, because although serious complications associated with labor and delivery are rare, they can be catastrophic," said Jeffrey Ecker, M.D., chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Massachusetts General Hospital.



According to the MIT research team, maintaining an indoor relative humidity between 40 – 60% is associated with relatively lower rates of infection and death from COVID-19. Lower or higher humidity rates than these are associated with more severe effects from COVID-19.

Journal of the Royal Society Interface

WHO Ranks The Deadliest Pathogens, Including The Mysterious 'Disease X'

Source: <https://www.sciencealert.com/who-ranks-the-deadliest-pathogens-including-the-mysterious-disease-x>

Nov 22 – The [World Health Organization](#) said on Monday it was thrashing out a new list of priority pathogens that risk sparking pandemics or outbreaks and should be kept under close observation.

The WHO said the aim was to [update a list](#) used to guide global research and development (R&D) and investment, especially in vaccines, tests, and treatments.

As part of that process, which started on Friday, the United Nations' health agency is convening over 300 scientists to consider evidence on more than 25 [virus](#) families and bacteria.

They will also consider the so-called "[Disease X](#)" – an unknown pathogen that could cause a serious international [epidemic](#).

"Targeting priority pathogens and virus families for research and development of countermeasures is essential for a fast and effective epidemic and [pandemic](#) response," [said WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan](#).

"Without significant R&D investments prior to the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, it would not have been possible to have safe and effective vaccines developed in record time."

The list was first published in 2017.

It currently includes COVID-19, [Ebola](#) virus disease and Marburg virus disease, Lassa [fever](#), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Nipah, Zika, and Disease X.

For each pathogen identified as a priority, experts will pinpoint knowledge gaps and research priorities.

Desired specifications for vaccines, treatments, and diagnostic tests can then be drawn up.



Efforts are also made to facilitate [clinical trials](#) to develop such tools, while efforts to strengthen regulatory and ethics oversight are also considered. The revised list is expected to be published before April 2023.

Pandemic treaty

The pathogen threat sessions come as the WHO prepares for the next round of talks towards a pandemic treaty.

An intergovernmental negotiating body is paving the way towards a global agreement that could eventually regulate how nations prepare for and respond to future pandemic threats.

They are due to meet in Geneva from December 5 to 7 for a third meeting to draft and negotiate a WHO convention or other kind of international agreement on pandemic preparedness and response.

A progress report will be presented to WHO member states next year, with the final outcome presented for their consideration in 2024.

An initial draft text for the December meeting emerged last week.

The Panel for a Global Public Health Convention, an independent coalition of statespersons and health leaders, said the draft did not go far enough, despite its bright spots.

The panel said Monday that more should be done to establish accountability and clear timelines for alert and response to avoid damaging consequences when an outbreak emerges.

"Once an outbreak is detected, there are often a few critical hours to report, assess and act to stop the spread of a disease before it becomes virtually unstoppable," the panel said in a statement.

"The current draft does not go far enough to call out the urgency needed to either prepare for disease X or known pathogens, or to respond at the early stage," it said.

"From December 2019 when information about the new [coronavirus](#) was suppressed, to multiple countries taking a 'wait and see' approach when COVID-19 cases were first reported... we've seen the damaging consequences of inaction at the onset."

Rapidly Melting Glaciers Are Releasing a Staggering Payload of Unknown Bacteria

Source: <https://www.sciencealert.com/rapidly-melting-glaciers-are-releasing-a-staggering-payload-of-unknown-bacteria>



A glacial stream in Norway. (Roberto Moiola/Sysaworld/Getty Images)

Nov 22 – Fast-melting glaciers are releasing staggering amounts of bacteria into rivers and streams, which could transform icy ecosystems, scientists warn.

In a study of glacial runoff from 10 sites across the Northern Hemisphere, researchers have estimated that continued global warming over the next 80 years could release hundreds of thousands of tonnes of bacteria into environments downstream of receding glaciers.



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"We think of glaciers as a huge store of frozen water but the key lesson from this research is that they are also ecosystems in their own right," microbiologist and study author Arwyn Edwards of Aberystwyth University in the UK [told](#) the BBC.

Glaciers are masses of ice creeping ever so slowly toward the sea, carving out mountainous valleys as they go. Yet there is more to the flows than frozen water, with minerals, gases, and organic materials trapped on a one-way slide that could take [tens of thousands to millions of years](#) to terminate.

[Studying the contents of glaciers](#) is like opening the door to another time in history. Microbes entombed inside them could be a rich source of useful, new compounds, such as antibiotics. However, the researchers behind this new study say melting glaciers are releasing tonnes upon tonnes of bacteria faster than scientists can possibly catalog them.

Led by glacial hydrologist Ian Stevens of Aarhus University in Denmark, the team sampled surface meltwater from ten glaciers across the Northern Hemisphere: in the European Alps, Greenland, Svalbard, and the far reaches of the Canadian Arctic.

Finding on average tens of thousands of microbes in each milliliter of water, they estimate that more than a hundred thousand tonnes of bacteria could be expelled into glacial meltwaters over the next 80 years, not including the glaciers in the Himalaya Hindu Kush region of Asia.

That's equivalent to 650,000 tonnes of carbon released per year into rivers, lakes, fjords, and oceans across the Northern Hemisphere, though it depends on how fast glaciers melt and how fast we curb emissions.

Under a ['middle of the road' emissions scenario](#) – that would still see global temperatures rise between 2 and 3 °C – masses of bacteria in meltwater are predicted to peak within decades before declining or potentially disappearing entirely as glaciers recede, the researchers found.

"The number of microbes released depends closely on how quickly the glaciers melt, and therefore how much we continue to warm the planet. But the mass of microbes released is vast even with moderate warming," Edwards [said](#).



The researchers collecting samples on the western edge of the Greenland Ice Sheet. ([Arwyn Edwards/Tristram Irvine-Fynn, Aberystwyth University](#))



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Earlier this year, scientists realized that Arctic ice is already [thinning faster than expected](#). Other research suggests that some glaciers have already [passed a tipping point](#) where meltwater is slowing to a trickle as glacial runoff steadily declines.

Microbes in meltwater can fertilize downstream ecosystems, but these may be sensitive environments or catchments used by communities that depend on glacial runoff as a water source.

The researchers didn't study individual strains of bacteria, only estimated their combined biomass, so they could not identify any species that might pose a threat to human health – nor did they determine whether microbes were active, dormant, damaged, or dead.

"The risk is probably very small, but it requires careful assessment," Edwards [told](#) Steffan Messenger at the BBC.

Without further studies, we also don't know how the sudden influx of microbes could contribute to further environmental change. Researchers expect it could have a profound effect on the productivity and biodiversity of microbial communities, as well as biogeochemical cycles. On top of that, bacteria and algae found in icy environments usually contain pigments to shield themselves from damaging sunlight. But these pigments, in absorbing solar energy, could add to warming that is already [accelerating glacial ice loss](#). Although more research is needed to assess the downstream effects of glacial meltwater laden with microbes, these warnings shouldn't be taken lightly. Humans' thirst for water and unabated industrial activity has [reshaped the global water cycle](#) in ways we're only just beginning to comprehend.

"Over the coming decades, the forecast 'peak water' from Earth's mountain glaciers means we need to improve our understanding of the state and fate of ecosystems on the surface of glaciers," [says](#) glaciologist and study author Tristram Irvine-Fynn at Aberystwyth University. "With a better grasp of that picture, we could better predict the effects of [climate change](#) on glacial surfaces and catchment biogeochemistry."

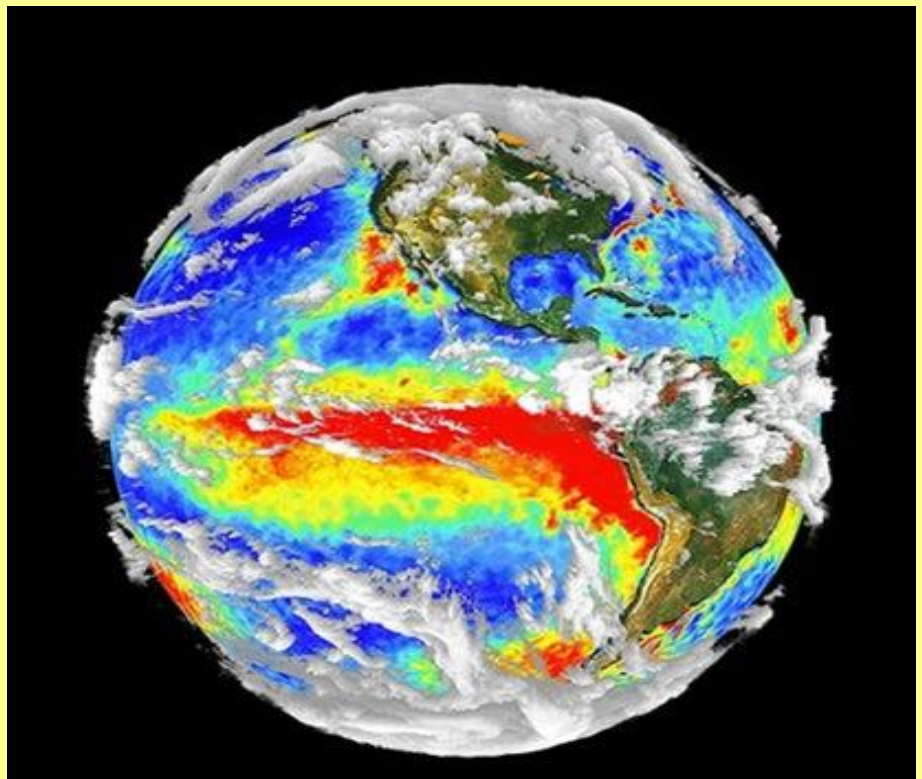
●► The study was published in [Communications Earth & Environment](#).

Climate Models Could Help Predict Future Disease Outbreaks

Source: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/climate-models-could-help-predict-future-disease-outbreaks/>

Trends in the warm water current of the El Niño Southern Oscillation in the Pacific Ocean ([red band at centre](#)) can affect disease dynamics. Credit: R. B.Husar/NASA/SPL

Nov 15 – Numerous studies over more than two decades have demonstrated a robust relationship between climate and the dynamics of human diseases, such as cholera, malaria and dengue. Changes in climate, including both long-term warming trends and short-term climate variability, might affect patterns of disease. Xavier Rodó, a computational ecologist and climate dynamics specialist at the Barcelona Institute for Global Health and the Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies in Spain, spoke to *Nature* about how climate modelling could be used to help prepare for future disease outbreaks—and the obstacles he has faced in implementing such systems.



How does climate affect disease transmission?

Climate impacts the emergence and spread of disease in myriad ways. Some are quite complex. Climatic conditions can have cascading effects on ecosystems that affect the likelihood of zoonotic spillovers, in



which pathogens jump from an animal host to humans. We see, for example, that changes in temperature in the Brazilian Atlantic Forest drive waves of yellow fever in howler monkeys (*Alouatta* species) that precede human epidemics in a predictable manner¹. As climate changes, so too will the spread and intensity of disease outbreaks. The effects will not be the same everywhere, but changes in temperature and rainfall are going to lead to huge changes in the distribution and dynamics of zoonotic and vector-borne diseases. We are already seeing record numbers of mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus in New York City, for example, when it is typically found farther west.

CLIMATE CHANGE INFOGRAPHIC



SOLAR RADIATION

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VEGETATION

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SEA LEVEL

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What evidence is there for climate change influencing disease outbreaks?

The first study² I was part of that demonstrated this was published in 2002, in collaboration with Mercedes Pascual, a theoretical ecologist now at the University of Chicago, Illinois. In a previous study³, we had shown that the incidence of cholera in Bangladesh was affected by short-term climate patterns. Cases rose around six months after periods of increased local temperatures brought on by the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), a recurring climate pattern of warm (El Niño) and cool (La Niña) phases that occur irregularly every 3–7 years in the Pacific Ocean. But since the 1980s, there has been a marked intensification of ENSO, and we thought that this long-term trend might also be affecting cholera incidence. We looked at historical cholera data spanning a 70-year period, and saw that, between 1980 and 2001, incidence was strongly correlated with ENSO². Data from a period before the intensification, however, showed no such correlation. The long-term trend of ENSO intensification, driven by a warming climate, seems to be affecting cholera dynamics.

How might climate modelling be used to predict and prepare for disease outbreaks?

With current tools, it is possible, in some regions, to forecast climatic conditions in the next season, the next summer or even further into the future—some El Niño events can be predicted up to two years in advance. Knowing months ahead of time that there is going to be an anomalous rainy season in a country, and how that is likely to affect disease incidence, makes it possible for public-health authorities to anticipate



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and plan their response. For example, they could stock up on medicines, or spray insecticides in certain areas to limit the hatching of mosquitoes.

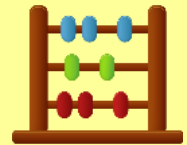
What are the obstacles to developing these predictive models?

Both climate change and infectious-disease epidemiology are complex systems, and we need to bring together scientists from these very different disciplines to work on this problem. Right now, interdisciplinarity is spoken about more than it is seen. We also face difficulty attracting funding for projects of this kind, and opportunities to publish in established journals can be limited. Availability of epidemiological data with which we can train and test our models is also a problem. For cholera, we have better historical data than we have recent data. It is similar for COVID-19—reporting has dropped off, so we have much better data for the first two years of the pandemic than we do for now. We need to understand that long-term data collection is fundamental if we want to be prepared for future threats.

What is the state of the development and implementation of such tools?

I have worked with an international team to develop a model that uses El Niño predictions to forecast dengue outbreaks in Ecuador. The model correctly predicted that in 2016, warmer temperatures and excess rainfall would lead to an outbreak in the city of Machala in March—three months earlier than would be expected. It also predicted that there was a 90% chance that incidence would exceed the average for the previous five years, and that a weak El Niño in 2019 would result in a low probability of a dengue outbreak during the typical peak season^{4,5}.

This model and others have been adapted for use in other regions⁶. But these models have not yet been picked up by public-health authorities. People say they are interesting, but they don't see the immediate economic benefit—unfortunately, saving lives is not valued as it should be. We have tried many times to implement our cholera prediction model in India and Bangladesh—Pascual more times than me—without success. I've also tried to set up a malaria forecast service in Madagascar, Senegal, and Ethiopia because there is a wealth of data the model can rely on there⁷. But we have been unable to convince the stakeholders.



Pandemics by numbers (as of November 24, 2022)

	CASES	DEATHS	COUNTRIES & TERRITORIES	MOST AFFECTED COUNTRIES
COVID-19	(632,700,308) 644,117,458	(6,582,238) 6,629,552	228	USA, India, Brazil, France, Germany, S. Korea
MONKEYPOX*	64,703 No change (2 nd month)	15** No change (2 nd month)	114	USA, Spain, UK, France, Germany

* Outside Africa | ** Outside Africa (Spain 2; India 1; Brazil 2; Peru 2; Ecuador 1; Mexico 1; USA 2; Belgium 1; Cuba 1; Czech Republic 1; Jamaica 1) – numbers in parenthesis are those of October 2022)



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