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CBRNE



*Dedicated to Global
First Responders*

DIARY

September 2022



Mr. Zelensky

Mr. Putin

Mr. Biden

Mr. Borrell

PART A

enough

Mrs. Truss

Mr. Stoltenberg

Mr. Guterres



An International CBRNE Institute publication

C²BRNE DIARY- 2022[©]

September 2022

Website: www.cbrne-terrorism-newsletter.com

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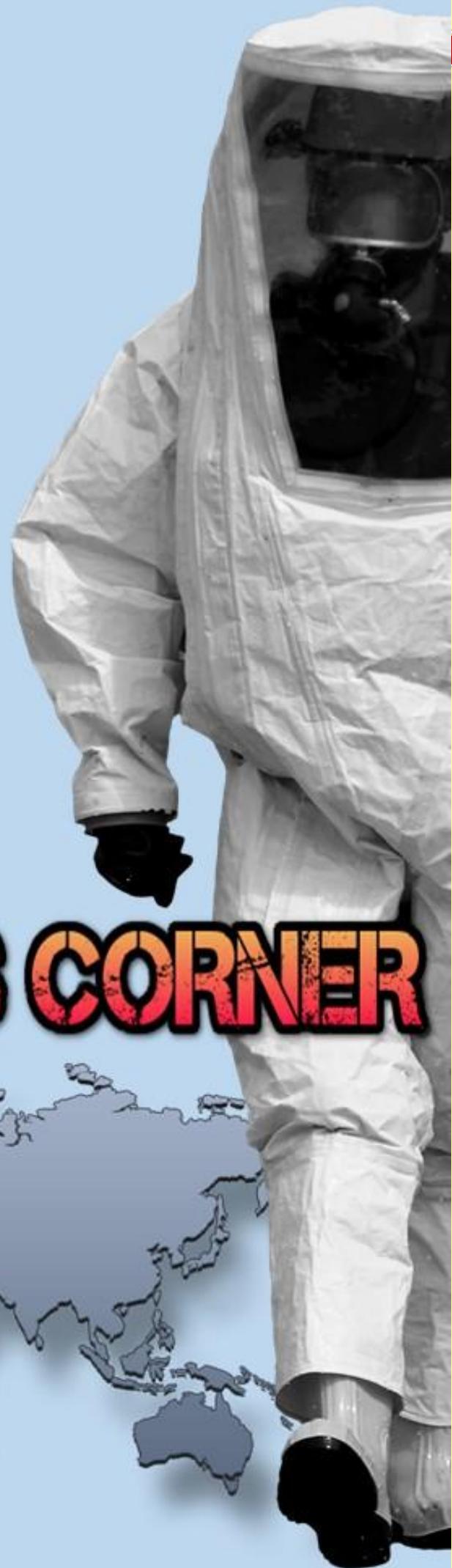
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EDITOR'S CORNER





Editorial

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

Editor-in-Chief
ICI C²BRNE Diary



Dear Colleagues,

Six months ago when the crisis in Ukraine began there was universal sympathy for President Zelensky and the Ukrainian people – but not anymore.

The proxy war in Ukraine continues and there is no light at the end of the tunnel. The only thing that has been proven beyond any doubt is that this conflict is unethical by all means. In court, most of the time there is a person who conducted the crime and the person who motivated this man to commit the crime. In our case, it is obvious who is the moral perpetrator of the crime. Both sides accuse each other of war crimes but it is OK if the entire EU is suffering the consequences and to a lesser degree the US and the rest of the world. Some say that the war will end soon; others that it will last for a year; others that a nuclear holocaust is inevitable (either in Ukraine or in Taiwan). What is for sure is that central and northern European countries will go through “a winter to remember” while the rest of us in the South might have a better time with firewoods and sun. And Zelensky will continue to suck money from the EU (latest immediate demand of 5 billion euros and 8th pack of sanctions) and pretend that he is protecting Europe from bad Russians by spreading blackout, poverty, and hunger. What a shame for the 21st-century human race dreaming to inhabit other planets...

The State of Oklahoma (USA) executed a man on Aug 25, 2022, for a 1997 killing, despite a recommendation from the state's Pardon and Parole Board that his life is spared. James Coddington, 50, received a lethal injection at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester and was pronounced dead at 10:16 a.m. Coddington was the fifth Oklahoma inmate to be put to death since the state resumed executions last year. Coddington was convicted and sentenced to die for beating 73-year-old Albert Hale to death with a hammer. Prosecutors say, Coddington, then 24, became enraged when Hale refused to give him money to buy cocaine. ON THE OTHER HAND, El Shafee Elsheikh, a British ISIS fighter and member of the execution cell dubbed “the ISIS Beatles” because of their British accents, was sentenced to life in prison Friday for his role in the hostage-taking and deaths of four Americans and several others. Elsheikh was handed down eight concurrent life sentences in a Virginia courtroom on the eighth anniversary of the brutal beheading of one of his victims: American journalist James Foley. Elsheikh and another member of the cell, Alexandra Kotey, were charged in October 2020 on eight counts for their involvement in the hostage-taking and murders of Foley, fellow American journalist Steven Sotloff, American aid workers Peter Kassig and Kayla Mueller, as well as British and Japanese nationals. There is something wrong going on here, don't you think so?

The US is about to provide Taiwan with 1.1 billion worth of weapons (anti-ship AGM-84 Harpoon; air-to-air AIM-9X Sidewinder missiles), to further tease China. It is amazing that behind almost all conflicts, wars, and tensions there is a red-blue-white finger! Then one day – what a surprise – there will be a new conflict in the area!

Ah! We still experiencing a pandemic! What is new is the fact that many studies reveal that mRNA vaccines are not exactly what was expected and that we have to wait the proper time until a real “vaccine” is produced. Until then do what pure logic dictates to trick or avoid the airborne virus. Do not think that summer parties exhausted the virus since he is a very good dancer and winter is his working environment. In addition, try to be as informed as possible regarding the booster jabs proposed by “experts” – rumors say that they have not been tested properly ...

Monkeypox is progressing relatively slowly but still, we have 15 deaths worldwide. Yes, fifteen is a very important number even if the death toll for coronavirus is over 6,500,000.



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In the beginning, it was the coronavirus. Then monkeypox follows. Recently we have the Tomato virus (or fever), this time evolving in India. Do all these pandemics, endemics and outbreaks herald the coming of the “big one?”

Dear colleagues, the threat is real and those who supported the opinion of “exotic” threats proved to be simply fooled. In that respect, increase your readiness, revise your response plans and intensify your training! The snake in the hole is very close to the exit but it will be your hand that will try to get it out!

The Editor-in-Chief





0.59B

Total number of people with insufficient food consumption

Donations to Ukraine war

(Feb. 24 and Aug. 16)

Numbers might have changed significantly!



**EU: €330 million (\$353 million)
+ €500 million (\$535 million)**

USA: \$40 billion

UK: £3.8 billion (\$4.6 billion)

Germany: €1 billion

World Bank: \$5.2 billion

Private sector: \$200 million

Google & Meta: \$15 million X2

General public (UK): £350 million

C'est la vie!



23-year old Brooklyn Beckham with a \$1.2 million McLaren P1

Risk their lives!

LeBron James \$97.1 million/ 2yrs contract

A ball in a basket

How Natural Disasters Exacerbate Human Trafficking

By Hailey York and Lindsey Lane

Source: <https://www.domesticpreparedness.com/resilience/how-natural-disasters-exacerbate-human-trafficking/>

Aug 24 – In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Louisiana, impacting the Pelican State with winds up to 174 miles per hour. While breached levees and the loss of homes, businesses, and lives made global news, they were not the only damages to follow the Category 5 storm. Many individuals displaced from the storm became victims of human trafficking. In the five years following Katrina, over [3,750 survivors of human trafficking](#) were identified in the Gulf Coast region alone. For comparison, 2020 saw [386 new survivors](#) identified in Louisiana through the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

[Human trafficking](#), the “crime of using force, fraud, or coercion to compel an individual to work or to engage in a commercial sex act,” is the world’s [second-largest criminal industry](#), generating an estimated [\\$150 billion annually](#). In the wake of natural disasters like hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes, and floods, an individual’s [risk of being trafficked increases](#) as traffickers often recruit and exploit victims from vulnerable populations. Certain pre-existing vulnerabilities are more likely to lead an individual into trafficking and are more likely to be exacerbated by disaster. Among the [federal criminal human trafficking cases](#) filed in 2021, adult victim vulnerabilities identified included financial debt (70%), financial insecurity (60%), undocumented status (49%), and limited English proficiency (47%). For minors, identified key vulnerabilities include being a runaway (76%), homelessness (8%), foster care (30%), previous trafficking victim (22%) or having undocumented status (5%).

In the wake of natural disasters, human trafficking cases rise. This article describes the threat and ways to mitigate the impact on vulnerable populations.

After natural disasters like Katrina, these already present vulnerabilities in communities are compounded as livelihoods and lives are lost, and communities are displaced from their support networks, leaving individuals more susceptible to traffickers. Additionally, limited resources force law enforcement’s attention toward immediate rescue needs, leaving those vulnerable to the uptick in human trafficking with limited protection. Children orphaned or separated from their parents, women who have



lost their homes and livelihoods, and immigrants flooding into the disaster-stricken area to work are particularly at risk for [trafficking post-disaster](#).

Children orphaned or separated from their parents post-disaster can be highly traumatized and especially trusting of adults, increasing their risk of sex or labor trafficking. While they may not be runaways, many of these children are subject to the same vulnerabilities a runaway would experience due to separation from supportive adults. [Beyond the immediate trauma](#) and harm of natural disaster exposure, children are also more likely to suffer long-term physical, psychological, and educational deficits, which may lead to a vulnerability to trafficking in the future. [Illegal adoptions](#) can also occur post-disaster as [traffickers take advantage](#) of displaced children, selling them to remote families who believe they are helping a child in need. Though it is unclear how frequently this practice occurs in the U.S., it was prevalent after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, when an unknown number of children were [taken illegally](#) from the country for international adoption.

Women also face an elevated trafficking risk post-disaster, especially for sex trafficking. Post-disaster, women may lose their jobs and homes, leading to poverty and financial debt – two key vulnerabilities that make them ready targets for traffickers. Traffickers often recruit victims by offering shelter, a way to make quick cash, or a way for individuals to get back on their feet. For example, after Hurricane Harvey, the prevalence of adult advertisements online [doubled](#), with many offering rent-free accommodations to any “pretty girls wanting to make some quick money and recover losses after Harvey.” Further, thousands of aid workers, such as construction and remediation crews, arriving in the post-disaster area can increase the demand for commercial sex, incentivizing traffickers to increase their supply by targeting vulnerable disaster victims.

Immigrants recruited to the post-disaster area for work are specifically at risk for labor trafficking. Post-disaster, there is an increased need for workers to repair damaged infrastructure and work in the local hospitality industry, which often hosts displaced individuals. Many of these jobs are considered undesirable by domestic laborers, [driving up the demand for laborers from abroad](#). Immigrant workers – documented (through the H-2 visa program) and undocumented – are at an increased risk for labor trafficking. They often have limited English proficiency, financial debt, and financial insecurity. The [H-2 visa](#), which is contingent on a worker remaining with a specific employer, creates an exploitative environment where employers may [threaten and exploit workers](#) unless they agree to work on particular terms.

Undocumented workers have even fewer rights and protections, making them exceptionally vulnerable to exploitation. Simultaneously, labor and immigration regulations are often relaxed after a natural disaster, compounding vulnerabilities, and creating situations ripe for human trafficking. For example, after Hurricane Katrina, [Signal International](#) (a Gulf Coast marine services company) used false promises of permanent U.S. residency to traffic hundreds of workers to the U.S. to repair damaged oil rigs and related facilities. The traffickers kept the men in guarded camps and threatened deportation if human rights abuses were reported. Since many of the trafficking victims had paid thousands of dollars to reach the U.S. and had their families’ livelihoods on the line, many were deterred from reporting. Unfortunately, cases like these are not uncommon.

Human trafficking is an incredibly complex problem that cannot be solved by implementing a single remedy or solution. However, the uptick in trafficking of at-risk groups post-disaster can be mitigated through proper emergency preparedness and training. While some agencies and organizations offer anti-trafficking training programs, [less than half](#) of surveyed emergency medical services (EMS) workers have received training on human trafficking. With the frequency of natural disasters increasing by a [factor of five](#) over the past 50 years and continuing to rise, human trafficking will only become a more pressing issue. There are steps federal, state, and local governments, corporations, and civil society organizations can take now in preparation to fight human trafficking:

- Establish more in-depth anti-trafficking training for front-line workers and ensure all front-line workers receive training. For example, in June 2022, the [Texas Division of Emergency Management](#) included presentations during its annual conference on how to recognize human trafficking post-disaster and how emergency management can help prevent trafficking. [Effective training](#) should consist of materials that highlight:
 - The signs of human trafficking post-disaster,
 - Legal definitions of human trafficking,
 - Local trafficking statistics,
 - Who is at risk for trafficking,
 - How people fall victim to traffickers,
 - How traffickers control people,
 - Common trafficking settings, and
 - How to ask questions of and listen to suspected victims.
- Develop [toolkits](#) with direct outreach materials, policies, and phone numbers to contact for assistance in multiple languages.



- Promote public awareness campaigns on trafficking surrounding natural disasters, including [common phrases](#) used by traffickers that civilians should watch out for and the risks of trafficking before and during disasters. This information should be posted in emergency shelters to ensure it reaches at-risk people.
- Ensure greater resources for law enforcement and front-line workers post-disaster to fortify anti-trafficking work amidst ongoing rescue efforts.
- Provide women with a way to make cash locally and quickly post-disaster to minimize their risk of trafficking. For example, after Hurricane Matthew landed in Haiti, [UNICEF](#) effectively partnered with cash-for-work companies to hire women to assemble needed hygiene kits.
- Prioritize safe environments for children post-disaster to decrease the risk of recruitment and exploitation by traffickers.
- [Avoid relaxing labor and immigration standards](#) post-disaster, as this can exacerbate trafficking.

Any combination of these approaches can help to limit trafficking post-disaster. Most importantly, though, steps to implement these programs should be included in emergency management so the U.S. is prepared to fight human trafficking when disaster strikes.

Lindsey Lane is the senior legal counsel for the Human Trafficking Institute (HTI) in Washington, DC. At HTI, she serves as the lead architect and author of the Federal Human Trafficking Report. She manages data collection and analysis of federal human trafficking cases and briefs government leaders and anti-trafficking stakeholders on key findings and emerging trends in federal human trafficking cases. She is the country program attorney for HTI's anti-trafficking efforts in Belize and formerly served as a prosecutor at both the state and federal levels, most recently serving as a human trafficking prosecutor for the State of North Carolina.

Hailey York is a second-year law student at Georgetown University Law Center, where she studies international and domestic human rights law and policy. She currently serves as an intern with the Human Trafficking Institute (HTI) in Washington, DC. She is a 2021 graduate of Gonzaga University with degrees in International Relations and Political Science.

Animatronic Dog Helps Train Medics in Canine Care

By Guy McCardle

Source [[+video](#)]: <https://sofrep.com/news/animatronic-dog-helps-train-medics-in-canine-care/>

Aug 21 – A sad fact for a force using military working dogs (MWD) in dangerous situations is that they are as likely as any human soldier to become injured or killed during their duties. Yet, when these dogs get hurt or need medical attention, a well-trained cadre of veterinary professionals are there to care for them.

The men and women of the United States Army Veterinary Corps are part of the Army Medical Department or [AMEDD](#).

The dog shown in the image above is no dog at all. That's Diesel, an anatomically correct model of a typical military working dog, a training aid. He's used to teaching military medical personnel how to care for our canine friends if they require it in the field. In real-world experiences, veterinarians are rarely present to care for sick or wounded animals. Currently, there are only about 700 veterinarians in the Army. They are spread few and far between.

If a dog is hurt in the field, chances are high that it will be cared for by the same doctors, nurses, and combat medics who take care of human warfighters. Because of that, medical personnel must receive some training in veterinary medicine. That's what Captain Schrader is doing in the photo above. In this specific case, she is training US Navy medical personnel to identify and clear an airway obstruction.

The captain is a member of the 422nd Medical Detachment, a reserve veterinary services unit out of Rockville, MD. She is quoted by army.mil as saying, "There are oftentimes very few veterinarians available to get to canine casualties, especially in a timely manner. So, we train these



guys on canine first aid and tactical combat care to help save the lives of the patients.”



Here we see CPT Gabrielle Schrader, a veterinary service officer, check for airway obstruction in an animatronic canine. Image Credit: SPC Veronica Hamilton

I'll be honest here; it's strange referring to animal models such as Diesel as "robots" or "animatronic." According to our friends at the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, "animatronic" means: "of, relating to, or being a puppet or similar figure that is animated by means of electromechanical devices." After doing a bit more reading, I discovered that not only does Diesel bleed and have a heartbeat, but he also breathes and barks. So I suppose he is indeed animatronic. I was thinking more of "Lincoln in the Hall of Presidents" at EPCOT before. The dog looks quite realistic, except for the slightly too purplish-looking palate in the photo above.

Captain Schrader had a bit more to say about non-veterinary services troops taking care of animals in the course of their duties. She said, "We rely on human health care providers. One of these people may be saving a dog's life, and in turn that saves their handler's life. We may not be the big flashy ER doctors running the big hospital, but we are behind the scenes helping care for the overall health of the dogs and the Soldiers."

As you might imagine, handlers are exceptionally tightly bonded with their animals. Often, if one is wounded, the other will be as well. If at all possible, wounded handlers (depending on the severity of their injuries) will see that their dog is cared for before they are. Dr. Schrader talks about training the various other services to care for military working dogs if veterinarians are not available. Video courtesy of YouTube and The Military Scoop

You might be surprised to find out that there are only veterinarians working on dogs in the Army (and I noted above there are only about 700 of them). Veterinarians, that is, not MWD. According to defense.gov, roughly 1,600 dogs are working in the various military services to help keep us safe. This is why human medical personnel is trained in canine first aid and tactical combat care.

Let me take a second here to note there is no separate medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) modalities for military canines and human warfighters. Simply put, if an MWD is so severely injured that it needs to be evacuated for care, we'll put it on a [MEDEVAC](#) flight. All possible



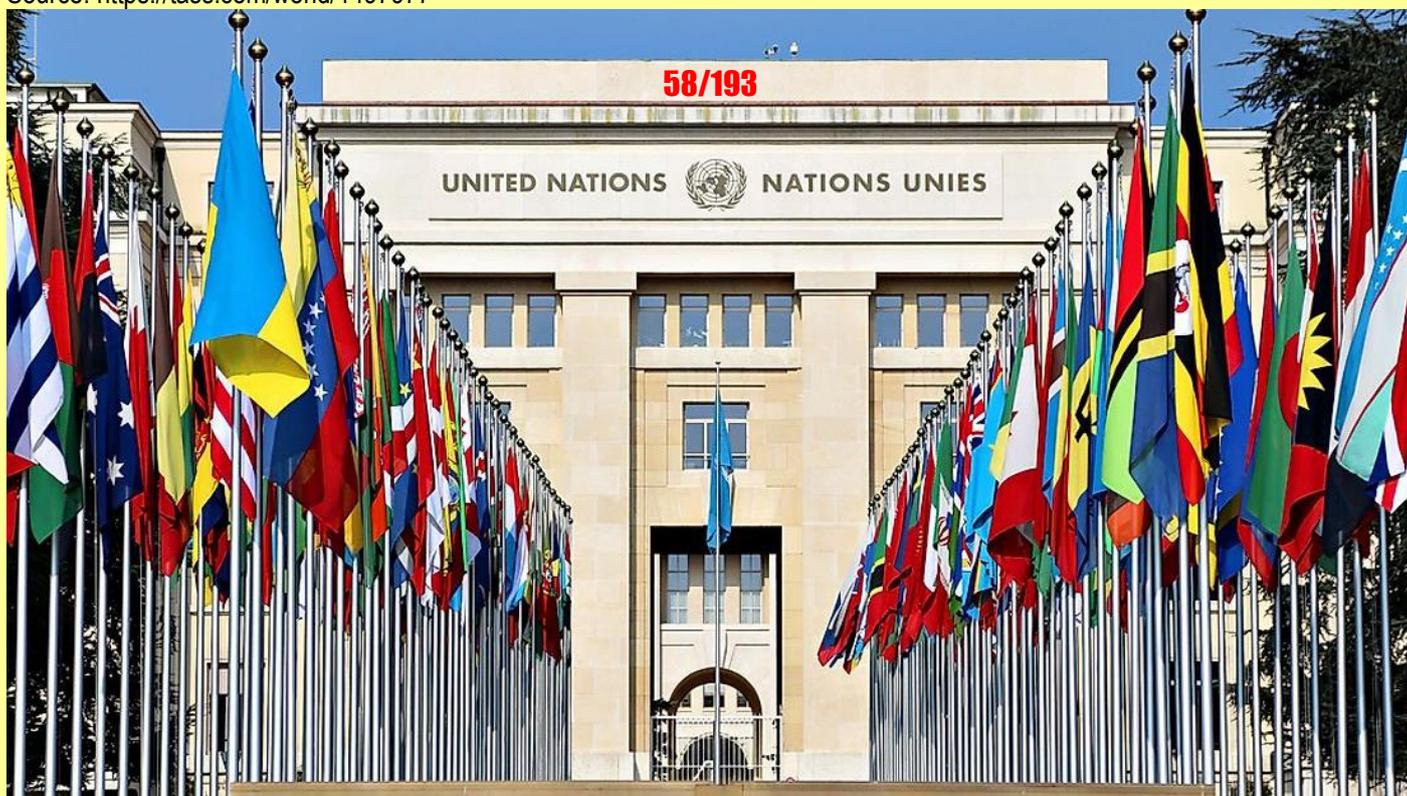
attempts are made to fly the handler with their canine. However, as I'm sure you're well aware, injured dogs can be unpredictable, which sometimes proves challenging to the flight crew.

Suppose a military canine needs to be flown to a distant medical treatment facility for a higher level of care or perhaps surgery. In that case, the Air Force takes care of that on fixed-wing aircraft in the course of their aeromedical evacuation (AE) duties.

Guy McCardle is a sixteen-year veteran of the United States Army and most recently served as a Medical Operations Officer during OIF I and OIF II. He holds a degree in Biology from Washington & Jefferson College and is a graduate of the US Army Academy of Health Sciences. Guy has been a contributing writer to Apple News, Business Insider, International Business Times, and Medical Daily, among others.

Less than a third of UN member states support the anti-Russian statement on Ukraine

Source: <https://tass.com/world/1497977>



Aug 25 – A joint anti-Russian statement on the conflict in Ukraine, which was released on Wednesday, was supported **by only 58 United Nations member states, or less than a third of the organization's 193 members.**

Ukraine's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Sergey Kislitsa read out the document to journalists at the UN headquarters and named all the states that supported it. The statement lambastes Russia's actions and calls on it to immediately stop combat operations.

Among the signatories of the statement are the European Union nations, the United States, the United Kingdom, Georgia, Turkey, and several Asian and Latin American countries.

On February 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a special military operation in response to a request for help by the heads of the Donbass republics. He stressed that Moscow had no plans of occupying Ukrainian territories, but aimed to demilitarize and denazify the country. After that, the West began to impose large-scale anti-Russian sanctions and intensified weapons supplies to Ukraine. According to Western politicians, it is literally an economic war on Russia. The Russian president noted on March 16 that the West's sanction policy had all the signs of aggression. In his words, the policy of containing Russia is the West's long-term strategy.



THE TRUTH



US Senator Richard H. Black (R) – Virginia

June 27, 2022

"We don't care! The United States and NATO, we do not care how many Ukrainians die. Not civilians, not women, not children, not soldiers. We do not care. It's become a great football game. You know, we've got our team. They've got their team, rah rah. We want to get the biggest score and run it up. And, you know, we don't care how many how many of our players get crippled on the playing field, as long as we win."

No need for borders

“

The Court of Justice of the European Union today confirmed the conclusions in our latest report on Lithuania, which details the authorities' flagrant violation European and international law by not only denying the right to asylum for irregular arrivals in the country, but also arbitrarily detaining them

Nils Muižnieks, Europe Regional Director of Amnesty International:

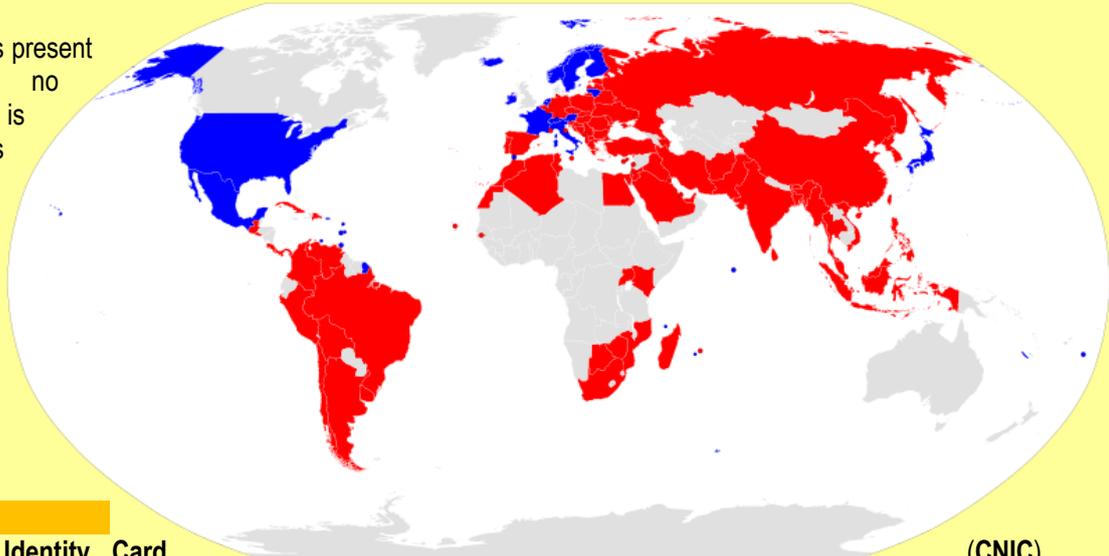
EDITOR'S COMMENT: Translation into English: *All illegal (not irregular) immigrants must be given asylum and until they get it they must move around the hosting country free.* Perhaps the next step would be to print contact information in many languages and distribute them to the countries of interest. EU is doing its best to speed the transformation to Eurostan ...

Illegal immigrants' identification cards

By the Editor of C²BRNE Diary

Almost 100% of illegal immigrants present to the hosting nation with no identification documents. This is done deliberately to pass as refugees and take advantage of asylum regulations. See below who is having what and you will realize that almost all of them have technologically advanced national IDs!

- Compulsory ID cards
- Non-compulsory ID cards



Pakistan

The **Computerised National Identity Card**

(CNIC)

(In Urdu: کارڈ شناختی قومی) is an [identity card](#) issued by Pakistan's [National Database and Registration Authority](#) (NADRA). The card is available to any citizen of Pakistan that is 18 years of age or older. The CNIC is a computerised version of the National Identity Card (NIC).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CNIC_\(Pakistan\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CNIC_(Pakistan))

Bangladesh

The **National Identity Card** (Bengali: জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র) or NID card is a compulsory identity document issued to every Bangladeshi citizen upon turning 18 years of age. The



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NID is a government issued photo ID just like the Bangladeshi Driver's license, which is also a biometric, microchip embedded, smart identity card.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_identity_card_\(Bangladesh\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_identity_card_(Bangladesh))

India

GOI introduced [Aadhaar Cards](#) in 2014, which is most widely accepted identification document in india and can be easily obtained by any person of any age group.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_documents_of_India

Iran

The **Iranian identity card** is the primary [identity document](#) in Iran. Every citizen age of 15 and above, whether resident or not, needs to apply for such a card, which bears their unique **national identity number**, given name, family name, birth date, and postal code. The current version of this card is called the **national smart card** (**Persian**: کارت هوشمند ملی) and is the successor of the **national card** (**Persian**: کارت ملی). This card is intended to reduce the need for the more valuable [Iranian identity booklet](#), which is issued at birth.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_identity_card



Iraq

The **Iraqi National Card** (کارتی/الوطنية البطاقة) is an electronic [biometric](#) card issued by the [Ministry of Interior](#) from January 1, 2016. It replaced the Nationality Certificate (رەگەزنامە/شهادة الجنسية) and Civil Identification Document (باری کارتی/المدنية الأحوال هوية) and the Residency Card (سیتی که/کارتی/السكن بطاقة). This card has a high security platform and is connected directly to the Iraqi Civil System.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_National_Card

Palestine

First made on the age of 16, The fields in it are identical to those in ID cards issued by [Israeli civil administration](#) prior to the [Oslo accords](#), fields include Full name (four names), Mother name, date of birth, birthplace, Gender, Religion, place of issuance, and issue date. in addition to an appendix that includes address, marital status, name and ID number of and



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listing of partner, and previous name(s), in addition to a listing of children names. The document "validity" is incubated until the Israeli authorities approve it.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_identity_card_policies_by_country

Syria

National ID card (الوطنية الهوية بطاقة) is compulsory for all Syrian citizens. Must be uptained at the age of 14. Information displayed in Arabic only. Available also: Family Booklet; Family Civil Extract; Red Card and Passport.

<http://www.syrianationality.org/index.php?id=21>

Turkey

The Republic of Türkiye Identity Card (Turkish: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Kimlik Kartı*) is compulsory for all Turkish citizens from birth. The Turkish police are allowed to ask any person to show ID, and refusing to comply may lead to a fine.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_identity_card

Somalia

Warqadda Aqoonsiga (identity card) is compulsory for all Somali citizens. Electronic since 2014.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_identity_card_policies_by_country#cite_note-90

Libya

The Libyan National Identification Card is the primary and only source of official credible identification documentation that may work towards verifying who is who in Libya. Once a person is proofed, a biometric feature such as a finger print or iris scan may be captured for Effective authenticating.

https://www.wikiprocedure.com/index.php/Libya_-_Obtain_National_Identification_Card

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/52cea00b4.html>

Lebanon

There is a compulsory identity document (هوية بطاقة) issued in Lebanon. The document is issued by the police on behalf of the Ministry of Interior and is the main form of identification on the territory of the Republic of Lebanon. All Lebanese are obliged by law to carry their identity cards with them at all times and are subject to fines should they not. As of 30 June 2006, all Lebanese nationals must hold the new magnetic Identification Card.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_identity_card_policies_by_country

Morocco

The national electronic identity card is the ID of the citizens of Morocco (in Arabic : الإلكترونية للتعريف الوطنية البطاقة). This is an official document which allows any citizen to prove his identity and therefore it is valid, his Moroccan nationality. It is compulsory for all citizens aged over 16 years, but it can be obtained at all ages. The 2008 version of the card is the first to have the form of a credit card. The replacement of the 2008 version for the new 2020 version is not compulsory.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_identity_card_policies_by_country

Algeria

The Algerian national identity card (الوطنية الهوية بطاقة) is an electronic biometric ID card, compulsory for all Algerian nationals and costs 2500 [Algerian Dinar](#).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_identity_card_policies_by_country

Egypt

All Egyptian citizens must carry national identification cards, which must be presented for any type of government service, such as medical care in a public hospital or processing for a property title or deed as well as to obtain employment, education, banking services, and many other important private transactions. ID cards are also required to pass through police checkpoints, and individuals without such cards are accordingly deprived of freedom of movement. The national identification cards contained a field for religion, with only Islam, Christianity and Judaism acceptable as a religion.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_identification_card_controversy#National_identification_cards

Albania

The *Letërnjoftimi* is an electronic biometric ID card, compulsory upon 16 years old and costs 1200 [leke](#) (€10).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_identity_card_policies_by_country

Azerbaijan

The *Şəxsiyyət vəsiqəsi* is an ID card, compulsory upon 16 years old and costs 5 [manats](#) (€2,5). It is not compulsory to carry it at all time.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_identity_card_policies_by_country

Afghanistan

The **Afghan identity card** or **Afghan Tazkira** (Pashto: تنکړه) is a [national identity](#) document that is issued upon request to every [Afghan citizen or national](#), whether such individual resides inside or outside of [Afghanistan](#). It serves as proof of [identity](#) and [residency](#) but more importantly [Afghan nationality](#). The document is issued by the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), which has offices in all [provinces of Afghanistan](#). The Afghan Tazkira, which is older than 100 years, has been modernized in recent years. The [electronic identification](#) (e-ID) card campaign was officially launched in [Kabul](#) on 3 May 2018 when [Afghan President Ashraf Ghani](#) and [First Lady Rula Ghani](#) received their e-ID cards. Distribution of the e-ID cards or e-Tazkira later began in other parts of Afghanistan. The new e-ID card complies with international standards for identity documents. As of August 2021, over 6 million Afghan nationals have obtained their new Tazkiras.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_identity_card

Key events in the war in northern Ethiopia

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/key-events-war-northern-ethiopia-2022-08-24/>

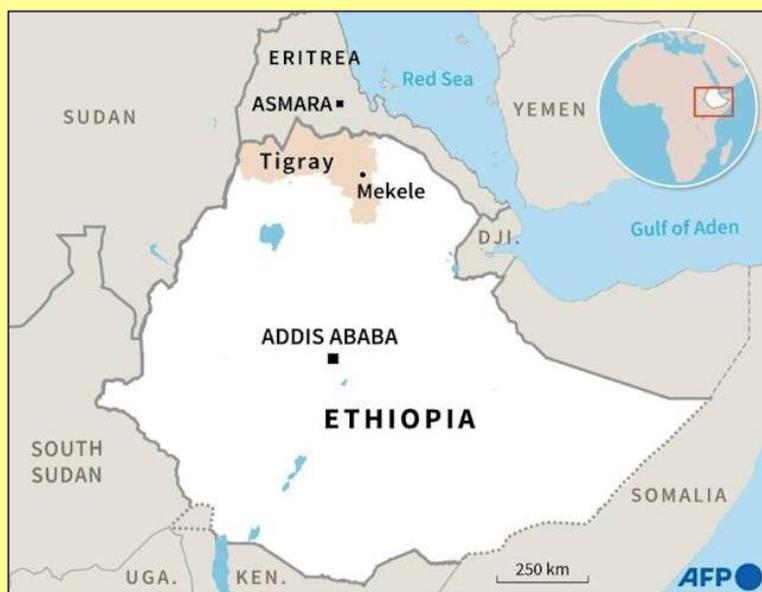
Aug 24 – A nearly two-year-long war in northern Ethiopia has killed thousands of civilians, left millions of people needing food aid and displaced millions more. Here are some of the main events in the conflict.

Nov. 4, 2020 - Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sends troops into the northern region of Tigray, accusing its governing party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), of mounting surprise attacks against military bases in the area. The TPLF, which dominated national politics until Abiy took office in 2018, says it seized military equipment and took thousands of soldiers prisoner because Abiy was preparing to send troops into the region after it held a vote in September in defiance of federal government orders. In the subsequent days, Eritrean soldiers and forces from the neighbouring Ethiopian region of Amhara mobilise to reinforce Ethiopian troops.

Nov. 9, 2020 - The first of two rounds of ethnic killings begins in the town of [Mai Kadra](#), claiming hundreds of lives. Initially Amhara civilians say they are attacked by Tigrayan militiamen. Then Tigrayan civilians say they are attacked by Amhara militiamen. Tens of thousands of Tigrayans begin to flee from Western Tigray into Sudan.

Nov. 14, 2020 - The TPLF fires rockets at two Amhara airports and at the Eritrean capital Asmara, accusing Eritrea of sending soldiers into Tigray.

Nov. 28, 2020 - Abiy tells parliament that operations in Tigray are over and soldiers control the Tigrayan capital Mekelle.



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – September 2022

Nov. 28-29, 2020 - Eritrean troops kill hundreds of people in the town of Axum, Amnesty International says, describing it as a potential crime against humanity.

February-March 2021 - Tens of thousands of civilians move east, deeper into Tigray, as they flee Western Tigray, whose fertile fields are also claimed by Amhara.

March 23, 2021 - Abiy confirms for the first time that Eritrean troops entered Tigray, after months of denials from both nations. [read more](#)

April 2021 - A regional official says Eritrean soldiers are holding Tigrayan women as [sex slaves](#) amid a wave of reported gang rapes. Eritrea denies the accusation.

June 11, 2021 - The United Nations says 350,000 Tigrayans are experiencing [famine](#) with millions more at risk; the U.N. aid chief accuses Ethiopia of using food as a weapon of war. Ethiopia denies blocking aid.

June 29, 2021 - Tigrayan forces [take control](#) of Mekelle, after months of battles in the surrounding countryside. Ethiopian and Eritrean troops withdraw from most of Tigray except Western Tigray.

July 13, 2021 - Tigrayan forces thrust south and west into land claimed by the neighbouring Amhara region.

July 19, 2021 - Tigrayan forces push east to attack the neighbouring Afar region, towards a road and railway linking the capital of landlocked Ethiopia to Djibouti's port.

Sept. 29, 2021 - Only a trickle of food aid reaches Tigray. The United Nations accuses the government of a [de facto blockade](#), which it denies.

Oct. 11, 2021 - Ethiopia launches a ground offensive to push Tigrayan forces out of Amhara and Afar. The next week, Ethiopia restarts air strikes in Tigray.

Nov. 2, 2021 - Ethiopia declares a six-month state of emergency after Tigrayan forces gain territory and say they are considering marching on the capital Addis Ababa.

December 2021 - Ethiopia's military recaptures the town of Lalibela, famed for its rock churches, from Tigrayan forces. It is the latest in a string of towns Ethiopia's military says it has retaken.

Jan 8, 2022 - Aid workers tell Reuters that an air strike in Tigray killed 56 people and injured 30 in a camp for displaced people. The government does not respond to a Reuters request for comment at the time, but has denied targeting civilians.

Feb 15, 2022 - Ethiopia's parliament votes for an early end to a six-month state of emergency.

March 24, 2022 - Ethiopia's government declares an immediate, unilateral truce to allow aid into Tigray. Tigrayan forces later say they will respect a ceasefire if sufficient aid is delivered to their region "within reasonable time".

April 1, 2022 - Twenty trucks carrying food aid enter territory controlled by Tigrayan forces, the first time aid enters Tigray by road since mid-December. The initial trickle of aid increases over the next month.

June 14, 2022 - The federal government forms a committee to negotiate with Tigrayan forces, a public step towards peace talks.

Aug. 20, 2022 - The World Food Programme says almost half the population of Tigray is in "severe" need of food. Aid groups struggle to distribute supplies because the government restricts the amount of fuel that can enter Tigray.

Aug. 24, 2022 - Fighting between Tigrayan forces and government forces erupts around the town of Kobo, ending a months-long ceasefire.

Ethiopia Food Security Outlook June 2022 to January 2023

Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-food-security-outlook-june-2022-january-2023>

Key Messages

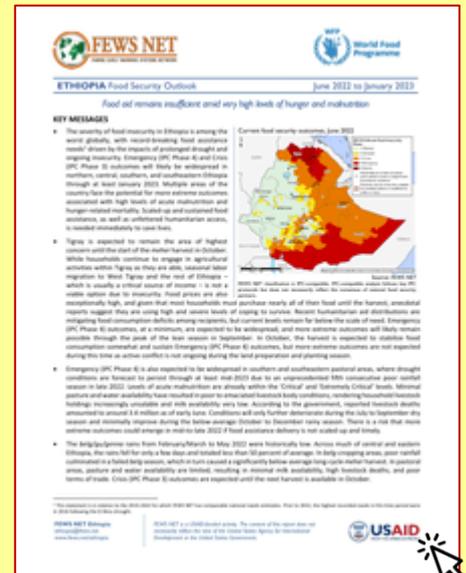
- The severity of food insecurity in Ethiopia is among the worst globally, with record-breaking food assistance needs[1] driven by the impacts of prolonged drought and ongoing insecurity. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes will likely be widespread in northern, central, southern, and southeastern Ethiopia through at least January 2023. Multiple areas of the country face the potential for more extreme outcomes associated with high levels of acute malnutrition and hunger-related mortality. Scaled-up and sustained food assistance, as well as unfettered humanitarian access, is needed immediately to save lives.

WHO CARES?



[1] This statement is in relation to the 2014-2022 for which FEWS NET has comparable national needs estimates. Prior to 2022, the highest recorded needs in this time period were in 2016 following the El-Nino drought.

- Tigray is expected to remain the area of highest concern until the start of the meher harvest in October. While households continue to engage in agricultural activities within Tigray as they are able, seasonal labor migration to West Tigray and the rest of Ethiopia – which is usually a critical source of income – is not a viable option due to insecurity. Food prices are also exceptionally high, and given that most households must purchase nearly all of their food until the harvest, anecdotal reports suggest they are using high and severe levels of coping to survive. Recent



humanitarian aid distributions are mitigating food consumption deficits among recipients, but current levels remain far below the scale of need. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes, at a minimum, are expected to be widespread, and more extreme outcomes will likely remain possible through the peak of the lean season in September. In October, the harvest is expected to stabilize food consumption somewhat and sustain Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes, but more extreme outcomes are not expected during this time as active conflict is not ongoing during the land preparation and planting season.

- Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is also expected to be widespread in southern and southeastern pastoral areas, where drought conditions are forecast to persist through at least mid-2023 due to an unprecedented fifth consecutive poor rainfall season in late 2022. Levels of acute malnutrition are already within the 'Critical' and 'Extremely Critical' levels. Minimal pasture and water availability have resulted in poor to emaciated livestock body conditions, rendering household livestock holdings increasingly unsalable and milk availability very low. According to the government, reported livestock deaths amounted to around 3.4 million as of early June. Conditions will only further deteriorate during the July to September dry season and minimally improve during the below-average October to December rainy season. There is a risk that more extreme outcomes could emerge in mid-to-late 2022 if food assistance delivery is not scaled-up and timely.
- The belg/gu/genna rains from February/March to May 2022 were historically low. Across much of central and eastern Ethiopia, the rains fell for only a few days and totaled less than 50 percent of average. In belg-cropping areas¹, poor rainfall culminated in a failed belg season, which in turn caused a significantly below-average long-cycle meher harvest². In pastoral areas, pasture and water availability are limited, resulting in minimal milk availability, high livestock deaths, and poor terms of trade. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected until the next harvest is available in October.

¹ Belg is the short rainy season normally beginning in February and ending (depending on the area) in late April/May. In belg dependent areas farmers usually sow barley with the first rain. Harvest of the crop is in June/July

² Any temporary crop harvested between the months of September and February are considered as meher season crop.



EDITOR'S COMMENT: Only European wars attract international attention. Who cares about Africa? Who is willing to donate money and food worth a few millions of euros or dollars – NOT BILLIONS! Who cares about peace and lives? The latter of course is valid for the Ukraine-Russia war as well.

Politicians must not be appointed to head security ministries – Expert

Source: <https://newsghana.com.gh/politicians-must-not-be-appointed-to-head-security-ministries-expert/>



Aug 28 – A security Threat Analyst on Sunday said in view of the volatile security situation in Africa, it does not make “security sense” to appoint politicians and businessmen to head security ministries.

Mr. George Dosoo Doyen, also an Executive Director of the Doyen Institute of Intelligence and Investigations, said “As long as this continues, Africa will still be down there when it comes to the security ladder,” he stressed. On the contrary, Mr. Doyen noted that most advanced and western nations like the United States and the United Kingdom, persons heading either the Interior Ministry or the Homeland Security were persons with security backgrounds or five-star generals, with deep knowledge and experience in security matters, and not just politicians. Mr. Doyen made these remarks when speaking at the 15th graduation and fifth anniversary of the Doyen Institute of Intelligence and Investigations, in Accra, on Saturday. He said terrorism in Africa



concerned everyone, therefore, it would require every citizen's vigilance and sense of responsibility to halt the threat. He observed that factors such as authoritative governance and pervasive corruption and bribery mostly fuelled terrorist attacks in Africa and, thus, underscoring the need to address such threats. The Executive Director admonished the graduands to work collaboratively with their colleagues and leverage on their new skills and knowledge acquired in professional private investigations, cyber and digital forensics, and corporate security management to combat crime and other fraudulent activities on the continent. In all, 93 graduands drawn from eight African countries including Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, South Sudan, Botswana, Liberia and Lesotho received certificates and diplomas after months of intensive academic work. Mr. Maxwell Caleb Nortey-Newman, a Certified Fraud Examiner and Forensic Professional speaking on the topic “Mitigating Fraud related Crime: The Role of Citizens” said fraud had moved from the traditional mode to online settings. He advised every citizen to be well-versed in the new methods and strategies to avoid being defrauded. He mentioned some new fraud methods such as identity fraud, imposter scams, credit and debit card fraud, mortgage and loan fraud, employment scams, tax fraud, and Ponzi schemes.

Russia: Vostok 2022 drills from Sept 1-7 will involve more than 50,000 troops from China, India and several other countries

Source: <https://theprint.in/world/vostok-2022-drills-from-sept-1-7-will-involve-more-than-50000-troops-from-china-india-and-several-other-countries-russia/1106231/>

Aug 29 – Russia said on Monday that the Vostok 2022 military exercises will be held from September 1 to 7 in different locations in the Far East and the Sea of Japan and involve more than 50,000 troops from China, India and several other countries.

“The Vostok 2022 strategic command and staff exercise envisages various scenarios of operations by combined arms and coalition forces (troops) to ensure military security of the Russian Federation and its allies within the area of responsibility of the Eastern Military District,” the Russian Defence Ministry was quoted as saying by the state-owned TASS news agency in a statement.



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The drills will be held from September 1-7 and “practice defensive and offensive operations” at seven training grounds of the Eastern Military District and in maritime and coastal areas of the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan, the ministry said.

“The strategic maneuvers will bring together over 50,000 troops and more than 5,000 items of armaments and military hardware, in particular, 140 aircraft, 60 combat ships, gunboats and support vessels,” it said, adding that it will engage troops from China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Syria and several ex-Soviet nations.

There were no immediate comments from the Indian Army or the Ministry of Defence in New Delhi on the participation of Indian soldiers at the Vostok-2022 military exercises in Russia.

Russia’s military contingent in the drills will involve military command centers and troops of the Eastern Military District, Airborne



Force units, long-range and military transport planes, the Russian defence ministry said.

“The drills are set to master the skills of commanders and headquarters in exercising command and control of combined arms and coalition forces to repel acts of aggression in the Eastern direction and in the Far Eastern maritime zone, raise compatibility and interoperability of the coalition forces in jointly coping with the objectives of maintaining peace, protecting interests and ensuring military security in the Eastern region,” the ministry said.

The maneuvers will also check the

preparedness of military command centers in planning operations in maritime areas, ensuring all-embracing logistics support, command and control of battlegroups in warfare, it said.

The tactical episodes of the drills are based on various scenarios of practical operations by military contingents of Russia and partner states, with the basic stage to be held at the Sergeyevsky practice range, the ministry said.

The Russian and Chinese naval forces will practice joint operations in the Sea of Japan to defend sea lanes and areas of maritime economic activity and assist ground forces in maritime directions, it added.

Last year, India attended Exercise ZAPAD 2021 drills in Russia in which 17 countries including China and Pakistan took part.

The Russian defence ministry stated earlier that during the drills the participating forces would practice measures to maintain military security in the eastern region.

Earlier this month, the Chinese Defence Ministry in a press release said the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has sent personnel to participate in this exercise, which aims to deepen pragmatic and friendly cooperation with the militaries of participating countries, enhance the level of strategic coordination of all participating parties, and enhance the ability to deal with various security threats.

The drills are unrelated to the current international and regional situation, it said, apparently referring to the Ukraine war as well as the Ladakh standoff.



The eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas. As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process last year on the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area. So far, the two sides held 16 rounds of Corps Commander Level talks to resolve the prolonged standoff.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: The side effects of the Ukraine war are becoming more visible.

The 'MacGyvered' Weapons in Ukraine's Arsenal

Source: <https://news.yahoo.com/macgyvered-weapons-ukraines-arsenal-114835507.html>

Aug 29 — The billions of dollars in military aid the United States has sent Ukraine includes some of the most advanced and lethal weapons systems in the world. But Ukraine has also scored big successes in the war by employing the weapons and equipment in unexpected ways, and jury-rigging some on the fly, according to military experts.

From the sinking of the Moskva, Russia's Black Sea flagship, in April to the attack on a Russian air base in Crimea this month, Ukrainian troops have used American and other weapons in ways few expected, the experts and Defense Department officials say. By mounting missiles onto trucks, for instance, Ukrainian forces have moved them more quickly into firing range. By putting rocket systems on speedboats, they have increased their naval warfare ability. And to the astonishment of weapons experts, Ukraine has continued to destroy Russian targets with slow-moving Turkish-made Bayraktar attack drones and inexpensive, plastic aircraft modified to drop grenades and other munitions.

"People are using the MacGyver metaphor," said Frederick Hodges, a former top U.S. Army commander in Europe, in a reference to the 1980s TV show in which the title character uses simple, improvised contraptions to get himself out of sticky situations.

After six months of war, the death toll on both sides is high: Although U.S. officials estimate that up to 80,000 Russian troops have been killed or wounded, Ukraine's outgunned military has said it is losing 100 to 200 troops a day. Even so, the engineering ingenuity of the Ukrainians lies in stark contrast to the slow, plodding, doctrinal nature of the Russian advance.

In the attack on the Moskva, for example, the Ukrainians developed their own anti-ship missile, called the Neptune, which they based on the design of an old Soviet anti-ship missile, but with substantially improved range and electronics. They appear to have mounted the Neptune missiles onto one or more trucks, according to one senior U.S. official, and moved them within range of the ship, which was about 75 miles from Odesa. The striking of the Moskva was, in essence, the Neptune's proof of concept; it was the first time the new Ukrainian weapon was used in an actual war, and it took down Russia's flagship in the Black Sea.

"With the Moskva, they MacGyvered a very effective anti-ship system that they put on the back of a truck to make it mobile and move it around," Hodges, who is now a senior adviser at Human Rights First, said in an interview.

Ukrainian troops have done so well with the Bayraktar drone, in fact, that the company's CEO, Haluk Bayraktar, praised their ability to "squeeze as much as possible out of these systems," in a recent interview with a Ukrainian news program. U.S. military officials remain puzzled by why Russia's many-layered air defense systems have not been more effective in stopping the drones, which have no self-defense systems, are easily spotted by radar and cruise at only about 80 mph.

A senior Pentagon official said Ukrainian forces had put American-supplied HARM anti-radiation missiles on Soviet-designed MiG-29 fighter jets — something that no air force had ever done. The American HARM missile, designed to seek and destroy Russian air defense radar, is not usually compatible with the MiG-29 or the other fighter jets in Ukraine's arsenal.

Ukraine managed to rejigger targeting sensors to allow pilots to fire the American missile from their Soviet-era aircraft. "They have actually successfully integrated it," the senior official told reporters during a Pentagon briefing. He spoke on the condition of anonymity per Biden administration rules.

Officials say the missiles can target Russian air defense systems up to 93 miles away.

The craftiness is now on display in Crimea. In recent weeks, Ukraine has targeted the Black Sea peninsula, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014, in a series of attacks.

In the strike on the Russian air base, Ukrainian forces destroyed eight fighter jets. A few days later, clandestine Ukrainian fighters operating behind enemy lines hit several sites in the occupied territory that Russia had thought were safe, including ammunition depots and supply lines.

Then, blasts hit a military airfield outside Sevastopol, the largest city in Crimea and home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Russia claimed that the booms from the strike were the sound of successful anti-aircraft fire.



“The Ukrainians are able to exploit their knowledge in the area,” said Dara Massicot, a senior policy researcher with Rand Corp. This exploitation is rooted in Ukraine’s history as the heart of the former Soviet Union’s defense industry. For decades, Ukraine was the place where the Soviet Union — and then Russia — developed turbines for warships, tanks and even aircraft, such as the Antonov An-124, one of the largest cargo planes in the world and used by Russia to transport weapons to Ukraine. U.S. military commanders who have worked with Ukrainian troops say the Ukrainians are always ready to improvise. Hodges said he noticed “on a tactical level how clever Ukrainians were” when he worked with them in 2013 and 2014. He said the adaptation of the American-supplied HARM missiles to work on MiGs demonstrated the depth of technological know-how in Ukraine’s military.

“You can’t just hang any kind of rocket off of any kind of plane — there’s a whole lot of avionics and other aspects of flying and high-performance aircraft that are involved here,” he said. “And they did it.”

The attacks in Crimea underscore Ukraine’s increasingly aggressive military tactics, as the government in Kyiv, Ukraine’s capital, has relied on special forces and local partisan fighters to strike deep behind the front, disrupt Russian supply lines and counter Russia’s advantages in arms and equipment.

U.S. officials say the United States has provided detailed intelligence to help Ukraine’s forces attack Russian targets throughout the war. But Ukraine conducted the first of the recent strikes in Crimea — a series of blasts at the Saki military airfield Aug. 9 — without notifying American and other Western allies in advance, officials said.

Indeed, one U.S. official later briefed on the attacks said Ukrainian commandos and partisan fighters had used an improvised array of weapons, explosives and tactics in the strikes.

“It’s all homegrown,” the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss operational details. “We did not get any advance notice.”

That first strike at the airfield destroyed much of the air power and munitions stores of the Black Sea Fleet’s 43rd naval aviation regiment. It was also intended to have a psychological impact on Russian forces in Crimea, the U.S. official said, calling it the “Doolittle Effect,” a reference to an American attack on Japan in World War II.

The bomber raid led by Lt. Col. James Doolittle was a low-level daylight attack in April 1942 that resulted in only light damage to military and industrial targets. But it buoyed an American homefront reeling from a string of setbacks in the Pacific, beginning with the Pearl Harbor attack on Dec. 7, 1941. It also shattered the idea that Japan was invulnerable to American air attacks, as its government had claimed.

In a Telegram post after the Saki strike, Andriy Tsaplienko, a Ukrainian military journalist, said the damage suggested that a truck-mounted heavy missile launcher called the Grim, or Sapsan, had been used in the attack. That system was developed by Yuzhmash, a state-owned Ukrainian aerospace manufacturer. The Kremlin, however, rejected the possibility that a Ukrainian-made ballistic missile system had anything to do with it.

“The activities in the Crimean Peninsula likely mark a new phase in the war with the Ukrainians going on the offensive with an irregular warfare campaign designed to push Russia from an area they were sure was secure,” said Mick Mulroy, a former Pentagon official and CIA officer.

The Spain-Morocco tunnel project resurfaces after the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two nations

Source: <https://atalayar.com/en/content/spain-morocco-tunnel-project-resurfaces-after-resumption-diplomatic-relations-between-two>



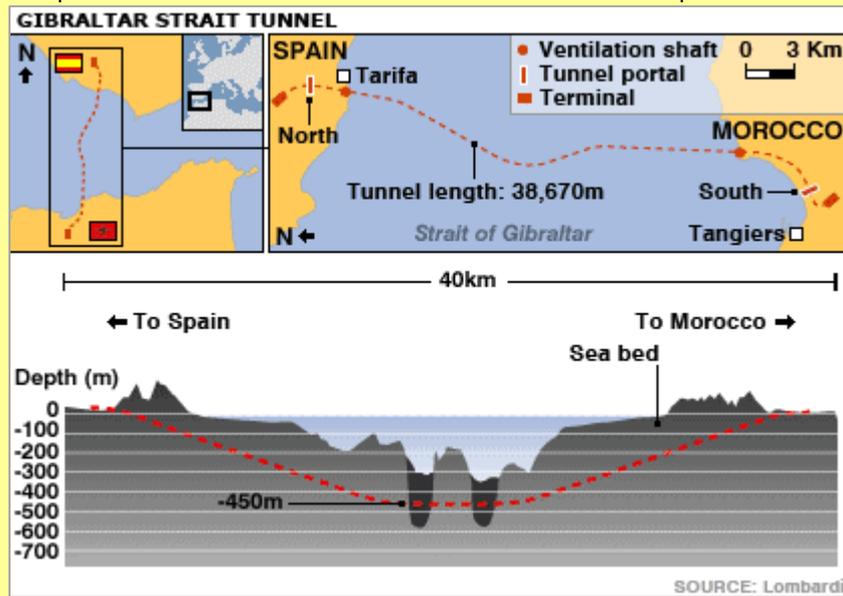
June 2022 – The resumption of relations between Spain and Morocco comes with new cooperation agreements for economic development. Following the Spanish government’s recognition of Morocco’s plan for Western Sahara, ties between the two countries are better than ever. Thanks to this, many experts and media have once again taken up one of the joint projects between the two nations that never became a reality: the Spain-Morocco tunnel.

This bridge between Africa and Europe was first planned in 1979, but never saw the light of day, but many are already saying that this diplomatic push could be the key to its construction. It is a tunnel that would connect the shores of both countries through the Strait of Gibraltar, with a length of 42 kilometers between the two territories.

Its construction could boost the economy in both regions, especially in the areas closest to the project. If this plan were ever to become a reality, it would facilitate the movement of people and goods more easily and quickly than by plane or ship, and would develop transport in the western Mediterranean.



Europe and Africa could be connected and trade could be expanded and developed more effectively. As a result, the European



market could have easier access to the African continent's market by entering through Morocco.

The origin of this project dates back to 1979 after the signing of the Spanish-Moroccan joint declaration. In this memorandum signed between the kings of the time, Hassan II of Morocco and Juan Carlos I of Spain, the will to collaborate in important sectors was expressed, aware of the future between Europe and Africa, as well as the work and positive consequences that the construction of the tunnel would have. From this document was born the scientific and technical cooperation agreement between the two kingdoms, which was the basis for the feasibility study of the project.

Many institutions contributed to the financing of the project in the past. These include the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, Arab funds and the

African Development Fund. There are still two public companies from both countries, SNED and SECEGSA, which have been interested in the project since it began to take shape.

Despite this, and following the various diplomatic conflicts that the two nations have experienced, the project was put aside and saved for a future in which the waters would be calm. Now, everything seems to indicate that the initiative has been taken up again with the reigns of Mohammed VI and the Spanish monarch Felipe VI. In addition, it is worth noting that the



intention to link the Alawi country with Gibraltar via a maritime tunnel or bridge was recently announced, so Spain would be interested in having its own entrance to Africa. There is currently a Joint Commission between five Spanish and five Moroccan members that meet every six months, and one of the issues it addresses is the construction of this tunnel. The aforementioned companies continue to present their reports and notify this institution with each progress in the study today. All the experts and diplomats from both countries who have spoken on the subject agree that it would be beneficial for both parties and that it would lead to important economic development. With its construction, it would be possible to develop logistics platforms, transshipment zones in the transport chain, the rationalisation of infrastructures, the use of storage facilities, and even the reduction of transport costs.

Moreover, not only would trade and the flow of goods between the two continents be favoured, but the use of the tunnel as a new gas



pipeline between Morocco and Spain could also be exploited. This would allow gas to be transported in both directions without having to resort to other methods, something that would benefit both parties after their conflict with Algeria.

The tunnel seems feasible, but when it was being studied, drawbacks arose. The Strait of Gibraltar is very deep and there are sea currents, winds, tides and waves that could complicate its construction in every way. But the main concern is that the bridge would be located on top of the Azores-Gibraltar fault, one of the Eurasian tectonic plates. In the event of an earthquake caused by the collision of these plates, this is an added difficulty and puts its viability in jeopardy. However, due to this situation, it would be very costly to carry it out and this becomes one of the main obstacles to implementing the plan.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: This innovative project might be good for commercial purposes but it is not a good idea when it comes to illegal immigrants seeking to pass to Europe. Of course, there will be increased security measures on both sides but Morocco will face a big problem that would be difficult to handle alone.

A “brave” neighbor



Aug 28, 2022: Emra Şen'in sunduğu Ulusal Kanal Ana Haber'de Emekli Hava Kurmay Albay İhsan Sefa Yunanistan'ın Türk jetlerine radar kilidi atmasını dikkat çeken ifadelerle Ulusal Kanal ekranlarında değerlendirdi.

like: “We have to shoot down a Greek warplane, to slap in their face!”

Aug 28, 2022: In the National Channel Main News presented by Emra Şen, Retired Air Staff Colonel İhsan Sefa evaluated Greece's radar lockdown on Turkish jets on the National Channel screens with remarkable expressions.

What is going on #1?

Aug 30 – A 13 y/o student was shot this afternoon at Madison Park Academy, a middle/high school near 98th Ave & Edes. Oakland Police say the shooter is 12 y/o student, now in custody. Campus evacuated as worried parents rushed to the scene.

According to the [gun control group Everytown](#), death by firearm is the leading cause of death for children and teens in America. “This is a uniquely American problem,” the group says. “Compared to other high-income countries, American children aged five to 14 are 21 times more likely to be killed with guns.” More than 3,500 children aged up to 19 are shot and killed in the US every year, and about 15,000 are shot and injured. That is an average of around



51 a day. The personal and psychological impact goes far wider, with about 3 million children annually estimated to witness a shooting.

What is going on #2?



Available in a supermarket next to you ...

UkraineNews
@Ukraine88261778

#Ukrainian soldier from the hellish front line watch in shock #Zelensky's rave dance party in #Kiev

This is #Ukraine
#ZelenskyWarCriminal #KhersonOffensive #Kherson #Belgorod #Kiev

Эммм... Хоть би один вихідний на 24 години, а тут.

48K views 0:06 / 0:13

3:26 PM · Aug 30, 2022 · Twitter Web App

What is going on #3?

While European leaders are warning European citizens not to turn on the water heater and spear electricity because "we have to help Ukraine in the war", a video reveals exactly where their money is going.

On the war front? Not of course, but in the pockets of the Ukrainian elite, who are gobbling up European aid in a party with no tomorrow that they never want to end.

It is characteristic that the CBS investigation showed that only 30% of the weapons systems sent by the West go to the front, and the rest "get lost on the way". Just think about what happens to the money that does not require any process to be appropriated, especially in one of the most corrupt states in the world like Ukraine.

The picture is typical: Ultra-luxurious jeeps, Porsches, and other expensive cars adorn the entrances of Kyiv's secular clubs, where the Ukrainian elite have fun enjoying Western aid money, spending it on alcohol, love and other substances.



#Freeze for Ukraine



Five Facts About Mass Shootings in K-12 Schools

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220830-five-facts-about-mass-shootings-in-k12-schools>

Aug 30 – Preventing mass shootings in the United States, particularly those occurring in school settings, is an important priority for families, government leaders and officials, public safety agencies, mental health professionals, educators, and local communities. What does the evidence say about how to detect, prevent, and respond to these tragic events? Here's what we've learned through [NIJ](#)-sponsored research:[\[1\]](#)

1. Most people who commit a mass shooting are in crisis leading up to it and are likely to leak their plans to others, presenting opportunities for intervention.

Before their acts of violence, most individuals who carry out a K-12 mass shooting show outward signs of crisis. Through social media and other means, they often publicly broadcast a high degree of personal instability and an inability to cope in their current mental state. Almost all are actively suicidal.

Case studies show that most of these individuals engage in warning behaviors, usually leaking their plans directly to peers or through social media.[\[2\]](#) Yet most leaks of K-12 mass shooting plans are not reported to authorities before the shooting. Research shows that leaking mass shooting plans is associated with a cry for help.[\[3\]](#) Analyses of case reports from successfully averted K-12 mass shootings point to crisis intervention as a promising strategy for K-12 mass shooting prevention.[\[4\]](#) Programs and strategies found to prevent school shootings and school violence generally could hold promise for preventing school mass shootings as well.

2. Everyone can help prevent school mass shootings.

Most individuals who carry out a K-12 mass shooting are insiders, with some connection to the school they target. Often, they are current or former students.

Research suggests that communities can help prevent school mass shootings by working together to address student crises and trauma, recognizing and reporting threats of violence, and following up consistently. Two-thirds of foiled plots in all mass shootings (including school mass shootings) are detected through public reporting. Having a mechanism in place to collect information on threats of possible school violence and thwarted attempts is a good first step.

The School Safety Tip Line Toolkit is one resource to consider for developing and implementing a school tip line.[\[5\]](#) The Mass Attacks Defense Toolkit details evidence-based suggestions for recognizing warning signs and creating collaborative systems to follow up consistently in each case.[\[6\]](#) The Averted School Violence Database enables schools to share details about averted school violence incidents and lessons learned that can prevent future acts of violence.[\[7\]](#)

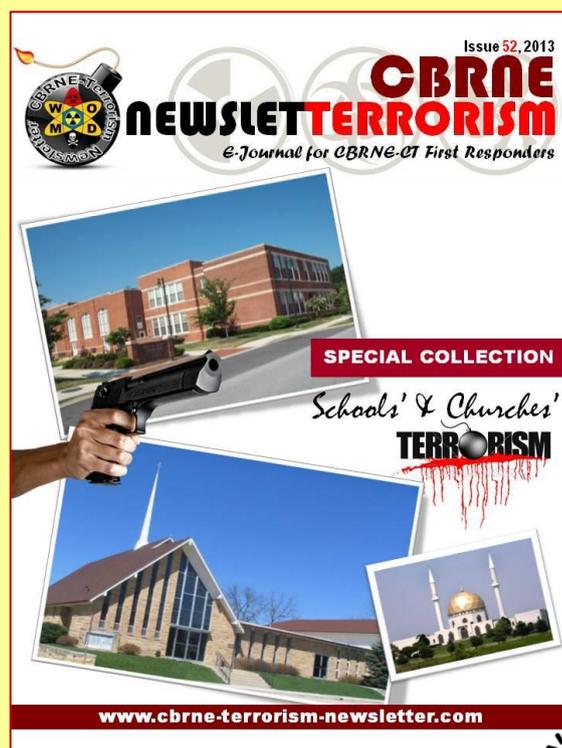
3. Threat assessment is a promising prevention strategy to assess and respond to mass shooting threats, as well as other threats of violence by students.

For schools that adopt threat assessment protocols, school communities are educated to assess threats of violence reported to them.[\[8\]](#) Threat assessment teams, including school officials, mental health personnel, and law enforcement, respond to each threat as warranted by the circumstances.

An appropriate response might include referral of a student to mental health professionals, involvement of law enforcement, or both.

Emphasizing the mental health needs of students who pose threats can encourage their student peers to report on those threats without fear of being stigmatized as a "snitch." In an evaluation study, educating students on this distinction increased their willingness to report threats.[\[9\]](#)

Many educational and public safety experts agree that threat assessment can be a valuable tool. But an ongoing challenge for schools is to implement threat assessment in a manner that minimizes unintended negative consequences.[\[10\]](#)



4. Individuals who commit a school shooting are most likely to obtain a weapon by theft from a family member, indicating a need for more secure firearm storage practices.

In an open-source database study, 80% of individuals who carried out a K-12 mass shooting stole the firearm used in the shooting from a family member.^[11] In contrast, those who committed mass shootings outside of schools often purchased guns lawfully (77%). K-12 mass shootings were more likely to involve the use of a semi-automatic assault weapon than mass shootings in other settings, but handguns were still the most common weapon used in K-12 mass shootings.

Explore more information about the backgrounds, guns, and motivations of individuals who commit mass shootings using The Violence Project interactive database.^[12]

5. The overwhelming majority of individuals who commit K-12 mass shootings struggle with various aspects of mental well-being.

Nearly all individuals who carried out a K-12 mass shooting (92%-100%) were found to be suicidal before or during the shooting.^[13] Most experienced significant childhood hardship or trauma. Those who commit K-12 mass shootings commonly have histories of antisocial behavior and, in a minority of cases, various forms of psychoses.

Despite the prevalence of mental well-being struggles in these individuals' life histories, studies suggest that profiling based on mental health does not aid prevention.¹⁴ However, research on common psychological factors associated with K-12 mass shootings, along with other factors that precipitate school violence, can help inform targeted intervention in coordination with crisis intervention, threat assessment, and improved firearm safety practices.

Notes

[note 1] National Institute of Justice funding award description, "Student Threat Assessment as a Safe and Supportive Prevention Strategy," at the Rector & Visitors of the University of Virginia, award number [2014-CK-BX-0004](#); National Institute of Justice funding award description, "Understanding the Causes of School Violence Using Open Source Data," at the Research Foundation of the City University of New York, award number [2016-CK-BX-0013](#); National Institute of Justice funding award description, "Mass Shooter Database," at Hamline University, award number [2018-75-CX-0023](#), and National Institute of Justice funding award description, "Improving the Understanding of Mass Shooting Plots," at the RAND Corporation, award number [2019-R2-CX-0003](#).

[note 2] Meagan N. Abel, Steven Chermak, and Joshua D. Freilich, "[Pre-Attack Warning Behaviors of 20 Adolescent School Shooters: A Case Study Analysis](#)," *Crime & Delinquency* 68 no. 5 (2022): 786-813.

[note 3] Jillian Peterson et al., "[Communication of Intent To Do Harm Preceding Mass Public Shootings in the United States, 1966 to 2019](#)," *JAMA Network Open* 4 no. 11 (2021): e2133073.

[note 4] Abel, Chermak, and Freilich, "Pre-Attack Warning Behaviors"; and Jillian Peterson and James Densley, *The Violence Project: How To Stop a Mass Shooting Epidemic* (New York: Abrams Press, 2021).

[note 5] Michael Planty et al., [School Safety Tip Line Toolkit](#), Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International.

[note 6] RAND Corporation, "[Mass Attacks Defense Toolkit: Preventing Mass Attacks, Saving Lives](#)."

[note 7] [National Police Foundation, Averted School Violence \(ASV\) Database: 2021 Analysis Update](#), Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

[note 8] Dewey Cornell and Jennifer Maeng, "[Student Threat Assessment as a Safe and Supportive Prevention Strategy, Final Technical Report](#)," Final report to the National Institute of Justice, award number 2014-CK-BX-0004, August 2020, NCJ 255102.

[note 9] Shelby L. Stohlman and Dewey G. Cornell, "[An Online Educational Program To Increase Student Understanding of Threat Assessment](#)," *Journal of School Health* 89 no. 11 (2019): 899-906.

[note 10] Cornell and Maeng, "Student Threat Assessment."

[note 11] Jillian Peterson, "[A Multi-Level, Multi-Method Investigation of the Psycho-Social Life Histories of Mass Shooters](#)," Final report to the National Institute of Justice, award number 2018-75-CX-0023, September 2021, NCJ 302101.

[note 12] The Violence Project, "[Mass Shooter Database](#)."

[note 13] Peterson, "A Multi-Level, Multi-Method Investigation." 14Dewey G. Cornell, "[Threat Assessment as a School Violence Prevention Strategy](#)," *Criminology & Public Policy* 19 no. 1 (2020): 235-252.

See more in these NIJ reports:

- ✓ [Understanding the Causes of School Violence Using Open Source Data](#)
- ✓ [A Multi-Level, Multi-Method Investigation of the Psycho-Social Life Histories of Mass Shooters](#)
- ✓ [The Causes and Consequences of School Violence: A Review](#)
- ✓ [A Comprehensive School Safety Framework: Report to the Committees on Appropriations](#)



Spain – Toro embolado



West Point Has a KKK Plaque Mounted Above Entrance to Science Hall

Source: <https://news.yahoo.com/west-point-kkk-plaque-mounted-122856521.html>

Aug 31 – For decades, the students at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in New York have walked beneath a panel of three bronze plaques mounted at the entrance of Bartlett Hall Science Center that includes an image of a hooded figure and the words “Ku Klux Klan” written below it, according to findings in a report released by a congressional panel Monday.

The report from the panel, the Naming Commission, which was created by Congress last year and tasked with providing recommendations for the removal or renaming of Defense Department assets that commemorate the Confederacy, included multiple suggestions regarding paintings, statues and other items at West Point as well as at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. But the commission said that recommending the removal of the plaque fell outside of its scope because the Ku Klux Klan, founded by former Confederate soldiers, emerged after the Civil War. The panel flagged the item for review in its report and included a picture. A spokesperson for West Point said the academy is reviewing the recommendations made by the panel and will collaborate with the Defense Department and the U.S. Army to implement the approved changes.

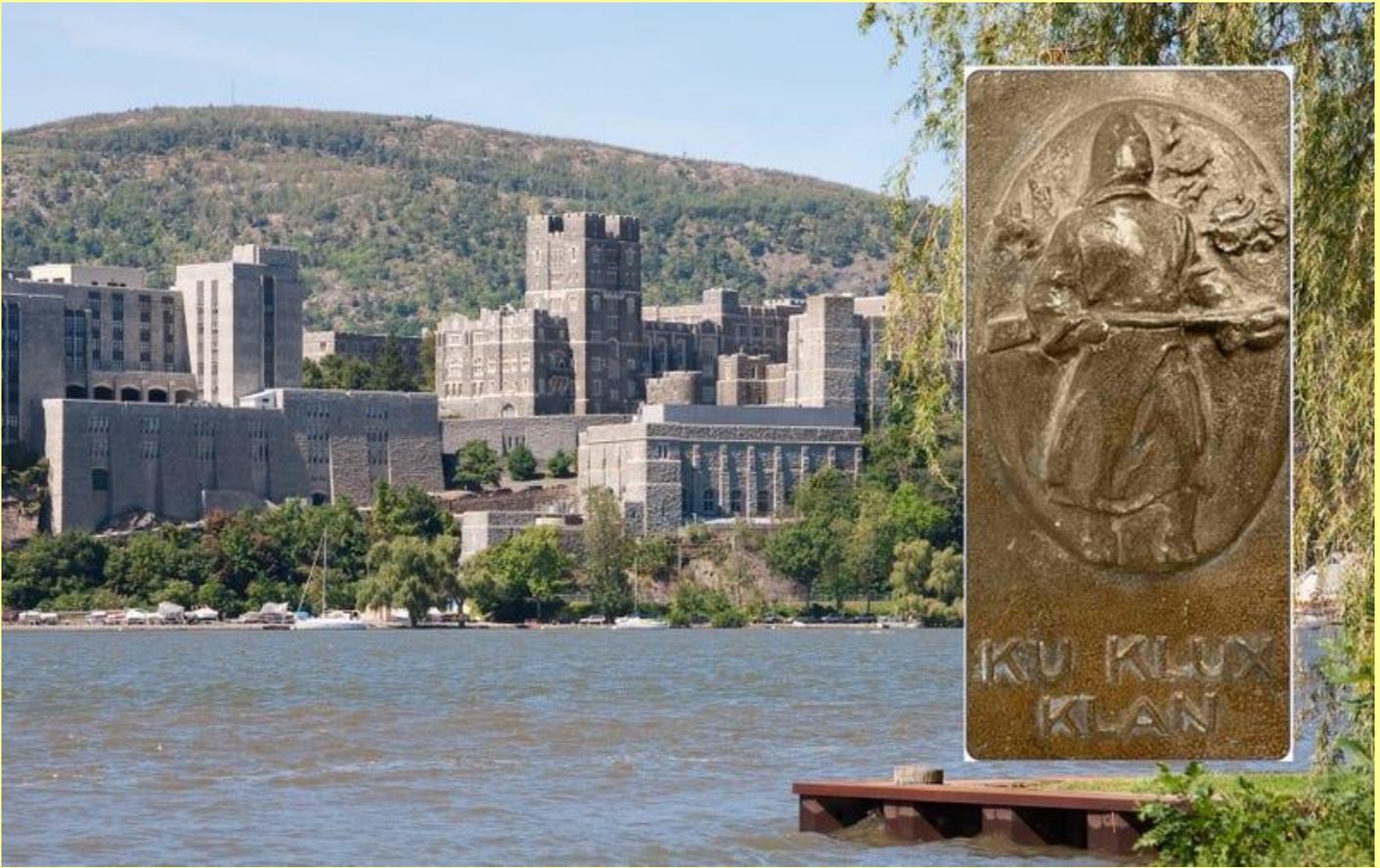
“As a values-based institution, we are fully committed to creating a climate where everyone is treated with dignity and respect,” she said in an email.

“The reason that we put that in there was because we thought it was wrong,” said Ty Seidule, a retired brigadier general who serves as vice chair of the commission, referring to the flagging of the KKK plaque in the report. “When we find something that’s wrong, but it’s not within our remit, we wanted to tell the Secretary of Defense about that.”

The other two plaques above the entrance to the science hall specifically commemorate Confederate figures, including Robert E. Lee and J.E.B. Stuart, the commission found. They were recommended to be modified or removed.

Seidule, who is also a professor emeritus of military history at West Point, wrote a book last year trying to understand why the Military Academy still displayed a portrait of Lee, who graduated from West Point but resigned his Army commission to fight with the Confederacy. The commission unanimously recommended that the portrait of Lee, in Confederate uniform and displayed in Jefferson Hall Library, be modified or removed.





The Naming Commission, established by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2021 following a national outcry over the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in 2020, suggested new names last year for nine Army bases that honor Confederate officers. That effort led to the renaming of a street in New York City's only Army post after a Black officer who died saving other soldiers in Vietnam.

The commission's first report, released earlier this month, focused on Army bases. A third report, due before Oct. 1, will include recommendations for all remaining Department of Defense assets. The secretary of defense has until Jan. 1, 2024, to implement a plan submitted by the commission.

The commission recommended several monuments, portraits and engraved images that depicted Confederate officers to be removed, relocated, renamed or modified at West Point and the Naval Academy.

The cost estimates to implement the changes at West Point ranged from \$1,000 for modifications to \$300,000 for the removal of monuments and engravings at Reconciliation Plaza, which was built in 2001.

Before making its recommendations in its recent reports, the commission examined an inventory, created by the Department of Defense, listing assets throughout the country that were named after Confederate officers or that contained images depicting Confederate officers, Seidule said.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., who co-sponsored a measure that would require the secretary of defense to remove anything that commemorates the Confederacy, said she would work to ensure that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin III implements the commission's recommendations.

"I am supportive of the findings in the report and will continue working with the Naming Commission and D.O.D. to remove these harmful tributes that uphold the legacy of Confederate leaders who killed thousands of American service members in order to preserve the institution of slavery," she said in an email. "It's a disgrace and damaging to our nation."

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, D-N.Y., whose district covers West Point and who wrote a letter in 2020 to then Defense Secretary Mark Esper arguing for the renaming of military buildings and facilities with Confederate names, said he supports the commission's unanimous recommendations.



“We cannot allow bigotry of the past to be perpetuated and celebrated in the same halls that educate our leaders of the future,” he said in an email. “It is essential that West Point’s campus and culture be one that is welcoming to students of all backgrounds.”

Afghanistan: One year after US withdrawal, massive humanitarian needs remain

Source: <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-one-year-after-us-withdrawal-massive-humanitarian-needs-remain>



Aug 15 – Following the withdrawal of United States military forces and the government takeover by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA, also known as the Taliban), international support for medical and humanitarian needs in the country declined sharply. After 20 years of war, Afghans now face extreme hardships due to economic collapse and other factors. The ripple effects of preexisting sanctions and additional financial measures imposed against the IEA after they took power last August are being felt by ordinary people nationwide. Food prices have soared, and many people do not have enough to eat. A prolonged drought is also contributing to food insecurity and [malnutrition](#). Meanwhile, individuals often delay seeking health care because they cannot afford it.

Against this backdrop, MSF teams have continued to provide free and much-needed health care across the country: In August 2021*, *the first patients were admitted to a [newly constructed trauma center](#) in Kunduz; in September 2021, [Khost maternity hospital](#) expanded admission criteria to accept all pregnant women; in February 2022, our teams began providing care to [severely malnourished children](#) in Kabul; and in June, we swiftly mobilized to [send a medical team](#) to the areas worst affected by an earthquake that shook Khost and Paktika provinces.

MSF now works in six provinces across Afghanistan—Helmand, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Kunduz, and Kabul—providing a range of health services, including pediatric, trauma, [maternal](#), [mental health](#), and drug-resistant [tuberculosis](#) care. Here’s a look back how we adapted to ensure continued medical care in all our programs, even when other international aid organizations left the country.

Adapting to provide trauma care amidst fighting

In the months leading to the withdrawal of foreign forces and the change in government, fighting intensified in many areas across the country as front lines came to the doorsteps of medical facilities. In late July, MSF’s team in Kunduz transformed its office space into a temporary trauma unit to provide emergency surgical care to people injured by the fighting.

“Much of our staff could not reach the trauma unit,” a medic [remembers](#). “Four patients urgently needed emergency surgery at the same time. One patient died, but three survived.” When the fighting stopped, patients were transferred to the newly opened 61-bed Kunduz Trauma Center, which had been under construction since 2018. Between January and June



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this year, the team there performed 1,905 surgeries and admitted 894 patients—most of whom were injured in accidents, but some were injured by violence.

Improved security makes it safer to seek care

In [early September 2021](#), improved security conditions allowed some people to leave their homes without the fear of being caught in the crossfire, meaning most MSF teams saw an increase in patients.

That month, the number of hospitalizations of malnourished children at Herat Regional Hospital reached 200 percent above the facility's bed capacity. This spike was likely caused by a lack of functioning health services in the area, the worsening economic crisis, and persistent drought.



The ripple effects of the economic crisis

Afghanistan's health system—dependent on foreign funding since the US-led invasion in 2001—has been [underfunded, understaffed, and dysfunctional for years](#). MSF witnessed severe funding cuts to the Afghan health system in the months after the IAE took control, as many medical organizations scaled down their work and governments and organizations suspended funding.

Foreign funding has now resumed but at significantly lower levels than before [August 2021](#), and specialized health care facilities no longer receive international funding. The ripple effect of the economic crisis and economic measures taken against the new government are being felt nationwide. Food prices have soared. Millions of people are out of work and struggling to find employment. Those with jobs are now supporting more family members, and many people do not have enough to eat or delay seeking health care as they cannot afford it.

MSF does not accept government money for its work in Afghanistan. And, while we've faced challenges accessing funds to pay staff salaries and cover operating costs, our teams have continued providing lifesaving medical care across the country.

Responding to more severe malnutrition peaks

MSF's ITFCs in [Boost hospital](#), in Helmand province, Herat Regional Hospital, and Kandahar are all operating above capacity. Malnutrition is endemic in Afghanistan, but this year the numbers soared: In May, 537 patients were admitted to MSF's ITFC in Boost hospital—the highest number since MSF began working there in 2009.



MSF opened an ambulatory therapeutic feeding center in Kandahar in December 2021, and Herat in May 2022, to provide outpatient care to patients with severe and acute malnutrition. In Kandahar, MSF's team screened more than 16,500 children aged between six months and five years in the first six months of this year. More than 1,500 patients are currently enrolled across both programs, including approximately 570 pregnant or lactating women in Herat.



The dangerous consequences of compounding illnesses

Children are more vulnerable to severe illness from malnutrition if they are also fighting other diseases such as measles, malaria, pneumonia, and gastrointestinal infections. They are also more susceptible to these diseases if they are malnourished, as their immune systems are weakened. It's a vicious cycle. Acute watery diarrhea, which peaks in summer, is particularly dangerous for malnourished children and is one of the leading causes of death in children in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has historically seen a seasonal peak in measles cases. But in 2021 there were two peaks, leading to far more cases than in previous years. The surge did not slow in 2022, and our teams witnessed a high number of cases in the first three months of the year in four provinces where we treat measles cases: Helmand, Kabul, Herat, and Kunduz.

"Strengthening routine immunization is key to controlling measles outbreaks," Dr. Hamayoun, MSF deputy medical coordinator in Afghanistan, said in April this year. "There is a willingness from the people in the community to get the measles vaccine. The problem is that there is no availability of care. Many people can't afford to go to health facilities."

Fortunately cases declined in April, and our teams are currently seeing fewer [cases of measles](#) in our facilities. The Ministry of Public Health carried out a vaccination campaign in some regions at the beginning of the year and another is planned in the coming months, though vaccination rates remain low and MSF teams will continue to monitor the situation.

The barriers women face accessing care

In September, MSF expanded the admission criteria of Khost maternity hospital to assist all pregnant women—not just those at high risk for complications. But it can still be difficult for pregnant women to access the care they need to have a safe delivery. In rural areas of Afghanistan, like Khost, most women do not have adequate access to essential obstetrics care for many reasons, including the shortage of female midwives and doctors.

More than half of our approximately 450 staff in Khost are female doctors, midwives, cleaners, and administrators hired from the local community. Ensuring a separation between men and women in the Khost maternity unit is an important cultural practice in this area of Afghanistan. Having women available to provide sexual and reproductive health care not only increases women's access to health care, but it creates a more comfortable and supportive environment for the patients.

As some funding for local health centers in Khost was restored, the hospital reverted to its regular admission criteria in December 2021. In the first six months of 2022, MSF's team helped to deliver more than 10,000 babies. "I like to help the women who deliver in Khost," said MSF midwife, Aqila, who finds great comfort in helping the women in her community.



“The MSF maternity is a safe and great place for them. I delivered my own baby here. I love being a part of it.”

Providing care through thick and thin

Despite decades of international aid and funding, Afghans still struggle to access basic medical care. The health system continues to be under-funded and under-resourced—as it has been for years. Government facilities face staff, training, medicine, and equipment shortages, and the few private clinics that are able to run are financially out of reach for many.

Donor funding is keeping the health care system afloat, but it is not a long-term solution: Humanitarian organizations and funding mechanisms will never be a substitute for a well-functioning public health system. Afghans urgently need a health care system that meets their needs.

While MSF continues to face many challenges such as disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and massive needs, [our teams across Afghanistan are committed](#) to providing free medical care, through thick and thin.

Congress Holds Key to Turkey-Greece Balance of Air Power

By Burak Bekdil

Gatestone Institute

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63492/congress-holds-key-to-turkey-greece-balance>



Aug 25 – In 2019, underestimating reaction from Turkey's NATO allies, Erdoğan decided to buy the Russian-made S-400 air defense system, the first such system purchased by a NATO member state. The cost to the Turkish taxpayer was a good \$2.5 billion. The system remains "unpacked": Erdoğan fears further Western sanctions if he deploys the S-400s.

In return, the U.S. sanctioned Turkey under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). Additionally, the U.S.-led multinational consortium that builds the new generation of F-35 fighter jets expelled Turkey from the partnership. The cost to the Turkish taxpayer was another \$1.5 billion. Turkey's defense industry, [suspended](#) from the consortium, will have been deprived of \$10 billion worth of contracts over the next decade.

One move, ordering the S-400s from Russia, cost Turkey a net loss of \$14 billion. And his fans call Erdoğan a wizard gambler.



That was only the financial loss to a country, where the per capita Gross Domestic Product is still crawling at around \$9,500 -- the second-lowest in Europe, after Albania. It appears that the S-400 decision will also cost Turkey geostrategically.

Turkey's 270 F-16s will be phased out in 10 to 15 years. Now that it has been kicked out of the US-led F-35 program, Ankara will be hard-pressed to sustain its aerial firepower unless it can buy new F-16s and upgrade some of its current fleet.

Turkey, with NATO's second-biggest military, has traditionally had a deterrent air force, during and after the Cold War. In 2022, the Turkish Air Force (TuAF) ranked 21 in the [Global Air Powers Ranking](#). An

attempted coup in July 2016 led to tens of thousands of people [purged](#) from both the civil service and the military. The number of generals in the TuAF [dropped](#) from 72 before the failed coup to 44 after. The force had lost half of its pilots – from 1,350 to 680. Resignations and retirement requests of TuAF pilots followed the purge, further [weakening](#) the air force's command and operational capabilities, and bringing the number of [pilots](#) to fewer than 400. The air force had to [recruit](#) Pakistani pilots for its F-16 missions. Turkey's air force operates fighter jet squadrons of fourth-generation U.S.-built F-16s and older F-4s. Today, the Turkish military [has a total](#) of 270 F-16C/D aircraft in its inventory, all of them Block 30/40/50 models. Is that good enough? No. Most of those aircraft will have to be phased out within the next 10 to 12 years, depending on their upgrades. So, this means that Turkey's air force is flying into an abyss.



Meanwhile, on the opposite shores of the Aegean Sea, rival Greece has taken steps to change the air power balance in its favor. Greece in January [showcased](#) its newly acquired defense capabilities by flying six new Rafale fighter jets over the Acropolis hours after they arrived from France -- along with a bill for €11.5 billion.

Ironically, in June, Greece sent an official request to the U.S. for the purchase of 20 F-35 fighter jets -- which Turkey would have bought if Erdoğan had not insisted on buying the Russian S-400s that he never unpacked. "Our intention is to acquire an F-35 squadron with a possible option for a second one. Sending a Letter of Request (LoR) which has happened in the past few days is part of this process," Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis [told reporters](#) after the NATO summit on June 30.

Erdoğan had also [threatened](#) his NATO allies that he would purchase Russian-made Su-35 or Su-57 aircraft if all other Western fighter jet options failed. Some Western governments were concerned about pushing Turkey further into Russia's orbit by denying Turkey fighter technology. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, however, buying from Russia is no longer an option. Erdoğan, fearing further sanctions, cannot buy even an airplane wing from Russia, let alone an advanced fighter.

A Swedish solution (Saab's Gripen jets) is also no longer an option. China is not either: Beijing keeps harboring hard feelings over Ankara's decision to scrap a \$3.4 billion contract initially awarded to a Chinese company in 2013 for the air defense program -- instead of which Ankara later chose the Russian-made S-400s. There is always the European Typhoon (Eurofighter). But Turkey and the Typhoon's European makers have not yet solved differences over intellectual property rights and other co-production details. All this picture showed Ankara was that the only viable option is another U.S.-made fighter, although not the new generation: The F-16 Block 70. Thus, Turkey in October made a [request](#) to the U.S. to buy 40 F-16 fighter jets and nearly 80 modernization kits for its existing warplanes. This purchase would mean an estimated \$6 billion+ business for F-16 maker Lockheed Martin.

President Joe Biden is "willing to cooperate with U.S. Congress on the renewal and modernization of Turkey's F-16 fighter jet fleet," according to a statement made by a State Department official on July 7. [According](#) to Doug Jones, deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs:

"So the F-16 issue has been up there for a while. And I think the administration has stated Biden's position on this, which is that the administration supports Turkey's modernizing.... The president has also been clear that he needs to support Congress to do this as well. So the leaders have spoken about this, but the position of the administration remains what it was before, before the summit in support of this sale, and expressed the willingness to work with Congress."

Things, however, are not progressing as smoothly as Biden may have hoped. The U.S. House of Representatives on July 14 approved legislation that could create a [new hurdle](#) for Biden's plan to sell F-16 fighter jets to Turkey.

The House approved a measure that basically said the amendment would bar the U.S. from selling or transferring the jets to Turkey unless the administration certifies that doing so is essential to U.S. national security and includes a description of concrete steps taken to ensure Turkey does not use them for unauthorized overflights of Greece (which Turkey repeatedly conducts). The amendment, offered by Democratic Representatives Frank Pallone and Chris Pappas to the annual National Defense Authorization Act by a vote of 244 to 179, restricted the sale by making it conditional. It was the latest effort by members of Congress to exert control over the sale of F-16s to Turkey.

An ostensibly compelling argument in favor of the sale is this: the U.S. will not be selling the advanced F-16 to Erdoğan, but to a NATO ally, Turkey. So, why block the sale as, after a while, the Turkish Islamist strongman, like others, will have to disappear from the political scene.

The argument is that the 69-year-old Erdoğan will be ousted by popular vote either in 2023 or, that failing, in 2028 -- whereas the F-16s will be in use in the next couple of decades.

However, even then, post-Erdoğan politics in Turkey will most likely produce another Islamist/conservative/nationalist alliance of some flavor, probably led by another Erdoğan.

The U.S. Congress should take into account a political perspective in Aegean military balance -- in addition to the \$6 billion or so business for the American industry -- if and when it decides on an F-16 sale to Turkey.

Turkey, theoretically, is a NATO ally, but in the last decade, Erdoğan's rigid anti-Western ideology has brought Turkey closer to like-minded states such as Russia and Iran. Erdoğan should not be allowed access to critical weapon systems with which he can further threaten Greece, a NATO and EU member. Further escalation in the Aegean Sea is not in anyone's interest in the West.

[Burak Bekdil is an Ankara-based political analyst and a fellow at the Middle East Forum.](#)

EDITOR'S COMMENT: An approval from US Congress will be no surprise! It has been proved countless times that the US cares only about its interests. Greece might advocate the "We belong to the West" motto but the cruel reality reveals that on important issues there are no friends and allies -- only interests and financial/geostrategic profits. It does not matter



if Turkey has its feet in two boats or plays (Russian) games under the table. The key denominator is what is important for the US (and NATO). So simple!

Guerrilla Warfare: Ukraine's Partisans are Taking the War to Russia

By Alexander Motyl

Source: <https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/08/guerrilla-warfare-ukraines-partisans-are-taking-the-war-to-russia/>

Sept 01 – Things are [heating up](#) on the [resistance front](#) in Ukraine.

There was a total of 24 resistance incidents in the 19 days under review, for an average of 1.26 per day. Although the previous period under review, August 4-13, averaged 3.4 incidents per day, only 65 percent were violent, whether directed against persons or property. In August 13-31, violent incidents constituted 83 percent of the total. More importantly, there were six incidents of violence against property in August 13-17 and only three in August 18-31. In contrast, violent incidents directed at persons numbered 11, and all took place after August 17. In a word, Ukraine's partisans are turning increasingly toward [violence](#) and especially toward violence against collaborators:

August 13, Melitopol, Zaporizhzhya province: partisans [destroy](#) rail bridge southwest of city, thereby disrupting rail traffic with occupied Crimea.

August 15, Dzhankoy and Simferopol, occupied Crimea: partisans [distribute](#) anti-Russian leaflets.

August 16, Kursk province, Russia: railroad tracks [destroyed](#) with explosive, possibly the work of Ukrainian partisans.

August 16, Kursk province, Russia: Russian security service, FSB, [accuses](#) Ukrainian saboteurs of felling six pylons supporting high-voltage electric cables on August 4, 9, and 12,

August 16, Dzhankoy, occupied Crimea: Russian Ministry of Defense [accuses](#) Ukrainian saboteurs of setting off massive explosions, declares state of emergency in Dzhankoy district. Ammunition depots and railroad tracks destroyed.

August 16, Lysychansk, Luhansk province: massive [explosion](#) in city, possibly the work of partisans.

August 16, Melitopol, Zaporizhzhya province: two [explosions](#) destroy cables transmitting Russian television.

August 17, Melitopol: [explosion](#) in city center near Russian command post.

August 17, Melitopol: [explosion](#) fells pylon supporting electric cables.

August 20, Mariupol, Donetsk province: failed [assassination](#) attempt on collaborationist mayor, Kostyantyn Ivashchenko.

August 20, Vasylivka district, Zaporizhzhya province: unknown number of Russian soldiers [poisoned](#) with Botulinum toxin type B. Russians accuse Ukrainians of "chemical terrorism."

August 21, Melitopol, Zaporizhzhya province: partisans [slit throat](#) of Russian soldier who attempted to sexually assault a minor.

August 21, Melitopol: several [explosions](#) set off in city.

August 21, Kherson: partisans [distribute](#) leaflets calling on local population to join them.

August 23, Kherson province: failed assassination [attempt](#) on Ihor Telehin, deputy head of collaborationist department of internal policy.

August 24, Mykhaylivka, Zaporizhzhya province: car bomb [kills](#) collaborationist "mayor," Ivan Sushko.

August 24, Nikolske, Mariupol district, Donetsk province: partisans [raise](#) Ukrainian flag in honor of Ukraine's Independence Day.

August 24, Novoraysk and Borozenske, Kherson province: partisans [raise](#) Ukrainian flag in honor of Independence Day.

August 25, Pryazovske, Zaporizhzhya province: partisans [bomb](#) administrative building where referendum was being organized and Russian passports distributed.

August 26, Berdyansk, Zaporizhzhya province: [assassination](#) of Oleksandr Kolyesnikov, collaborationist deputy head of the city's State Automobile Inspection.

August 27, Mykhaylivka, Zaporizhzhya province: collaborationist head of local police, Andriy Ryzhkov, found [hanged](#).

August 28, Hola Prystan, Kherson province: Oleksiy Kovalov, collaborationist deputy head of "provincial government" [shot](#) and killed in his home. His wife's throat slit.

August 28, occupied Crimea: *Novaya gazeta* [reports](#) that at least ten Ukrainian groups are involved in sabotage and intelligence gathering.

August 29, Mariupol, Donetsk province: two-man Russian patrol steps on mine [planted](#) by partisans. One dead, one severely wounded.

August 30, Kherson province: [failed](#) assassination attempt of collaborationist acting head of the State Automobile Inspection, Major Snyeshin.



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August 31, Berdyansk, Zaporizhzhya province: [explosion](#) at headquarters of collaborationist “We Are Together with Russia” organization, which is preparing a referendum in the province. Clearly, Ukrainian partisans are taking the war to the Russian rear. And they’re making collaborators pay a high price for their collaboration with the invaders. It’s hard to avoid the conclusion that partisan activity is being coordinated with the ongoing Ukrainian efforts to retake Kherson province and, eventually, the entire occupied south.

Now a 1945 Contributing Editor, **Dr. Alexander Motyl** is a professor of political science at Rutgers-Newark. A specialist on Ukraine, Russia, and the USSR, and on nationalism, revolutions, empires, and theory, he is the author of 10 books of nonfiction, including *Pidsumky imperii* (2009); *Puti imperii* (2004); *Imperial Ends: The Decay, Collapse, and Revival of Empires* (2001); *Revolutions, Nations, Empires: Conceptual Limits and Theoretical Possibilities* (1999); *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine after Totalitarianism* (1993); and *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919–1929* (1980); the editor of 15 volumes, including *The Encyclopedia of Nationalism* (2000) and *The Holodomor Reader* (2012); and a contributor of dozens of articles to academic and policy journals, newspaper op-ed pages, and magazines. He also has a weekly blog, “Ukraine’s Orange Blues.”

Greece's Slide Toward Authoritarianism

A Commentary By Maximilian Popp

September 01, 2022

Source: <https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/border-lawlessness-greece-s-slide-toward-authoritarianism-a-57099e2b-b855-4eea-a14a-477b075107b9>

.....
In migration policy, especially, the Greek government has essentially abrogated international and European law. In the last two years, Greek security personnel have intercepted thousands of refugees and violently forced them to return to Turkey. They have also used other migrants as slaves to assist in these illegal pushbacks. In other instances, Greek officials have towed asylum-seekers out to sea and abandoned them on unsafe inflatable rafts.

●► Read the full “article” at the source’s URL.



Maximilian Popp was born in Passau in 1986. He graduated from the Henri Nannen School of Journalism in Hamburg and studied political science in **Istanbul**. He has been working for SPIEGEL since 2010, initially as an editor in the Germany department in Dresden, Hamburg, and Berlin, and since 2016 as a correspondent in Istanbul. Since April 2019 he is the deputy head of the foreign department. He was awarded the Journalism Prize of the Southeast Europe Society for his reporting on **Turkey**.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: I was about to commend using the same language as the author of this libel when I read the short CV of the journalist and everything became crystal clear. Just for the record, Greece never invited the illegal immigrants’ tsunami to come and settle in its territory without offering anything other than consuming benefits and expressing uncivilized behavior. It would be great if the EU could open its borders and thousands of these illegal immigrants could travel freely to Germany and other EU member states with big mouths!



The last true European leader!



Mikhail Gorbachev (1931-2022)

International Relations Theory Suggests Great-Power War Is Coming

By Matthew Kroenig

Source: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/27/international-relations-theory-suggests-great-power-war-is-coming/>



Aug 27 – This week, thousands of university students around the world will begin their introduction to international relations courses for the first time. If their professors are attuned to the ways the world has changed in recent years, they will be teaching them that the major theories of international relations warn that great-power conflict is coming.

For decades, international relations theory provided reasons for optimism—that the major powers could enjoy mostly cooperative relations and resolve their differences short of armed conflict.

Realist IR theories focus on power, and for decades, they maintained that the [bipolar world](#) of the Cold War and the [unipolar](#) post-Cold War world dominated by the United States were relatively simple systems not prone to wars of miscalculation. They also held that [nuclear weapons](#) raised the cost of conflict and made war among the major powers unthinkable.

Meanwhile, liberal theorists argued that a triumvirate of causal variables (institutions, interdependence, and democracy) facilitated cooperation and mitigated conflict. The dense set of [international institutions](#) and agreements (the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation



Treaty, etc.) established after World War II—and expanded and depended on since the end of the Cold War—provided forums for major powers to work out their differences peacefully.

Moreover, [economic globalization](#) made armed conflict too costly. Why quarrel when business is good and everyone is getting rich? Finally, according to this theory, [democracies](#) are less likely to fight and more likely to cooperate, and the major waves of democratization around the world over the past 70 years have made the globe a more peaceful place.

At the same time, [constructivist scholars](#) explained how new ideas, norms, and identities have transformed international politics in a more positive direction. In the past, piracy, slavery, torture, and wars of aggression were common practices. Over the years, however, strengthening human rights norms and taboos against the use of weapons of mass destruction placed guardrails on international conflict.

Unfortunately, nearly all of these pacifying forces appear to be unraveling before our eyes. The major driving forces of international politics, according to IR theory, suggest that the new Cold War among the United States, China, and Russia is unlikely to be peaceful. Let us begin with power politics. We are entering a more multipolar world. To be sure, the United States is still the world's leading power, according to nearly all objective measures, but China has risen to occupy a strong second-place position in military and economic might. Europe is an economic and regulatory superpower in its own right. A more aggressive Russia maintains the largest nuclear weapons stockpile on Earth. And major powers in the developing world—such as India, Indonesia, South Africa, and Brazil—are choosing a nonaligned path.

Realists argue that multipolar systems are unstable and prone to major wars of miscalculation. World War I is a classic example. Multipolar systems are unstable in part because each country must worry about multiple potential adversaries. Indeed, at present, the U.S. Defense Department frets about possible [simultaneous conflicts](#) with Russia in Europe and China in the Indo-Pacific. Moreover, U.S. President Joe Biden has stated that the use of military force remains on the table as a last resort to deal with Iran's nuclear program. A three-front war is not out of the question.

Wars of miscalculation often result when states [underestimate](#) their adversary. States doubt their opponent's power or resolve to fight, so they test them. Sometimes, the enemy is bluffing, and the challenge pays off. If the enemy is determined to defend its interests, however, major war can result. Russian President Vladimir Putin likely miscalculated in launching an invasion of Ukraine, incorrectly assuming that war would be easy. Some realist scholars [warned](#) for some time that a Russian invasion of Ukraine was coming, and there is still the possibility that the war in Ukraine could spill across NATO's borders, turning this conflict into a direct U.S.-Russia conflagration.

In addition, there is the danger that Chinese President Xi Jinping might miscalculate over Taiwan. Washington's confusing "strategic ambiguity" policy as to whether it would defend the island only adds to the instability. Biden has said he would [defend Taiwan](#), but his own White House contradicted him. Many leaders are confused, including possibly Xi. He might mistakenly believe he could get away with an attack on Taiwan—only to have the United States intervene violently to stop him.

Moreover, after several U.S. presidents have threatened "all options on the table" for the Iranian nuclear program without backing it up, Tehran might assume that it can make a dash for the bomb without a U.S. response. If Iran is mistaken in doubting Biden's resolve, war could result.

Realists also focus on shifts in the balance of power and worry about the rise of China and the relative decline of the United States. Power transition theory says that the fall of a [dominant great power](#) and the rise of an ascendant challenger often results in war. Some experts worry that Washington and Beijing may be falling into this "[Thucydides Trap](#)."

Their dysfunctional autocratic systems make it unlikely that Beijing or Moscow will [usurp global leadership](#) from the United States anytime soon, but a closer look at the historical record shows that challengers sometimes start wars of aggression when their expansive [ambitions are thwarted](#). Like Germany in World War I and Japan in World War II, Russia may be lashing out to reverse its decline, and China may also be [weak and dangerous](#).

Some people might argue that nuclear deterrence will still work, but military technology is changing. The world is experiencing a "Fourth Industrial Revolution" as new technologies—such as artificial intelligence, [quantum computing](#) and communications, additive manufacturing, robotics, hypersonic missiles, directed energy, and others—promise to transform the global economy, societies, and the battlefield.

Many defense experts believe we are on the eve of a new revolution in military affairs. It is possible that these new technologies could, like tanks and aircraft on the eve of World War II, give an advantage to militaries that go on the [offense](#), making war more likely. At a minimum, these new weapons systems could confuse assessments of the balance of power, contributing to the above risks of miscalculation.

China, for example, is leading in several of these technologies, including hypersonic missiles, certain applications for artificial intelligence, and quantum computing. These



advantages—or even the false perception in Beijing that these advantages might exist—could tempt China to invade Taiwan. Even liberalism, a more optimistic theory in general, provides a reason for pessimism. To be sure, liberals are right that institutions, economic interdependence, and democracy have facilitated cooperation within the liberal world order. The United States and its democratic allies in North America, Europe, and East Asia are more united than ever before. But these same factors are increasingly sparking conflict on the fault lines between the liberal and illiberal world orders.

In the new Cold War, international institutions have simply become new arenas for competition. Russia and China are infiltrating these institutions and turning them against their intended purposes. Who can forget Russia chairing a meeting of the United Nations Security Council as its armies invaded Ukraine in February? Similarly, China used its influence in the World Health Organization to stymie an effective investigation into COVID-19's origins. And dictators vie for seats on the U.N. Human Rights Council to ensure their egregious human rights abuses escape scrutiny. Instead of facilitating cooperation, international institutions are increasingly exacerbating conflict.

Thucydides Trap, is a term popularized by American political scientist Graham T. Allison to describe an apparent tendency towards war when an emerging power threatens to displace an existing great power as a regional or international hegemon.

Liberal scholars also argue that economic interdependence mitigates conflict. But this theory always had a chicken-and-egg problem. Is trade driving good relations, or are good relations driving trade? We are seeing the answer play out in real time.

The free world is recognizing that it is too economically dependent on its enemies in Moscow and Beijing, and it is decoupling as fast as it can. Western corporations pulled out of Russia overnight. New legislation and regulations in the United States, Europe, and Japan are restricting trade and investment in China. It is simply irrational for Wall Street to invest in Chinese technology companies that are working with China's People's Liberation Army to develop weapons intended to kill Americans.

But China is also decoupling from the free world. Xi is prohibiting Chinese tech firms from listing on Wall Street, for example, because he doesn't want to share proprietary information with Western powers. The economic interdependence between the liberal and illiberal worlds that has served as a ballast against conflict is now eroding.

Democratic peace theory says democracies cooperate with other democracies. But the central fault line in the international system today, as Biden explains, is “the battle between [democracy and autocracy](#).”

To be sure, the United States still maintains cordial relations with some nondemocracies, such as Saudi Arabia. But the world order is increasingly divided with the United States and its status quo-oriented democratic allies in NATO, Japan, South Korea, and Australia on one side and the revisionist autocracies of China, Russia, and Iran on the other. One does not need a stethoscope to detect the echoes of the free world's conflict against Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperial Japan.

Finally, constructivist arguments about the pacifying effects of global norms were always plagued with doubts about whether these norms were truly universal. As China engages in genocide in Xinjiang and Russia issues bloodcurdling nuclear threats and castrates prisoners of war in Ukraine, we now have our gruesome answer.

Moreover, constructivists might note that the democracy versus autocracy cleavage in international politics is not simply an issue of governance but of ways of life. The speeches and writings of Xi and Putin are often ideological rants about the superiority of autocratic systems and the failings of democracy. Like it or not—we are back in a 20th-century contest over whether democratic or autocratic governments can better deliver for their people, adding a more dangerous ideological element to this competition.

Fortunately, there is some good news. The best understanding of international politics may be found in a [combination of theories](#). Much of humanity prefers a liberal international order, and this order is only made possible by the realist military power of the United States and its democratic allies. Moreover, 2,500 years of theory and history suggest that [democracies tend to win](#) these hard-power competitions and autocracies flame out disastrously in the end.

Unfortunately, the clarifying moments that bend history in an arc toward justice often only emerge after major-power wars.

Let's hope that today's incoming students are not reminiscing at their graduation ceremonies about where they were when World War III began. But IR theory gives us plenty of reasons to be concerned.

Matthew Kroenig is deputy director of the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security and a professor in the Department of Government and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. His latest book is *The Return of Great Power Rivalry: Democracy Versus Autocracy From the Ancient World to the U.S. and China*.



Ukrainian war – ENOUGH!



Sep 03 – In Prague, 100 thousand people came to a rally (“This is not our war! The Czech Republic first of all!”): they demand that the authorities take a neutral position on the conflict in Ukraine and even exit NATO!

When you think that you have heard everything in your life ...

The world of the East is being pushed to the West so that the space of the warm inexpensive East will be occupied by the Northern Europeans who will live again in the ice age due to unprofitable climate change of their energy and policies. It is an informal exchange of populations... Westerners will conquer the East after vacating it with wars and forcibly displacing its inhabitants. It is a methodical tactical migration....



IRGC Navy unveils homegrown Shahid Soleimani patrol combat vessel, two other military watercraft

Source: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2022/iran-220905-presstv03.htm>

Sept 05 – Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy has unveiled a domestically-developed patrol combat vessel named after the country's top anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated in a US drone strike near Baghdad airport in January 2020.



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The military achievement was put on display during a ceremony in the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas on Monday. Chief of Staff of Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri, the IRGC Chief Commander Major General Hossein Salami, Commander of the IRGC Navy Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri and a number of other high-ranking military officials, commanders and state officials attended the ceremony.



During the ceremony, the IRGC Navy also took delivery of Shahid (Martyr) Rouhi and Shahid Dara high-speed and missile-launching assault boats.

The hull of Shahid Soleimani combat patrol vessel is equipped with radar-evading stealth technology, meaning that it has a very low level of radar cross-section, according to Major General Bagheri.



The vessel, thanks to its shape, can undertake all kinds of operations in open seas, and is capable of cruising in adverse weather conditions.

Shahid Soleimani military watercraft also has a much higher maneuverability and a much smaller turning radius compared to vessels of the same size, enabling it to implement various offensive and defensive missions.



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The vessel runs on four indigenous high-power engines, which give it the chance to be quickly dispatched to the designated zone, and go on long-haul maritime missions without the need for coastal support as it defends the interests of the Islamic Republic in high seas.

Moreover, it can carry helicopters, and is equipped with large helipads intended for use by military choppers as well as vertical take-off and landing unmanned aerial vehicles.

Shahid Soleimani vessel, given its combined combat features, can also carry and launch various types of fast attack craft during operations in open seas.

The watercraft is equipped with the most sophisticated reconnaissance, surveillance, telecommunications and electronic warfare systems as well as radars. It can identify and monitor designated targets at sea level, below sea level and in the air.

Among other features of the vessel is the use of homegrown self-protection systems, modern communication and telecommunication equipment, various types of encoders and data links.

"This is the Islamic Republic of Iran's first domestically-developed warship which is equipped with vertical launch, short-range and medium-range air defense systems," Major General Bagheri said.

He added, "It is also equipped with automatic and semi-automatic systems, in addition to 20mm and 30mm cannons for peripheral defense in case of confrontations with enemy aerial and maritime objects."

The chief of the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces further noted that Shahid Soleimani vessel is equipped with the first combined launch system of short and medium-range surface-to-surface (SSM) missiles, enjoys an operation room that relies on an indigenous software for integrated management of combat zones, and has the ability to detect different type of targets and threats and assign them to offensive and defensive systems.

For his part, the commander of the IRGC Navy said that Shahid Dara high-speed and missile-launching assault boat has four engines, weighs six hundred tons and has an operational range of five thousand knots.

Rear Admiral Tangsiri highlighted that Shahid Rouhi military vessel is 37 meters long, has a missile range of 180 kilometers, and can cruise at 850 nautical miles.

Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made substantial headway in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in the weaponry sphere.

Iranian officials have repeatedly stressed that the country will not hesitate to boost its military capabilities, including its missile and drone power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will never be subject to negotiation.

'I love my school but I am here today because I would not call a boy a girl': Teacher who refused to use student's gender-neutral pronouns condemns 'insanity' as he is **JAILED** in Ireland

Source: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11184043/Teacher-refused-use-students-gender-neutral-pronouns-JAILED-Ireland.html>

Sep 06 – A teacher who refused to use gender-neutral pronouns for a [transgender](#) student has been sent to Mountjoy prison for contempt of court. Enoch Burke was arrested yesterday morning for breaching a court order not to teach at his Westmeath school, or be physically present there. After Judge Michael Quinn made his ruling, Mr Burke said: 'It is insanity that I will be led from this courtroom to a place of incarceration, but I will not give up my Christian beliefs.' Counsel for Wilson's Hospital School's board of management said it was with a 'heavy heart' that it sought Mr Burke's committal to prison, but she said her client had been left with no choice as Mr Burke continued to attend the school, despite the court order which it had obtained last week.

The dispute began over his refusal to address a transitioning student as 'they' rather than 'he', as requested by the student and their parents in May, and agreed to by the Church of Ireland school. This escalated to his suspension on the day before the start of the autumn term, pending the outcome of a



disciplinary process. He had refused to remain away from the school on paid leave for that suspension, the court heard, and would sit in an empty classroom, declaring that he was there to work. Mr Burke told Judge Quinn: 'I am a teacher and I don't want to go to prison. I want to be in my classroom today, that's where I was this morning when I was arrested.'

He said he loved his students, to whom he teaches German, history and politics, as well as debating.

'I love my school, with its motto Res Non Verba, actions not words, but I am here today because I said I would not call a boy a girl.' He added: 'Transgenderism is against my Christian belief. It is contrary to the scriptures, contrary to the ethos of the Church of Ireland and of my school.'

Referring to his suspension, Mr Burke said: 'It is extraordinary and reprehensible that someone's religious beliefs on this matter could ever be taken as grounds for an allegation of misconduct.'

'My religious beliefs are not misconduct. They are not gross misconduct. They never will be. They are dear to me. I will never deny them and never betray them, and I will never bow to an order that would require me to do so. It is just not possible for me to do that.'

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He described his suspension as 'unreasonable, unjust and unfair'. He added: 'There has been a dumbing down of the seriousness of suspension. It is a serious step.'

'It has tarnished my good character and my good name, particularly in the profession of a teacher, where one is so close to a large number of members of the local community. It leaves a stain on what has been, for me, an unblemished teaching record.'

Mr Burke said he had a wonderful relationship with his pupils, who knew him as a man of 'professed morals and convictions'.

He asked how he could return to school and bow to something he believed to be 'manifestly wrong', which he also described as a 'violation of my conscience'. Mr Burke told the court that he believed that 'around this country, teachers are being forced to participate... they are being forced to use the pronoun "they" instead of either "he" or "she".'

Rosemary Mallon BL, for the board of management, told Judge Michael Quinn that her client had no choice but to ask the court to send Burke to prison for breach of a court order.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: "Enough" is the cover topic of this issue. Not only for war and pandemics but also for the imposition of any deviation. Nothing personal but tolerance should not be taken as a weakness. Enough!

September 6, 1955: the Violent Istanbul Pogrom Against Greeks

By Philip Chrysopoulos

Source: <https://greekreporter.com/2022/09/06/september-6-1955-the-violent-istanbul-pogrom-against-greeks/>

Sep 06 – In 1955, the large Greek population of the Turkish city of Istanbul was victim to a heinous pogrom that resulted in the suffering and death of many and the destruction of countless homes and businesses.

The [Greeks in Istanbul](#) were a [longstanding, thriving community](#) comprised mostly of families of merchants. In 1955, their population was about one hundred thousand, and they were a prominent class in the city.

At the time, Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes (1950-1960) sought to appeal to the conservative religious faction of the Turkish population, causing irritation in the country's secular Kemalist establishment. The thousands of mosques built during his time as PM are proof of this.

At the time Istanbul, and [Turkey](#) as a whole, was not as prosperous as the Greeks.





Turkish people destroying Greek businesses during the Istanbul pogrom. Credit: Public domain

Additionally, nationalist fever in the country was rising, as the Greek-Cypriots demanded their union with [Greece](#). The rich Greeks of Istanbul were the perfect scapegoat. It was a good occasion for the Turkish leaders to distract the public from its problems, turning it against the prosperous Greek minority. On August 28, 1955, Menderes publicly, and falsely, claimed that the Greek-Cypriots were planning massacres against [the Turkish-Cypriots](#).

Pogrom result of resentment, discrimination

In essence, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes decided to turn his people against the prosperous Greeks, blaming them for all the woes of the Turks, much like Hitler had turned most Germans against the prosperous Jewish communities in Germany in the mid-1930s.

Terror unleashed against the Greek community of Istanbul over two days beginning on September 6, 1955 in much the same fashion as Nazi Germany's Kristalnacht.

The Pogrom, or violent riot aimed at a particular ethnic group, against the Greeks of Istanbul broke out on September 6, 1955 after reports circulated that Greeks planted a bomb at the Turkish Consulate in Thessaloniki, which is housed in the residence where Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the modern Turkish state, was born.

The perpetrator of the bomb was a Turkish usher at the consulate named Oktay Engin, who was arrested by Greek authorities.

Turkish media was silent about the arrest and continued to push the idea that it was a Greek who set off the bomb.

Engin later became a hero in Turkey. He was honored in Turkey and appointed provincial governor.





Years later, in an interview with the Greek newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, Engin denied any connection with the incident and considered himself a victim of Greek authorities.

The blast at Ataturk's home caused only minor damage to the building's windows, but Turkish newspapers took advantage of the situation.

Following government instructions, they magnified and distorted the event. Headlines such as "Greek terrorists destroyed Ataturk's paternal home" of the *Istanbul Express* and the publication of a series of fake photos of the incident sparked "spontaneous" demonstrations in Taksim Square in the afternoon of the same day.

The brutality and destruction

At five o'clock in the afternoon, a raging crowd of fifty thousand people turned against the Greek properties in the Pera district.

The looting lasted until the morning hours of September 7th, when the army intervened, as the situation was in danger of spiraling out of control.

Until then, the authorities remained apathetic. Menderes' Democratic Party, which controlled the unions, played a catalytic role in the rioting.

Large numbers of protesters were transported to Istanbul from West Asia Minor for free to take part in the pogrom against the Greek community.

Four thousand taxis transported them to the scene of the riots while trucks of the Municipality of Istanbul were deployed in parts of the city, loaded with axes, shovels, bats, pickaxes,



hammers, iron crowbars, and petrol cans, necessary tools for the mob that attacked the Greek stores.



They shouted slogans like “death to the giaourides (faithless)” and “break it, tear it down, he is giaouris.” “Slaughter the Greek traitors” and “down with Europe” were other common slogans and many shouted about “[marching] against Athens and Thessaloniki.”

Although the rage was directed against the Greeks, the anger of the mob did not spare shops owned by Armenians and Jews. Men and women were raped, and according to the testimony of the famous Turkish writer Aziz Nesin, many priests were forced to be circumcised, with one of the victims being an Armenian priest. Sixteen Greeks lost their lives and thirty-two were severely injured. Violence against the Greeks took place not only in Istanbul but also [in Izmir, or Smyrna](#). On the morning of September 7th, Turkish nationalists set fire to the Greek pavilion at the Izmir International Fair.

They then destroyed the newly built church of Agia Fotini, while looting the homes of Greek soldiers serving at NATO Headquarters.

The world remained silent about the pogrom

The Papagos government tried to make the issue known internationally, but without any significant results.

The Americans and the British were unwilling to pressure Turkey, a valuable ally during the Cold War. NATO allies advised Greece to forget about the incident.

Only the World Council of Churches from international organizations demanded an explanation from Turkey for the destruction of ninety percent of the Orthodox churches in Istanbul.

However, in August 1995, the U.S. Senate called on President Clinton to declare September 6th Pogrom Remembrance Day.

The Pogrom against Hellenism in Istanbul resulted in the death of sixteen Greeks and the injury of thirty-two, the death of one Armenian, the rape of twelve Greek women, and the rape of an unspecified number of men, but the real numbers could be much higher.

Furthermore, the rioting caused the destruction of 4,348 merchant stores, 110 hotels, 27 pharmacies, 23 schools, 21 factories, 73 churches, and about one thousand homes owned by Greeks.





The financial cost of the damages amounted to \$150 million, according to international organizations while the Greek government estimated it at \$500 million. Economic destruction and fear forced thousands of expatriates to emigrate to Greece. Of the one hundred thousand Greeks who resided in Istanbul in 1955, only two thousand remain in the city today. Later, the Turkish state, through President Celal Bayar, promised compensation for the destruction of Greek property. At best, reparations did not exceed twenty percent of the claims, given that assets had depreciated dramatically.

Many details about the September riots came to light in 1961 during the trial for the ultimate betrayal of ousted military Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, who did not escape the gallows. The book of eminent Greek-American Byzantine scholar Spyros Vryonis, *The Mechanism of Catastrophe: The Turkish Pogrom of September 6-7, 1955 and the Destruction of the Greek Community of Istanbul*, (Greekworks.com, New York, 2005), is also a valuable resource on the subject.

How ridiculous!

Is this the new signal replacing the “green man” on a pedestrian crossing in Trafalgar Sq...



Sep 02 – Around 50 sets of traffic lights near busy Trafalgar Square had their “walk” and “green man” images replaced with the new designs in June to coincide with an annual Gay Pride Festival.



Russian soldier carrying special and deadly cargo near Izyum



FOCO F4 GT



vincent cochetei
@cochetei

Grieving for the loss. But the same mothers had no problem encouraging or funding their children to embark on those dangerous journeys. Like in Senegal, symbolically prosecuting parents for putting at risk their children could trigger serious attitudinal change on death journeys.

Maurice Stiert @MauriceStiert · Sep 6

We are marching through Zarzis in Tunisia today. The mothers of the disappeared lead the way, followed by the fishermen of #Zarzis and activist supporters from around the world. #CommemorAction



2:17 PM · Sep 6, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

An issue nobody talks about!

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Vincent Cochetei is Special Envoy, UNHCR for the Western & Central Mediterranean situation. He spoke the truth on an issue nobody talks about. Almost in every boat used by illegal immigrants we see small children and pregnant women exposed to the possibility of drowning or being injured during extremely difficult traveling conditions. Nobody ever prosecuted parents, escorts, and women for risking their lives. Do not argue with the “hope for a better life” motto because almost all of them do not work in the hosting countries. Unless you consider “benefits” a type of work. We get used to hypocrisy and when somebody raises issues like this we are pretending that our moral background has been offended. Cochetei removed the comment from his Tweet account and apologized most probably to save his face and work but the truth remains even if it hurts. All lives are valuable but why do we never touch the core of the problem that is “governments”, “politics”, “profit”, “development”, “share of wealth” – just to name a few?





**Over half a million
young children
in Somalia face
acute malnutrition**

**STOP spending billions of USDs or Euros
In useless wars**



Reliance on Dual-Use Technology is a Trap

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220908-reliance-on-dualuse-technology-is-a-trap>

Sep 08 – As currently executed, Jake Chapman writes in [War on the Rocks](#), the U.S. military's embrace of dual-use technology will not [repel the Russians from Ukraine](#) and it will not [deter China](#) from invading Taiwan. Instead, it risks ceding America's technological advantage to its adversaries. Chapman notes that he has been working at the nexus of national security and technology for many years. Initially, he served as a venture capitalist backing frontier technology companies doing security-relevant work. He then acted as managing director of the [Army Venture Capital Corporation](#), a non-profit organization created by Congress to serve the needs of the Department of Defense. Now he is at a new defense-focused firm. "In all these roles, I have repeatedly seen portfolio **companies encouraged to build their technologies for the commercial market first and only then slap some green paint on them so that they can begin exploring the U.S. defense market**," he writes, adding:

This approach is what I call the dual-use hack. It is the idea that the way emerging technology companies should work with the Department of Defense is to build commercial applications first and only then move into defense. Incorporating dual-use technology certainly has its place in constructing the defense ecosystem. Among other things, it helps to mitigate some of the Department of Defense's first-order challenges in technology adoption, particularly with regard to commercial off-the-shelf technologies. But an overreliance on the commercial-first dual-use hack has generally failed to live up to the hopes laid out almost 30 years ago in the 1995 [Dual Use Strategy: A Defense Strategy for Affordable, Leading Edge Technology](#). This strategy was supposed to ensure that the Defense Department could keep costs low, speed up innovation cycle times, and ensure that America's industrial base did not atrophy in an environment of falling defense budgets. It has failed at all three of these goals. Costs have skyrocketed, [new platform generations take literal generations to release](#), and America's [defense industrial base](#) has been dangerously eroded in many different sectors. As if these shortcomings were not enough, an over-dependence on dual-use technology has created several problems on its own. It cedes a growing technical advantage to America's peer adversaries, discourages startups with cutting-edge intellectual property from building directly for the military's needs, and provides the Department of Defense with a convenient excuse to avoid or delay real reforms. In short, the dual-use hack has its place, but should no longer be the centerpiece of our national security innovation efforts. A better solution would enable entrepreneurs to focus on solving defense challenges by making the Department of Defense a better customer. A first step would be to award larger contracts more quickly. The Department of Defense can also communicate better with the entrepreneurial ecosystem regarding current capabilities and problem sets, even if this means sharing more information than they are used to. This communication will serve to lower development risks and make agile, customer-centric development possible. Finally, the Defense Department should provide an incentive system and a clear process that drives successful development projects directly from research and development into acquisitions and sustainment.

He concludes:

I have dedicated my career to supporting the defense innovation base, and I firmly believe that dual-use technology has a role in meeting the military's technology needs. Some companies should build for the commercial market first, but the Department of Defense cannot always afford to wait for the dual-use track to play out. Companies should be able to build directly for the Department of Defense rather than treating national security as a side hustle. There is no lack of [patriotic U.S. entrepreneurs](#) eager to contribute to the country's defense. Showing industry that developing technology for the military can be successful will cause both financial and human capital to flow into the national security space.

Ukraine's Azov Battalion: Neo-Nazis or Russian Propaganda?

By Thomas Klikauer

Source: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/09/07/ukraines-azov-battalion-neo-nazis-or-russian-propaganda/>

Sep 07 – The infamous Ukrainian right-wing extremist [Azov Battalion](#) – Полк Азов – was founded on the 5th of May 2014, in the port city of [Berdyansk](#), in the Zaporizhzhia Oblast province in South-eastern Ukraine near the [Sea of Azov](#). Hence, its name. Initially was set up as a voluntary militia in the turmoil of the [Euromaidan protests](#) and the subsequent political instability of the country, Asov rose to prominence. Asov-men operated against the



illegal armed intrusion by Russia into Donbass and Crimea. The co-founder and the first leader of the Azov Battalion is Ukrainian [Andriy Biletsky](#).

At that time, he was a [35-year-old graduate](#) of the history faculty at the National University in the Eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv. Yet, previously he was highly active in Ukraine's far-right circles and had been a leader of several right-wing extremist micro-parties – including a political party called [Patriot of Ukraine](#), which has been said to have merged into the Azov Battalion in 2014.

In August 2014, Ukraine's Minister of Internal Affairs – [Arsen Avakov](#) – awarded Biletsky the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. On 2nd September 2014, the [business oligarch](#) and then President of Ukraine – [Petro Poroshenko](#) – awarded him the rather dashy [Order For Valor](#). From 2014 to 2019, Biletsky was a member of the Ukrainian parliament, the [Verkhovna Rada](#).

Already in 2014, Biletsky's Azov Battalion started to recruit ultra-nationalists, far-right militias, ultras, Neo-Nazis, as well as football hooligans – many were former Maidan fighters. Meanwhile, the Canadian journalist [Michael Colborne](#) noted in an interview ([February 2022](#)) with Germany's progressive news-outlet [Belltower](#), "right-wing extremists were indeed a minority on the Maidan, but they were necessary to prevent the police from putting down the protests."

During the founding phase of the Azov Battalion and as a direct response to the Russian seizure of the Donets Basin ([Donbass](#)) and the Crimea, plenty of very close connections and rather "fluid" personnel links to far-right extremist and ultra-national movements emerged. These links included a political party called [All-Ukrainian Union](#) – Svoboda or Freedom. It also included more militant groups that later became part of Ukraine's infamous [Right Sector](#) and the [Radical Party](#).

Andriy Biletsky, the original commander of the Azov unit (May-October 2014) was also a co-founder and an active member (2008-2016) of Ukraine's far-right [Social-National Assembly](#) that subscribes to a neo-fascist ideology.

Initially, the militia group was largely privately funded, but soon started to receive support from the Ukrainian government. One of the main supporters – in financial terms – is considered to be the [Ukrainian billionaire](#) and [oligarch](#) of Jewish descent, [Igor Kolomoyskyi](#). These militia fighters were paid around €400 per month.

For the first time, the right-wing extremist militia unit – the [Azov Battalion](#) – was deployed in actual combat in June 2014 supplying about 400 soldiers. Their "work" constituted a significant part in the successful recapture of the city of Mariupol – temporarily occupied by pro-Russian separatists. Mariupol lies on the Sea of Azov and is a city of about half a million people.

Above all, the activities of Asov gave rise to a certain acceptance among the Ukrainian population. This continues to this day – especially in the area around [Mariupol](#). By September 2014, the battalion grew into the *Special Operations Battalion Azov*. In October 2014, the then Ukrainian Interior Minister – Arsen Avakov – announced the incorporation of [Asov](#) into the Ukrainian National Guard. This meant that [Asov](#) fell under the jurisdiction of [Ukraine's Ministry of the Interior](#). Since then, the battalion has not only been integrated into the extended chain of military command of the [Ukrainian Armed Forces](#), but has also been subjected to the Ukrainian legal system, [international law](#), and the [Geneva Convention](#).

Meanwhile, [Asov's](#) original headquarters in Berdyansk was moved to Ursuf in Donetsk Oblast which is about 35km southwest of the [geo-strategically](#) important port city of [Mariupol](#). In June 2015, Asov's commander – [Andriy Biletskyi](#) – announced that the Azov Battalion would be transformed into a special unit with a targeted strength of 2,500 men.

Before the start of Russia's war on 24th February 2022, Asov's true fighting power was estimated to be between [1,000 and 1,500](#) men. The current strength isn't known – at least not in reliable numbers. According to a report by Germany's state-owned [Deutschlandfunk](#), the number of soldiers could well be between [2,000 and 3,000](#) men.

Beyond all that, some sources have argued that Asov has up to [5,000 men](#). But this isn't credible for logistical, as well as organizational reasons. Yet, it is still noteworthy that since its inception, the Azov Battalion has accepted foreign fighters and self-appointed right-wing extremist militiamen. Others see Asov as relatively apolitical. Occasionally, even [Jewish volunteers](#) fight for the [Azov Battalion](#).

Yet, the proportion of foreigners fighting for the Azov Battalion can't be precisely quantified. On the basis of various reports, it is generally assumed that foreigners are in the [low double-digit percentage range](#).

As an immediate reaction to the Russian invasion (25th February 2022), the Azov Battalion announced that it would increasingly accept [foreign volunteers](#). In a very short time, right-wing volunteers followed that call. It is worth noting that the Asov Battalion had its headquarters near the now heavily destroyed city of [Mariupol](#), which was encircled and subsequently taken by Russian forces. [Asov](#) was engaged in fierce battles against the Russian invasion forces.

Relationship to right-wing nationalism and right-wing extremism

The widespread and aggressive use of right-wing extremist symbolism by [Asov](#) is particularly striking, as [Time Magazine](#) reported recently. This carries connotations to [White](#)



Supremacist ideologies. Unsurprisingly, Asov's main insignia is the Nazi's Der Wolfsnagel or wolf's hook. It was used, among others, by the 4th SS Polizei Panzergrenadier Division – a branch of Germany's Waffen SS.



Today, it can be found on Asov's coat of arms. Above the Wolfsnagel is Asov's "A30B" that infers its status as a military unit of the National Guard of Ukraine – formerly based in Mariupol. The Nazi Wolfsnagel is placed on every Asov badge. Officially, Asov wants the Nazi symbol to be understood as a stylized slogan meaning National Idea or Ideya Natsii.

In March 2015, Andriy Diachenko – a spokesman for the Azov Battalion – told the US daily, USA Today, that 10-20% of Asov members are active Neo-Nazis. Meanwhile, it has become public knowledge that prominent Western European Neo-Nazis have been taking part in Asov-led fights in Ukraine. It has also been reported that there is a cooperation of members of the Asov Battalion with right-

wing radical troops such as, for example, the Neo-Nazi militia Misanthropic Division.

All in all, the Azov Battalion should not be confused with the even more openly right-wing Azov movement. However, both are closely connected and intertwined. Meanwhile, the Russian government argues that its war of aggression – which remains contrary to international law – seeks to combat an ultra-nationalistic and far-right danger – that of Ukrainian Nazism. And this includes Russia's fight against the Azov Battalion.

Mysteriously, or perhaps rather conveniently – some say that after the torture and murder – an explosion in July 2022 at a Russian-held prison has killed dozens of Ukrainian captives – some of whom were Asov soldiers.



Propaganda?

Meanwhile, and in view of the utter devastating destruction of Ukraine's civilian infrastructure, the Bucha massacre, and the indiscriminate killing of scores of Ukrainian civilians, Russia's we-fight-Nazism claim is not even remotely credible.

Rather, the Russian leadership itself – through its armed intervention and violation of international laws as early as 2014 – the occupation and separation of significant parts of



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sovereign Ukraine, which is also contrary to international laws, actually produced precisely this ultra-nationalistic gathering in the Ukraine. The Asov Battalion is all but one part of that.



Propaganda?

The existence of Neo-Nazis, ultra-nationals, and other right-wing extremist tendencies – including [anti-Semitism](#) – within the [Azov Battalion](#) is indeed undeniable. More recently, the Asov Battalion has sought to free itself from many unsavory people in the course of its self-proclaimed professionalization – particularly after 2014. Today, it even seeks to depoliticize itself.

Yet, in 2018, the US Congress, when pledging assistance in the amount of [\\$520 million to Ukraine](#), it specifically ordered a training and weapons' embargo against the Azov Battalion. In fact, it is conceivable that foreign right-wing extremists who feel a Neo-Nazi calling to fight in Ukraine may try and continue to join the [Azov Battalion](#).

However, according to all available information on Asov, to argue that the battalion is a monolithic Neo-Nazi, ultra-nationalist, and anti-Semitic unity is unjustified. German-extremism researcher, [Alexander Ritzmann](#) at Berlin's [Counter Extremism Project](#) said recently, *the Azov Battalion is definitely not a right-wing extremist Battalion in the Ukrainian army*.

Ritzmann noted that many of Asov's right-wing extremist founding members had, in fact, left the Azov Battalion in the course of its integration into Ukraine's National Guard. Once outside, they founded the right-wing extremist [Azov movement](#).

Finally, the [Azov Battalion](#) and other right-wing extremists operating at Ukraine's national level are insignificant for Ukraine as a whole. For example, all right-wing extremist parties combined received only [2.15%](#) of public support in the last election.

This is not to say that the [Azov Battalion](#) is not right-wing. But even if one were to assume an ultra-national and right-wing radical share of 25% in Asov – favoring the Russian propaganda of rooting out Nazism – this would still be close to Shakespeare's [Much Ado about Nothing](#).



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While the often assumed maximum manpower of Asov of 2,000 to 3,000 soldiers is actually more close to only 500 to 750 fighters, they are, however, part of an army of a total of [over 250,000 men](#). That was before the outbreak of war. In other words, the trumped-up Russian threat of Nazism in the Ukraine – when measured on the Asov Battalion – is an absolute minority. Perhaps, Asov can even be neglected for being insignificant.

Yet, on the other hand, one might still say, *one Fascist is one too many*. Given the facts outlined above, Russia's claim to be fighting fascism in the Ukraine is pure propaganda. In the past, [Russia itself provided](#) sustained support to Neo-Nazis and right-wing extremist forces in Ukraine in order to destabilize the country. Since the 1990s, [the Kremlin](#) has also maintained close relations with inner-Russian Neo-Nazi groups. They are being exploited for the purpose of maintaining domestic [political power](#).

For these reasons, Moscow's reference to a problem that is real and problematic – but in reality is not very significant at all – as a justification for its [war against the Ukraine](#) does not hold much water.

This is particularly the case in light of multiple [war crimes](#) committed by [Russian Armed Forces](#) against the civilian population. Yet, the founding of the [Azov Battalion](#) took place in direct response to the [Russian invasion of 2014](#). In conclusion, the Asov Battalion might best be understood as a reality-distorting propaganda element.

[Thomas Klikauer](#) is the author of [Managerialism](#) (Palgrave, 2013).

A thorn in British history ...

Plenty of time now to discuss and explain the “WHY” the following Greek-Cypriot patriots will ask:

- Karaolis Michael (hanged* 10-5-1956; 22 years old)
- Dimitriou Andreas (hanged 10-5-1956; 22 years old)
- Patatsos Iakovos (hanged 10-5-1956; 22 years old)
- Zakos Andreas (hanged 09-8-1956; 25 years old)
- Michail Charilaos (hanged 09-8-1956; 21 years old)
- Mavromatis Stelios (hanged 21-9-1956; 24 years old)
- Panagidis Andreas (hanged 21-9-1956; 22 years old)
- Koutsoftas Michael (hanged 21-9-1956; 22 years old)
- Pallikaridis Evagoras (hanged 13-3-1957; 19 years old)





* By order of the Queen



School book distinguishes 8 genders and 10 sexual orientations

Source: <https://hellas.postsen.com/books/100209/School-book-distinguishes-8-genders-and-10-sexual-orientations.html>

Sep 10 – How many genders are there after all and how many sexual orientations? And yet, in Orange County, California, the answer lies in the textbooks.



So according to the school textbook, there are 8 different gender identities, including androgyny, bigender, gender-nonconforming and non-binary.

lead to unfair treatment of a specific gender.

Sexual Orientation

A person's sexual orientation is separate from gender identity. *Sexual orientation* describes the enduring pattern of a person's romantic and/or sexual attraction to other people. Sexuality is an important part of a person's identity.

Social Identity

Your social identity is your connection to other people, including family members, friends, and group members. It also includes the role you play in your community and your relationships with other cultural and socioeconomic groups. For example, your social identity includes your role among friends, religious practices, political beliefs, country of origin, place of residence, and family connections.

Social identity influences how people label themselves. Some social identities make people feel good and build confidence, while others make people who hold social identities that are stigmatized, or seen negatively by some people, may feel worse about themselves.

Gender Identities	
Gender Identity	Description
Agender	Having a gender identity that does not align with any gender; also called <i>gender neutral</i>
Androgynous	Exhibiting masculine and feminine traits equally
Bigender	Having a gender identity that includes two genders
Cisgender	Having a gender identity that matches one's biological sex assigned at birth
Gender fluid	Having a changing, or fluid, gender identity
Gender nonconforming	Having a gender identity that does not follow gender expectations based on a person's biological sex assigned at birth
Gender questioning	Being unsure about one's gender identity or experimenting with different genders
Nonbinary	Having a gender identity that falls outside or between the categories of man and woman; also called <i>gender queer</i>
Transgender	Having a gender identity that does not match one's biological sex assigned at birth

Figure 4.9 Each term describes how a person may identify with gender.

The US school district's textbook also states that there are 10 different sexual orientations, including androsexual, polysexual, skoliosexual and demisexual.

Reactions from parents

"They're sexualizing our kids and normalizing sexual behavior at a young age," a mother in the area, Alicia Beget, told FOX News, adding:

"We put them in a situation where they think this is safe, that this is healthy, that this is how we show love. And that's how very bad people take advantage of them."

Powering Wearable Devices Using Unexpected Source

Source: <https://i-hls.com/archives/108086>

Sep 10 – Researchers have found a way to harvest electricity from radio waves. From microwave ovens to Wi-Fi connections, the radio waves that permeate the environment are not just signals of energy consumed but are also sources of energy themselves. An international team of researchers from Penn State Department of Engineering Science and Mechanics has developed a way to harvest energy from radio waves to power wearable devices.

Current energy sources for wearable health-monitoring devices have their place in powering sensor devices, but each has its setbacks. Solar power, for example, can only harvest energy when exposed to the sun. A self-powered triboelectric device can only harvest energy when the body is in motion.

"We don't want to replace any of these current power sources," said one of the team leaders, Huanyu "Larry" Cheng. "We are trying to provide additional, consistent energy."





The researchers developed a stretchable wideband dipole antenna system capable of wirelessly transmitting data that is collected from health-monitoring sensors. The system consists of two stretchable metal antennas integrated onto conductive graphene material with a metal coating. The wideband design of the system allows it to retain its frequency functions even when stretched, bent and twisted. This system is then connected to a stretchable rectifying circuit, creating a rectified antenna, or “rectenna,” capable of converting energy from electromagnetic waves into electricity. This electricity can be used to power wireless devices or to charge energy storage devices, such as batteries and supercapacitors.

This **rectenna** can convert radio, or electromagnetic, waves from the ambient environment into energy to power the sensing modules on the device, which track temperature, hydration and pulse oxygen level. Compared to other sources, less energy is produced, but the system can generate power continuously — a significant advantage, according to psu.edu.

Security Crisis: New Weapon Detection System Developed

Source: <https://i-hls.com/archives/113087>

Sep 07 – Mass shootings have become a critical problem in the US. 611 mass shootings occurred in the US in 2020, a 47% increase from 2019, according to the Gun Violence Archive. In addition to the growing physical threats, security teams and professionals are facing new challenges such as reduced workforces and temporary, high-turnover guard staff. The reliance on decades-old, hardware-only, metal detectors has meant that venues face complex challenges to collect, analyze, and learn from data about people entering and exiting their premises. Moreover, collecting reliable weapons data at venue entrances has been exceedingly difficult, and security guards at venue entry points have very few tools to communicate – quickly and at a mass scale – about a threat. An enhanced security screening system, **Evolv Express**, is expected to change this state of affairs. The complete security screening system developed by Evolv Technology is now the first system to integrate weapons screening and detection data collected at venue entrances with Milestone Video Management System (VMS) and Titan HST mass notification system.





The enhancements to Evolv Express address the legacy approach to physical security and enable security teams to meet today's threats. Through these new integrations, information about Evolv Express-identified threats – including time, location, image data, type of threat, and staff requests for additional support – can be instantly communicated to complementary security technologies via the Milestone and Titan HST VMS systems and protocols that a venue may already have in place.

The partnership is expected to provide a leading threat detection system with the best multi-patented

mass notification platform to help quickly identify and manage potential threats and mitigate risks to sites via instantaneous communication, according to the company announcement.

The recent enhancements also include advanced video analytics that further improves and automates the identification and resolution of who presents a potential threat, and where on a person's body the threat is located. By optimizing and automating threat isolation, high-turnover security guard staff can be more effective, accelerate detection and resolution of the threat, and eliminate the friction that visitors, fans, employees and students typically experience moving through security by screening them in a touchless manner.

Daniel Pipes: Greece Is "Far More Valuable to NATO than Turkey"

World Geostrategic Insights (Italy)

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63559/do-nato-and-turkey-have-a-future-together>

Sep 04 – An interview with Marcello Iannarelli.

World Geostrategic Insights: Turkey's President [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#) stated on Sept. 2 that "A NATO without Turkey is unthinkable. Greece has no value in NATO. If there is Turkey, NATO is strong, if there is no Turkey, NATO is weak." Is he correct?

Daniel Pipes: No, he is wrong, and for two main reasons. First, while Turkey does bring important assets to the NATO alliance – its large armed forces, formidable military industry, and critical geographic location – those assets are all vitiated by Turkish actions. The forces attack civilians in Syria, the armaments go to [Ethiopia](#), and the location leads to outrageous land and sea claims. Secondly, Greece is a loyal member of NATO, it has [built up its military strength](#), and it works productively with two non-NATO partners, Cyprus and Israel. The reliability of Greece makes it far more valuable to NATO than Turkey.

WGI: Just a day later, on Sept. 3, [Erdoğan](#) accused Athens of illegally occupying islands in the Aegean sea and threatened to seize Greek islands: "Your occupying the islands does not bind us. When the time, the hour, comes, we will do what is necessary." He also reminded the Greeks "not to forget Izmir," a reference to a Turkish victory over Greek forces exactly a century earlier. What do you make of these statements?

DP: I see them as an extremely dangerous distraction at a moment when NATO is focused on helping Ukraine against Putin's aggression. Any hostile action by Erdoğan versus Greece would not only be a catastrophe in itself but would severely damage the united front against the Russian invasion. NATO needs to warn Erdoğan loud and clear that it will stand with



Greece against Turkey just as it stands with Ukraine against Russia. Also, I wonder if Putin encouraged Erdoğan to threaten Greece; if so, what might the threat or quid pro quo be?

WGI: Contrarily, Ankara has recently mended fences with such Middle Eastern states as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, [Syria](#), Israel, and Egypt. Why initiate this charm campaign now?



The outrageous "Blue Homeland" plan has attracted a following in Turkey.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Dreams and reality are two different things – **Μολών λαβέ!**

DP: Note the jarring contrast of threats against Greece and the quickly warming relations with those Middle Eastern states. Given that Turkey is effectively a dictatorship, the explanation probably lies less in a sophisticated strategy and more in Erdoğan's biases and inconsistencies. As a bully who often [acts illogically](#), perhaps he sees the Middle Eastern states as a threat to his power while dismissing Greece as insignificant. Not only is Turkey's population eight times larger than that of Greece but Erdoğan witnessed at close hand the economic decline of Greece following the 2008 global recession. So, he mobilizes public opinion against a perceived weaker opponent and

away from what he sees as more threatening ones.

WGI: Do these foreign policy changes signify a tactical or strategic shift?

DP: Nearly everything Erdoğan does is tactical, whether working with the Kurds, promoting economic growth, buying arms from Russia, or turning on the charm internationally. He has only two consistent goals: gathering personal power and forwarding an Islamist agenda.

WGI: Turkey has increasingly become a problem for Western allies by not meeting the alliance's requirement of democratic governance and working closely with its opponents (Russia, China). Would NATO be better off without Turkey?

DP: Absolutely. Turkey is a liability whenever NATO confronts ISIS, Iran, Russia, or China. Ankara's block to Sweden and Finland joining the alliance offers a timely example of it impeding NATO.

WGI: Should the alliance explore ways to expel or marginalize Turkey?

DP: Yes, though I very much doubt this is happening due to a mentality that sees Erdoğan as an aberration and expects a return to the good-old Turkey of 1952-2002. But I have news for NATO; with only one slight exception, all the other Turkish political parties view NATO with more hostility than Erdoğan. By the way, I witnessed NATO's weakness toward Turkey first hand in 2017, when my organization, the Middle East Forum, [hosted a NATO event](#) and 11 country delegations ostentatiously stood by Ankara rather than by NATO's [founding principle](#) "to safeguard the freedom" of its peoples.

WGI: As an easier solution than expelling Turkey, you have suggested the creation of a [NATO 2.0](#) without Turkey. What do you have in mind?

DP: It is theoretically possible to expel Turkey from NATO but difficult and controversial. I propose starting a new organization that includes all the other 29 members but not Turkey. Then, shift all of NATO's assets to the new organization. This time, clear rules for membership and expulsion need to be included. While we're being creative, how about deleting the geographic reference and call it something like the Global Alliance of Democracies, GLAD? That then opens to the door to Israel, India, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and others joining. It can become a proto-United Nations of democracies.

WGI: Would Turkey not cause even more problems outside of NATO, aligning more closely with Russia and China?

DP: I think not. First, **Turkey needs NATO more than NATO needs Turkey.** Turkey joined NATO in 1952 out of fear of Russia. No matter how much Putin and Erdoğan pal around now, the Turks know who's the boss and who won in the [two centuries of warfare](#). Second, Ankara already aligns closely with Moscow and Beijing in the diplomatic, financial, trade, and military arenas; NATO membership has not held it back.





لماذا؟

How to Prevent, Prepare for, and Respond to Mass Attacks

By Doug Irving

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220912-how-to-prevent-prepare-for-and-respond-to-mass-attacks>



Sep 12 – Put aside the politics for a moment, the pointing fingers, the thoughts and prayers and hopeless shrugs. What can people do right now to protect their communities from mass shootings?

Researchers at RAND have spent two years working to answer that question. They didn't just look at the deadliest shootings and ask what went wrong. They looked at would-be shootings that never made the news and asked what went right. The result is a [step-by-step guide to prevent shootings and other mass attacks](#) before they happen, and to save lives when they do. It's written for police, paramedics, [local government officials](#)—and for church leaders, concert promoters, grocery store owners, and school superintendents.

"I don't like having to live in a world in which I know my daughter has a lot of fear over this," said [John Hollywood](#), who led the effort as a senior operations researcher at RAND. "We have the findings, we have the tools, we have the processes that we need to really do a better job of getting a handle on this. It's a matter of going out and using them."

In 2018, a woman in Everett, Washington, just north of Seattle, picked up a spiral notebook that had been lying on her grandson's bed. She flipped it open and found the detailed outline of a school shooting. Zip ties for the doors. Bombs beneath the bleachers. A date in April that would coincide with the Columbine shooting.

"I'm preparing myself," her grandson had written. "I can't wait. My aim has gotten much more accurate."

The woman did the most important thing she could do. She called for help.

[RAND's study](#) looked at 640 mass attack plots that endangered, or would have endangered, four or more people in a public place between 1995 and 2020. More than half were thwarted before anyone got hurt—and in two-thirds of those cases, it was because of a tip from the public. Yet previous research has shown that people are much more likely to try to talk to a potential shooter themselves or to do nothing than to call in a report.

"We have to get people to trust their instincts, to know that if they think about something for more than about five seconds, they really need to take action," said Tara Richardson, a senior consultant with Lafayette Group, a public safety consulting firm that partnered with RAND.

For years now, RAND has been pulling together evidence to inform the debate over which policies could slow [gun violence in America](#), such as [child-access prevention laws](#). But the



mass attacks project had a different purpose, and a different audience. Researchers wanted to provide tips and tools that communities could implement themselves, no Senate vote or governor's signature required.

What Warning Signs Look Like and Where They Have Come From

The top warning signs to report

In the analysis, it was found that warning signs tend to exist in combination, meaning that there are signs that a person wants to attack (i.e., signs of motivation) and is taking actions to carry out an attack (i.e., signs of preparation).

Motivation (serious intent to attack) + **Preparation** (concrete actions for attack) = **Warning** (intent and actions)

Examples of *motivation* are

- claims that they are inspired by past attacks
- claims that they will fulfill an extremist cause (especially if they were kicked out of a group for being too violent)
- claims that someone is (or others are) so harmful or threatening that they have *no choice* but to attack

Examples of *preparation* are

- written plans for an attack
- attempts to recruit others
- attempts to learn how to kill many people (in person or online)
- coordination with known violent extremists
- seeking arsenals of weapons and ammunition (without a benign reason, such as hunting)
- travel for training or to the target
- site probing or breaching

That starts with educating people about the specific warning signs they should watch for—words and actions that indicate not just motivation, but preparation for an attack. Those warning signs have not been well-publicized, but they should be. Public education campaigns could provide better guidance—beyond just “see something, say something”—about when people should reach for the phone.

Communities need to think of their response to such tips as a team effort. That means schools, mental health providers, social service agencies, major venue owners, and law enforcement all sharing information and establishing a single point person to follow up. That follow-up should be relentless and sustained. One of the biggest predictors of a plot reaching execution was information falling through the cracks.

In late November 2021, for example, rumors began to spread through the halls of Oxford High School in eastern Michigan that something terrible was about to happen. They were specific enough, and scary enough, that some students stayed home from school. “We got none of it,” the county sheriff said afterward.

During a break between classes, with the halls crowded with students, a 15-year-old boy walked out of a bathroom with a 9 mm handgun and opened fire. Four students died. Seven people were hurt. But the school had practiced active-shooter drills, and every classroom had a lock on the door. Students who fled the hallways knew to get into a classroom, lock and barricade the door, and grab anything they could to defend themselves—a hockey stick, a tape dispenser, scissors.

Run. Hide. Fight. When a shooting starts, those are, in order, the most effective ways to survive, and they should be as well-publicized as the warning signs. [RAND's study](#) included 65 cases in which people fought back—and in 85 percent of those cases, they stopped the gunfire or made the attacker flee. In 12 cases, people rushed the shooter from different directions—and in all 12 cases, they stopped the shooting.

Communities need to know how they would respond, too. Police drills need to emphasize a lesson that has been clear since Columbine: Don't wait, don't assemble a response team, just stop the shooting. But schools, shopping malls, and other so-called “soft targets” also need to train—with police and other community partners—until their response is seamless. Washington, D.C., for example, recently offered active-shooter training for nightlife and religious workers, with instruction on what to do if a gunman is nearby and how to tie a tourniquet.

[RAND's study](#) identified three additional steps that such potential targets can take to better protect people inside their buildings. They can ensure plenty of well-marked exits. They can provide longer walk-ups and controlled-entry areas, so people can see who's coming. And, like the high school in Oxford, they can put locks on the doors. One study found that, as of 2017, no active shooter in the United States had successfully breached a locked door.



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“We have examples where a shooter shows up, the doors are locked, and the shooter is left to basically run around until the police show up,” Hollywood said. “You haven’t heard about them because they weren’t mass-casualty events.”

RAND and its partners on the project—Lafayette Group, RTI International, and Karchmer Associates—chose not to present their findings in an inch-thick research report. Instead, they took what they learned from the data and from interviews with dozens of experts and first responders, and used it to build a [free, online tool](#), available to anyone.

The tool walks users through every step of preparing for, preventing, and responding to a mass attack. It includes links to funding sources, case studies, model programs, assessment tools, databases, and training guides. The National Institute of Justice sponsored the project.

“We wanted to give communities clear, concrete steps they can take to protect themselves,” said [Dic Donohue](#), who came to the project as the director of the [RAND Center for Quality Policing](#), a former Boston-area transit police officer—and a shooting survivor. A bullet severed his femoral artery during a gun battle with the Boston Marathon bombers in 2013.

“Community stakeholders such as schools or law enforcement agencies need to assess: ‘Where are we missing things?’” he said. “It comes down to training and follow-up. Do they have relationships in the community? Can they get the word out? If something happens, God forbid, do they know how to reunite families?”

[RAND’s project](#) had its roots in many places—in Orlando’s Pulse nightclub, in the Route 91 Harvest country music festival in Las Vegas, in the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas. But one shooting in particular motivated the research. In February 2018, a former student who had threatened to kill people and was known to have weapons walked into Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and started shooting. Seventeen people died. It was the deadliest school shooting since Sandy Hook—until this spring, when 19 children and two teachers were killed in Uvalde, Texas.

Just one day before the shooting in Parkland, a woman in Everett, Washington, called the police to report the notebook she had found in her grandson’s room. Police arrived, searched the room, and found a rifle hidden in a guitar case. They pulled the grandson from his classroom at school and arrested him.

He had written in his notebook that he wanted to make his school attack “infamous.” It’s not, because nothing fell through the cracks. He pleaded guilty to charges that included attempted first degree murder and illegal possession of an explosive device. He’s now serving time in a Washington state prison.

[Doug Irving](#) is a communications analyst at RAND.



“Cosmic” and “phantom” UFOs are all over Ukranian skies



If they are real UFOs then most probably they are departing to more logical galaxies!

The big mistake of the WW2 Western coalition

Germany is the most populous nation, with the greatest economic power and is at the center of the continent, so "the German armed forces must become the cornerstone of conventional defense in Europe and the best-equipped force in Europe," stated Chancellor Olaf Solz (speaking at the German Armed Forces Conference in Berlin) and emphasized that "the main mission of the Bundeswehr is the defense of freedom in Europe."

There's An Intriguing Link Between US Presidents And The Wars They Wage

By David Nield

Source: <https://www.sciencealert.com/theres-an-intriguing-link-between-us-presidents-and-the-wars-they-wage>

Sep 16 – Wars begin, continue and end for a whole host of different reasons, but the personalities of the people in charge have a role to play. According to a new study there's an intriguing link between the characters of past US presidents and the length of time they went to war for.

Based on an analysis of the 19 presidents who served between 1897 and 2009 (from William McKinley to George W. Bush), the degree to which a commander in chief exhibited grandiose narcissistic personality traits is correlated with the duration of any wars they presided over.

With conflicts continuing to rage across the world today, the findings could be useful for politicians, analysts and military commanders in understanding how wars might play out. Before now, how the personalities of leaders influence war hasn't been fully explored.

"More narcissistic presidents tend to only exit wars if they can say they won, and they will extend wars to find a way to declare some kind of victory," [says political scientist John P. Harden](#), from The Ohio State University.

"They want to look heroic and strong and competent – even if it means fighting the war beyond what is reasonable." Harden used data pulled from the [Correlates of War](#) database, which tracks conflicts involving at least 1,000 deaths in battle within a one-year period – so 11 operations for the US during the study period.



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This was cross-referenced with [previous research](#) that analyzed the characters of US presidents, in part through their biographers. High levels of assertiveness and excitement-seeking, and low levels of modesty, compliance and straightforwardness were used to measure narcissistic tendencies.

US chiefs who scored lower on narcissism, including McKinley and Eisenhower, tended to put the interests of the state first. Wars were pursued only as a last resort, and were ended as quickly as possible – see Eisenhower's quick exit from the Korean War, for example.

Those presidents who ranked higher for narcissism, such as Roosevelt and Nixon, were less likely to separate personal and state interests, carrying on conflicts for longer. For example, Nixon inherited the Vietnam War, and continued it for another four years.

Overall, the eight leaders who scored above average for narcissism (headed by Johnson and Roosevelt) spent an average of 613 days at war, as opposed to 136 days for the 11 presidents who were below average on narcissism (McKinley and Howard Taft scored the lowest in the test).

The relationship still holds, the study shows, even when other factors are taken into account – including the political climate in the US, the terrain the war is being fought on, the balance of power between combatants, and whether or not the president himself has prior military experience.

"What I found is that the traditional way political scientists have looked at war dynamics doesn't capture the whole story," [says Harden](#).

"Presidents don't always look rationally at the evidence to make their wartime decisions. Many presidents have done that, but others are more interested in their own self-interest than the interest of the state."

Harden puts forward several suggestions for why narcissism might lead to presidents staying in conflicts for longer. They potentially have grander aims, and have higher expectations in terms of the end results of conflicts, for example.

They might also be overconfident in their strategies, leading to a lack of effectiveness in battle and periods of combat that go on for longer than they need to. Narcissists are also known to make mistakes when stressed, and tend not to adapt to failure as well.

Of course, there's no end to the number of influences on war – from the weather to the number of countries involved to the spirit of the troops – but the disposition of the person in charge could be a more important factor than previously thought.

"Narcissistic presidents spend more time worrying about their image than other presidents," [says Harden](#).

"These motivations, especially their desire to protect their inflated self-image, cause them to drag out wars longer than needed."

●► The research has been published in the [Journal of Conflict Resolution](#).



When humor transforms to tumor!



Shocking document: How the US planned the war and energy crisis in Europe

Source: <https://nyadagbladet.se/utrikes/shocking-document-how-the-us-planned-the-war-and-energy-crisis-in-europe/>

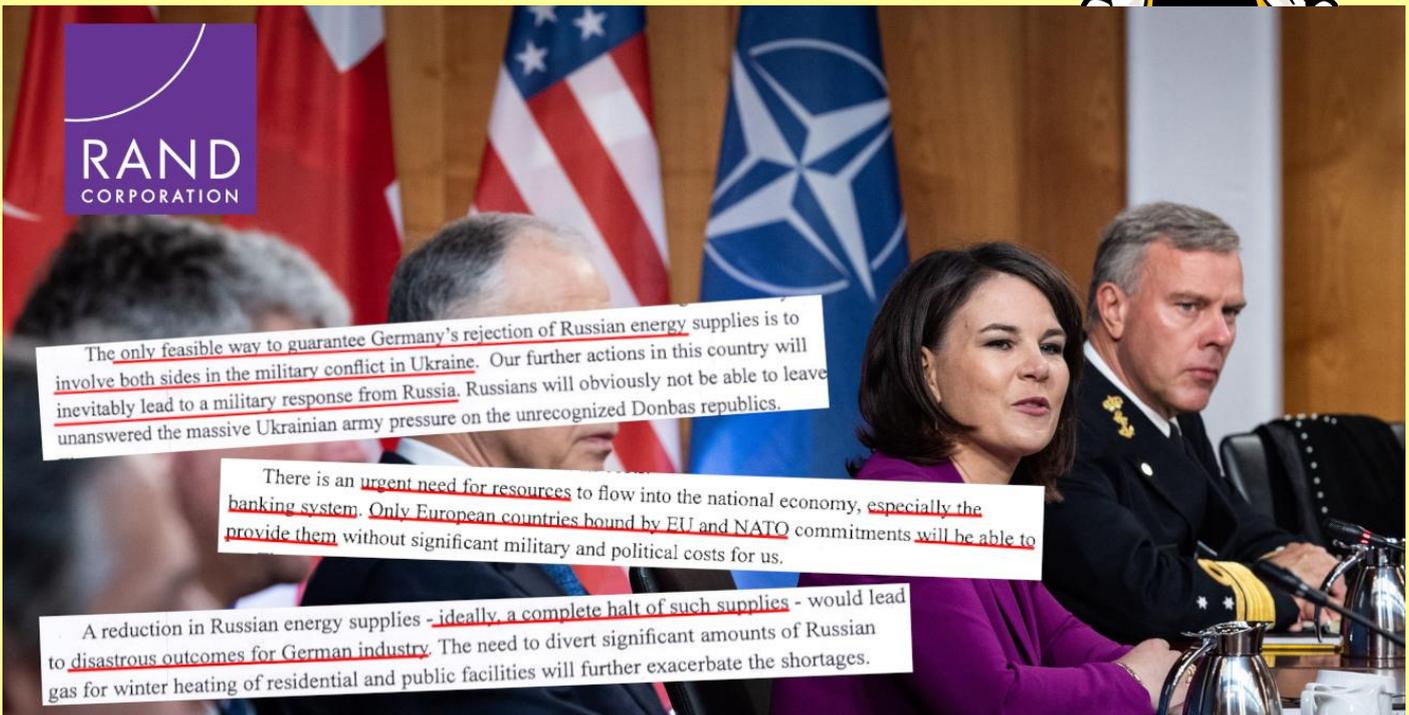
- In what appears to be an exceptional internal leak from the think tank RAND Corporation, known among other things to have been behind the American strategy for foreign and defence policies during the Cold War, a detailed account is given of how the energy crisis in Europe has been planned by the United States.
- The document, which dates from January, acknowledges that the aggressive foreign policy that was being pursued by Ukraine before the conflict would push Russia into having to take military action against the country. Its actual purpose, it contends, was to pressure Europe into adopting a wide range of sanctions against Russia, sanctions which had already been prepared.
- The European Union's economy, it states, "will inevitably collapse" as a result of this, and its authors rejoice in the fact that, among other things, resources of up to \$9 billion will flow back to the United States, and well-educated young people in Europe will be forced to emigrate.
- The key objective described in the document is to divide Europe - especially Germany and Russia - and destroy the European economy by placing useful idiots in political positions in order to stop Russian energy supplies from reaching the continent.

NYA DAGBLADET

Sep 15 – RAND Corporation's think tank, which has a huge work force of 1,850 employees and a budget of \$350 million, has the official aim of "improving policies and decision-making through research and analysis". It is primarily connected to the United States Department of Defence and is infamous for having been influential in the development of military and other strategies during the Cold War.

A [document](#) signed RAND, under the opening heading of "Weakening Germany, strengthening the U.S.", suggests that there is an "urgent need" for an influx of resources from outside to maintain the overall American economy, but "especially the banking system". "Only European countries bound by EU and NATO commitments can provide us with these without significant military and political costs for us."





Germany's minister for foreign affairs Annalena Baerbock, in a meeting in May with Nato and U.S. officials.

According to RAND, the main obstacle to this ambition is the growing independence of Germany. Among other things, it points out that Brexit has given Germany greater independence and made it more difficult for the United States to influence the decisions of European governments.

A key objective that permeates this cynical strategy is, in particular, to destroy the cooperation between Germany and Russia, as well as France, which is seen as the greatest economic and political threat to the United States.

"If implemented, this scenario will eventually turn Europe into not only an economic, but also a political competitor to the United States.", it declares.

The only way: "Draw both sides into war with Ukraine"

In order to crush this political threat, a strategic plan, primarily focused on destroying the German economy, is presented.

"Stopping Russian deliveries could create a systematic crisis that would be devastating for the German economy and indirectly for the European Union as a whole", it states, and believes that the key is to draw the European countries into war.

"The only possible way to ensure that Germany rejects Russian energy supplies is to draw both sides into the military conflict in Ukraine. Our continued actions in this country will inevitably lead to a military response from Russia. Russia is clearly not going to leave to the massive Ukrainian army's pressure on the Donetsk People's Republic without a military response. This would make it possible to portray Russia as the aggressive party and then implement the entire package of sanctions, which has already been drawn up".

Green parties will force Germany to "fall into the trap"

The green parties in Europe are described as being particularly easy to manipulate into running the errands of American imperialism.

"The prerequisite for Germany to fall into this trap is the dominant role of green parties and European ideologies. The German environmental movement is a highly dogmatic, if not fanatical, movement, which makes it quite easy to get them to ignore economic arguments", it writes, citing the current foreign minister of Germany, Annalena Baerbock, and the climate minister, Robert Habeck, as examples of this type of politician.

"Personal characteristics and lack of professionalism make it possible to assume that it is impossible for them to recognise their own mistakes in time. I will therefore be sufficient to rapidly form a media image of Putin's aggressive war – and make the Greens into ardent



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and tough supporters of sanctions – a ‘war party’. This will make it possible to impose the sanctions without any obstacles”. Baerbock is, i.a., well known for declaring that she will continue the suspension of Russian gas even during the winter – regardless of what her constituents think about the matter and the consequences for the German population. – We will stand with Ukraine, and this means that the sanctions will stay, also in winter time – even if it gets really tough for politicians, she said at a conference in Prague recently.

“Ideally – a complete halt of supplies”

The authors express a hope that the damage between Germany and Russia will be so great that it will make it impossible for the countries to re-establish normal relations later on.

“A reduction in Russian energy supplies – ideally, a complete halt of such supplies– would lead to disastrous outcomes for German industry. The need to divert significant amounts of Russian gas for winter heating will further exacerbate the shortages. Lockdowns in industrial enterprises would cause shortages of components and spare parts for manufacturing, a breakdown of logistics chains and, eventually, a domino effect”.

Ultimately, **a total collapse of the economy in Europe is seen as both probable and desirable.**

“Not only will it deliver a devastating blow to the German economy, the entire economy of the entire EU economy will inevitably collapse.”

It further points out that the benefits of US-based companies having less competition on the world market, logistical advantages and the outflow of capital from Europe, would mean that they would be able to contribute to the economy of the United States by an estimated 7-9 trillion dollars. In addition, it also emphasises the important effect of many well-educated and young Europeans being forced to immigrate to the USA.

RAND denies originating the report

RAND Corporation issued a [press release](#) on Wednesday denying that the report originates from them. No comments are made regarding what parts of the report are false or what is accurate, apart from simply writing that the content is “bizarre” and that the document is “fake”.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: A possible scenario? Yes! Fake? Maybe. But is there smoke without a fire? No!



Cost of Providing for Illegal Aliens Released into the U.S. Since Jan. 2021: \$20.4 Billion Annually

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220920-cost-of-providing-for-illegal-aliens-released-into-the-u-s-since-jan-2021-20-4-billion-annually>

Sep 20 – According to a new analysis by the Federation for [American Immigration Reform](#) (FAIR), a nonprofit organization calling for reducing overall immigration levels, the cost of providing for the needs of illegal aliens who entered the country under President Joe Biden adds **an additional \$20.4 billion annually. FAIR says that this figure is in addition to the about \$140 billion a year cost of providing benefits and services for the longer-term illegal alien population.**

The Biden administration has released approximately 1.3 million illegal aliens into the country's interior after removals and Title 42 expulsions are accounted for. FAIR says that its sources within U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) suggest that to this figure we should add approximately 1 million "got-aways." It thus can be safely estimated that approximately 2.3 million illegal aliens successfully entered the country's interior after since January 2021.

Based on its most recent cost study, FAIR estimates that each illegal alien costs American taxpayers \$9,232 per year.

"Even in an age in which trillion dollar spending packages are considered modest, the additional \$20.4 billion the Biden Border Crisis has heaped onto the backs of American taxpayers is still staggering," noted Dan Stein, president of FAIR. "\$20.4 billion could address some very important needs of the American public, instead of covering the costs of the surge of illegal migration triggered by this administration's policies."

The \$20.4 billion that taxpayers will spend this year, on just the illegal aliens who have entered the country in the last year and half, could cover the cost of:

- ❖ Providing every homeless veteran in America \$50,000 per year for a decade. This would effectively end veteran homelessness.
- ❖ Giving every family in America earning \$50k or less a grocery voucher of roughly \$410.
- ❖ Providing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to more than 7 million additional needy families.
- ❖ Funding and expanding the entire National School Lunch Program.
- ❖ Hiring more than 315,000 police officers to combat rising crime across the country.
- ❖ Hiring of 330,000 new teachers, which would easily end the long-standing teacher shortage in America.
- ❖ Construction of nearly the entire Southern Border Wall (which could prevent millions more illegal aliens from entering).

"According to another [new report](#), 35 percent of U.S. families with a full-time worker struggle to meet their basic needs. These are the people President Biden pledged to champion. Instead, he is choosing to divert an additional \$20.4 billion away from their needs, in order to fund a radical open borders agenda with no end in sight," concluded Stein.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: 160 billion USD! What is the "return value" of this money? What do illegal immigrants return to the hosting country? Because in Greece for example, all the money spent does not pay back because people prefer to enjoy benefits than working! And this happens not only in Greece. So, why not use the money differently by helping the countries of origin to offer more working places and better living conditions?

As Turkey Backs Azerbaijan's Recent Strikes on Armenian Towns, Where Are Russia, the EU, and the US?

By Ambassador John E. Herbst

Source: <https://www.justsecurity.org/83143/as-turkey-backs-azerbajians-recent-strikes-on-armenian-towns-where-are-russia-the-eu-and-the-us/>

Sep 21 – Azerbaijan's Sept. 13 military strikes on Armenian border towns were just the latest reminder that "upper-handism" – the temptation to take full advantage of perceived military superiority – is alive and well in the south Caucasus. Armenia practiced "upper-handism" for more than 20 years after its emergence as an independent state in 1991. With Russia's backing, it enjoyed a military advantage over Azerbaijan that enabled it to maintain control not only over ethnic Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh, but also roughly 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory. During this time, with rare exceptions, Yerevan showed no



willingness to recognize Azerbaijan's [internationally recognized](#) sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The first signs that this was going to change became evident in 2016, when Baku initiated the first major clash with Armenia in years. It was called the [four-day war](#), and Azerbaijan recovered a small amount of territory under Armenian control. Azerbaijan had spent the preceding and following years strengthening its military. A [second clash](#) followed in July 2020, but it was never clear which side had initiated it. But all of this was a prelude to the war in the fall of 2020 that Baku decisively won.

Since then, the shoe has been [on the other foot](#). Upper-handism is alive and well in Baku. With strong diplomatic support from Turkey in that conflict, and ample supplies of Turkish and Israeli weapons, including [drones](#), Azerbaijan quickly regained control of Nagorno-Karabakh and the additional territory held by Armenia for nearly three decades. Azerbaijan's latest maneuver would not have been possible without strong support from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, as well as lethargy in Moscow. In the meantime, the European Union and the United States have been largely on the sidelines (even with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's meeting this week in New York with his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts), though constructive involvement could ease tensions all around.



In the diplomatic tango that followed the 2020 war, Armenian leaders in Yerevan have at times expressed a willingness to compromise – even as this remains a controversial matter in Armenian political circles — but Baku has insisted that any peace deal should focus on recognizing Azerbaijan's territorial borders, which include Nagorno-Karabakh. At the same time, Baku does not currently appear ready to consider specific measures to provide safeguards for Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. The latest outbreak of fighting, which reportedly [has killed at least 286](#) people, might be interpreted as an effort to coerce Armenia to sign a peace agreement on Baku's terms, or to not oppose a transportation corridor to connect most of Azerbaijan with Nakhichevan. (Armenian territory sits between Nakhichevan and the rest of Azerbaijan.)

Since the start of the 2020 war, Turkey has emerged as the most active and perhaps influential outside power in the region. Baku's win in the 2020 war enhanced Ankara's prestige in the region. Russia partly recouped when President Vladimir Putin, after initial failure, shut down the fighting with a ceasefire and appeared to strengthen his hand by placing Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Yet those peacekeepers have been largely inactive during the occasional fighting that has broken out since the ceasefires, and that has been true this time as well. What is more, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), created by Moscow to provide security in the post-Soviet space, has also been inactive. CSTO members include Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Armenia, whose Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan heads the organization, convened a virtual meeting of the CSTO on Sept. 13, the day Azerbaijan conducted its strikes, and formally asked the CSTO to intervene the next day. The CSTO turned down the request.



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Notably, the CSTO did provide troops to help restore order in Kazakhstan last January (Pashinyan was head of the organization at the time, too). The [refusal of the CSTO](#) (which really means Russia's refusal) to help Armenia has not gone unnoticed in Yerevan. The CSTO justified its position by noting that a ceasefire had been established. But from Armenia's point of view, Baku had launched new attacks – in violation of a previous ceasefire – and the CSTO did nothing.

Russian lethargy in this crisis is certainly a result of Armenia and the south Caucasus ranking lower in Moscow's priorities at the moment, especially considering Putin's sinking position in Ukraine. The Ukrainian military's successful counteroffensive around Kharkiv follows its thwarting of the Kremlin offensive to "take all of Donbas" – two defeats for Putin. These defeats were amplified during Putin's visit to Samarkand, Uzbekistan, last week for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit, where he publicly apologized to dictator-pal Xi Jinping of China for the way events are unfolding in Ukraine and received a scolding from Indian partner Narendra Modi for the same. Putin is likewise facing [public criticism in Russia](#) from both relatively liberal local officials calling for his resignation and ultra-hawks who want a major escalation of the war.

This means not only that Putin has less time and resources to deal with tensions in the south Caucasus, but that he has a specific reason for being less responsive to Armenia – Turkey's Erdoğan. Turkey is not just a major player in the south Caucasus; it is also a player in Ukraine, which has benefitted recently both from Turkish drones and Erdoğan's role in reaching the summer agreement on grain shipments from Ukrainian ports. Putin does not want Turkey to become an even greater supporter of Ukraine; so he takes no steps against Turkey's regional client.

It is noteworthy that the United States and the European Union are largely absent from this crisis. Yes, Blinken issued a statement calling for a ceasefire, spoke with both Pashinyan and Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, and then met with their top envoys this week on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly opening. But the United States is not having the same impact as either Ankara or even Moscow. Partly as a response to this, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, long a supporter of Armenia, led a congressional delegation to Yerevan on Sept. 17, during which she [condemned](#) the Azerbaijan strikes.

Pelosi is likely hoping that her trip will spur the Biden administration to play a more active role in this crisis. Joe Biden last year became the first U.S. president to declare the World War I Ottoman-era massacre of Armenians as a genocide, and in this instance, the United States does have cards to play. Relations with Turkey's Erdoğan remain strained, and he may well find value in improved ties with Washington.

The Biden administration could consider outreach to Erdoğan suggesting that greater cooperation both on Ukraine and the south Caucasus could lead to improved bilateral relations. In the Caucasus, such cooperation would work to prevent further violations along the Armenia/Azerbaijan border and to normalize Turkish-Armenian relations. Such cooperation also could include regional economic cooperation, which Baku too would find attractive.

Ambassador John E. Herbst is Senior Director of the Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center. He served for 31 years as a Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. Department of State, retiring at the rank of career minister. He was U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine from 2003 to 2006 and Ambassador to Uzbekistan from 2000 to 2003.





T - NEWS

Why the Death Edict on Salman Rushdie?

By Daniel Pipes

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63481/why-the-death-edict-on-salman-rushdie>

Aug 23 – The stabbing of Salman Rushdie raises the question: Why did Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini sentence Salman Rushdie to death in 1989 for his novel *The Satanic Verses*? That the Iranian dictator had [not read the book](#) made this action, one that dispensed with laws, boundaries, and precedents, the more surprising.

[Robin Wright](#) explains in the *New Yorker* that this "was a political move to exploit the erupting fury in Pakistan, India, and beyond."

[Giles Kepel](#) argues that Khomeini's edict "effectively proclaim[ed] himself the spiritual guide of all Muslims, thereby wresting the leadership role from the Saudis." Sam Westrop, head of Islamist Watch at the Middle East Forum, concurs: "After Jamaat-e-Islami leaders in Britain flew to Saudi to petition for an international campaign in October 1988, Khomeini thought he needed to speak up or risk losing out."



Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1989 death sentence for Salman Rushdie for his novel *The Satanic Verses* was not a tactical move by Khomeini to promote himself but a true and furious response

I disagree. This was not a tactical move by Khomeini to promote himself but a true and furious response. Why? Because an author named Salman Rushdie wrote a book called *The Satanic Verses*. Those two

bare facts—and not the complex contents within the 546 pages in the novel—sufficed to provoke an emotional reaction.

Start with the title. The phrase "Satanic verses" refers to two deleted lines in the Koran that imply the Islamic prophet Muhammad, in a concession to his adversaries, briefly made Islam a polytheistic faith. In those two lines, he stated that three pagan goddesses named Lat, Uzza, and Manat can intercede between man and God: "These are the exalted birds/And their intercession is desired indeed." A leading early Muslim historian of Islam, At-Tabari, wrote that "Satan threw" those words on Muhammad's tongue.

Discussing this incident in his pathbreaking 1858 biography, *The Life of Mahomet*, the British orientalist [William Muir](#), refers to "the two Satanic verses." That appears to have been the first use of this phrase to refer to the deleted passage. Later Western authors then picked up the term, most notably W. Montgomery Watt, who devoted ten pages to the topic in his authoritative 1953 study, *Muhammad at Mecca*, as well as in his 1961 abridgement, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*.

Basically, anyone over the past seventy years who—like Rushdie (and myself)—studied in the West about Muhammad and the Koran likely read Watt and encountered the "Satanic verses" phrase.

In contrast, the term "Satanic verses" is unknown in the mother tongues of Muslims, including Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Scholars using those languages know the two deleted lines in the Koran as the *gharaniq* (birds) incident. Accordingly, Muslims like Khomeini who studied Muhammad's life and the Koran but not in English have no idea what "Satanic verses" refers to.

What they do know is that translating "Satanic verses" into the languages spoken by Muslims raises unimaginably offensive implications. In Arabic, it becomes *Al-Ayat ash-Shaytaniya*; in Persian, *Ayat-e Shetani*; in Turkish, *Şeytan Ayetleri*. *Shaytan* is a cognate for "Satan" and poses no problems. But, unlike "verses," which refers generally to poetry, song, and scripture, *ayat* specifically refers to "verses of the Koran."

Therefore, back-translated literally into English—and this is the critical point—these Arabic, Persian, and Turkish titles mean "The Koran's Satanic Verses." Extrapolating slightly, this turns into "The Satanic Koran." That explosively implies that Muhammad received the Koran not from God, nor that he made it up, but that he received it from the devil. For this reason, [Ali A. Mazrui](#), a prominent Muslim academic, called the title "perhaps the most fundamental blasphemy" in the novel, a widely shared view.

"The Satanic Koran" also suggests Rushdie proclaimed the entire Koran—and not just two deleted verses—to come from the devil. For Mazrui, "Rushdie's blasphemy does not lie in his saying that the Qur'an is the work of Muhammad. The blasphemy lies more in Rushdie's suggestion that it is the work of the Devil." Also: [Abdelhamid Zbantout](#), a French Islamic leader, announced himself "indignant that someone could write that the prophet received the



revelation from Satan, and not from the angel Gabriel." Yaqub Zaki, a British convert to Islam, spelled out this misreading in the *Times* of London:

Rushdie's use of the name of the devil responsible for the fraud is intended to indicate that the whole Koran is fraudulent and Muhammad a mean imposter; not a question of two verses spotted as such but all the 6,236 verses making up the entire book. In other words, the title is a double entendre.

But these assertions are all wrong. The title is not a double entendre. Nowhere in the novel does Rushdie state or imply that the Koran came from the devil; in fact, he portrays Muhammad as making it up. But angry Muslims reading the title as "The Satanic Koran" entirely missed these subtleties in the heat of their outrage. Later, no one bothered to verify these false assumptions, so they became received truths endlessly repeated.

Herein lies the most direct cause of the furor. Other books have to be read to uncover their blasphemies; this one announced the hideous outrage in large, gold relief letters right on the dust cover. (And the Persian miniature on the cover, showing "Rustam Killing the White Demon," only confirmed an impression that the book centers on Satan.) Add to this what Muslims heard about the book's irreverent contents—which eroticized Muhammad's wives, called Muhammad by the extinct and hostile European name of Mahound, and portrayed God as a balding middle-aged man with dandruff—and the externalities alone damned Rushdie so thoroughly, of course, no one felt a need to read the actual book.

A novelist selects a title on the basis of, among other things, its originality, concision, drama, topicality, and memorability. Rushdie's choice of *The Satanic Verses* meets all these criteria. What the author did not realize was that, combined with his rude treatment of Islamic pieties, his title had an incendiary effect. More than anything else, his apparently innocent choice of title explains why so many Muslims responded with fury to what would otherwise have been just another novel.

The title also helps explain the conspiracy theories that grew up around *The Satanic Verses*, for as word of the novel got out, and then became a front-page story, many Muslims knew in their hearts that such a diabolical plot could only come from the West. They devised a whole scheme and filled in the details: Western leaders, consulting with their orientalist experts, had come up with the despicable volume to spearhead a latter-day Crusader-style effort to sabotage Islam. Who else but the CIA or MI6 know enough to devise so crafty a scheme? The more that pious Muslims thought about it, the larger the issue grew, and the more impassioned their response. That the book was a work of fiction became increasingly irrelevant; what mattered was its challenge to the fundamentals of Islam, and the need to mount a defense. Such concerns were at the center of the Muslim response around the globe, including Ayatollah Khomeini's.

Add to this that Khomeini knew one other fact: the author's name, Salman Rushdie, the name of a born-Muslim. A non-Muslim ridiculing Islamic sanctities comes as no surprise, but a born-Muslim doing so is intolerable and renders him both an apostate and a traitor. Thus did Khomeini invoke a death sentence on Rushdie for "opposition to Islam, the Prophet, and the Koran."

So, no, the death edict was neither about rivalries nor geopolitics. It was about saving Islam from a perceived blasphemy by a traitor working with the enemies of Islam.

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

BETWEEN SALVATION AND TERROR: RADICALIZATION AND THE FOREIGN FIGHTER PHENOMENON IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Edited by Vlado Azinović

Foreword by Peter R. Neumann



2017 – This project was supported by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Shipping industry says piracy off coast of Somalia is no longer a threat



Source: <https://www.ft.com/content/3c67767c-301c-41b9-bbdc-189546dc04ef>

Aug 22 – Piracy in the waters off Somalia is no longer a threat to global shipping, an industry group said on Monday, after more than a decade of efforts to prevent the attacks that disrupted trade and drove up costs. The group of six international shipping organisations, which includes the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) said from the start of next year the Indian Ocean would no longer be considered high risk as there had been no attacks on merchant vessels off Somalia since 2018. “This announcement is a testament to nearly 15 years of dedicated collaboration to reduce the threat of piracy in the Indian Ocean,” it said in a statement. A vital thoroughfare for energy exports from the Middle East to Europe, the coast of Somalia was deemed high risk after piracy and ransom demands surged from 2008 and peaked three years later. Just under 10 per cent of global seaborne petroleum trade goes through the Gulf of Aden, the waterway between Yemen and the Horn of Africa, according to the US Energy Information Administration.



In 2009, in one of the most high-profile cases, later turned into the Hollywood film *Captain Phillips*, a US-flagged ship, the *Maersk Alabama*, was hijacked by Somali pirates. The crew was eventually rescued by the US Navy. John Stawpert, senior manager of environment and trade at ICS, said removing Somalia’s designation as a high-risk area would probably reduce the number of private armed guards — who are often former servicemen — deployed on ships travelling through the region. “It’s very strange to be standing here saying piracy is suppressed when we went through so many years of them being able to operate indiscriminately,” he said. However, insurance premiums for voyages in the region are influenced by separate security assessments made by the Joint War Committee, a marine insurance advisory board whose guidance is watched closely by underwriters. Dimitris Maniatis, chief commercial officer at Seagull Maritime, a private maritime security firm, said that private guards together with naval deployments had helped to reduce piracy. About a third of all daily shipping in the world passes the north-east edge of Africa, where the water narrows to a chokepoint between Yemen and Djibouti on its way to the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. Djibouti is home to a handful of military stations including from the US, France, and China’s first overseas military base, whose presence has contributed to the diminishing of piracy in the area.

Operation Atlanta, the EU’s first naval operation, and the Combined Maritime Forces, a 34-nation maritime coalition focused on counter-terrorism and counter-piracy that operates out of Bahrain, were among the naval deployments that helped combat piracy in the region. In December, the UN Security Council said there were no successful pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia last year, noting that “joint counter-piracy efforts have resulted in a steady decline in pirate attacks and hijackings” since 2011. It added that there had been no successful ship hijackings for ransom since March 2017. However, the UN warned that “suspicious approaches towards merchant vessels in the region were



observed . . . indicating that progress achieved in combating piracy could be reversed if not consolidated.” Maniatis, of Seagull Maritime, added that the Somali clans that had been engaged in piracy operations were now focused on smuggling weapons and people in and out of Yemen and on the coal trade with the Arabian Peninsula after the risk-reward for piracy had become less attractive. “I don’t anticipate any immediate rebound of Somali piracy anytime soon,” he said, adding that “we need to see what the insurance industry will say about this.”

The Gulf of Guinea off west Africa has since emerged as the world’s biggest piracy hotspot. In 2020, 95 percent of kidnapping incidents of ship crew members occurred while they transited through west African waters. A UN resolution in May called on countries in the region to adopt tougher measures to combat piracy. While piracy in the Gulf of Guinea plummeted in the first half of the year, with only 12 incidents reported — down from 50 in the same period in 2018 according to the International Maritime Bureau — security insiders worry that it will not continue to be suppressed in the region.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: Good news but are we sure and confident that we did not push the problem (Somalia) under the carpet (Gulf of Guinea)? In addition, Al-Shabaab failed to collaborate with Somali pirates; Boko Haram might use a different approach.

Bali bomb maker Umar Patek could be released early from Indonesian jail

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/18/bali-bomb-maker-umar-patek-could-be-released-from-prison-in-indonesia>

Aug 19 – **Umar Patek**, the bomb maker who helped assemble the devices used in the 2002 bombing in **Bali**, could walk free early from prison this year.

The Indonesian ministry of law and human rights regional office in East Java has proposed the early release after the ex-member of Jemaah Islamiyah, an Indonesian terror group linked to al-Qaida, completed two-thirds of his sentence, plus remissions.

Patek gained the remissions as he declared his obedience to Indonesia. “He has made a full pledge to the Republic of



Indonesia,” said Zaeroji, the head of the ministry of law and human rights regional office in East Java.

A ministry spokesperson confirmed the proposal was in process. Patek, whose real name is Hisyam bin Ali Zein, was accused of his role in assembling the bomb that ripped through the Sari Club and Paddy’s Pub in Kuta, killing 202 people ((including 88 Australians, 38 Indonesians, 23 Britons, and people of more than 20 other nationalities). The court in Jakarta sentenced him to 20 years in prison.

He was spared the death sentence after collaborating with the police and apologising to the victims’ families.

He was also sentenced for his involvement in attacks on Jakarta churches on Christmas Eve 2000, in which 19 people were killed.

The US offered a \$1m reward for information leading to Patek’s arrest. He was hiding in Abbottabad, the city

in Pakistan where the al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden was killed, when he was caught by Pakistani authorities in 2011.



In recent years he has become an icon of the Indonesian government's achievements in deradicalising terrorist prisoners. The Bali bombings were Indonesia's deadliest terror strike. On Saturday 12 October 2002, a suicide bomber blew himself up inside a nightclub packed with tourists on Kuta beach, killing many people instantly and forcing others to flee outside. Another suicide bomber detonated a huge bomb in a car parked on the street in front of two clubs.



Patek admitted he helped make the bombs, but said he did not know how they would be used. Prosecutors argued that he helped to assemble the suicide vests, as well as the detonating cords and boosters connected to the explosives.

Patek left Bali just before the attacks and spent nine years running from the law, travelling in the Philippines and Pakistan. He was considered one of Asia's most-wanted terror suspects. Australia's prime minister, Anthony Albanese, said the decision would "cause further distress" to families of those caught in the bombings, which killed 88 Australians. "I feel a great deal of common distress, along with all Australians, at this time," he said on Friday. "He was responsible for death and destruction on a major scale. And this decision by the Indonesian government will add to the trauma that families are feeling at this time." Albanese said Australian officials had been told about the sentence reduction overnight, and that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was making diplomatic representations around the case. "His actions were the actions of a terrorist. They did have such dreadful results for Australian families that are ongoing, the trauma which is there," he said.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Life in Bali costs ~10 years. So sad!

Why the Muslim Brotherhood Is Still Dangerous

By Cynthia Farahat

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63479/why-the-muslim-brotherhood-is-still-dangerous>

Aug 19 – An Arab News article from September 12, 2021, quoted Egyptian President [Abdel Fattah al-Sisi](#) saying, "the Muslim Brotherhood has been eating away at the mind and body of Egypt for 90 years." It went on to state that Sisi blamed it for creating a culture of mistrust and warned other countries against a permissive environment which fosters militant Islamists.



Isn't it about time the US approached the progenitor of most, if not all, Sunni militant Islamist groups with coherent policies? Egypt, Israel, Bahrain and the UAE know full well the dangers of allowing the Islamist terrorist organization, the Muslim Brotherhood,



to pursue its hegemonic goals without being met with significant resistance. Just a week ago, Israel killed two leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated group, [Palestinian] [Islamic Jihad](#).

Al-Azhar University and mosque, Cairo, Egypt. Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram, the Taliban, and other terrorist organizations are largely products of al-Azhar and its long-standing ideological program controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood.

Israelis understand that Islamic Jihad is a murderous and aggressive smaller sibling to Hamas, also a Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated terrorist group.

While Hamas, Islamic State (IS, ISIS), the Islamic Jihad and various other Islamist organizations are

designated as terrorist groups, the US has refused to designate as a terrorist enterprise the very organization that spawned them. In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood continues to churn out Islamic terrorists at a shocking rate, actively seeking to undermine western societies.

The US cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the Islamist ideological source that connects these terrorist groups. Just like al-Qaeda leader [Ayman Zawahiri](#) was replaced within hours, the Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and ISIS are also quick to fill the openings created when Israel or the US eliminate terrorists.

Unless western democracies tear down the ideological support provided by the Muslim Brotherhood, a game of terrorist whack-a-mole will continue endlessly.

The Biden administration's deadly, irresponsible and rushed withdrawal from Afghanistan facilitated the Taliban's resurgence. The Taliban not only violated the terms agreed upon by the US for its withdrawal but has provided a safe-haven for al-Qaeda members and other jihadists.

Biden's policy is a continuation of other US administrations' policies regarding Islamists and jihadists and breathed new life into global terrorism. But this isn't the worst part of the West's failed policies directed at Islamists.

The Muslim Brotherhood continues to control

THE ENTERPRISE serving as the command and control of the world's radical Islamic theology continues to be the Muslim Brotherhood. Most Americans know al-Qaeda, ISIS and Hamas from the headlines recounting the carnage of their strikes on civilians. However, the Muslim Brotherhood is the organization that is proselytizing American hatred to its members, those who stay within the organization as political soldiers, and those who are spun off to organize separate terrorist groups.

In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood uses al-Azhar University in Cairo to reverse launder its political and radical soldiers. In other words, not-yet-indoctrinated young men enter al-Azhar for a formal education and graduate with a degree in radical Islamism. For those in the West, a PhD from al-Azhar is a sign of education and erudition. Sadly, it's anything but.

Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram, the Taliban, and other organizations are largely products of al-Azhar University of Cairo and its long-standing ideological program controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood. While al-Azhar is often falsely painted as a leading institutional authority on moderate Islamic thought, it is actually an epicenter for radical Islamist ideology.

Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram founders, Abdallah Azzam and Abubakar Shekau, respectively, both received their ideological indoctrination at al-Azhar.

Al-Azhar scholars and jihadists are also connected through the issuance of assassination fatwas (religious edicts). Fatwas may include an open order to murder or torture Muslims or non-Muslims, as well as excommunicating moderate Muslims, deeming them infidels who should be murdered. This is essentially contract killing with the blessing of so-called Muslim clergy.

Recently, author [Salman Rushdie](#) was brutally attacked because of an open fatwa issued against him issued in 1989. Last February, al-Azhar scholar Ahmed Karima issued a fatwa



excommunicating from Islam my friend Ibrahim Issa, a moderate Muslim author and commentator. Al-Qaeda then ordered his killing. The Muslim Brotherhood benefits from the West's ethnocentric arrogance. It maintains our willful ignorance about its organization. Further, jihadist groups conceal their operational discourses in Islamic terminology, religious edicts and sermons precisely because they are obscure to Westerners.

In other words, westerners will believe what Islamists tell them in English and disregard what the Islamists are saying in either their native languages or buried in their cloaked communication techniques. But we can no longer remain ignorant of the Muslim Brotherhood's game plan.

American policymakers can no longer willfully disregard the dangers lurking in plain sight. The United States must work to dismantle the Muslim Brotherhood. Doing so will require working with Egypt to cleanse al-Azhar University of the radical Islamist ideologues who develop and legitimize jihadism.

Until this issue is taken seriously, expect a continuing flow of Islamist mayhem and murder.

Cynthia Farahat is a fellow at the Middle East Forum and author of [The Secret Apparatus: The Muslim Brotherhood's Industry of Death](#), forthcoming in September 2022 from Bombardier Books.

Food insecurity and terrorism: What famine means for Somalia

By Rayna Alexander

Source: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/08/food-insecurity-and-terrorism-what-famine-means-for-somalia/>

Aug 16 – In Somalia, [26 million people](#) are expected to experience extreme hunger by February 2023, threatening hundreds of thousands of lives. Nearly half of Somalia's population of [7.1 million people](#) already face acute food insecurity. In the first six months of 2022, the number of children receiving [300 percent](#) treatment for malnutrition surged [among the highest](#) in the world.

A persistent drought, internal violence, economic instability, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have contributed to the growing food crisis. Not only does food insecurity threaten fundamental human rights and longevity, but it also poses challenges to political stability and increases the [risk of terrorism](#).

In the short term, swift action is necessary to avert the imminent humanitarian catastrophe and the political stability of the Horn of Africa. In the long term, the United States and its partners should support agricultural investment, import diversification, and anti-corruption efforts in the region to mitigate the consequences of future climate disasters and Somalia's crisis of ineffective governance.

Impacts of Drought

The Horn of Africa is [experiencing](#) the driest conditions in four decades, resulting in crop failures, animal deaths, and millions of desperate Somalis. In some regions, it has [not rained](#) for years. Persistent arid conditions contribute to increasing food insecurity, heightened competition over resources, and internal displacement and [emigration](#) (primarily to neighboring countries, including Kenya and Ethiopia). Droughts are not uncommon in East Africa. As a result of climate change, however, the current dry spell is [more extreme](#) than in the past. In 2021, domestic crop [production](#) decreased by [80 percent](#). The upcoming rainy season will also likely fail, pushing the [drought into 2023](#). More than [three million](#) animals died in the past year, resulting in decimated meat and milk [production](#) and increased malnutrition among young children, specifically in pastoral communities. Subsistence livestock losses place many Somalis at greater risk of starvation.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine exacerbated food insecurity across the world, with detrimental impacts on Somalia. Global price fluctuations and supply chain disruptions have increased commodity prices. In Somalia, where the poorest spend [60 to 80 percent](#) of their income on food, soaring prices are life threatening. Half of all imported [cereal](#) in Somalia is for individual consumption. Further, Somalia is [entirely dependent](#) on Ukraine (70 percent) and Russia (30 percent) for wheat imports. The war in Ukraine has destroyed crops and stalled exports, severely threatening food access in Somalia as domestic production has suffered from mass drought-induced crop failure.

Unstable prices and halted imports threaten the lives of millions in the Horn of Africa. Since the late 1980s, Somalia has [required consistent food aid](#) even in the best of circumstances. [Cash transfers](#), the World Food Programme's main form of assistance, are highly vulnerable to fluctuating markets. [Since March](#), the price of a kilo of potatoes has doubled in Somalia, and the price of a life saving peanut paste given to malnourished children is expected to



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increase [by 16 percent](#). Since Russia invaded Ukraine this this year, food prices have increased by [160 percent](#) in some regions. Somalia's Save the Children director noted the government would be in a [better position to provide](#) for struggling Somalis if prices stabilized. Given the circumstances, direct cash transfers from aid agencies is not a viable solution. However, prior to the war, Ukraine supplied more than [50 percent](#) of the wheat used by the World Food Programme. Thus, UN agencies were forced to roll back food aid efforts, even as insecurity increased globally.

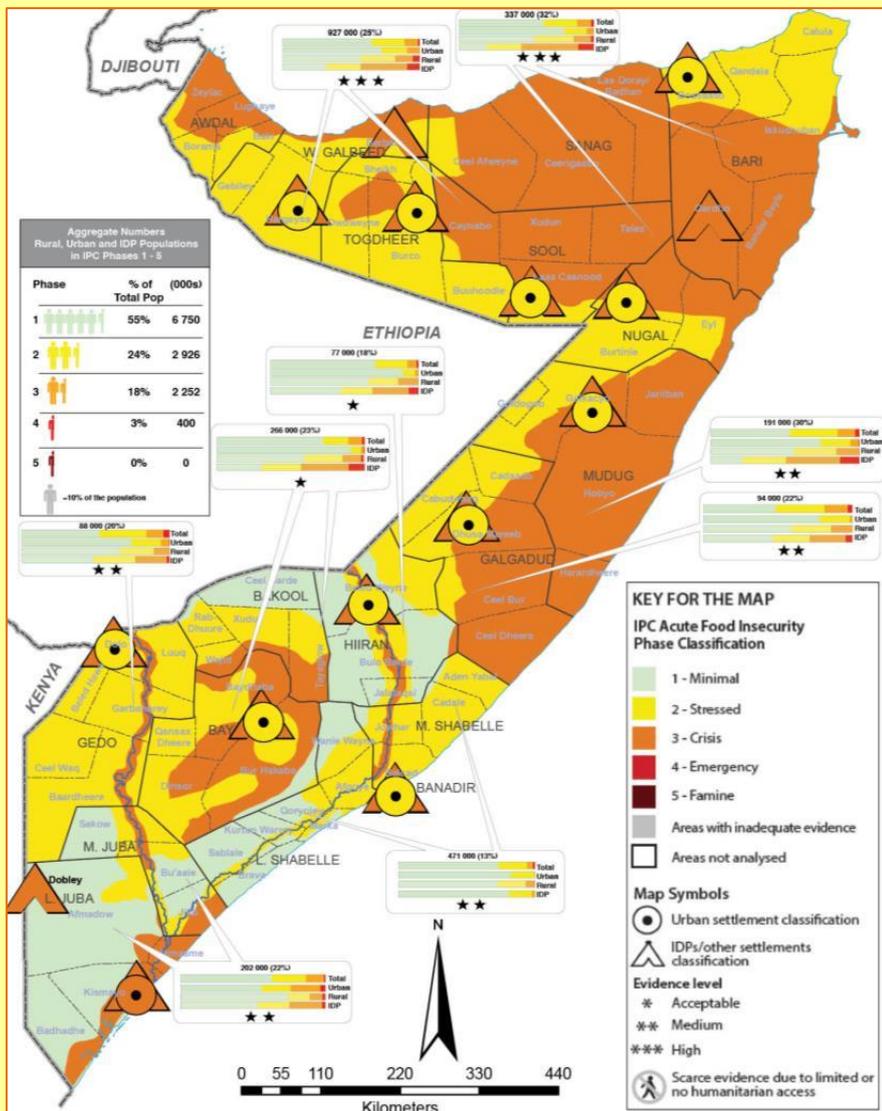
International donors have pledged only [30 percent](#) of the \$1.5 billion needed to address the crisis in Somalia. In response, the World Food Programme's regional director for East Africa asked G7 leaders for a ["massive scaling-up"](#) of aid and the head of the African Union appealed to President Vladimir Putin to allow the flow of Ukrainian grain exports. In late July, Ukraine and Russia signed trade [agreements](#) ensuring millions of tons of grain are exported from Black Sea ports. The following day, Russia [bombed](#) a port in Odessa. [Mined](#) trade routes, continued Russian [bombing](#), and persistent tensions threaten sustained exports and the longevity of the deal (which is only in effect for [120 days](#) before renewal is required). However, the first grain ship departed from Odessa on [August 1](#), and fifteen others are expected to [deliver grain](#) to Africa, the Middle East and Asia in the coming weeks.

Risks of Violence and al-Shabaab

According to the most recent Global Terrorism Index report, sub-Saharan Africa is the global [epicentre](#) of terrorism, accounting for 48 percent of terrorism-related/caused deaths worldwide. Somalia ranks [first](#) in Africa and third globally as the most impacted by terrorism. Numerous groups in Somalia, including [Islamic State-Somalia](#), [Hizb al Islam](#), and [Ahlu Sunna](#), could exploit the growing food crisis. However, al-Shabaab, Somalia's largest terrorist threat (responsible for almost [90 percent](#) of Somalia's terror-related deaths in 2021), is the most worrisome.

Al-Shabaab, or "the youth" in Arabic, controls more than [20 percent](#) of the country, primarily in the south and central regions (an area the size of Texas). An estimated 7,000 of al-Shabaab's members [govern](#) rural areas, extort taxes, and provide health, educational, and judicial services, undermining the state government's legitimacy and emboldening the group as a source of de facto authority. Throughout Somalia, al-Shabaab exploits [businesses](#), [real estate](#), and construction, as well as local schools, clinics, [mobile courts](#), and police departments. According to one [business owner](#) who pays the militants \$4,000 annually, "the Shabab are like a mafia group. You either have to obey them or close your business. There's no freedom."

Food and water [inaccessibility](#) and increased commodity prices are related to insurgent activity and the potential for a social [uprising](#). In 2011, for example, food prices were related to the [mobilization](#) of farmers in Tunisia that ignited the Arab Spring. The drought in the Horn of Africa and subsequent drinking water shortages may increase competition and lead to communal violence. In turn, [militant groups](#) will have an opportunity to provide resources and further legitimize their intervention, undermining state actions (or lack thereof). Acute food insecurity may also [increase social grievances](#) and mobilize disaffected individuals to join terrorist organizations. In [one study](#), the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers found more than half of former al-Shabaab members cite economic factors as their primary motivation to join (see below). One



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recruit [concluded](#), “all one had to do was carry around a gun and patrol the streets. It was an easy job compared to other jobs such as construction work.”

Disadvantaged Somalis may see al-Shabaab membership as a [source of income](#). Recruits are offered a monthly [salary](#) and financial benefits. Given the current socio-economic status of many Somalis and the lack of economic opportunity in the agricultural sector, al-Shabaab may become more [enticing](#) for individuals with limited opportunities. Al-Shabaab recruits are as young as fourteen, and [70 percent](#) are younger than 24 years old. In Somalia, where the median age is [17 years old](#), recruitment trends are a cause for concern.

According to the [Africa Center for Strategic Studies](#), the Trump administration’s withdrawal of military forces from the country in December 2020 resulted in a [17 percent](#) increase in al-Shabaab activity. To relieve concerns of a resurgence, President Joe Biden redeployed [500 troops](#) in May 2022. However, the threat of terrorist activity and expansion largely remains. Last year, [1,200 children](#) were recruited and another thousand were abducted by armed groups. In one year (2019 to 2020), sexual violence committed by al-Shabaab increased by [80 percent](#), a common trend where internal migration and militant insurgency are concerned.

In May 2022, the UN Refugee Agency reported a total of [2.97 million were displaced Somalis](#) due to drought, food shortages, and violence. Mass internal migration has resulted in overcrowded refugee sites where many lack adequate shelter and water. Overcrowded sites can also be used as [safe havens](#), as they are commonly isolated from authorities, allowing terrorists to [operate undetected](#). Terrorist training networks are also common in refugee communities where displaced peoples are directly or [involuntarily recruited](#). Worsening conditions force internally displaced peoples to turn to all sources of aid. Attacks and aid worker kidnappings [deter agencies](#) from reaching communities in occupied territories (some [900,000 Somalis](#)). However, trained militants are able to [exploit government grievances](#) and impose order in disorganized camps. For al-Shabaab, control of camps is [viable](#) and demand for compensation and recruits is opportune.

Conversely, the Somali government’s inability to provide physical and economic security [delegitimizes the political establishment](#), contributing to a vicious cycle of weak governance and militant influence and insurgency. Propaganda further legitimizes terrorist activity. Al-Shabaab argues international humanitarian aid weakens the country and results in dependency on “[infidels](#).” News and radio outlets that distribute pro-al-Shabaab [propaganda](#) claim militants are the superior authority alternative to international intervention and failed state governance.



US Efforts to Avert the Crisis

The [White House](#) acknowledged the East African food crisis in a statement on June 28. The following month, the U.S. Agency for International Development pledged [\\$1.2 billion](#) in additional aid to Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya to combat the growing food crisis. While



immediate international efforts are necessary to save hundreds of thousands of lives, long-term solutions must be implemented to mitigate the risks of climate change, global market fluctuations, political instability, and increased regional terrorism. Additional pressure from the international community on Russia to allow stable exports is also imperative to mitigate the current crisis. However, Somalia's total reliance on Ukrainian and Russian wheat—countries with a history of political conflict and instability—increases geopolitical vulnerability.

Somalia needs to prioritize diversifying trade partners and appeal to regional sources of financial support. Long-term international efforts should focus on investing in domestic agricultural solutions in Somalia, like drought-resistant seeds and technologies, water preservation strategies, and community-based entrepreneurial initiatives in order to enhance Somalia's productivity and self-sufficiency.

Ultimately, failures in governance are to blame for Somalia's crisis. The inability to provide basic resources, secure border regions, and pursue a diverse economy create a breeding ground for terrorist activity. Because of the lack of Somali state presence, fewer US troops in the region may create a power vacuum that increases opportunities for terror organizations to expand their territory, increase the number and frequency of attacks, and ramp up recruitment efforts. However, sporadic US military intervention is an unsustainable solution for quelling insurgencies.

The new [US strategy](#) toward sub-Saharan Africa is an important step in emboldening democratic governance, pursuing long-term peace, and turning away from the mindset of perceiving African countries as geopolitical pawns in a broader power struggle. Implementing nationwide anti-corruption measures and strengthening democratic institutions, as difficult as that may be, could mitigate the risk of expanding terror networks as natural disasters become more frequent and extreme in the face of climate change. Developing [community-centric counterinsurgency](#) approaches could also provide economic opportunities for Somalis while increasing state legitimacy and mitigating grievances. However, [tumultuous governance](#) since the early 1990s has challenged the efficacy of counterterrorism efforts in the past. The low capacity of the state may make further efforts extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement fully without continued support. The looming famine in Somalia is more than a humanitarian crisis, it is a terrorist threat and it requires immediate action.

[Rayna Alexander](#) is a research intern in the Africa Program at FPRI. She is an undergraduate studying political science, geography, and international affairs at the Pennsylvania State University.

Somalia Country Report 2022

Source: <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/SOM>

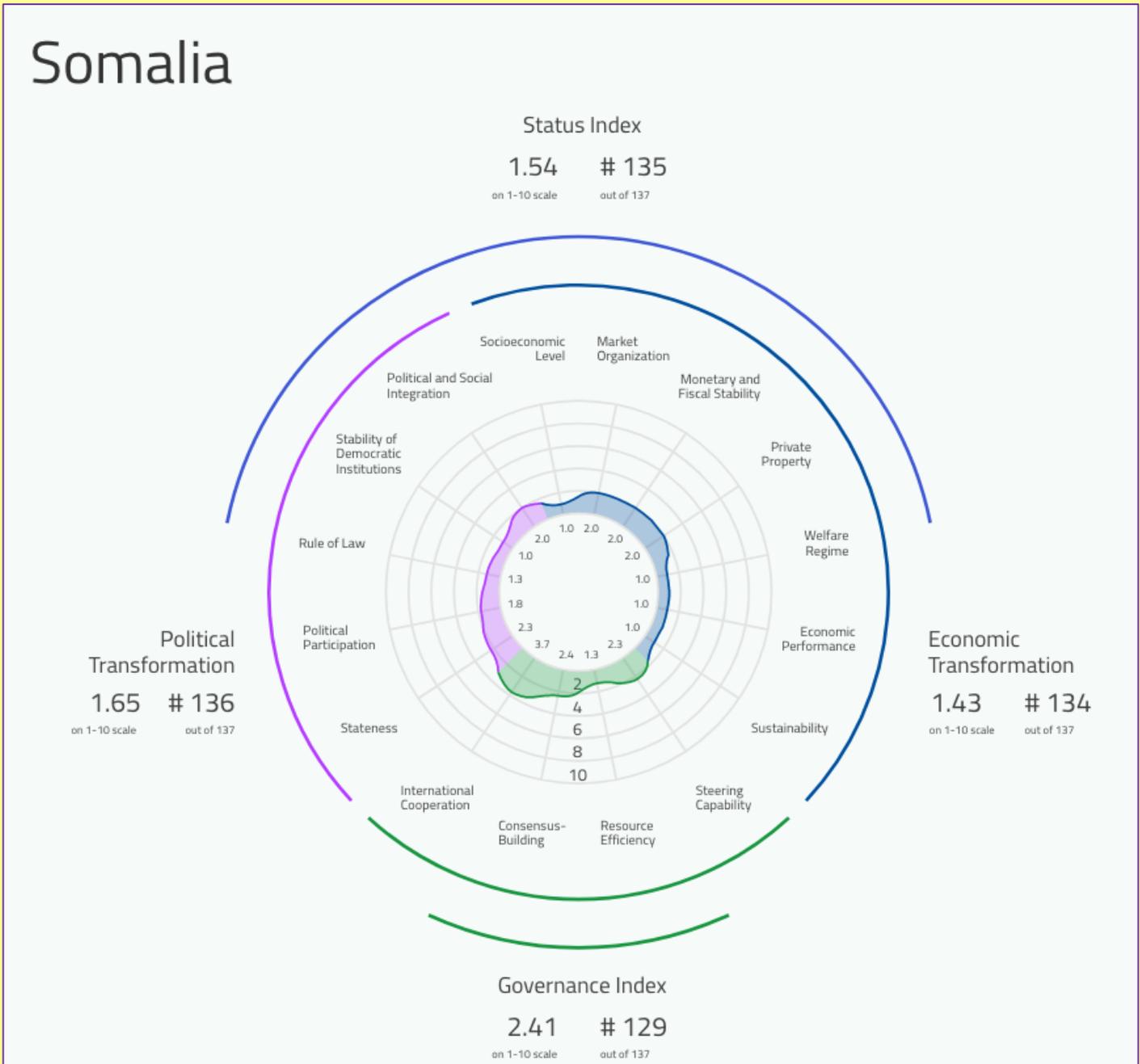


Somalia remains vulnerable to environmental shocks. Severe flooding, desert locust infestations and the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and slowed down necessary reforms. While the Somali economy had begun to pick up again after the end of the severe drought in 2016, the global disruption of supply chains, and the closure of borders and airports in the context of the health pandemic have slowed Somalia's economic recovery. The country has only a very rudimentary health infrastructure and is ill-prepared to deal with the pandemic.

The reporting period was additionally characterized by rising political tensions as well as military confrontations between the federal member states (FMS) and the federal government of Somalia (FGS). These conflicts blocked necessary reforms. The constitutional review process has stalled. The status of the FMS and especially the modus of power and resource sharing between the federal and central institutions are yet to be determined. Although planned presidential and parliamentary elections did not take place, universal suffrage was replaced by an indirect electoral model. The president's term in office ends on February 8, 2021, and attempts to unilaterally expand his mandate could, in the current explosive political atmosphere in Somalia, result in violence. The federal government has initiated reforms in the security and finance sectors, among them the biometric registration of security forces and the integration of soldiers into an electronic financial system. It increased the domestic revenue base and contributed to the successful completion of three reviews by the International Monetary Fund. Somalia eventually qualified for participation in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, which initiated a three-year process of debt relief and provided the country with access to the international borrowing market.



However, the Islamist insurgency against the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has continued. Supported by the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), the FGS held control over major towns, but the Islamist militia Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (al-



Shabaab) has firmly established itself in rural areas in the southern half of the Somali Federal Republic. Al-Shabaab controls major supply routes to towns and, through taxation and judicial services, exerts influence even in the FGS-controlled areas. It has regularly launched attacks and assassinations. Meanwhile, the al-Shabaab offshoot Islamic State of Somalia (ISS) has established bases in Puntland.

Security in Somalia depends heavily on the approximately 20,000 AMISOM forces. Plans to withdraw AMISOM troops by the end of 2021 are unrealistic in the context of continued infighting between political elites and the large institutional and capacity gaps in the Somali security sector. The Somali National Army (SNA) improved its military capacity, but the loyalty of many forces lies with the political leaders of their clans rather than with the government. In many areas formally under the control of the FGS regional forces and clan militias provide security.



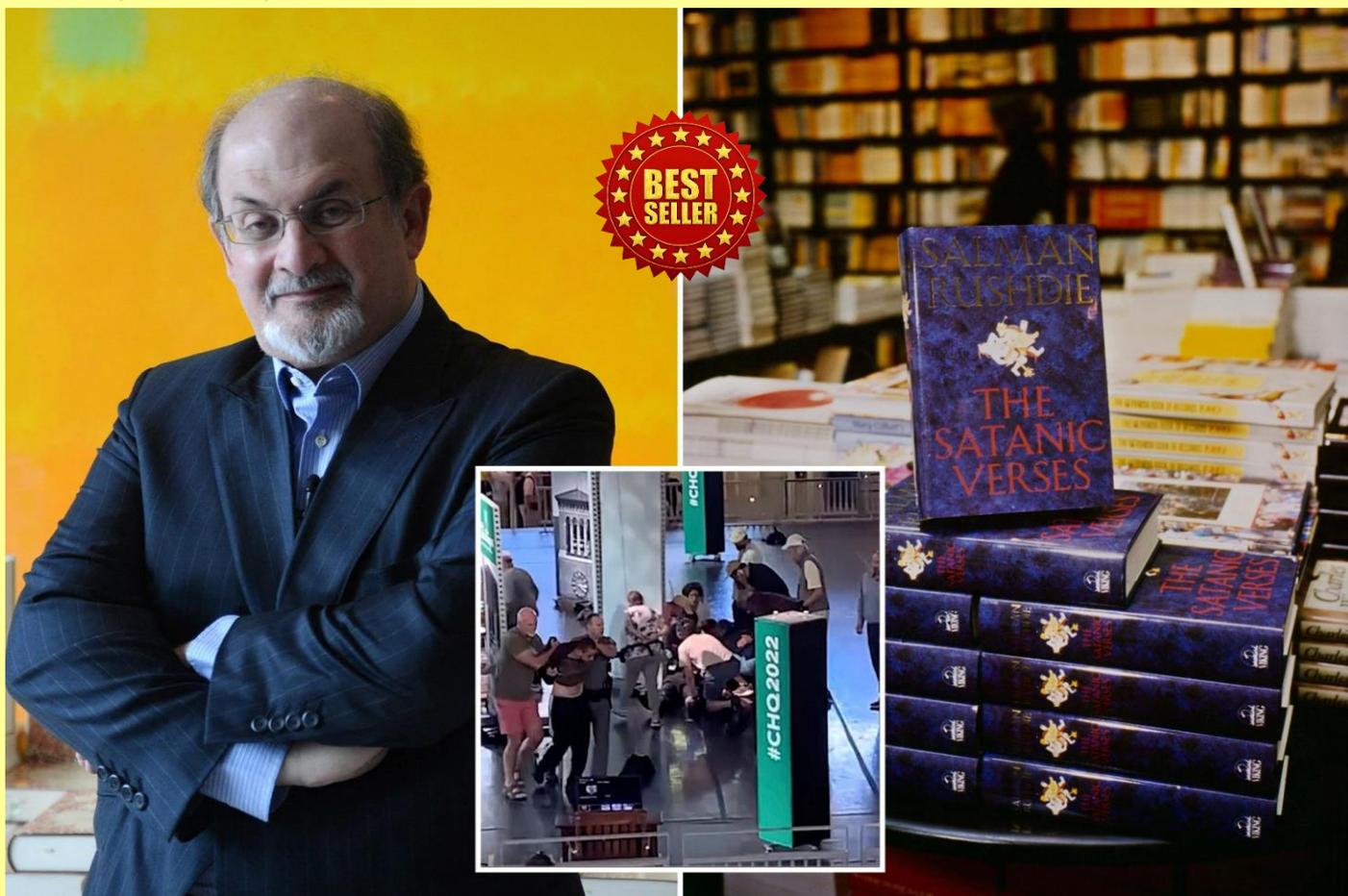
The United States has increased airstrikes against al-Shabaab that have killed many Islamist operatives. Human Rights organizations have criticized the rising number of civilian casualties. About 700 U.S. security personnel were relocated from Somalia to neighboring countries in January 2021.

The self-declared but internationally not recognized Republic of Somaliland has again postponed parliamentary elections. Since assuming presidential power at the end of 2017, President Muse Bihi Abdi has increasingly resorted to authoritarian forms of rule. Abdi's regime has regularly curbed freedom of speech and has harassed and detained media workers and other people reporting or publicly discussing controversial political topics.

► Read the full report at the source's URL.

Sales of The Satanic Verses surge after Salman Rushdie stabbing

Source: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/satanic-verses-bestseller-salman-rushdie-b2145642.html>



Aug 16 – [Salman Rushdie](#)'s novel *The Satanic Verses* is surging up [bestseller](#) lists amid renewed interest in the [author](#)'s works after he was brutally stabbed in western New York state on Friday.

The paperback edition of the magical realism novel sits atop Amazon's [contemporary literature and fiction chart](#), is second in the censorship and politics category and was the 18th bestselling book overall on the e-commerce site on Monday.

A Kindle ebook version of the book was also enjoying strong sales, reaching number one in several categories including fiction satire, and censorship and politics.

The Kindle ebook was 23rd on Amazon's chart of Kindle bestsellers.

Rushdie's other works were also proving popular, with *Midnight's Children* reaching 10th on the contemporary literature and fiction list.

Versions of his 2012 memoir *Joseph Anton*, which chronicled his decade of life under police protection, occupied the four top spots on the [religious intolerance and persecution list](#).



The Satanic Verses ignited a wave of controversy after its publication in 1988 for its depiction of the Prophet Muhammed.

[Iran](#)'s former spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa on Rushdie the following year, placing a \$3m bounty on the author's head.

Amazon's bestseller charts are updated hourly. Amazon's Charts, which gives a clearer picture of sales, are *updated weekly and will give a clearer picture of sales*.

At Strand Bookstore in New York City, staff also reported a spike in sales and interest of Mr Rushdie's works.

"Honestly, I feel like people just came here yesterday because they wanted to talk about how they felt about what happened," manager Katie Silvernail told *AFP*.

Rushdie spent nearly 10 years under the protection of British security forces. A Japanese translator was stabbed to death in an a still unsolved murder in 1991, while a Norwegian publisher narrowly survived after he was shot several times outside his home in 1993.

Rushdie was stabbed up to 10 times as he was about to deliver a speech at the Chautauqua Institution in western New York on Friday. He was airlifted to hospital and suffered severed nerves in his arm, a punctured liver and may lose an eye, his agent Andrew Wylie told *the New York Times*. His son Zafar said in an update on Sunday that his father had been taken off a ventilator and was speaking, but remained in a critical condition.

New Jersey man Hadi Matar, who has been charged with attempted murder, was reportedly in contact with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard over social media prior to the attack. He has pleaded not guilty.

The French just gave us another lesson in how not to fight terrorism

By William Drozdiak

Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/08/29/french-mali-pullout-failure-fight-terrorism/>

Aug 29 — The withdrawal of [the last remaining French troops](#) from Mali this month has inflicted a serious blow to Western military efforts to curtail a growing Islamist threat spreading across the Sahel region of Africa.

The failure of the French military mission, which included up to 5,000 soldiers in what became known as Operation Barkane,



demonstrates the perplexing difficulties of waging a counterinsurgency campaign against regional remnants of al-Qaeda and Islamic State. It also raises concerns that Russia and China might step into the geopolitical void left by frustrated and impatient Western governments.

[Soldiers of the French military mission in Mali fold a French flag at an undisclosed military installation on Aug. 11.](#) (Etat Major des Armées/AFP/Getty Images)

As the United States ponders the lessons of its 20-year struggle against the Taliban in Afghanistan, which ended in a chaotic exit one year ago, France is reconsidering its own strategy in coping with the proliferation of Islamist militants in many of its former African colonies. President Emmanuel Macron has

[assigned](#) his leading defense chiefs and advisers to review all of France's military postures on the continent after the failure to eradicate the threat posed by violent Islamist radicals. The French departure has opened the door to Russian mercenaries from the [Wagner Group](#), a private security business linked to the Kremlin. Mali's rulers say France's decision to break relations left them no choice but to seek other partners. Up to 1,000 Russian mercenaries are estimated to have [descended on Mali](#) in recent months, hoping to be paid with gold extracted from local mines. China is also eyeing ways to expand involvement in the region and tap into its mineral wealth. The Sahel, a vast semiarid region separating the Sahara desert in the north from tropical savannas in the south, has emerged in recent years as a fertile breeding ground for Islamist terrorists who have exploited local grievances against the corruption and brutality of military rulers. The Sahel houses the world's [fastest-growing population](#) and is also one of the poorest, with 80 percent of people living on [less than \\$2 a day](#). The region



encompasses four countries bordering Lake Chad — Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria — as well as Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal.

Around 4 million people have been [displaced by the fighting](#), and many [thousands have died](#). The desperation of the local people has been compounded by persistent drought as climate change spreads desertification through the region. An estimated [50 million people](#) gain their daily sustenance from Lake Chad, which experts predict will evaporate within a decade and force those residents to move, creating still greater hardship for the region.

The French mission in Mali began nine years ago with a promising string of successes in pushing back the advance of Islamist militants toward the capital of Bamako. But relations eventually broke down between French forces and Mali's military rulers, who seized power two years ago. A second coup took place last year. The army rulers have refused to hand power over to civilians as France had demanded. The French withdrawal from Mali might jeopardize the fate of the United Nations peacekeeping mission known as [MINUSMA](#), which has some 14,000 troops stationed there. Contingents from Britain and Germany are soon expected to follow the French lead in departing the country.

French forces scored some victories during their long campaign and estimate they have killed about [2,700 militants](#), yet the Islamist threat continues to grow and attract recruits from disgruntled youths. Islamist guerrillas have [expanded](#) beyond Mali into Burkina Faso and Niger and lately have spread terror farther south into coastal states such as Benin and the Ivory Coast. Regardless of their political or religious fervor, the militants have been able to achieve their territorial gains largely by capitalizing on the pernicious forces of climate change, drought, diminishing food production and, most of all, rapidly surging birthrates. It is hard to see how

these impoverished societies will be able to cope with the quadrupling of their populations in the decades to come, as projected by the United Nations. By the end of this century, Mali is expected to grow from 20 million to [85 million people](#), and the even poorer state of Niger will rise from 25 million to [165 million people](#). As the United States discovered in Afghanistan, even the most modern armies cannot succeed in battling Islamist insurgents with powerful weapons alone. As France is learning the hard way in Africa, the fight against violent Islamists can only be won by combining military prowess with more effective local governance. Curbing corruption and improving the lives of civilians through better schools, medical clinics, clean water and sufficient food supplies are vital. Defeating Islamist extremists can only be achieved by providing local populations with hope for a better life, not a cause for which to die.



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Douglas London

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Olympics attack victims' families agree on a deal with Germany

Source: <https://apnews.com/article/winter-olympics-sports-israel-germany-munich-dae898bb1b4d69da81ef27471918cfa9>



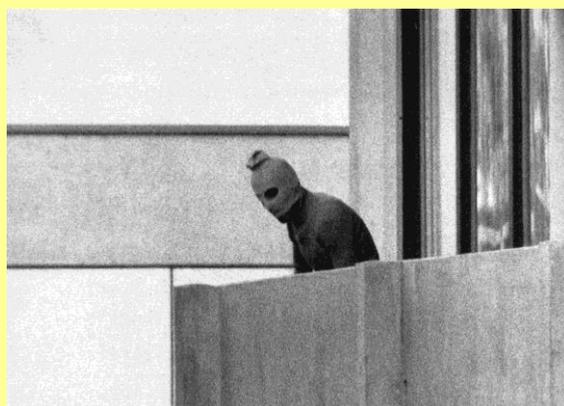
A memorial plaque for the eleven athletes from Israel and one German police officer were killed in a terrorist attack during the Olympic Games 1972, stands at the former accommodation of the Israeli team in the Olympic village in Munich, Germany, Saturday, Aug. 27, 2022. The families of 11 Israeli athletes killed by Palestinian attackers at the 1972 Summer Olympics and the German government are close to reaching a deal over the long-disputed amount of compensation. (AP Photo/Matthias Schrader)

Aug 31 — The families of 11 Israeli athletes killed by Palestinian attackers at the 1972 Munich Olympics have reached a deal with Germany over a long-disputed compensation claim, the German government said Wednesday. Earlier this month, the families had threatened to boycott Monday's 50-year anniversary ceremony in Munich organized by German authorities because they said the amount they had been offered was too low.

"The German government welcomes the fact that it has now been possible to reach an agreement with the relatives on an overall concept to mark the 50th anniversary," a spokesman for German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said.

"This includes the reappraisal of the events by a commission of German and Israeli historians, the release of files in accordance with the law, the classification and acceptance of political responsibility within the framework of the commemoration ceremony, as well as the provision of further recognition services by the federal government, by the state of Bavaria and by the city of Munich," spokesman Steffen Hebestreit said.

The German news agency DPA and other media reported that Germany increased its offer to the families to around 28 million euros (dollars), up from the initial 10 million euros offer to



the families, which would have included the payments already made. Of this, the federal government is to bear 22.5 million euros, the state of Bavaria 5 million euros and the city of Munich 500,000 euros, DPA reported.

The German government has not publicly revealed how much money it has offered.

The German president and his Israeli counterpart Isaac Herzog welcomed the agreement.

“We are pleased and relieved that an agreement on historical clarification, recognition and compensation has been reached shortly before the 50th anniversary,” Steinmeier said in a joint statement with Herzog, who will visit Germany next week and participate in the ceremony.

“The agreement cannot heal all wounds. But it opens a door to each other,” the statement said. “With this agreement, the German state acknowledges its responsibility and recognizes the terrible suffering of the murdered and their relatives, which we will commemorate next week.”

The negotiations over the amount of the compensation and the release of further historical documents had been a lingering point of friction between the two countries that have built strong ties despite the enduring legacy of the Nazi Holocaust, in which 6 million Jews were murdered during World War II.

Members of the Palestinian group Black September broke into the Olympic Village, killed two athletes from Israel's national team and took nine more hostage on Sept. 5, 1972. The attackers hoped to force the release of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel as well as two left-wing extremists in West German jails.

All nine hostages and a West German police officer died during a rescue attempt by German forces. Relatives of the athletes accuse Germany of failing to secure the Olympic Village, refusing Israeli help and then botching the rescue operation.

Immediately after the attack, Germany made payments to relatives of the victims amounting to about 4.19 million marks (about 2 million euros or dollars), according to the country's interior ministry. In 2002, the surviving relatives received an additional 3 million euros, Germany's DPA news agency reported.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Germans agreed to pay compensation to families of 11 Israeli athletes killed by Palestinian attackers at the 1972 Munich Olympics in order not to boycott the 50th-anniversary ceremony in Munich but they refuse to pay compensation (8-11 billion euros) to Greek families of those murdered/executed in Greece during the WW2 German occupation. A show has more gravity than justice! Same applies for WW2 Polish compensations (6.2 trillion zlotys [\$1.32 trillion USD; 1.3 trillion euros]).

Arria-formula Meeting: “Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Transnational Activities of Terrorist Groups”

Source: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2022/08/arria-formula-meeting-threats-to-international-peace-and-security-caused-by-transnational-activities-of-terrorist-groups.php>

This afternoon (31 August) at 3 pm EST in the ECOSOC Chamber, Kenya and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will convene an Arria-formula meeting titled “Threats to International Peace and Security caused by Transnational Activities of Terrorist Groups”. The expected briefers are: Christian Emmanuel Mouaya Pouyi, Acting Head of the Training and Equipment Unit at the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism; James Rogers, Associate Professor in War Studies at the Danish Institute for Advanced Study; and Rose Gichure, a survivor of an Al-Shabaab terrorist attack.

Kenya and the UAE have prepared a concept note ahead of the meeting, which says that its aim is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Security Council's response to the transnational threat posed by terrorist groups. Al-Shabaab, a terrorist group with links to Al-Qaeda that is sanctioned under the 751 Somalia sanctions regime, will serve as an example to help frame the discussion. The activities of other groups will also be discussed, as will the recruitment efforts of transnational terrorist groups, cross-border attacks, and the use of new and emerging technologies by terrorists, including unmanned aerial systems (UAS).

The concept note argues that the Council's approach to combatting transnational terrorism is driven by a “two-track approach” that equates fighting terrorism with countering the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Al-Qaeda, and their affiliates, “to the exclusion of other groups”. It further contends that other groups pose some of the most serious threats globally, citing Al-Shabaab's activities in Somalia and the region, including its attacks on Somali troops and AU missions and cross-border attacks in Kenya and other neighbouring countries, as evidence to support this claim.

Referring to “the growing use of drones”, including by Al-Shabaab, Da'esh, and the Houthi group in Yemen, the concept note also claims that the use of new and emerging technologies, such as UAS, renders the transnational threat posed by terrorist groups “more pressing than ever”.



Several objectives for the meeting are outlined in the concept note, including:

- Starting a conversation between member states about the transnational threat posed by terrorist groups.
- Evaluating how the Council can effectively deploy its available tools to address this threat.
- Proposing recommendations on how the Council and regional and international organisations can further address transnational activities by terrorist groups.
- Raising awareness about the risks associated with the abuse of new and emerging technologies, such as UAS, by terrorist groups.

The concept note also proposes a series of guiding questions for the discussion, such as:

- What tools does the Council have at its disposal to address transnational threats posed by terrorist groups?
- How can the Council address concerns by affected countries regarding conflicting treatment of terrorist groups?
- How can the concerns of humanitarian partners be properly addressed?

Since joining the Council, Kenya has sought to draw attention to the activities of Al-Shabaab and the dangers posed by the group. During the 9 August Council briefing on the Secretary-General's 15th biannual strategic-level report on the threat posed by ISIL/Da'esh, for example, Kenya said that Al-Shabaab "remains dominant in its transnational activities", adding that "several countries, including [Kenya], have suffered the senseless atrocities of that terrorist group". Kenya referred to Al-Shabaab's attack in late July in south-east Ethiopia and argued that it shows the group's determination to "continue spreading its dangerous ideology across borders".

At the 9 February Council meeting on ISIL, Kenya announced that it will again formally request that Al-Shabaab be listed under the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions regime, a proposal that it first raised in 2019 prior to its current tenure on the Council. Kenya's 2019 proposal was rejected by six Council members, who argued that listing Al-Shabaab under the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions regime could nullify the humanitarian exception in the 751 Somalia sanctions regime. At the time of writing, Kenya has not yet re-tabled its proposal for listing Al-Shabaab under the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions regime.

While on the Council, the UAE has referred to the risk of terrorists using new technologies and sought to label the Houthis, an entity that is party to the ongoing conflict in Yemen, as a terrorist group. In its statement at the 9 August briefing on ISIL, the UAE said: "it is imperative that the international community take serious steps to address the acquisition of drones and their components by terrorist groups, including Da'esh, Al-Shabaab, and the Houthis". While negotiating [resolution 2624](#) of 28 February, which renewed the 2140 Yemen sanctions regime, the UAE pushed for the inclusion of language describing the Houthis as a terrorist group. Despite opposition from Russia and concerns expressed by other Council members, this language was ultimately included in resolution 2624, which "strongly condemns the cross-border attacks by the Houthi terrorist group, including attacks on Saudi Arabia and the UAE striking civilians and civilian infrastructure". Resolution 2624 designated the Houthis as an entity subject to the targeted arms embargo and marked the first time that the Houthis have been labelled as a terrorist group in a Council product.

Islamic Fatwas — Are They Laws or Opinions?

Source: <https://www.voanews.com/a/islamic-fatwas-are-they-laws-or-opinions-/6727402.html>

Sept 01 – Immediately after British American writer Salman Rushdie was stabbed in New York on August 12, a decades-old fatwa given by the founder of Iran's Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, became the buzzword as the prima facie cause for the attack.

The 24-year-old attacker has not cited the fatwa as his motive for the stabbing, only that he did not like Rushdie and perceived *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie's controversial book, of which he reportedly had read only a few pages, as insulting Islam.

Despite several statements by Iranian officials, including a 1998 statement by former President Mohammad Khatami that the Islamic Republic was not supporting Khomeini's fatwa to kill Rushdie, it is still believed to be in force, primarily because of the influence of the man who issued it.

"Khomeini's fatwa carries immense potency because he's not only followed but revered by the global Shia community," Khaled Beydoun, a law professor at Wayne State University, told VOA.

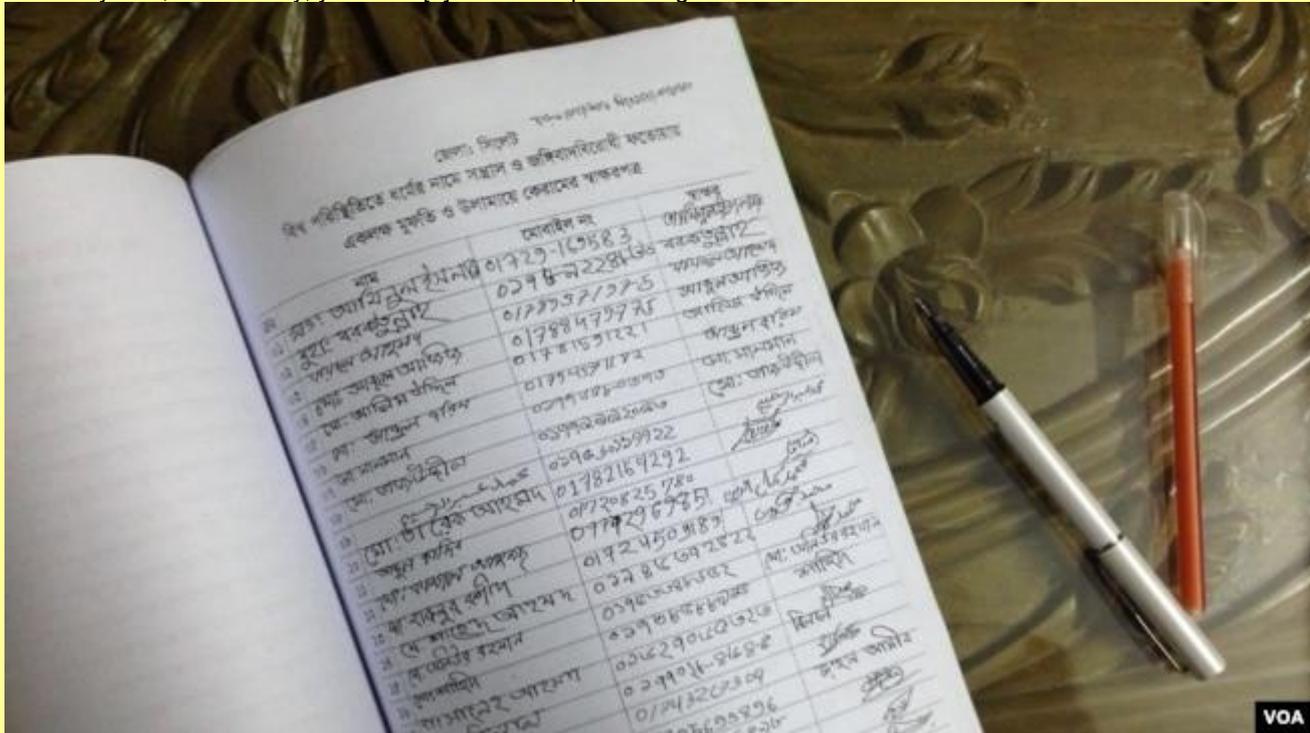
A fatwa can be the opinion of a mufti, or scholar of Islamic laws, like Khomeini, or an official pronouncement by an Islamic institution. "A fatwa can be about a simple personal matter such as missing a prayer, or it could be about a controversial issue such as embryo cloning or transgender operation," said Jonathan Brown, a professor of Islamic studies at Georgetown University.

The enforcement of a fatwa depends largely on who the mufti is, rather than what its contents are.



There are also other limitations.

"A fatwa issued in Afghanistan may have some weightage there ... but a religious leader in America pronouncing something has very limited impact, because Muslims live in a non-Muslim society where there are laws, and the laws say that you cannot go and kill people simply because someone issued a fatwa," said Akbar Ahmed, the Ibn Khaldun chair of Islamic studies at American University. "So, immediately, you have [a] block in implementing such a fatwa."



More than 100,000 Islamic clerics, scholars, teachers and others from across Bangladesh signed and endorsed a fatwa on terrorism in June 2016. (J. Samnoon/VOA)

Fatwa is not law

For centuries, thousands of fatwas have been issued by numerous scholars and institutions. There are fatwas against Western colonialism, nuclear weapons, tobacco, terrorism and suicide bombing. A 2008 fatwa was issued by a Pakistani religious scholar against Pakistan's former President Asif Ali Zardari for his alleged flirting with Sarah Palin, then a U.S. vice presidential candidate. There are also fatwas in support of vaccination, singing and women's rights.

"A fatwa is not a legal decree. A legal decree is issued by a court," Ahmed said.

But some fatwas carry as much weight as the law in a country.

Fatwas issued by the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia or by the Supreme Leader of Iran are enforceable as laws, and fatwas declared by state muftis in Malaysia are published in the official newspaper.

"There is no equivalent Muslim institution to the Vatican and the pope in Roman Catholicism. Fatwas only have the relevance of the governmental body and religious institution that seek to enforce them. This in no way diminishes how a fatwa can become important as part of geopolitical culture wars, and in the case of Salman Rushdie, tragically led to real harm," Hatim El-Hibri, assistant professor of media at George Mason University, told VOA.

Absent endorsement from a government or when a mufti has no followers, a fatwa remains the opinion of an individual.

In 1996 and 1998, al-Qaida founder Osama bin Laden reportedly signed two fatwas declaring Islamic jihad against the United States. No Muslim government endorsed al-Qaida's fatwas, but there were several other fatwas against al-Qaida itself and terrorism that are supported by many Islamic scholars and official entities in several Muslim-majority countries.

Need for fatwas

The origins of fatwas go back to the early days of Islam when Muslim leaders responded to questions about the religion's take on various mundane matters.



"After the Prophet Muhammad, when questions arose, they were answered through fatwas by the Companions [of the Prophet]," said Georgetown's Brown, adding that the practice has evolved over the centuries as an Islamic custom.

"Fatwa is not unique and distinct only to Islam," said Beydoun of Wayne State. Leaders of other faith groups also offer religious opinions about new issues that are not already answered by their religions or issues that need religious clarification, he said.

While some fatwas have raised concerns, as they herald far wider security and human rights consequences, through others, social and political reforms and progressive ideas have been propagated in various Muslim communities, experts say.

"To view fatwas with negative connotations will be part and parcel of the broader cultural Islamophobia that we live in," Beydoun said. Khomeini's 1989 fatwa has received global condemnation across religious communities, and many Muslim writers and activists have condemned the attack on Rushdie. But whether it still propels individuals to act upon it is open for debate.

Canadian spy smuggled me into Syria, says UK girl who joined Daesh/ISIS

Source: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/canadian-spy-smuggled-me-into-syria-says-uk-girl-who-joined-daesh-isis/2674834>

Sept 01 – Shamima Begum, a schoolgirl who left the UK to join the Daesh/ISIS terrorist group, has said she was smuggled into Syria by a Canadian intelligence agent.

Mohammed al-Rasheed posed as a human smuggler when he helped Begum and two other British girls travel to Syria in 2015.

Begum was 15 years old at the time and was accompanied by Kadiza Sultana, 16, and 15-year-old Amira Abase.



"He organized the entire trip from Turkey to Syria ... I don't think anyone would have been able to make it to Syria without the help of smugglers," Begum said in a BBC podcast detailing her journey to join the terror group.

"He had helped a lot of people come in ... We were just doing everything he was telling us to do because he knew everything, we didn't know anything," Begum added.

Rasheed played a major role in bringing foreign fighters into Syria, while also providing information to Canadian intelligence authorities on their movements, according to the BBC, which gained access to a dossier on the Canadian spy and his undercover work as a smuggler.

A senior intelligence officer confirmed that Rasheed "was providing information to Canadian intelligence while smuggling people" to Daesh/ISIS, the BBC reported.

In a video he took of Begum, Sultana and Abase at the Syrian border, Rasheed can be heard directing the British schoolgirls to a car that would take them to their destination.

Rasheed was arrested by authorities in Türkiye's southern city of Sanliurfa shortly after he smuggled Begum into Syria.

According to the BBC, the Canadian agent also obtained information on the terrorist group itself, documenting the location of homes of foreign fighters in Syria, as well as identifying IP addresses and locations of internet cafes used by fighters in Daesh/ISIS-controlled territory.

After his arrest, Rasheed told law enforcement that he was gathering information on everyone he helped and "passing this information to the Canadian Embassy in Jordan," the BBC report said.

He had also been in contact with an infamous UK member of the terrorist group, Raphael Hostey, and the pair coordinated on supplying fighters and weaponry.

"I need you to work under me. Officially ... I want you to help us bring people in," Hostey said to Rasheed in a text conversation seen by the BBC.

"You work for us bringing equipment, bringing in brothers and sisters," Hostey added, to which Rasheed responded with: "I am ready, brother."

The UK revoked Begum's citizenship in 2019 and she is currently held in a detention camp in northeastern Syria.

Her lawyers, who have launched legal proceedings to get her back to the UK, said it was "shocking" that a Canadian intelligence asset helped in trafficking young girls.

They told the BBC that "intelligence-gathering looks to have been prioritized over the lives of children." UK authorities have yet to comment on the issue, with a government spokesman saying "it is our long-standing policy that we do not comment on operational intelligence or security matters," the BBC report said.



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the government “will follow up on the claims.” However, he defended Canadian agencies, saying that the “fight against terrorism requires our intelligence services to continue to be flexible and to be creative in their approaches,” according to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: What is the point to know the details of how she traveled to Syria to join ISIS? Let the woman live her dream in the land of promises. On the other hand, we do you believe that Canadian intelligence agencies are nice guys?

French prosecutor warns of elevated terror attack threat

Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/french-prosecutor-warns-elevated-terror-attack-threat-89214648>

Sept 02 – There is an elevated threat of terror attacks on French soil by Islamic extremists coming from [Iraq](#) and Syria, [France's](#) national anti-terrorism prosecutor warned Friday.

Jean-Francois Ricard said in an interview on French news broadcaster BFM TV that terrorist acts carried out “by individuals coming from areas where terrorists are operating, especially the Iraqi-Syrian area” cannot be ruled out.

Ricard's comments come ahead of the opening of the trial of eight suspects in connection with the 2016 Bastille Day truck attack in Nice that left 86 people dead.

Ricard said the extremist threat has increased since 2020. “For two years, we've been able to see how the Islamic State group was regaining some pieces of territory, was restructuring itself” in Iraq and Syria.

He pointed to the January attack in Syria by Islamic State militants of a prison holding suspected extremists in the northeastern city of Hassakeh.

Individuals convicted in France on terror-related charges and are set to be released pose another threat, Ricard said.

“Very often they have abandoned none of their convictions,” he said, adding however that France's judicial and intelligence services will keep a close watch on that released inmates.

The prosecutor said French authorities will “need to do everything we can” to prevent determined terrorists from committing attacks. “It's a true problem that we must certainly not deny,” he said.

The Islamic State group had claimed responsibility for the July 14, 2016 attack in Nice. The attacker, Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, who plowed a 19-ton truck into a crowd assembled for the fireworks display, was shot dead by police.

French authorities said Bouhlel, a Tunisian with French residency, was inspired by the extremist group's propaganda, but they say no evidence has been found that IS orchestrated the attack. The trial is to take place at a special court for terrorist cases in Paris.

In June, 20 men were convicted in connection with the 2015 Paris terror attacks on the Bataclan theater, Paris cafes and the national stadium that resulted in 130 deaths. Most attention had focused on the lone surviving member of the Islamic State attack team, Salah [Abdeslam](#). [The other suspects were found guilty of assisting in the preparation of the attacks or hiding Abdeslam from police. Some are presumed dead in Syria and were tried in absentia.](#)

Five trends driving the future of terrorism

By Colin Clarke

Source: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/09/five-trends-driving-the-future-of-terrorism/>

Sept 03 – In mid-May 2022, eighteen-year-old Payton Gendron approached a grocery store in a predominantly African-American neighborhood in Buffalo, NY. He opened fire with a [Bushmaster XM-15 semi-automatic rifle](#), killing ten people. The attack was one of the deadliest racist massacres in recent American history.

The attack made headlines worldwide, the latest in a series of racially and ethnically motivated violent extremist attacks. As in the [Christchurch mosque attack](#) in New Zealand, Gendron live-streamed his armed assault and left behind a manifesto outlining a range of conspiratorial views and documenting extreme racial animus.

Beyond the tragedy itself, the attack was noteworthy for another reason—it was the quintessential example of how terrorist ideologies have become more diverse in recent decades, attacks have become more decentralized, terrorism itself has been democratized by new technologies, disinformation has been used to fuel hate, and terrorists have acquired the means to make attacks much deadlier. **These trends in terrorism (diversity, decentralization, democratization, disinformation, and deadly) are shaping the future of violent extremism.**



For counterterrorism analysts, government officials, and policymakers, it is crucial to understand how terrorism is changing to know how to prioritize threats and allocate resources. Given China's increasingly assertive foreign policy and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, counterterrorism is no longer the principal national security focus of Western governments. As a result, those charged with preventing terrorist attacks need be smarter about how terrorists and terrorist groups are evolving. Moreover, it is essential to understand the grievances motivating political violence and terrorism in order to craft a comprehensive response.

First, the attack in Buffalo reflected the **diverse** ideologies that are motivating terrorism and violent extremism. Whereas the past two decades have mostly been about dedicating resources to combat Salafi-jihadism and groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, the current terrorism landscape is far more varied. In Buffalo, Gendron's motivation was a deep hatred of African-Americans, but even within the broader category of far-right extremism, there exists an intersectionality among prejudices that also include Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, or threats against the LGBTQ+ community.

The ideologies motivating terrorists is the most significant change in counterterrorism. What was mostly a monochromatic threat from Salafi-jihadist groups and those individuals they sought to inspire, has now become a kaleidoscope with new threats from white supremacists and neo-Nazis, shadowy anarchist elements, neo-Luddites, and the extreme fringe of violent incels (i.e., politicized involuntary celibates fueled by a hatred of women). Once-formidable ethno-nationalist terrorist groups, including the Provisional Irish Republican Army and the Basque group ETA, have all decommissioned their arms and faded into history—the same is true of radical left-wing militants like the Baader Meinhoff group in Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy. In South Asia, secessionist groups like the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have also been pacified.

Second, the shooting was **decentralized**. The attacker was a so-called lone wolf, who acted on his own without any external assistance or instigation. Lone wolves are difficult for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to detect, although the term "lone wolf" itself is something of a misnomer. Even in cases where a single attacker may be responsible, the individual almost always emerges from a broader ecosystem where they have radicalized, often after being exposed to extremist propaganda online.

Decentralization describes the concept of "leaderless resistance" pioneered by violent far-right extremists, but also the phenomenon wherein the leadership and upper echelon of large, bureaucratized terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State are winnowed through relentless counterterrorism campaigns. In both cases, the result has been a shift to an affiliate or franchise model, where regional branches pursue a blend of local and global objectives.

Third, the attack was an example of the **democratization** of terrorism. In other words, the barriers to entry to engage in terrorism have been significantly lowered over the past decade. Today, an individual with an internet connection, a smartphone, and access to weapons, including do-it-yourself weapons like "[ghost guns](#)" and [3-D printed explosives](#), can now wreak havoc in society. In the case of Gendron, he used a Bushmaster XM-15 semi-automatic rifle, taking advantage of America's gun culture and ease of access to lethal weaponry.

The means of terrorism, perhaps once restricted to a hard core of guerrilla fighters, is now widely available to billions of people around the globe. Innovations in encrypted communications and access to sophisticated weaponry have facilitated the rise of what the United States military has called "[super-empowered individuals](#)," who have access to powerful, low-cost commercial technology and are highly connected, able to reach far beyond their geographic location.

Fourth, Gendron was fueled in many ways by **disinformation**. A review of the Buffalo attacker's social media history shows an obsession with the so-called "Great Replacement Theory," a conspiracy that posits that a shadowy cabal of elites is deliberately replacing native-born white people with immigrants in an act of what they label "white genocide." Gendron spent considerable time on [4chan](#), where he consumed significant amounts of disinformation about the supposed contribution of Black people to the crime rate, IQ differences, and posts directly related to Holocaust denialism.

Disinformation is now ubiquitous, with foreign countries crafting disinformation campaigns that feed domestic terrorism elsewhere. Russia and China [regularly amplify](#) divisive narratives on social media in an effort to sow further dissent within the United States. Many of these narratives are related to racial issues and promote posts related to civil war and domestic uprisings. Conspiracies abound online, and the advent of so-called "deep fakes" and artificial intelligence have only served to further complicate the information environment. Disinformation also lives forever on the internet, enshrined in terrorist manifestos, and passed around by followers and supporters of violent extremist ideologies.

Fifth, the Buffalo attack was **deadly**. In the United States, between [1994 and 2013](#), there were only three years in which more than eight individuals were killed in terrorist attacks during the entire year. This was due to the Oklahoma City bombing (1995), 9/11 (2001), and the Fort Hood attack (2009). The Buffalo attack resulted in ten dead, reflective of the increasing trend in lethality—between 2014 and 2021, the average number of fatalities per year was thirty-one, demonstrating the increasing lethality of terrorism. Gendron illegally modified his rifle so that high-capacity magazines could be loaded into it, increasing the lethality of his attack.



Terrorists and terrorist groups to seek large body counts, with mass casualty events fueling the propaganda value of an attack or series of attacks. The advent of technologies like drones, 3-D printing, and autonomous weapons has exacerbated the threat of large-scale attacks, while terrorists' pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons, remains a nightmare scenario. Terrorism expert Brian Michael Jenkins once wrote, "terrorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead." The quote reflected the zeitgeist in terrorism studies at the time, especially with the skyjackings perpetrated by Palestinian terror groups in the 1970s, that the overarching purpose of terrorism was psychological and as a mode of communication to express a grievance to a large audience. After the al-Qaeda attacks of September 11, 2001, Jenkins revised his axiom, [now commenting](#), "Many of today's terrorists want a lot of people watching *and* a lot of people dead."

Witnessing the devastation and destruction wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic likely increased terrorists' interest in acquiring the materials and know-how to conduct a bioterror attack. Such an attack could be conducted surreptitiously by a small group with catastrophic effects. There would be considerable challenges in managing the aftermath, which could include the contagion of humans or animals or contamination of food and water sources or medicines. There will also be major challenges posed by physical-to-digital conversion technologies—including [gene sequencing technology](#) and the ability to send genome sequences by e-mail. Being able to send these sequences by e-mail means that terrorists in far-reaching corners of the globe could potentially cooperate to harness the disruptive power of technologies like [CRISPR](#) (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats). In some circumstances, CRISPR could be used to create viruses, crop-destroying plagues, or "killer mosquitoes" that spread disease. This is another area where barriers to entry are being lowered, offering more opportunities for nefarious individuals and small groups to do harm.

Following two decades of prosecuting the Global War on Terrorism, many Western countries are now pivoting toward great power competition as the pendulum swings away from a focus on violent non-state actors back toward state-based threats. Accordingly, what were once vast troves of money and resources allocated to counterterrorism have diminished, and states and governments will be largely unprepared to deal with what comes next. France recently withdrew its troops from Mali. Germany has also [suspended its mission to the country](#), even as the Russian private military contractor Wagner Group has moved to fill the power vacuum. The United States and [many of its Western allies](#) are attempting to move beyond counterterrorism as an organizing principle, preparing to meet the challenges posed by near-peer competitors. Russia's invasion of Ukraine could further accelerate this trend.

But counterterrorism and great-power competition are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, in many cases, a convergence between the two will further complicate the response and may also lead to an increase in state-sponsored terrorism, a throwback to the proxy conflicts waged during the Cold War. An increase in state-sponsored terrorism could spur a spike in terrorist groups motivated by ethnonationalism or separatism. Counterterrorism strategies must adapt to the range of traditional and emerging threats from a multiplicity of international and domestic adversaries.

Some attacks, like the one in Buffalo, NY, will comprise all of the aforementioned trends. Others will represent one or two of the trends. When these trends converge, counterterrorism practitioners will face significant challenges. Thinking through the implications of a more diverse, decentralized, democratized, and deadly terrorist threat environment fueled by disinformation could help respond to a short-list of future possible scenarios. Moreover, it could also frame policy responses for how law enforcement, governments, and policymakers can begin preparing for the continued evolution of terrorism, violent extremism, and political violence.

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Saskatchewan stabbing suspect was not considered a risk by parole board, report shows

Source: <https://globalnews.ca/news/9107920/saskatchewan-mass-killing-suspect-was-not-considered-a-risk-by-parole-board-report-shows/>

Sep 05 – A [Parole Board of Canada](#) decision dated Feb. 1 found that [Myles Sanderson](#) would "not present an undue risk," and freeing him would "contribute to the protection of society" by facilitating his reintegration.

"The Board is satisfied that your risk is manageable in the community, if you live with your [blacked out] maintain sobriety and employment, and continue with developing supports, including getting therapy," the board wrote.

Sanderson became the subject of a massive police manhunt after **11 people were killed and 19 injured** on the James Smith Cree Nation and in Weldon, Sask.

Among the dead was Sanderson's brother Damien, who was also wanted.



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Police have said little about Sanderson, except that he had a significant criminal record, was last seen in Regina and was wanted on an arrest warrant for three counts of first-degree murder following Sunday's stabbings.

But his parole records recount almost two decades of crime, as well as drug and alcohol abuse, and associations with gang members, pimps and drug dealers.



DAMIEN SANDERSON

MYLES SANDERSON

His most recent convictions were for assault, assault with a weapon, assaulting a police officer, uttering threats, mischief and robbery.

According to parole records obtained by Global News, in July 2017, Sanderson showed up at his ex-girlfriend's house and "acted in a threatening manner, made comments about a gang, and damaged property."

While the children hid in a bathtub, he punched a hole in the bathroom door before going outside and throwing a cement block through the side window of a car. He had fled before the police arrived.

Days later, during an argument with an employee at a "First Nations band store," Sanderson "tried to fight the victim, and then threatened to murder him and burn down his parents' house." Again, police could not find him.

In November 2017, he threatened an accomplice, hitting him in the head with a firearm and stomping on his head. He then made the accomplice rob a fast food restaurant with a firearm, his parole records indicate.

Multiple stabbings across Saskatchewan



The following April, while drinking at a home, he stabbed two men with a fork. He then went outside and beat a victim who lost consciousness in a ditch. Sanderson returned to the home and kicked in the door. He was finally arrested in June 2018, after telling police they would have to shoot him. As he was being put into a police car, he kicked an officer in the face and



head repeatedly, the parole board wrote. His prison sentence totaled four years, four months and 19 days, along with 12 months of probation. During his time in federal prison, Sanderson “participated in programming and cultural activities, and engaged with elders,” the records show. He was “reported to have made gains.” In February 2021, he was transferred to a healing lodge. He was freed in August 2021 on statutory release. The Parole Board said in a statement that statutory release was mandatory after offenders had served two-thirds of their sentence. But Sanderson’s statutory release was suspended in November 2021 when he was caught lying to his parole supervisor. Three months later, the Parole Board cancelled the suspension.

In its 10-page decision, the Board wrote that while Sanderson had “a significant journey” ahead and needed to stay sober and get therapy, he had been “making an attempt” to deal with his emotional and addiction problems.

“To your benefit, you do seem to have maintained sobriety, obtained employment, engaged a therapist, were engaged in cultural ceremonies, had obtained a home for your family, and appeared to have been making good progress on reintegration,” the Board wrote. “It is the Board’s opinion that you will not present an undue risk to society if released on statutory release and that your release will contribute to the protection of society by facilitating your reintegration into society as a law abiding citizen,” the decision read.

Upon his release, Sanderson was required to not consume any alcohol or drugs, follow a treatment plan, avoid his victims and their families, and have no contact with his children as well as an individual identified only by the initials V.B.

By May, however, Sanderson was listed by the Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers as “unlawfully at large,” and last seen in Saskatoon, about 200 kilometres southwest of the scene of Sunday’s mass killings.

According to his parole records, Sanderson spent his childhood bouncing between family members. After his parents separated when he was 9, he lived with his father, who was allegedly violent with his girlfriend. He then moved in with his paternal grandparents but returned to his father at age 11 “due to an abusive environment.” For the remainder of his adolescence, he moved back and forth between his mother and father. A psychological report said his upbringing “created a sense of abandonment and feelings of not being wanted,” which it said played a part in his criminal conduct.

He started drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana at age 12 and began using cocaine at 14. In his mid-teens, he fathered a child with whom he has no relationship. He may have been a gang member at one time, his parole records indicate. He had five more children but said alcohol had harmed his relationship with their mother “and there are reports of domestic violence in this relationship and a no-contact order was imposed as a result of previous domestic violence.”

“Considering your Indigenous background, the Board notes that there are factors from your background that may have contributed to your involvement in the criminal justice system,” according to the Parole Board’s decision. Those include the inter-generational impacts of residential schools, neglect, exposure to substance abuse, experiencing domestic violence during childhood, family fragmentation, lack of education, and loss of culture and spirituality. A psychological report, completed in October 2020, said Sanderson had reported past struggles with anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts, and he believed he suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The psychologist said Sanderson was taking psychotropic medication to manage Attention Deficit Disorder concerns, and found there was a moderate risk he would re-offend. The RCMP said Monday that Sanderson might be injured. Regina Police Chief Evan Bray said he was “very confident” Sanderson was spotted in the city on Sunday.

EDITOR’S COMMENT: If you wonder why I included this story in the terrorism chapter it is because I think that this was a real terrorism incident – that is an incident igniting terror to people; simple as that. Was the parol officer a psychiatrist? Was his criminal record indicative that this subject will change if released from prison? I do not think so! And I am sure that this parole officer and the Parole Board of Canada will never have a peaceful night for the rest of their lives. UPDATE (8/9): The second terrorist committed suicide after his arrest. A BIG “WHY” WILL REMAIN FOR EVER!

Nice terror attack **trial** starts in France: 8 face justice, accused of helping truck driver Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel

Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/nice-terror-attack-france-trial-starts-truck-mohamed-lahouaiej-bouhlel/>

Sep 05 – It was July 14, 2016 — Bastille Day in France. Some 30,000 people were on the seafront Promenade des Anglais in Nice that night to watch the traditional fireworks to mark the national holiday.

The road along the French Riviera promenade was closed to traffic for the evening. Suddenly, a truck appeared on the road and started plowing through the crowd, driving at 56 miles per hour. The driver swerved several times, deliberately, to hit a maximum number of pedestrians as people fled in terror.



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The truck mounted the sidewalk at several points to avoid police roadblocks that had been designed to keep vehicles away during the festivities.

Police tried to stop the truck, but it traveled 1.5 miles along the Riviera seafront before they finally managed to halt it. The driver was shot dead at the scene.



In all, [86 people were killed, including 10 children and teenagers](#). Another 300 were injured. Among the victims, children who had been allowed to stay up late to watch the fireworks; foreign students enjoying a summer in France; and local families decimated as the truck tore through the crowds.

UC Berkeley student Nick Leslie, 21, was on a study abroad program in Nice for the summer. With several of his friends from the program, he'd gone to watch the Bastille Day fireworks on the Promenade des Anglais. As the truck plowed through the crowd, the students were separated from each other.

His friends put "missing" posters on lampposts, hoping he would turn up, but three days later, forensics doctors confirmed that Nick was among the dead.

Sean Copeland, 51, and his 11-year-old son Brodie, tourists from Texas, were also killed.

The next day the promenade was closed as police worked to piece together what had occurred. All along the road were the unmistakable signs that [something terrible had happened](#): Dropped champagne glasses, heavy bloodstains, one high-heeled shoe missing its pair, and its owner.



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Six years later, the trial of eight people accused of helping 31-year-old Tunisian national Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel prepare his deadly attack opened in Paris on Monday.

ISIS claimed the truck driver was responding to its calls to target nationals of countries fighting against its self-declared "caliphate" in Syria and Iraq, but no clear link between the group and the attacker was ever established.

The attack took place just eight months after the [deadly series of attacks in Paris in November 2015](#), and the country was still on edge. French counterterrorism investigators said they had foiled a number of planned terror attacks in 2015 and early 2016. A separate investigation is still underway into the security arrangements in Nice that night, to determine whether more should have been done to protect people.

Bouhlel lived in Nice, as did several of the accused. The eight suspects are on trial on a range of charges, including weapons charges, criminal association in a terrorist enterprise, and helping Bouhlel to hire the truck he used. The charges carry sentences of up to life in prison.

The trial is taking place in the central Paris courtroom that was built specifically for the November 2015 attacks case, which [finished earlier this year](#). There are 850 civil participants in this case, including survivors and families of the victims. Most are from Nice. Some will travel to Paris for at least part of the trial, others will be able to follow the proceedings from Nice, where a special annex has been set up to show a live broadcast from the Paris court. The rest of the world will not see the proceedings, as French law prohibits news cameras in courts.



Jean-Claude Hubler is president of the association "Life for Nice." He was on the beach that night when he heard the commotion. He said he knew it was an attack, and went to help. "I held a woman's hand until she passed," he recounted. "That's hard, and afterwards, I had to cover her. Near me, there was a father who was cleaning up the body of his daughter who had died. Farther down, there was a woman, a nurse, who was applying a tourniquet on someone who was bleeding. It was one thing after another. We had to cover the bodies — a beach worker gave us beach blankets to cover them."

Like many from Nice, he understands that Bouhlel had to be stopped that night, but part of him wishes he could have survived, to stand trial. "It would have been better for him to be present and take responsibility for what he did," Hubler told the Reuters news agency. "It's hard, but whatever happens, we trust the legal system."

The trial will last 15 weeks. A verdict is expected on December 16.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: 86 dead; 300 injured! Why trial?



Somalia: Briefing and Consultations

Source: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2022/09/somalia-briefing-and-consultations-7.php>



Tomorrow morning (7 September), the Security Council is scheduled to hold an open briefing, followed by closed consultations, on the situation in [Somalia](#). Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) James Swan will brief on the latest political, security and humanitarian developments in the country. Acting Special Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson (SRCC) for Somalia and head of the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) Fiona Lortan and EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa Annette Weber are also expected to brief.

The dire humanitarian situation in Somalia is expected to be a key focus of tomorrow's meeting. Swan is likely to highlight the Secretary-General's latest report, covering developments from 7 May to 23 August, which describes the severe drought pushing Somalia to the brink of famine. According to the report, the drought has affected 7.8 million people—nearly half of the Somali population—and led to the displacement of more than one million. Swan may describe the efforts by humanitarian actors to provide assistance to 5.3 million Somalis despite challenges to humanitarian access. He may also draw attention to the 2022 Drought Response and Famine Prevention Plan, released by the UN and its humanitarian partners in June, which aims to mobilise \$993.3 million to reach 6.4 million Somalis.

On 19 August, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths released \$10 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to support humanitarian response efforts in Somalia. Since 2 September, Griffiths has been on a visit to the country, which is ongoing at the time of writing. The aim of his visit is to assess the situation on the ground and to meet with the federal and regional authorities, affected communities, and partners. In a 5 September message, Griffiths said: "We are in the last minute of the eleventh hour to avoid a full-blown disaster in Somalia." Council members are likely to express serious concern about the dire humanitarian situation and call for enhanced international support to avert the looming famine. Some members may also mention emergency assistance they have provided to Somalia in response to the international humanitarian appeal.

Political developments in Somalia are another likely focus of tomorrow's meeting. In June, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was inaugurated as president; he subsequently appointed Hamza Abdi Barre to serve as prime minister. Following prolonged consultations, Barre announced the formation of his cabinet on 3 August. In this regard, Swan may describe his engagement with the new Somali leadership on how to align the UN's support with the government's priorities. These priorities include promoting national reconciliation; strengthening the federal system and improving relations between Mogadishu and the regional states; intensifying the fight against **Al-Shabaab**; finalising the constitutional review process and judicial reform; and addressing the humanitarian situation.

Council members are likely to welcome the conclusion of Somalia's electoral process with the formation of a new government. They may also take note of the priorities outlined by the new government and underscore the need to align UN support with these priorities. Council members are awaiting the outcome of the UNSOM strategic review in line with [resolution 2632](#) of 26 May, which extended the mandate of the mission until 31 October. Resolution 2632 renewed UNSOM's mandate for a shorter period than the customary one year, with the aim of allowing time for a new government to form and for its priorities to inform any potential change to UNSOM's mandate. The strategic review team under the leadership of Ian Martin, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), visited Somalia and Ethiopia between 1 and 9 August to conduct consultations with the Somali federal government, regional states, UN agencies, the AU, ATMIS, women and youth civil society representatives, and international partners. The team's report is expected by the end of September and is likely to inform UNSOM's mandate renewal process in October.

Lortan is likely to stress the need for the Somali federal government to accelerate the implementation of the Somali Transition Plan and National Security Architecture. In this regard, she may call for the authorities to promote effective force generation and the integration of regional forces into the national security forces to facilitate the drawdown of 2,000 ATMIS troops by 31 December, in line with [resolution 2628](#) of 31 March, which reconfigured the AU Mission in



Somalia (AMISOM) into ATMIS. She may also draw attention to the funding challenges that ATMIS faces and call for renewed engagement to address this issue.

Although Lortan will brief tomorrow, it should be noted that AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat appointed Mohamed El-Amine Souef as the new AU Special Representative to Somalia and Head of ATMIS on 1 September. Before his appointment, Souef was the head of the regional office of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in Gao, Central Mali. He had also previously worked with the UN-AU Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

Council members may emphasise the need for progress in implementing the Transition Plan. Members look forward to receiving the benchmarks and indicators requested by resolution 2628, which are due by the end of September. These benchmarks and indicators, for the effectiveness of ATMIS and the implementation of the Somali Transition Plan and National Security Architecture, are being drawn up by the UN in consultation with the Somali government, the AU, the EU, and other relevant member states.

In terms of the security situation, the persistent threat posed by Al-Shabaab continues to be a major concern for Council members. The UN recorded a monthly average of 227 security incidents between May and July. Al-Shabaab is implicated in most of these incidents. On 2 September, the group attacked trucks transporting food supplies in Hiiraan region, central Somalia. This incident, in which at least 20 civilians were reportedly killed, happened two weeks after Al-Shabaab's siege of a hotel in Mogadishu in August that left 21 people dead and more than 100 people injured. Council members are likely to condemn these recent attacks by Al-Shabaab and express support for the federal government's renewed determination to combat terrorism in Somalia.

Weber may mention her visit to Mogadishu in May following the conclusion of Somalia's electoral process and her discussion with Mohamud to reaffirm the EU's support for the consolidation of peace, security and development in Somalia. Regarding the humanitarian situation, she may allude to the EU's humanitarian air bridge that is a means of delivering emergency assistance to Somalia. Weber may refer to the EU's recent decision to resume direct budgetary support to the federal government to assist reform efforts. She may also refer to the EU's continued support to ATMIS through the provision of €120 million to the military component under the European Peace Facility (EPF) and €20 million to the civilian and police components under its Africa Peace Facility (APF).

Strategic Depth & the Fight Against Violent Extremism

Source: <https://www.domesticpreparedness.com/preparedness/strategic-depth-the-fight-against-violent-extremism/>

Sep 07 – A year has passed since the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Since then, intelligence agencies have [shifted focus](#) from al-Qaida to [China's](#) growing military, political, and economic aspirations. However, despite the lack of U.S. presence on the ground in Afghanistan, the nation must continue to preserve the importance of gathering intelligence on extremism within the greater Middle East including parts of Central Asia. Allocating resources elsewhere cannot sacrifice continued counterterrorism efforts. Notwithstanding the current administration's [justification](#) for the military's withdrawal in 2021 (i.e., al-Qaida was no longer in Afghanistan), al-Qaida is not dead. Under the rule of the Taliban, Afghanistan will remain a haven for terrorist organizations. Neither Ayman al-Zawahiri nor al-Qaida could operate in Afghanistan without the knowledge and permission of the Taliban.

The Death of a Leader, But Not the Followers

The recent successful strike against and subsequent death of al-Zawahiri on the third-floor balcony in an affluent area of Kabul (only a short distance from the former U.S. embassy) is a poignant moment to reassess the relative benefits and challenges associated with the continuing U.S. counterterrorism efforts. While the world remains engrossed in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, violent extremists are continuing to plot against the U.S. These signs remain obvious as al-Zawahiri was not hiding for 21 years but rather, until recently, sitting comfortably in Kabul at a Taliban safe house until killed. Al-Zawahiri's presence in Afghanistan is a strong indicator that al-Qaida's resurgence is mounting again. If nothing more, al-Zawahiri's presence solidifies that the bond is stronger than ever between the Taliban and al-Qaida. A February 2022 [UN assessment](#) strongly reinforces this assertion: *“There are no recent signs that the Taliban has taken steps to limit the activities of foreign terrorist fighters in the country. On the contrary, terrorist groups enjoy greater freedom there than at any time in recent history.”*

The [Doha Agreement](#) – designed during the Trump administration and delivered during the Biden administration – was intended, among many things, to remedy numerous security concerns within the region and force the Taliban to keep Afghanistan from becoming a terrorist haven, a recruitment hotbed, and a launching pad for future terrorist attacks after the U.S. withdrawal. Unfortunately, the Taliban seems to have ignored that part of the agreement and has since denounced the killing of al-Zawahiri as a violation of the terms of the Doha Agreement. The [U.S. State Department](#) suggests the opposite, arguing that the Taliban was



“hosting and sheltering” al-Zawahiri and “grossly” violating the Doha Agreement and “assurances to the world that they would not allow Afghan territory to be used by terrorists to threaten the security of other countries.”

Al-Zawahiri’s mere presence confirms that he received protection from the [Taliban](#). The killing of al-Zawahiri will likely invigorate al-Qaida’s recruitment efforts and further strain U.S.-Taliban relations. Although uneasy and uncertain before the killing of al-Zawahiri, relations now will become noxious. Observation of many pro-al-Qaida social media platforms has encouraged followers to ramp up the attacks on the U.S. and seek revenge for al-Zawahiri’s death. Some social media sites note that [“dark days await America.”](#)

Intelligence & Technological Capabilities

Assuming tensions in the Middle East will get worse before they get better, the U.S. must maintain vigilance for the disruption of terrorism movements – particularly those in leadership. The benefits of current U.S. counterterrorism efforts are evident, and the ongoing capacity for U.S. [“over-the-horizon”](#) precision strikes is apparent. The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan brought the advantage of focusing military effort and spending in areas of the globe with greater strategic significance, such as East Asia and Europe. It has given the U.S. military contracting and manufacturing community the space to shift toward conventional war supply (e.g., significant military armament and other aid to Ukrainian forces) to good effect. The [“Fact Sheet”](#) on the 2022 Department of Defense National Security Strategy reflects these priorities. It is arguable whether these efforts would have been achievable with a continued sizeable military presence in Afghanistan.

The successful strike against al-Zawahiri is also further demonstration and proof of impressive U.S. intelligence and technological capabilities. A lethal drone strike conducted halfway across the world inside an unfriendly nation is difficult. The fact that it produced very little collateral damage is also laudable. The strike represents a highly sophisticated and adeptly managed technological and human capital nexus that can extend similar results globally. These demonstrated capabilities will continue to provide good leverage for the U.S. on the global stage. It also evidences continued U.S. capabilities to target threats in the Afghanistan region from abroad. These will remain important because al-Qaida will seek to replace al-Zawahiri while leveraging Afghanistan as a safe haven under the protection of the Taliban, allowing continued plotting against the U.S. and its allies.

Some might argue that this strike closes the loop on the attacks of 9/11, thus bringing an end to a 21-year search. Some may also argue that the strike represents the final retributive chapter on the long story that came to a head with the brutal attacks on the U.S. in 2001. Undoubtedly, the U.S. has relentlessly eliminated or captured the ring of planners and supporters of the infamous attacks one by one, no matter where they lived. As a result, the al-Qaida of today is not the same as the al-Qaida of 2001. In many ways, this is because of the relentless pursuit and elimination of its leaders. However, al-Zawahiri’s death could mark the beginning of renewed tensions between the U.S. and the Taliban leadership.

Part of the fundamental problem of U.S. counterterror efforts is that successes such as the al-Zawahiri strike often hide the inherent challenges. They can often drown out the real factors contributing to the success and lessen awareness of resources needed for continued future success. The al-Zawahiri strike was likely the result of legacy intelligence capabilities that the U.S. built in Afghanistan over the past two decades rather than any inherent or new over-the-horizon capability. The U.S. robust intelligence capability formerly in Afghanistan is rapidly dwindling without the protection and resources previously provided by the U.S. government’s full-scale commitment.

Strategic Choices & Ongoing Challenges

Perhaps recent history can elucidate the heart of the issue in Afghanistan. Strategic choices in that region were presented as a false dichotomy, an all-or-nothing approach to U.S. involvement that extends well back into the initial U.S. responses to the terror attacks in 2001. In the face of competent advice, two successive presidential administrations have chosen to view the U.S. commitment in Afghanistan as an either-or scenario. Both the Trump administration, through its negotiations with the Taliban, and the current Biden administration, with its wholesale withdrawal, were committed to an approach that drained nearly all U.S. resources from Afghanistan. To both administrations, the answer was simple, nothing in Afghanistan.

Strategic depth means detecting, tracking, anticipating, and eliminating terror threats in their expected safe havens before effective terror attacks can be executed against U.S. interests.

For the Biden administration, these ideas came to the forefront in a nearly forgotten controversy with [General Stanley McChrystal](#) and President Obama in 2009-2010. The controversy began over publicly released information from a McChrystal recommendation to double down on a counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. Perceived within the Obama political apparatus, including Vice President Joe Biden, as an attempt by the military establishment to restrict the president’s decision, the alternative quickly became the Biden-team sponsored “counterterror plus” strategy. This controversy, ably described by former Defense Secretary Robert Gates in his book [Duty](#), pitted an all-in counterinsurgency



approach against a scaled-down counterterrorism approach in Afghanistan. With the benefit of hindsight, while Biden had advocated increased support for a Pakistan partner in counterterrorism, Gates looked to rely on an Afghanistan regime that proved either unwilling or unable to sustain any determined assault against the Taliban. However, any Pakistan-centered policy option was doomed to failure, as evidenced by the harboring of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad by elements within the Pakistani Inter-service Intelligence agency (ISI). The Afghan government proved too weak to resist the Taliban's resurgence. Nevertheless, Gates recognized then the same essentials that remain now. All the approaches to al-Qaida and their Taliban supporters had already failed by 2009. Neither the counterinsurgency nor counterterrorism plus strategies could work. He recommended in his book an approach that "had to narrow the mission and better communicate what we were trying to do."

That clarity is what is needed now. But as past decisions were ultimately about military power commitments in Afghanistan, the fundamental choice now is the level of commitment of other security measures within the region, specifically intelligence capabilities. Given the changed politico-strategic environment in the greater Middle East, it is uncertain what capabilities will be dedicated to counterterrorism efforts. An increased pledge of support from NATO allies is now a moot point. The European crises consume much of their energy and resources. Asian alliances and partnerships are similarly consumed with Chinese provocations and belligerency.

The Need for More Strategic Depth

What most informed analysts have known all along since 9/11 is that strategic depth is necessary to confront the ever-morphing hydra of the threat:

- What strategic depth means precisely, especially regarding the deployment of intelligence capabilities, is a million-dollar question on the counterterror front.
- At what scale is the U.S. government willing to develop, deploy, and sustain regional networks of clandestine informants, ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) assets, and other operational capabilities?
- What costs, institutionally and monetarily, are required for such an effort?

Strategic depth means detecting, tracking, anticipating, and eliminating terror threats in their expected safe havens before effective terror attacks can be executed against U.S. interests. This means being able to strike not just one high-payoff target like Zawahiri but striking multiple high-value targets within the same network near simultaneously on-call. That will require a robust intelligence effort spatially and temporally near the terror network itself. Frankly, this means a significant infiltration and espionage only possible through high-level strategic commitment.

The current [U.S. National Defense Strategy](#) reflects counterterror as an economy-of-force effort designed to deter attacks and manage the persistent threat of violent extremist organizations. The priority of effort should focus on larger-scale threats such as China and Russia. As the landscape of the terrorism threat shifts, shapes, and grows within a changing global environment that provides relative safety to Middle Eastern terror organizations, one wonders whether the current U.S. counterterror approach reflects the necessary strategic depth to prevent another 9/11.

Al-Qaida has not yet announced its new leadership. Most recently, the threat from the terrorist movements has weakened significantly and suffered organizational setbacks, as the Islamic State and al-Qaida leadership have been killed. Nevertheless, the continued monitoring of al-Qaida and the Islamic State is essential to diminish their threat. Although it has been a test for al-Qaida and the Islamic State to generate eagerness to recruit when their supporters witness continued defeats and setbacks, the killing of Zawahiri might just be the spark that ignites al-Qaida 2.0.

Richard Schoeberl, Ph.D., has over 25 years of experience, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). He served various positions throughout his career, ranging from a supervisory special agent at the FBI's headquarters in Washington, D.C., to acting unit chief of the International Terrorism Operations Section at the NCTC. In addition to the FBI and NCTC, he is the author of numerous articles on terrorism and security. He has served as a media contributor for Fox News, CNN, PBS, NPR, Al-Jazeera Television, Al Arabiya Television, and Al Hurra. He works with the international nonprofit organization Hope for Justice, combatting human trafficking, and additionally serves as a professor of Homeland Security at The University of Tennessee Southern.

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ISIS opened office in Turkey to target Europe, Russia, Caucasus

By Abdullah Bozkurt

Source: <https://nordicmonitor.com/2022/09/isis-opened-office-in-turkey-to-target-europe-russia-caucasus/>



Sep 08 – The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) had quietly built its second base in Turkey to target Europe and Central Asia, only to move its operations to Syria after the imposition of international pressure on the Islamist government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which forced a limited crackdown on ISIS cells.

As part of reorganization efforts after sustaining heavy losses in the US-led global anti-ISIS campaign that wiped out caliphate territory, ISIS turned to Turkey in 2017 to set up one of the main branches under the name of the “Al-Faruq office.” The office was designed primarily to manage the ISIS network in Eastern Europe, Russia and the Caucasus.

The core office that administers operations in Syria and Iraq under the “Al-Sham office” in Syria remained the main vehicle for the jihadist organization’s general directorate of provinces to direct the ISIS global network.

ISIS leadership believed it could take advantage of the permissive environment provided by the Erdoğan government in Turkey, which it had used in the past to traffic fighters, raise funds and procure logistical supplies. To some extent, the ISIS leaders were right since the Turkish authorities turned a blind eye to ISIS operations in most cases and at times even supported the group in its fight against Kurdish groups in Syria. The criminal justice system functioned as a revolving door for ISIS suspects as most were quickly let go after brief detentions and many acquittals.

Brett McGurk, the White House Middle East coordinator and former US envoy for the global coalition to counter ISIS, accused Turkey of foreclosing “any serious cooperation on ISIS even as 40k foreign fighters flowed through its territory into Syria,” in a tweet he posted on October 9, 2019. “Tal Abyad, a Syrian border town, was the main supply route for ISIS from 6/14-6/15 when weapons, explosives, and fighters flowed freely from Turkey to Raqqa and into Iraq. Turkey refused repeated and detailed requests to seal its side of the border with US help and assistance.”

McGurk said Turkey also refused to permit the US military to fly from Incirlik Airbase to strike ISIS positions even while ISIS fighters were pouring into Syria from Turkey.

The track records of militants who wreaked havoc in European capitals show they have all spent time in Turkey, where they were linked with the ISIS network under the watch of Turkey’s national intelligence organization, MIT. For example, Hayat Boumeddiene, a French national of Algerian origin who was the female accomplice of the Islamists behind the deadly attacks in Paris in January 2015, came to Turkey on January 2, 2015 and stayed in Istanbul for two days before going to the border province of Şanlıurfa, where she spent four days before finally crossing into Syria. Turkish intelligence had tracked her movements and listened to her conversations yet allowed her to work closely with ISIS cells in Turkey.

Ismail Omar Mostefai, a Frenchman of Algerian descent who was involved in the Bataclan concert hall attack that killed 89 people (130 in total in coordinated attacks) on November 13, 2015, travelled to Turkey at the end of 2013 and moved on to Syria afterwards. He was known to Turkish intelligence, which tracked his movements and shared details with French authorities in December 2014 and June 2015.

Brussels bombers Ibrahim El Bakraoui and his brother Khalid el-Bakraoui, who were involved in the deadliest act of terrorism in Belgium’s history on March 22, 2016, which killed 32 civilians, also turned out to have been in Turkey. Ibrahim El Bakraoui, a Belgian national of Moroccan descent, flew to Turkey’s tourist resort city of Antalya on June 11, 2015 and moved on to the border province of Gaziantep on June 14. He was caught three days later as he was trying to cross into Syria and deported to the Netherlands on July 14, 2015. His brother Khalid el-Bakraoui entered Turkey on November 4, 2014 through an Istanbul airport. He was let in without any trouble. He left Turkey 10 days later on his own. The entry ban for Khalid el-Bakraoui was imposed on December 12, 2015, after Belgium issued an arrest warrant for him on the same day.

The accomplices of Anis Amri, a Tunisian national who drove into the Christmas market in Berlin on December 19, 2016, killing 12 people, were detained in Turkey after the incident. German citizens of Lebanese origin identified as Muhammed Ali K., Yusuf D. and Bilal Yosef M. were arrested in March 2016 in an operation conducted by the police acting on an intelligence tip as the suspects were about to leave Turkey. A fourth man, a German national of Jordanian descent, was also detained in Turkey’s western city of İzmir.

Akbarzhon Jalilov, a Russian national who was born in Kyrgyzstan, killed 14 people in a blast at the St. Petersburg metro on April 3, 2017. He went to Turkey in late 2015 and had spent a year there before he was deported on immigration

violations in December 2016. Rakhmat Akilov, the Uzbek national who rammed a truck into a crowd in Stockholm and killed five people on April 7, 2017, also had spent some time in Turkey, tried to cross into Syria and was deported to Sweden. Salman Abedi, a British national of Libyan descent, killed 22 people at a pop concert in the northern English city of



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Manchester when he blew himself up on May 22, 2017. Before the attack, he was in Libya and returned to the UK via Turkey and Germany. He was believed to have been supported by accomplices in Turkey. Youssef Zaghba, one of the three London Bridge attackers who killed eight on June 3, 2017, was detained in Italy in 2016 when he attempted to travel to Syria via Turkey. Zaghba had dual Moroccan and Italian citizenship. The Erdoğan government was forced to take action against ISIS only after international criticism and pressure mounted on Turkey. That's what happened in the case of the Al-Faruq office as well. A crackdown on key ISIS operatives in Turkey forced ISIS to shift its operations to the Al-Sham office although the Al-Faruq office remained open. ISIS still manages to run its operations, raise funds and enlist new fighters right across the Turkish border in northern Syria including in territories that are under the control of the Turkish Armed Forces and its affiliated fighter groups.

The killing of ISIS leader Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahman al-Salbi on February 3 by US forces took place in the Atmah region, which is effectively controlled by Turkey. It was impossible for Turkish intelligence agency MIT not to have known about al-Salbi since Atmah, located near the Turkish border, is a MIT base for clandestine operations in Syria.

Thousands of militants, both Turkish and foreign, have used Turkish territory to cross into Syria with the help of smugglers in order to fight alongside ISIS groups there. MIT has facilitated their travel, with Kilis, a border province in Turkey's Southeast, one of the main crossing points into ISIS-held territory. Human smugglers were known to have been active in the border area, although Turkish authorities often overlooked their trips in and out of Syria.

The Erdoğan government boasts that Turkey is the only NATO country that has fought ISIS on the ground while hiding the true nature of the supposed crackdown on the jihadist group. Turkish officials do not disclose the number of successful convictions in ISIS cases and decline to respond to parliamentary questions asking for such information. Instead, they often float figures on the number of detentions and in some cases arrests, which in many cases result in acquittal and release.

According to Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu, police detained 2,438 ISIS suspects in 2021, but only 487 of them were formally arrested, corresponding to a 20 percent arrest rate. In other words, four out of five detained ISIS suspects were never put in jail. He did not provide figures on how many were let go after arrest. In most cases ISIS suspects who were formally arrested pending trial were released by Turkish courts at their first hearing.

●► Read also: [Erdoğan Protects ISIS Network in Turkey](#)

Geography Lessons From the 9/11 Terrorist Network

By Olivier Walther, Rafael Prieto Curiel, Joseph Padron, and Jason Scheuer

Editor's Note: *Mapping the travel geography of terrorist networks can help expose how they operate internationally. Olivier Walther, Joseph Padron, and Jason Scheuer of the University of Florida and Rafael Prieto Curiel of the Complexity Science Hub in Vienna take a close look at the 9/11 plot and find that terrorists who belonged to the same operational cell did not necessarily live in the same place at the same time. However, their itineraries closely matched their organizational structure. Distinct travel patterns and strong social ties not only made the 9/11 travel network resilient but also essentially allowed the 19 hijackers to hide in plain sight while being very mobile.*

Mohammed Atta, the lead al-Qaeda hijacker, passes through a security checkpoint at an airport in Portland, ME, on Sept. 11, 2001. Photo credit: U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia via Britannica.



Sep 05 – On June 3, 2000, Mohamed Atta, the ringleader of the Sept. 11 attacks, cleared Immigration and Customs at Newark Liberty International Airport after arriving from Prague, Czech Republic. Over the course of the next year and a half, Atta and 18 other terrorists embarked on a series of trips within the United States, from the suburbs of Phoenix to the ethnic neighborhoods of Paterson, New Jersey, and from the ritzy beaches of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, to Portland, Maine.

The 9/11 hijackers also traveled extensively internationally, visiting more than a dozen countries and crossing international borders at least 45 times. From the moment they



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entered the United States until the morning that they killed 2,977 people, Atta and his accomplices each traveled, on average, more than half of the circumference of Earth.

This flurry of travel can help inform an understanding of terrorist networks. Our [analysis](#) of the travel patterns of the 9/11 hijackers suggests that mapping the travel geography of members of violent extremist organizations can yield important insights into the group's overall structure.

Which Terrorists Flock Together?

To find out whether geography really matters, we collected [detailed information](#) about the known location of each hijacker using publicly available sources from the [9/11 Commission](#), the [FBI](#), and the [U.S. Congress](#). In total, we documented 231 trips between 48 metropolitan areas across the world, totaling more than 445,000 miles.

Our study shows that terrorists who worked closely together as part of the same operational cell during preparation for the 9/11 attacks tended to cluster in a few regions of the United States, including the Boston-Washington, D.C., corridor, southern Florida, and the triangle between Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Phoenix (Figure 1). The entire set of hijackers of the two planes that crashed into the World Trade Center, for example, lived in or visited Fort Lauderdale at some point in time. There, they seemed to have lived relatively “normal” lives—opening bank accounts, visiting Lion Country Safari, and shopping at local supermarkets.

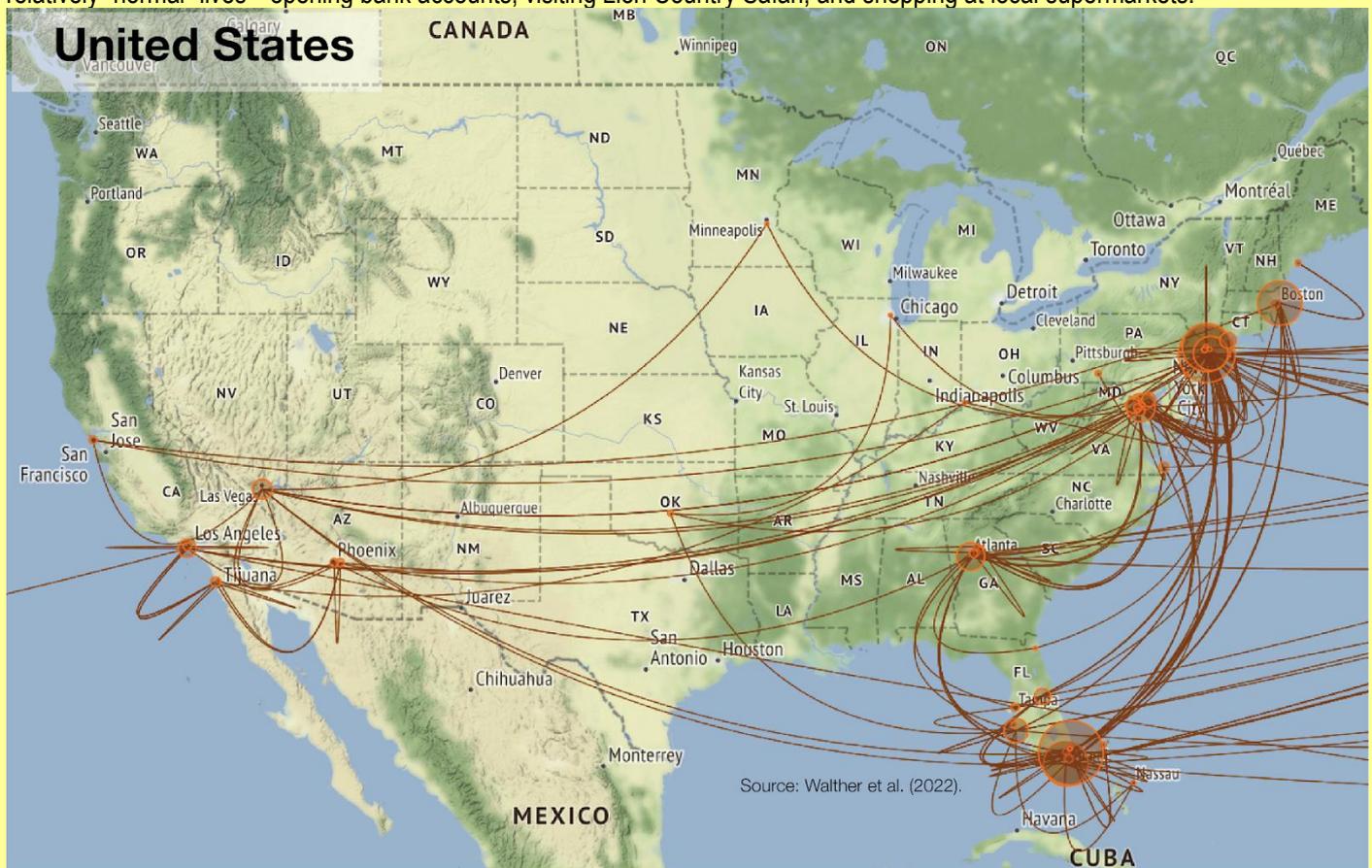
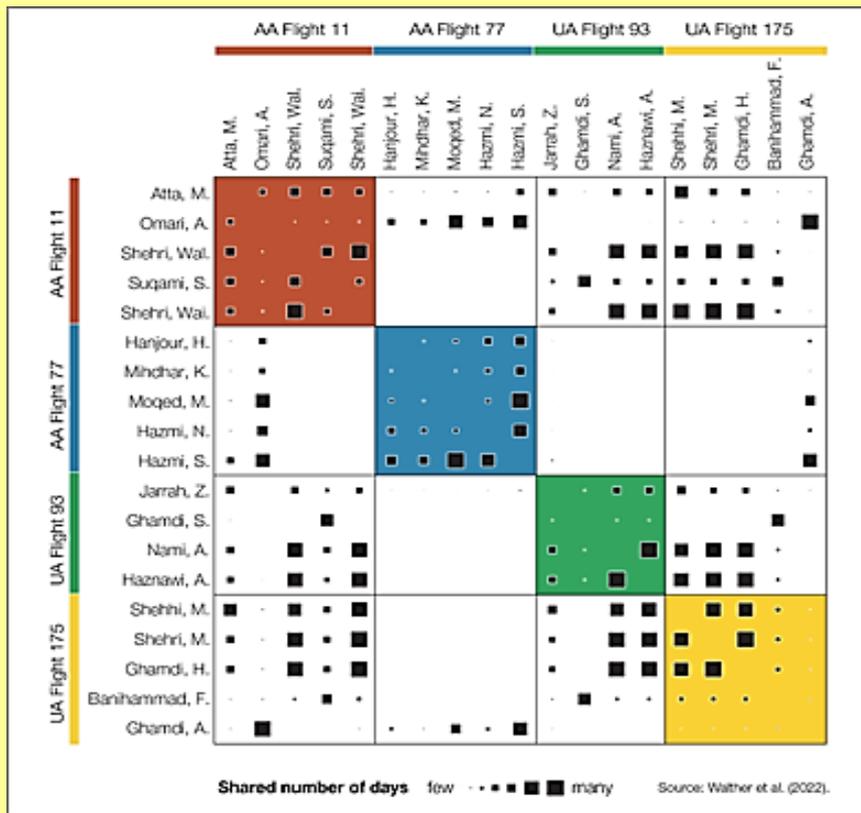


Figure 1. Domestic travel patterns of the 9/11 hijackers. The size of the cities is proportional to the number of trips between them. Source: Authors.

However, the 9/11 hijackers did not necessarily live in or visit the same places at the same time. Our analysis reveals that co-presence may provide crucial information about some aspects of the network but does not really identify the cell-based operational structure that enabled the coordinated, simultaneous attacks aboard different planes.

To demonstrate this, we calculated the number of days shared by each pair of hijackers in the same location. Individuals who spent many days together in the same city are represented with large squares in Figure 2. Our analysis shows that the largest number of shared days is not always found within each cell, colored according to their flight.





For example, several members of the cell that boarded American Airlines Flight 11, which crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center, spent as much or more time with some of those who hijacked United Airlines Flight 175, which crashed into the South Tower, and United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania.

Figure 2. Number of days shared by each pair of al-Qaeda operatives in the same location. The size of squares indicates length of time spent together in the same city by each pair of hijackers. Colored boxes indicate co-membership within cells. Source: Authors.

Space Can Inform Social Structure

The hijackers' pre-9/11 travel patterns reveal that the itineraries and destinations of the al-Qaeda operatives more closely matched their organizational structure than did co-presence. To demonstrate this, we represented each hijacker as a node in a network connecting different places in the United States and abroad. Hijackers

who moved numerous times between the same cities are connected.

We then compared this spatial network with a reconstruction of the hijackers' [social network](#) based on who they trained with, lived with, or had other known contact with before the attacks. As shown in Figure 3, the similarity between the two networks is striking:

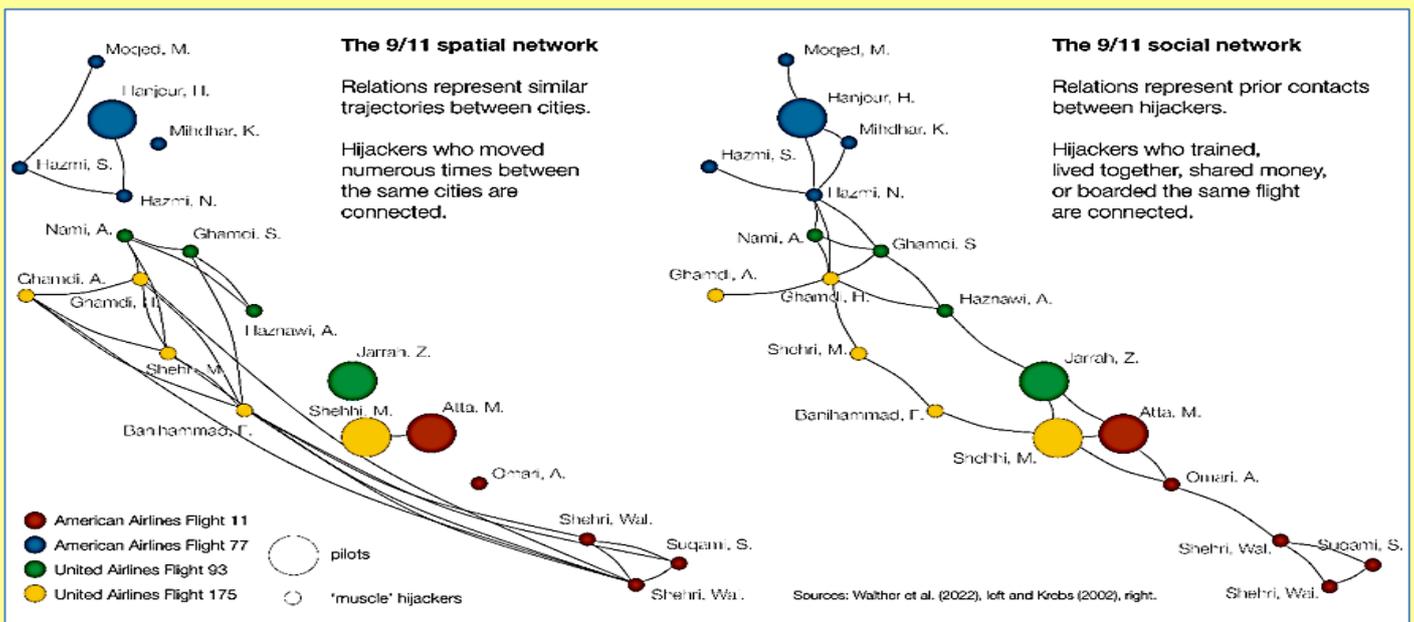


Figure 3. Comparing the 9/11 spatial and social networks. The spatial network (left) connects individuals depending on the similarity of their trajectories between cities. Similar trajectories are weighted more in the network. The social network (right) connects individuals based on their prior contacts. Pilots are represented with large nodes, "muscle" hijackers with small nodes. Source: Authors.



The spatial structure of the network based on similar trajectories mimics how hijackers were socially connected. In other words, the destinations of their travel are a rather good match for what we now know about the cell structure of the network.

The co-destination of cell members, or their traveling to the same places at different times, was both inevitable given the task and more revealing after the fact. This spatial aspect of the hijacker network was a function of the way in which they were socially organized as four discrete cells with identical tasks to be carried out simultaneously at separate locations. Because of this parallel structure, for example, pilots had to travel to certain flight schools to finish up their training, while “muscle” hijackers, who arrived in the United States less than five months prior to the attacks, needed to be moved to rented apartments to settle rapidly in the country. This spatial organization also allowed the 19 hijackers to hide in plain sight while simultaneously being very mobile. Some of the early travel patterns of the network were successfully detected by intelligence agencies, such as those of Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi in Southeast Asia in 2000. However, the intensity and complexity of the domestic patterns followed by the four al-Qaeda cells became apparent only after the attacks, when intelligence about their prior contacts and locations was finally pieced together.

Spatializing Social Networks

Mapping how terrorists travel from place to place provides a much more comprehensive picture of their social organization than simply monitoring their location. The scale and sophistication of the 9/11 attacks did not require the routine co-presence of cell members, but within-cell travel patterns were detectably similar. In other words, hijackers tended to follow the same itineraries across the United States and the world, without necessarily always visiting the same destinations at the same time.

Thanks to recent developments in network and spatial science, the structure, geography, and temporal evolution of terrorist networks can now be modeled with a level of complexity that would have been unimaginable 21 years ago. Geolocalized data, for example, can be extracted from social media to monitor the spatial diffusion of violent events and identify the social structure of the most active accounts, as during the 2012 [attack](#) on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya.

In years to come, the growing availability of geospatial data and the use of artificial intelligence should make it increasingly easier to detect patterns in terrorist activities. “Knowledge discovery” techniques, for example, are already being developed for the [intelligence](#) and [law enforcement community](#) to predict the outcome of a specific event, identify hotspots where violence could be concentrated, understand connections between the actors involved, and more generally “make sense” of large-scale data in real time.

One thing hasn’t changed, though. While new technologies have facilitated the exchange of easily codified information, such as dates and names, space continues to exert a considerable constraint on connectivity. Then as now, the preparation of terrorist attacks still requires close linkages that can happen only in certain places at a certain time, if only briefly. Similarities in travel patterns, such as those observed in the 9/11 network, should remain difficult, if not impossible, for international terrorist organizations to hide.

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Paris 2024 takes opening ceremonies to the streets in Games for the people

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/sep/06/paris-2024-olympics-paralympics-for-the-people-president-tony-estanguet>

Sept 2021 – On Sunday night, during the Paralympic handover ceremony, Tony Estanguet could be seen bounding on to a stage in Paris in a black polo shirt and stonewash jeans. Full of energy and boasting a big smile, like a radio DJ or Club 18-30 rep, he geed up a maskless crowd to get ready for the biggest experience of their lives: the Games were coming to France.



Estanguet is the president of the Paris 2024 organising committee; his enthusiasm is understandable and the crowd around him a deliberate choice. At this point in the cycle possibility is limitless. It is when the next Olympic and Paralympic host can conceive of itself as the ultimate expression of those original values of ‘excellence, friendship and respect’. Reality begins to intrude later.

A former C1 slalom canoeist, Estanguet is the only French athlete to have won a gold medal at three [Olympic Games](#). He is 43 but looks younger, which is probably helpful given the



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amount of stress he is about to endure. His job in the next two years is to create two sets of games – one that has to deal with Covid, one that does not – but he has other issues to contend with too, the first of which is legacy.

Estanguet has spent a lot of time studying London 2012 and he came to the conclusion Paris would do things differently, that the ambition to ‘inspire a generation’ into greater physical activity in the UK had not worked. “We have had many many meetings with London executives,” he says. “I met with Seb Coe several times over the last years and we met in Tokyo this summer.

“It’s not because you organise the games that there is an impact in the country. I think the difference is we have started earlier with [the legacy] programme. We have invested more means and more resources in this objective.”

Paris 2024 has two initiatives underway that seek to engage with the general public. The first is a



school-based programme, with an Olympic and Paralympic week taking place once a year. Estanguet says 1m schoolchildren have been reached by this programme. Then there is the Terre de Jeux, a devolved, community-based programme.

[Tony Estanguet, the president of the Paris organising committee for the 2024 Olympic Games, has plans to engage the wider public.](#)
Photograph: Ian Langsdon/EPA

Communities have access to resources and activities such as the current ‘Ping tour’, which is show-casing the elite table tennis programme around the country. But one thing they do not get is funding as the 2024 Games are to be paid for almost entirely by private

sponsors. “For the first time it’s not just the cities where competitions will be held that can be part of the [Olympic and] Paralympic Games, it’s all the cities in France,” Estanguet says. “We started two years ago [and] we already have more than 2,000 cities with this label ‘Terre de Jeux’.”

Public engagement is the animating vision, hence the crowds in Paris on handover day. The slogan for their successful bid was “Paris 2024: made for sharing”. The logo for the Games, which has not been immune to internet mockery, tries to capture this idea by being a version of the Olympic flame and the face of a young woman with a short bob haircut.

Among the ideas developed to help aid engagement, Estanguet plans to make Paris 2024 the first Games to have a common standard that ensures accessibility to venues and events for people with disabilities. He also has two key ideas for the competition. The first is to take the opening ceremonies out of the Stade de France, the major venue, and on to the streets. The second is to open up some of the events so that, while participation is not directly shared between international athletes and the public, it comes close. “The idea is to move to the people,” Estanguet says. “We will transform the city of Paris into a big Olympic and Paralympic park. We don’t want them to come to the stadium, we want to transform their city into a sporting atmosphere. We have the idea of the marathon open to the participation of the public. On the same day on the same road it will be open to thousands of people. The athletes will start at 9 and the public at 10. We will also do the same for the road cycling event.”

Moving the opening ceremony out of the stadium will “change the scale, having potentially hundreds of thousands of people participating in this symbolic moment”.

That is presuming people can attend Games. Estanguet says Paris has undertaken a review that has found €350m (£300m) of savings from a budget of €3.9bn to create a Covid contingency fund. But even tougher decisions may have to be made.

“In our timeline we open ticket sales in the middle of 2023,” Estanguet says. “I don’t feel comfortable with announcing a ticketing programme and then [rolling] back afterwards. We



will look at the situation again at the end of 2022. If we are still in the same uncertainty, then we will have to start to find different options." Sign up to The Recap, our weekly email of editors' picks.

Tokyo has shown it is possible to stage the Games in a pandemic, though that is not necessarily a lesson anyone wanted to learn. "Merci, thank you to Tokyo 2020 to have been able to adapt, to find solutions, even if it's not ideal," Estanguet says. "We were able to watch the Games, we allowed the athletes to realise their dreams and, with that, put Covid a little bit to the side for a few weeks. "Tokyo has been good learning for us in case we have to do the same. But I really hope it won't have to be the case."

Coe pushing for Paris Olympic city events, confident of security

Source: <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220909-coe-pushing-for-paris-olympic-city-events-confident-of-security>



Sep 09 – Track and field supremo Sebastian Coe is pushing organisers of the 2024 Olympics to include live events in downtown Paris in a bid to "democratise" sport, playing down any security fears over their hosting.

Before taking over as president of World Athletics, Coe headed up the organising committee for the London Olympics in 2012, widely regarded as one of the most successful in recent times.

Athletics is touted as the premier sport of the Olympics and Coe is keen for certain events to be moved out of the Stade de France, north of Paris, into street locations to increase exposure.

"I would like to," Coe told AFP in an interview in Zurich, host of the Diamond League finals.

"And I know the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are keen and I have had these discussions with Tony (Estanguet) and Etienne (Thobois) (head and CEO of the Paris 2024 organising committee respectively).

Advertising

"I think it's worth it. I know they pose challenges, there are security costs, but actually, it's very much in keeping with the vision the IOC has for expanding the footprint for sport."

The concept of city events is not new, with the Diamond League regularly organising competitions

downtown, while the shot put in the 2004 Athens Olympics was held in Olympia.

The Zurich finals relocated six of the 32 disciplines to a central city location and the athletes involved loved it.

Shot put winner Joe Kovacs said it had been "really fun", with thousands of spectators not only sat in traditional tribunes, but also able to move around between events.

"Every street competition we try to put on a show, make the crowd happy," the American said.

"Maybe cheers and beers is a good idea. We really love to be part of that and we are thankful for that."

Kovacs' teammate Sandi Morris added: "As a pole vaulter I love it, I love street events, high five the fans."

Maximum exposure

Coe said that having been part of the team that organised the 2012 Olympic Games, "you are forever trying to figure out how you can get as many people to watch sport as possible".

"If your ambition is to use it as a vehicle to get more young people challenged to join judo clubs, tennis clubs, athletics clubs, then you need to give them as much exposure to that as possible.

"We have to do more to try to democratise sport. It can't just be about a handful of people, relatively, that can afford tickets or get lucky in a ballot. We need to broaden that base."

Coe, who won two 1500m Olympic gold medals for Britain at the 1980 and 1984 Games, admitted, however, that talks to implement the idea of city events were not quite where he wanted them.

"I'll be open with you. It's not as advanced as I would hope," he said.

"I know the opening ceremony in Paris is very much about engaging... there was a plan to have something like 600,000 people in the opening ceremony.

"Moving what you possibly can sensibly and with, obviously, all the security structures you need to adhere to from a venue into something that allows particularly young people to see it has to be worth doing."

Coe was quick to play down fears over security at the Stade de France, where May's Champions League football final between Liverpool and Real Madrid descended into chaos amid crowd control issues.



"It's a very different mentality," Coe said. "I'm not making judgments about football grounds or security.

"I'm not saying that this has anything to do with the fans. I'm just saying that football poses challenges that other sports don't."

Coe said that his experience organising London 2012 showed security was "incremental, sequential", a process that starts years in advance of the actual Games.

"I'm sure the right people and the right authorities will have looked carefully at what happened that night in the stadium," he said.

"But I'm very confident that at an Olympic Games, it'll work well. "You don't want people coming to Paris thinking they're in lockdown."

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Tony Estanguet and Sebastian Coe better stick to what they know best which is canoeing and running respectively. In the August 2022 issue, there is a preview of a paper under publication (I. Galatas and J. Marx) strongly opposing – from a CBRN perspective – the opening ceremony in the River Seine. Now, we read about transforming the entire Paris into a sports arena with the excuse of "promoting" sports to young people. Perhaps in another country, this might be a good idea but not in France with a heavy history of terrorist incidents. Somebody has to say a big NO to crazy ideas that are projected as innovative and futuristic and take people's lives seriously. The chance of a terrorism incident during the Olympic Games might be one in a billion but what if this "one" chance happens during the 2024 Olympiad? Would an apology be enough when the tradition of seppuku is not applicable in our societies?

Indonesia Deradicalizes Bali Bombing Jihadists

Source: <https://jamestown.org/program/briefs-372/>

Sep 09 – In what appears to be a major paradox for a longtime jihadist ideologue who once condemned the Indonesian Constitution and demanded its replacement by the Quran, on August 17, **Abubakar Baasyir** participated in Indonesia's Independence Day ceremony (jakartaglobe.id, August 17). The ceremony took place at the Baasyir-founded Al-Mukmin Boarding School in central Java, which at one time had the reputation as being the "university of terror" because of all the alumni who went on to join terrorist organizations like Jemaa Islamiya (JI) (news.com.au, June 14, 2017).

However, in recent years Al-Mukmin has experienced great change, with the school publicly embracing the legitimacy of the Indonesian state. This is reflective of the apparent success of the Indonesian deradicalization campaign, which has seen former terrorists, including Al-Mukmin alumni, abandon terrorism after consistent engagement with moderate Indonesian Islamic scholars as well as financial, psychological, and professional assistance from the state (jakartapost.com, January 13; Terrorism Monitor, March 25).

Baasyir himself may represent successful deradicalization programming, despite the fact this would have been nearly impossible a decade ago. After Baasyir was granted clemency and released from prison early (on terrorism charges of establishing a jihadist training camp in Aceh in January 2021), he condemned violence and even denied any foreknowledge of JI's Bali bombings in 2002, which killed more than 200 people (benarnews.org, February 18, 2021). Whether his statement is true or not, the fact that Baasyir would say this beside Indonesian counter-terrorism officials indicated he now accepted not only the Indonesian state, but also counter-terrorism operations against his former organization JI.

In contrast, at the 2011 trial that resulted in Baasyir's imprisonment, he proclaimed that he was a jihadist who is "defending Islam and Muslim people from the despotism of the pharaohs from America, Australia and their allies," with an emphasis on Indonesian counter-terrorism officials being such "allies" (smh.com.au, February 23, 2011). Although he was sentenced to serve a prison sentence until 2026, his age at 83-years old and poor health were cited as reasons for his early release (tribunnews.com, January 8, 2021). Australians, whose compatriots were among the most victimized in the 2002 Bali bombings, vociferously opposed Baasyir's release from prison, but Indonesia went ahead with the move so long as Baasyir disavowed violence and terrorism (indonesiaexpat.id, January 9, 2021).

Besides the Baasyir case, the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights has also announced that Umar Patek is scheduled to be paroled (belu.inews.id, September 4). Unlike Baasyir, who denies a role in or knowledge of the 2002 Bali bombings, Patek admits his role, but has apologized for the attack and now claims to have been deradicalized (abc.net.au, August 8). His initial apology to Christians was in 2012 and he evidently has continued on the course of repentance since then (kompas.com, May 5, 2012).

While Indonesia's clemency to former jihadist ideologues like Baasyir and jihadist attackers like Patek is somewhat unique in the Islamic world, the country has also seen decreasing terrorism in recent years. This suggests Indonesia's deradicalization programs, unlike the programs found in other states, may be having a positive effect. If so, Indonesia deserves to



be studied by other states seeking to deal with jihadist prisoners and as well as those currently pursuing deradicalization programs.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Deradicalization is not the issue here. The fact that he is not in jail, is! Same for Umar Patek to be released soon. Unless the Indonesians discovered how to replace certain circuits in jihadists' brains to make them function properly!

COL Cyril Richard Rescorla

Source: <https://militaryhallofhonor.com/honoree-record.php?id=2032>



Cyril Richard "Rick" Rescorla was killed "in action" by terrorists who flew an airliner into the World Trade Center Two building on 11 September 2001. Before he died, Rick's actions allowed all but 13 of Morgan Stanley's 2,700 WTC employees to survive the terrorist attack.

The Early Years

Cyril Richard "Rick" Rescorla was born on 27 May 1939 in Hayle, a seaport on the north coast of Cornwall, Britain. In 1943, his home town of Hayle served as headquarters for the 175th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. 29th Infantry Division, largely composed of American soldiers from Maryland and Virginia. Young Rescorla idolized the American soldiers, and wanted to become a soldier someday because of them. He was the only child of a single mom but didn't know it; he thought he had a 'regular' working-class family. He later learned that his "parents" were actually his grandparents and that his "sister" and "brother" were really his mother and uncle.

Even after learning the truth, he continued to call his mother "Sis" until the day he died. (He never met his father.) Rescorla was a sports natural; he set a school record in the shot put and was an avid boxer. When a professional boxing match was scheduled between a British boxer and an American heavyweight contender named Tami Mauriello, his friends backed the Englishman. Rescorla stated, "I'm for Tammy," and after Mauriello won the fight, everyone in Hayle began calling Rescorla "Tammy." According to his friend, Mervyn Sullivan, he was also a talented and highly competitive rugby player. Sullivan has a scar on his forehead where Tammy kicked him 50 years ago while chasing a ball - and Tammy was on his team!

British Military Service

Rescorla enlisted in the British Army in 1957 and because he hated his given name "Cyril," he began using the name "Rick." He trained as a paratrooper with the Parachute Regiment and then served with an intelligence unit in war-torn Cyprus during the Cypriot insurgency. He then served as a paramilitary police inspector in the Northern Rhodesia Police (*now the Zambia Police Service*).

After returning to civilian life in London, he joined the Metropolitan Police Service and became a detective at Scotland Yard. However, he soon became bored with the job and paperwork and moved to the U.S. where he lived at a YMCA in Brooklyn until he was able to enlist in the Army.

U.S. Military Service

Rick enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1963 and underwent basic training at Fort Dix, NJ. While in basic training he met Dan Hill, who would become his best friend. Rick and Dan were the only two recruits in basic with combat experience; the situation was the same when they attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, GA (they also took Airborne training). After graduating from OCS and being commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in April 1965, Rescorla was assigned as a platoon leader in Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). Like many other units, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment was sent to Vietnam in the fall of 1965; a time when the Vietnam War was beginning to seriously escalate.

Vietnam and the Battle of Ia Drang

In a remote part of the Central Highlands lay the hills of the Ia Drang Valley, an area so named because of the Drang River which runs through the valley northwest of Plei Me ("*la*" means "river" in the local Montagnard language). On 14 November 1965, elements of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 7th Cavalry Regiment and the 5th Cavalry Regiment began being



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dropped into the Valley. The first night, American troops were encircled at a landing zone they called X-Ray, and one company was virtually wiped out in a hellish firefight.

The next day, Rescorla's company was ordered to replace it on the perimeter at the foot of the Chu Pong mountain ridge. In a later letter to Moore and Galloway, Rescorla recalled that when he arrived - after a U.S. fighter jet had mistakenly dropped napalm on his men - he found corpses scattered everywhere from the night before, including an American with his hands still clenched around a North Vietnamese soldier's throat. *"Are your men up for this? Do you feel they can hold?"* asked Myron Diduryk, his commander. *"If they break through us, sir, you'll be the first to know,"* Rescorla replied.

Rescorla risked sniper fire that night to study the terrain from the enemy viewpoint. He ordered his men to dig new foxholes 50 yards back, lay booby traps, reposition their machine guns and artillery. After midnight, he sang a slow Cornish mining tune: "Going Up Cambourne Hill Coming Down." Lund remembers Rescorla stopping by his foxhole to reset his bayonet and critique his fields of fire, joking as if they were preparing to play paintball. *"What a command presence,"* recalls Lund, *"We all thought we were going to die that night, and Rescorla gave us our courage back. I figured, if he's walking around singing, the least I can do is stop trembling."* He was indeed a very rare Second Lieutenant.

The next morning, Bravo Company beat back four assaults, cutting down about 200 enemy soldiers while sustaining only a few injuries. *"A quietness settled over the field,"* Rescorla wrote later. *"We put more rounds into clumps of bodies nearest our holes, making sure. Forty yards away a young North Vietnamese soldier popped up from behind a tree. He started his limping run back the way he had come. I fired two rounds. He crumpled. I chewed the line out for failure to fire quickly."*

Although it sounds callous, Rescorla had a vicious job to do. Minutes later, he saved several of his men by dropping a grenade on an enemy machine-gunner. When his company was airlifted back to base, Rescorla still had the gunner's brain matter on his fatigues. *"The stench of the dead would stay with me for years after the battle,"* he wrote. *"Below us the pockmarked earth was dotted with enemy dead. A grenadier next to me threw up on my lap. He was, like many, a man who had fought bravely even though he had no stomach for the bloodletting."*

The next day, while Bravo Company rested, the rest of 2nd Battalion marched into a vicious ambush near a landing zone called Albany. Bravo was sent back to the rescue. *"You know the battalion is in the [expletive],"* Rescorla told his men. *"We've been selected to jump into that [expletive] and pull them out."* Once again, Rescorla sprinted into a ragged perimeter -- after a bone-rattling 10-foot jump from a Huey under fire -- and immediately lifted the spirits of weary soldiers who thought they were done. *"My God, it was like Little Big Horn,"* recalls Pat Payne, a reconnaissance platoon leader. *"We were all cowering in the bottom of our foxholes, expecting to get overrun. Rescorla gave us courage to face the coming dawn. He looked me in the eye and said, 'When the sun comes up, we're gonna kick some ass.'"*

Rescorla was right, 2nd Battalion fought its way out of Albany. Rescorla left the field with a morale-boosting trophy of war: a battered French Army bugle that the North Vietnamese had once used to signal troops. It became a talisman for his entire division.

The Battle of Ia Drang took place during 14-18 November and it was the first major battle between the U.S. Army and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). The area in which the battle took place would become known as the Valley of Death. A total of 305 Americans died in the Battle of Ia Drang, more than in the entire Persian Gulf War. The NVA death toll was 3,561. But the worst news of all was that the leaders on each side decided after the battle that they would be able to outlast the other side in a war of attrition.

The bloody battle was described in the book and movie *We Were Soldiers Once... And Young*, co-authored by Lieutenant General Hal Moore, U.S. Army (Ret) and war correspondent Joseph Galloway. Rick Rescorla is the gaunt, unshaven soldier pictured on the book's jacket cover carrying his M-16 rifle with bayonet fixed. Lieutenant General Moore described him as *"the best platoon leader I ever saw."* *"What a unique man."* Rescorla's men nicknamed him "Hard Core" for his bravery in battle, and revered him for his good humor and compassion towards his men.

Rick is also mentioned in the book *Baptism* by Larry Gwin, who also fought at Ia Drang. The fourteenth chapter of that book is called *Rescorla's Game* and describes him as the "Cornish Hawk." Gwin described him as a charming raconteur with a *"crazed irreverent twinkle"* at play, but also a ruthless killer with a *"cold steely glint that could sear through you like the icy stare of death"* in the bush.

The survivors of the 7th Cavalry still tell awestruck stories about Rescorla. Like the time he stumbled into a hooch full of enemy soldiers on a reconnaissance patrol in Bon Song. *"Oh, pardon me,"* he said, before firing a few rounds and racing away. *"Oh, comma, pardon me,"* repeats Dennis Deal, who followed Rescorla that day in April 1966. *"Like he had walked into a ladies' tea party!"*

Another story involves the time a deranged private pulled a .45-caliber pistol on an officer while Rescorla was nearby, sharpening his Bowie knife. *"Rick just walked right between them and said: Put. Down. The. Gun."* recalls Bill Lund, who served with Rescorla in Vietnam. *"And the guy did. Then Rick went back to sharpening his knife. He was flat out the bravest man any of us ever knew."*



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Larry Froelich, an OCS classmate, remembers *"Most of us were in awe of Rick. It came as no surprise when the stories began to trickle back from Vietnam about his exploits in the field."*

Rescorla served one tour in Vietnam. He hated the way the Washington politicians were running things; their kill ratios, no-fire zones, and half-baked commitment to victory. He believed they were underestimating the enemy's resolve by mistaking fervent nationalism for Soviet-style communism, and that they were piling up body bags in a losing cause. He liked to say the higher-ups *"saw things through the rosy red hue."* *"When I heard that Rick had quit the war, I felt in my heart that this was the wrong war for us,"* Froelich recalls. *"I never thought he'd walk away from a noble pursuit."*

Medals, Awards and Badges

Silver Star Medal	Army Commendation Medal	Presidential Unit Citation
Bronze Star Medal with "Valor" Device	Army Reserve Components	Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation Medal
Bronze Star Medal (Merit)	Achievement Medal	Vietnam Civil Actions Medal
Purple Heart	National Defense Service Medal	Combat Infantryman Badge
Meritorious Service Medal	Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Bronze Stars	Parachutist Badge
Air Medal	Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Silver Hour Glass	British Parachutist Badge
	Vietnam Campaign Medal	

Post-War Military Service

Rick finished his Army tour back at Fort Benning, and received his U.S. citizenship there.

He later trained officers for the Oklahoma National Guard and took another job training security guards in hand-to-hand combat. But although he remained in the Army Reserve for years, the pure-macho stage of his life was over.

Rick retired from the Army as a Colonel.

Vietnam was always in the background. He told his daughter, Kim, that he wasn't the same man who used to kill 20 people before breakfast. He felt uneasy at reunions, complaining in an e-mail to Shucart about *their "strange mixture of sentimentality, camaraderie, hucksterism and revisionist history."* He once wrote that men who died in Vietnam were *"as valid as any American hero in any war this country has ever fought,"* and he often visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. But he could not relate to veterans who still greeted him with *"Welcome home, brother,"* and who never got over their bitter homecomings.

Civilian Life

In 1968, Rick began his studies in literature at the University of Oklahoma on the GI Bill. He hung around bookstores and coffee shops. He read up on American Indians and the Wild West and studied creative writing. He earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Literature and then began law school. *"I'm sure everyone's talking about Rick the Celtic warrior, Rick the hero, but he also had a deep intelligence,"* says Fred McBee, a fellow student who later became a philosophy professor. *"He'd lay Shakespeare on you. He'd quote Proust."*

In 1972, Rick became a Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina. However, academia was not his calling. *"Can you imagine Rescorla sitting around with a damn pipe in his mouth?"* Dan Hill asks. The money wasn't great, either. So Rescorla shifted into corporate security, first at the Bank Administration Institute, then at a Chicago bank.

In 1985, Rick moved to New Jersey to be Director of Security for the Wall Street brokerage firm Dean Witter, which later merged with the investment bank Morgan Stanley. He brought a military regimen to the job, frequently calling his guards at night to make sure they were at their posts, and constantly analyzing new security threats.

World Trade Center Risk Assessment

During the Gulf War, Hill says, Rescorla concluded that the main threat at the World Trade Center was a truck-bomb attack on the pillars of the basement parking garage. *"We walked the garage together, and that was obviously the soft spot,"* says Hill, who had been hired by Rescorla as a consultant. *"He warned Port Authority, but they said it was none of his business."*

In 1993, a terrorist truck bomb in that very garage created pandemonium. Although legend has it that Rick dropped his pants to get the crowd's attention, that Rescorla story isn't quite true. He only jumped on a desk in the middle of the firm *and threatened to drop his pants if*



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his people didn't chill out and listen. In the stunned silence that followed, he launched an orderly evacuation, refusing to leave until the entire tower was empty.

Rescorla and Dan Hill reasoned that the World Trade Center was still a target for terrorists and that the next attack could be a plane crashing into one of the towers. Rick expected a cargo plane, possibly loaded with chemical or biological weapons. He recommended to his superiors at Morgan Stanley that the company leave Manhattan. Office space and labor costs were lower in New Jersey, and the firm's employees and equipment would be safer in a proposed four-story building. However, this recommendation was not followed as the company's lease at the World Trade Center did not terminate until 2006. At Rescorla's insistence, all employees, including senior executives, then practiced emergency evacuations every three months - walking down stairways, two abreast.

11 September 2001

Rescorla was supposed to be on vacation that day. His wife Susan's daughter, Alexandra, was getting married the next week in a 10th Century Tuscan castle, and they had planned to go abroad early. But his deputy, Ihab Dana, wanted to visit Lebanon, so Rescorla delayed his own vacation and covered his shift. *"It should've been me in there,"* Dana says. *"Rick was like a father to me."* Rescorla was also scheduled to attend a lunchtime meeting to discuss the lawsuit Morgan Stanley was filing against the Port Authority about the security lapses that led to the 1993 attack.

At 8:15 a.m., Rick called Susan from his corner office on the 44th floor. *"He told me he loved me. He said he didn't need the movies -- he had me,"* she says.

At 8:46 a.m., American Airlines Flight 11 struck World Trade Center Tower 1 (WTC 1). Rescorla, following his evacuation plans, ignored building officials' advice to stay put and began the orderly evacuation of Morgan Stanley's 2,700 employees on twenty floors of WTC 2, and 1,000 employees in WTC 5. Rescorla reminded everyone to "...be proud to be an American ...everyone will be talking about you tomorrow," and sang *God Bless America* and other military and Cornish songs over his bullhorn to help evacuees stay calm as they left the building, including an adaptation of the song "Men of Harlech":

*Men of Cornwall stop your dreaming;
Can't you see their spearpoints gleaming?
See their warriors' pennants streaming
To this battlefield.
Men of Cornwall stand ye steady;
It cannot be ever said ye
for the battle were not ready;
Stand and never yield!*

Rescorla had most of Morgan Stanley's 2,700 employees, as well as people working on other floors of WTC 2, safely out of the buildings by the time United Airlines Flight 175 hit WTC 2 at 9:03 a.m. After leading many of his fellow employees to safety, Rescorla returned to the building to rescue others still inside. When one of his colleagues told him that he too, had to evacuate, Rescorla replied, *"As soon as I make sure everyone else is out."* Susan Rescorla watched the United Airlines jet carve through her husband's tower, and she dissolved in tears. After a while, her phone rang. It was Rick.

"I don't want you to cry," he said. *"I have to evacuate my people now."* She kept sobbing. *"If something happens to me, I want you to know that you made my life."* The phone went dead.

According to Stephan Newhouse, Chairman of Morgan Stanley International, Rescorla was seen as high as the 72nd floor evacuating people, clearing the floors and working his way down. He was last seen heading up the stairs of the tenth floor of the collapsing WTC 2. His remains were not recovered.

As a result of Rescorla's actions, all but 13 of Morgan Stanley's 2,700 WTC employees survived. They are: Richard C. Rescorla, Titus Davidson, Wesley Mercer, Jennifer de Jesus, Joseph DiPilato, Nolbert Salomon, Godwin Forde, Steve R. Strauss, Lindsay C. Herkness III, Thomas F. Swift, Albert Joseph, Jorge Velazquez, and Charles Laurencin.



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Personal Life and Health

Rick married Elizabeth, a special-needs teacher, in 1972. She once found his medals hidden in a round tin in their attic. *"He always said: 'The war was part of my life. It's not my life,'"* she says.

In 1994, Rick was diagnosed with prostate cancer and underwent surgery to remove his prostate. Initially, the prognosis was positive, but by 1998 the cancer had spread to his bone marrow.

After his divorce from Elizabeth, Rescorla met Susan Greer in 1998 in the townhouse complex where he lived. Susan was an assistant to a dean at Fairleigh Dickinson University. When Rescorla's cancer went back into remission, he credited Susan, who had introduced him to a specialist in herbal medicine. They married on 20 February 1999 at Castillo de San Marcos, in St. Augustine, FL, because it reminded him of his childhood home on the coast of Cornwall.

Based on the life of COL Cyril Richard Rescorla

Family

Rick left behind a widow, Susan Rescorla, two children, Kim and Trevor; and three stepchildren. His mother died in 2002.

Rescorla's daughter, Kim, was in law school at Seton Hall University in Newark, NJ, on 9/11. She and her brother, Trevor, were living with their mom, Rescorla's first wife, Betsy, in Morristown, NJ, when the attacks occurred.

They were not surprised that he died in the line of duty. Trevor says, *"I knew he would be the last person out, because it was his command. As long as there were people in there, he would try to get them out."*

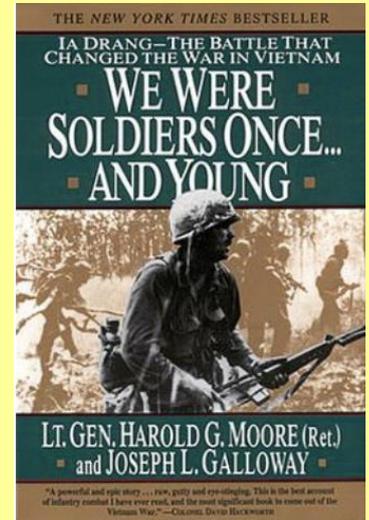
"It was part of who my father was. He stayed to help evacuate the building in 1993 and would not have done anything different that day," Kim says.

This was Rescorla's last e-mail to Kim at law school, dated 10 September:

"Your mission... should you choose to accept it... dream, then scheme... This country will be coming out of its slump about two years from now. It's going to be a time for legal eagles of all kinds to leave their rocky promontories, spread their wings, and do what eagles tend to do..."

Tributes

- A memorial stone was erected in his hometown of Hayle, Cornwall, to commemorate his life.
- The Richard C. Rescorla Memorial Foundation
- A biography of Rescorla, *Heart of a Soldier* by James B. Stewart (ISBN 0-7432-4459-1), was described by Time Magazine as "the best non-fiction book of 2002." The book is the subject of an opera by Christopher Theofanidis, with libretto by Donna DiNovelli; starring Thomas Hampson as Rescorla, and featuring William Burden. It was premiered by San Francisco Opera on 10 September 2011.
- Rescorla was the subject of a 2005 documentary entitled *The Man Who Predicted 9/11*. The film was shown on Channel 4 in the UK and the History Channel in the U.S.
- Rescorla was honored with the White Cross of Cornwall/An Grows Wyn a Gernow award from his native Cornwall in 2003 by the Revived Cornish Stannary Parliament.
- Amanda Ripley's 2008 book, *The Unthinkable: Who survives When Disaster Strikes-and Why*, profiles Rescorla in the "Conclusion" section of the book.
- In 2006, Fort Benning, GA, unveiled a statue of Rick Rescorla.
- On 11 November 2009, Colonel Rescorla was inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame.
- There is a Forward Operating Base in Farah Province, Afghanistan named after him, *FOB Rescorla*.
- Raptor Preserve, a Memorial Site in Morris County, NJ, contains a Memorial Plaque for Richard C. Rescorla. He once told Susan that if she wanted a memorial for him, he'd be okay with a plaque at a nearby bird sanctuary called the Raptors. It'll go on the American eagle cage.
- On 25 March 2009, Rick was awarded the Above & Beyond Citizen Medal - the most prestigious civilian award in America. Every year, on National Medal of Honor Day, three U.S. citizens are awarded the Above & Beyond Citizen Honor. They receive this award from a group of Americans whose actions have defined the word *courage*: the fewer than 100



living members of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. Rick's children, Kim and Trevor, accepted this honor at a ceremony held in the shadow of the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington Cemetery.

The Baby Jihad: 'We're Taking Over Your Country'

By Raymond Ibrahim

Source: <https://www.meforum.org/63564/the-baby-jihad-were-taking-over-your-country>

Sep 22 – A recent [video](#) of Muslims and Danes quarreling in Denmark is revealing in more ways than one — especially for those who are considering the merits of the Great Replacement theory. In the video, one Muslim man can be heard yelling the following words to a Dane:

We have five children, you only have one or two. In 10 to 15 years there will be more Pakistanis than Danes in this country!... The Danes are five million, soon you'll be exterminated [or extinct?]. Look at the Swedes, look at the Norwegians, look at the Finns, man! We are multiples [of] millions, man!

The clamorous Muslim goes on to accuse Europeans of preferring bestiality to marriage, hence their lack of procreation. Soon other Muslims chime in. One says, "I just got married and will also have five children." Others start yelling about how the Danes' "mothers will be pregnant again," because their mothers and sisters are "whores" (who presumably sleep around with the Muslims). Others chant, "This isn't Denmark anymore, this is Paki-land" repeated several times, "We are taking over your country."



What's In a Name?

Several indicators certainly support this last assertion — beginning with what the main Muslim man in the recent video was hollering about: Muslims are certainly outbreeding Europeans. This is evident in the simple fact that, [all throughout Western Europe](#), the name Muhammad is either one of the most popular names given to newborn baby boys, or, in some countries and major cities — the Netherlands, [England](#), [Berlin](#) — *the* most popular name.

This is to say nothing of other Arabic/Muslim names, which are also topping the charts of newborn baby names. Even in the U.S., Muhammad recently made the [list](#) of top 10 baby names. "Arabic names are on the rise this year," the Baby Center explained, "with Muhammad and Aaliyah entering the top 10 and nudging Mason and Layla off."

All this may seem innocuous enough; after all, what's in a name? In reality, however, because more numbers equate more influence and power, many Muslims see their progeny as their contribution to the jihad — the "struggle" to make Islam supreme.

The Muslim Dream Come True

"We have 50 million Muslims in Europe," Muammar Gaddafi exaggerated back in 2006, before more realistically adding, "There are signs that Allah will grant Islam victory in Europe — without swords, without guns, without conquest — will turn it into a Muslim continent within a few decades."

Ongoing reports and polls suggest this long cherished Muslim dream may not be so farfetched.

Thus, in the U.K., "Muslim hate fanatics plan to take over Britain by having more babies and forcing a population explosion," a [report](#) revealed back in 2008: "The swollen Muslim population would be enough to conquer Britain from inside."



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One Pew [report](#) found that one out of every three people on earth is set to be a Muslim by 2070. Another Pew report [says](#) that the Muslim population of Europe could triple by 2050 — just when all those baby Muhammads are coming of age.

In Germany alone, nearly [20 percent](#) of the population could be Muslim by 2050; considering that the average Muslim man is more zealous over his way of and purpose in (Islamic) life than the average German male, 20 percent may well be enough for an Islamic takeover of — or at least mass havoc in — Germany. Yet the [report](#) also finds that even "if all migration into Europe were to immediately and permanently stop" and due to significantly higher Muslim birthrates, Europe's Muslim population will still grow significantly, to about 36 million, almost double the current population.

The Baby Jihad

Incidentally, the baby jihad can be achieved with either Muslim or infidel women. As an example of the latter, a Muslim imam was videotaped [saying](#) that, because European men lack virility, their women seek fertility among Muslim men:

We will give them fertility! We will breed children with them, because we will conquer their countries! Whether you like it or not, you

Germans, Americans, French, and Italians and all those akin to you [Western people]—take in the refugees. For soon we will call them [and their European born sons] in the name of the coming caliphate! And we will say to you, 'These are our sons.'

Similarly, the diary of Patrick Kabele, an African Muslim man who was living and arrested in Britain for trying to join the Islamic State — his primary motive being to purchase a nine-year-old sex slave — had references that only likeminded Muslims would understand: in an effort, as the aforementioned imam said, to use European women as incubators and "breed children with them," Kabele [noted](#) that he had been "seeding some women over here, UK white," adding, "I dont [sic] kiss anymore." (Unlike straightforward mating, kissing is deemed an intimate act, and Muslims, in keeping with the doctrine of *al-wala' w'al-bara*, must never be intimate with, certainly not love, non-Muslims — [even when married to them](#) — though they can have carnal relations with them.)

As discussed [here](#), the same strategy is being used in the Muslim world against Christian minorities. Unlike in the West, however, where women freely give themselves to Muslims, Christian minorities are seized and seeded by Muslim men.

A More Zealous Faith

Even so, Muslim women remain the primary incubators for the jihad — and many of them see it as their obligation. A Christian Eritrean volunteer and translator who worked in migrant centers in Germany and was often assumed to be Muslim by the migrants, [confessed](#) last year that "Muslim migrants often confide in her and tell her about their dislike towards Christians," and that "a number of the Muslim migrants she has spoken to have revealed a hatred for Christians and are determined to destroy the religion." How they plan on doing this is telling: "Some women told me, 'We will multiply our numbers. We must have more children than the Christians because it's the only way we can destroy them here.'"

Not that many Western Europeans seem to care; some are even glad to see their own kind die off and be replaced by Muslims — such as Dr. Stefanie von Berg, who [exulted](#) before the German parliament: "Mrs. President, ladies and gentlemen. Our society will change. Our city will change radically. I hold that in 20, 30 years there will no longer be a [German] majority in our city. And I want to make it very clear, especially towards those right wingers: *This is a good thing!*"

From here one understands the true root of the immediate problem — and, as usual, it is not so much Muslims as it is perverse elements dispersed throughout the West. Having turned its back on its founding faith, a moribund culture — typified by nihilism, hedonism, cynicism, and, as such, dropping birth rates — simply has little worth living for and gives way to a more zealous one.

Surely those many historic [Defenders of the West](#) who bled rivers over the course of many centuries to keep invading Islam out of the West are turning in their grave.

[Raymond Ibrahim](#) is the Judith Friedman Rosen Fellow at the Middle East Forum.



A modern prophet



ويقول الدكتور عبد الله النفسي - حفظه الله - في أحد لقاءاته المبررة: أننا نعتقد أن
التظيم العربية اليوم هزوات في يد الأمريكان؛ هذه ليست نظم، هذه امتدادات
للأمريكان في المنطقة، ثم يقول: لو جربنا الفسوة الأمريكي بقوة أعظم سوف
تسقط كثير من هذه النظم.

فعلينا الاستمرار في ذلك العدو الأكبر واستهدافه-أمريكا وحلفائها- وإن ضل اسم
المركبة، فببدا هو السيل الوحيد لتحقيق النصر، وتفكيك المشروع، "والله قريب على
أمره ولكن أكثر الناس لا يؤمنون" يوسف/21.

كتبه: أبو محمد المصري

ذو القعدة / 1440.

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11..... بداية الواجبة المباشرة ضد المخططات الأمريكية
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15..... الانتقال للسودان وتطور الفكرة
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Al Qaeda releases book detailing 9/11 planning on anniversary of terror attacks: Report

Source: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/al-qaeda-releases-book-detailing-planning-of-terror-attacks>

Sep 12 – Al Qaeda leaders reportedly released a book over the weekend detailing the timeline leading up to the 9/11 terror attacks, coinciding with the 21st anniversary of the attacks that left almost 3,000 people dead in three locations. The book was written by one of the group's senior leaders, Abu Muhammad al Masri, who was killed in Iran in 2020, according to the News Agency of Nigeria. The book details the timeline of the attack, noting that al Qaeda began planning attacks on the United States in 1996 with the intention to drag the U.S. military into a long-term war, the outlet reported. An Egyptian pilot initially suggested flying a civilian plane into "an important and symbolic American building" while carrying thousands of gallons of flammable materials, according to the book. Group members were then chosen in 1998 to enlist in further combat training and enroll in aviation schools, the outlet reported. On Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked three U.S. planes and crashed two into the Twin Towers in New York City and another into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. A fourth plane was also hijacked, but passengers were able to overcome the pilots and crash the plane in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. It's believed the plane was either headed toward the Capitol or the White House.

'World in grave danger from ISIS, Al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan': Report

Source: <https://www.eastcoastdaily.in/2022/09/17/world-in-grave-danger-from-isis-al-qaeda-network-in-afghanistan-report.html>

Sep 17 – According to local media, John Bolton, a former adviser to the US National Security Council, warned in an interview with Voice of America that the area and the rest of the globe are in grave danger due to the rapid rise of ISIS and the Al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan. According to Khaama Press, Bolton stated during the VOA interview that the increasing number of foreign terrorists entering Afghanistan should worry everyone in the world and added that ISIS and al-Qaeda terrorist groups are reorganising there. The former diplomat also criticised the Taliban for its connections to global terrorist organisations. He emphasised how the Taliban has disregarded the requirements of the Doha Agreement to combat terrorism ever since seizing control of Kabul in August of last year. ' Once again, the Taliban have shown that their statements aren't worth the paper they're printed on. Not just in Afghanistan, but throughout the world, they have posed a threat ', Bolton stated in the interview with VOA.

In light of the US drone operation that killed al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, the former top official said that the Taliban had failed to uphold its obligations under the Doha Agreement, particularly given Zawahiri's continued presence in Afghanistan, according to Khaama Press. The Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS-K) has been able to extend its territory to almost all of Afghanistan's provinces in the months since the Taliban assumed power at the federal level. According to the Washington Post, the U.N. mission in Afghanistan made this statement in November.

ISIS-K has also accelerated the pace of its attacks, carrying out ambushes, killings, and suicide bombers. In 2015, ISIS-K first set up shop in Afghanistan. Hafiz Saeed Khan, a citizen of Pakistan, who had sworn allegiance to the Islamic State's commander at the time, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in 2014, launched it. It attracted some recruits from the Taliban and other extremist organisations, but its original membership was primarily made up of Pakistani terrorists and was centred primarily in the eastern Afghan province of Nangahar.

An extreme Sunni Muslim movement known as Salafism is practised by the Islamic State. ISIS-K has frequently attacked the Hazara minority group of Shiites in Afghanistan. Sanaullah Ghafari, also known as Shahab al-Muhajir, is the leader of ISIS-K and is thought to be in eastern Afghanistan, according to the UN.



Al-Qaeda, an adversary of the Islamic State, and the Taliban have always had strong links. Although Taliban leaders agreed to prevent Afghanistan from serving as a safe haven for terrorist organisations in a 2020 agreement with the US, The Washington Post reported that the death of Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in a US drone strike in Kabul last month seemed to indicate ongoing ties between the groups.

The United Nations assessed that ISIS-K had between 1,500 and 2,200 fighters in Konar and Nangahar provinces before the Taliban took control, in addition to smaller cells in other regions of the nation. Leaders of the Islamic State criticised the Taliban's win last year, believing it to be insufficiently severe. According to the UN monitoring team, ISIS-K received new funding of USD 5,00,000 from the core Islamic State group around the end of last year. In the fall, a Taliban intelligence official admitted that several Islamic State captives were freed as a result of his group's struggle to topple the US-backed Afghan government.

ISIS spokesman Abu Umar al-Muhajir calls on Muslims around the world to join the organization's ranks and criticizes other Islamist organizations

Source: <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/isis-spokesman-abu-umar-al-muhajir-calls-on-muslims-around-the-world-to-join-the-organizations-ranks-and-criticizes-other-islamist-organizations/>

On September 13, 2022, ISIS's Al-Furqan Media Foundation released an audiotape by ISIS spokesman Abu Umar al-Muhajir entitled "Hold firmly to the rope of Allah and do not be divided."^[1] In the audiotape, the spokesman calls on ISIS operatives to liberate ISIS prisoners from prisons around the world. He also calls on Muslims around the world – especially in Syria, Iraq, Africa, Yemen, and East Asia – and non-Muslims to join the ranks of ISIS (Telegram, September 13, 2022).

The spokesman harshly criticizes the Sunni rebel organizations in Syria, Al-Qaeda, and the Taliban. He also criticizes the Sinai tribes for collaborating with the Egyptian army, claiming that they serve Israel, and calling on them to change their ways before it is too late. Abu Umar al-Muhajir also criticizes Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), referring to them as converts to Shiite Islam, those who abandoned Islam (*murtaddin*), and liars who do not operate on behalf of Islam, but rather for a narrow interest.

In the ITIC's assessment, the spokesman's call to join ISIS may indicate that the organization suffers from a shortage of operatives, probably stemming from intensive counterterrorism activities against it around the globe. In addition, the audiotape reflects an attempt to leverage the fragile political and economic situation in the world and the division in the West, as perceived by the spokesman, for ISIS's needs.



The Islamic State Is Back — But Its Focus Has Shifted

Source: <https://dailycaller.com/2022/09/18/islamic-state-focus-africa-resurgent/>

Sept 18 – The Islamic State is festering globally as **its base of operations shifts to Africa**, where poor local control offers space for the violent jihadists to regroup and revitalize, according to experts.

Islamic State groups have proliferated throughout the Middle East, central Asia and Africa even after a U.S.-led global coalition [dealt](#) the core group, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a territorial defeat in 2016, experts told the Daily Caller News Foundation. While so far the groups have adopted a locally-focused strategy of survival in some areas and rebuilding in others, the U.S. remains engaged in countering the revitalized terrorist threat.

"ISIS has regrouped ... and it is [organizing](#) for a prolonged insurgency," a recently-declassified intelligence [document](#) stated, forecasting ISIS capabilities through 2021.

The assessment has proven accurate, according to former Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Vandenberg Advisory Board member Christopher Harnisch. "They laid low for a while, have re-grouped, and are now making a resurgence in the region," he told the DCFN.

ISIS has proliferated far beyond its initial hub in Iraq and Syria. Semi-autonomous affiliates have sprung up in Africa, vying with al-Qaida-linked groups for the speed of their territorial acquisition while weak or sympathetic governments struggle to contain the threat, experts told the DCFN.

In Iraq and Syria, ISIS has gone "underground," focused on fundraising and [recruiting](#), according to Bill Roggio, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

"They're looking to step back up ... as soon as the U.S. takes our eye off," Roggio said to the DCFN.



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In late August and early September, U.S. Central Command forces and Syrian allies captured dozens of ISIS operatives in the al-Hol refugee camp in northeast Syria and potentially dissolved a “major ISIS facilitation network,” officials [told](#) The Washington Post. U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) has raided the camp seven times since 2021, each time detaining between 40 and 120 ISIS suspects.

The camp, consisting primarily of women and children who are either relatives of ISIS members or fighters themselves, functions as a hotbed for terrorist recruitment and provides cover for illicit financing operations, the Post reported.

“The next generation of ISIS is growing up there,” Simone Ledeen, former deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East, told the DCF. Failed states like Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, provide the perfect “petri dish” for violent jihadist groups to metastasize, Daniel Hoffman, a former CIA official with operational experience in the Middle East, told the DCF.

The U.S. [withdrawal](#) from Afghanistan, during which the Taliban [liberated](#) hundreds of imprisoned ISIS fighters, [provided](#) a “jolt of momentum” for the jihadi Islamist movement, Harnisch said to the DCF.

The Islamic State routinely [conducts](#) attacks against Taliban targets, [claiming](#) a suicide bombing earlier in September at the Russian mission in Kabul that killed two of Moscow’s diplomats, [according](#) to The Associated Press.

ISKP poses a “moderate to high threat” to the Taliban and Afghan citizens and could grow, CENTCOM Gen. Kenneth McKenzie [told](#) the Senate’s military committee members in a March hearing.

However, Islamic State’s branch in Afghanistan, ISKP, is likely the weakest, mainly because it must [fight off](#) a much larger Taliban that has access to state resources and foreign backing, Roggio explained to the DCF.

ISIS leadership in Africa is much less centralized than al-Qaida’s, leaving the [Africa-based affiliates](#) — the Somali Islamic State; Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the Islamic State in Mozambique (ISM); the Islamic State Sinai Province (ISSP) in Egypt; the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)/Islamic State Sahel Province in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso; and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in Nigeria — to [pursue](#) more local strategies.

The local agenda affords fundraising, field experience and training, said Ledeen. ISIS groups can “achieve moderate goals and live to fight another day — slowly growing stronger and wealthier.”

Africa is “the central focus of terrorism in the world,” Gen. Stephen J. Townsend [said](#) in July before stepping down from his position as head of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) head, adding that the Islamic State has developed financial networks with affiliates across the globe. Engagement in the region looks like sponsoring [military exercises](#) with local forces to train them in [counterterrorism](#) and counterinsurgency tactics, he said.

The Biden administration’s policy of “[integrated deterrence](#)” means it has refocused on “[civilian tools](#)” along with [training](#) and advising local military partners. In Africa, the U.S. conducts an “economy of force” mission prioritizing resource efficiency to achieve objectives, Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Mark Milley [explained](#) in 2020.

“I would say there’s been some progress. There have been some tactical victories,” [said](#) Townsend in July of AFRICOM’s progress in countering terrorism. He reiterated the need for a holistic strategy that addresses the root of violent extremism in “poor governance.”

Through the Global Coalition, the U.S. “relies on the active [partnership](#) of African nations in a civilian-driven effort led by Africans and leveraging international partner resources,” a spokesperson for the State Department’s Bureau of Counterterrorism said to the DCF. Nevertheless, most ISIS groups in Africa continue to strengthen, [according](#) to a recent analysis from the American Enterprise Institute. ISIS has yet to [conduct](#) a known coordinated, top-down attack against the U.S. or Western allies, but that doesn’t mean the U.S. is completely out of reach. Some groups have [kidnapped](#) Americans traveling in areas near their control. U.S. authorities also [arrested](#) an Ohio man with connections to ISIS in May for plotting to assassinate former President George W. Bush.

In the near term — three to five years — “the Islamic State is going to be focused on survival,” Roggio said to the DCF. CENTCOM and AFRICOM did not respond to requests for comment.

Perspectives on Terrorism

Volume XVI | Issue 4 | August 2022

Source: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism/archives/2022#volume-xvi-issue-4>



Universiteit
Leiden

The current issue features three Articles. *The first, The Contagion and Copycat Effect in Transnational Far-right Terrorism: An Analysis of Language Evidence*, by Julia Kupper, Tanya Karoli Christensen, Dakota Wing, Marlon Hurt, Matthew Schumacher and Reid Meloy, shows in great detail how social media provided an eco-system for contagion and the spread of copycat crimes by ten lone actors from the extreme right.

The second article, by Joe Whittaker, *Rethinking Online Radicalization*, argues that the distinction between online and offline no longer makes much sense as “most people are



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either online or in a state of online readiness 24/7.” The third article, *Terrorism Experts’ Predictions Regarding the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Activities of Violent Non-State Actors*, by Yannick Veilleux-Lepage, Tommy van Steen, and Maria-Elena Kisyova present findings based on 142 responses to a questionnaire sent out by the authors.

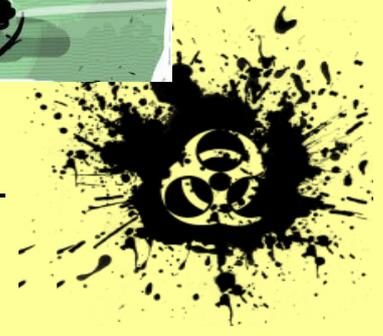
The **Resources** section features, in its CT-Bookshelf, eleven short reviews by our book reviews editor, Joshua Sinai. Our information resources editor, Judith Tinnes, offers in her Resources List for Terrorism Research: Journals, Websites, Bibliographies a unique instrument for researchers in the field of (counter-)terrorism studies. Associate Editor Berto Jongman contributes another of his wide-ranging surveys of recent online resources on terrorism and related subjects.

Resources

- [Counter-Terrorism Bookshelf: 11 Books on Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism-Related Subjects](#)
Reviewed by Joshua Sinai
- [A Resources List for Terrorism Research: Journals, Websites, Bibliographies \(2022 Edition\)](#)
Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes
- [Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects](#)
Compiled and selected by Berto Jongman

In **Announcements**, Olivia Kearney presents her regular “Conference Calendar. There is also a job vacancy announcement, since Olivia has moved to another field of research. 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 and prepared by Alex Schmid and James Forest, 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 August 2022 issue of our journal has been in the hands of our Associate Editor for IT, Audrey J. Vrolijk (ISGA, The Hague).



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CHEM NEWS



Pendar X10

Breakthrough, standoff, Handheld Raman chemical identification for EOD, HAZMAT, Drug Enforcement, Forensics, and more.

Source: <https://www.pendar.com/products/pendar-x10-handheld-raman/>

With a standoff **distance of up to 6 feet**, Pendar X10 is a handheld Raman spectrometer that rapidly identifies hazardous chemicals including highly fluorescent, dark, and sensitive materials.



Pendar X10 saves time, improves measurement reliability, and prevents exposure to dangerous substances while reducing the risk of igniting explosive chemicals. Point and shoot functionality identifies unknown chemicals, even deep inside containers and through translucent containers or windows. Innovative patented technology greatly reduces the explosion risk when identifying dark powder and explosives. **Pendar X10's smart algorithm enables rapid identification of white powders (5 to 10 seconds) and dark and fluorescent materials**



(~30 seconds.) Pendar X10 lets users reach farther, stay safer, and measure faster.

●► [Specifications](#)



ORBRIX CBRN Academy – Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Smaller than a teacup! Cone snail, one of the world's most dangerous species, in Turkish waters: Its touch can kill 30 people

Source: <https://earthpressnews.com/smaller-than-a-teacup-cone-snail-one-of-the-worlds-most-dangerous-species-in-turkish-waters-its-touch-can-kill-30-people/>

June 14 – Cone snail, which has a deadly venom, got caught in a fishing net in Marmaris. The emergence of the Cone snail, which usually lives on the shallow coasts of Australia, in our seas has prompted the authorities. Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Faculty of Fisheries, has started a genetic analysis for the dangerous species, which is seen for the first time in Turkish waters.



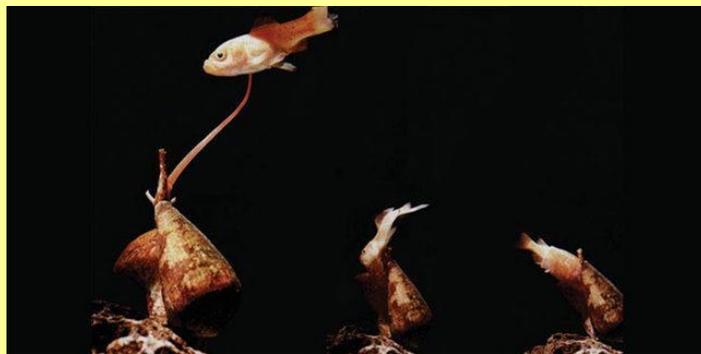
Balloon, lion fish, now cone snail

Sea creatures invading the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts through the Red Sea and oceans continue to multiply day by day. After the balloon and lion fish, which cause the most damage to the life at the bottom of the sea, another sea creature that we are not accustomed to seeing in our waters was seen on the shores of Muğla.

A cone snail of the genus *Conus*, which can kill 30 people with its poison, was caught in a fisherman's net off the coast of Marmaris.

Works started

Speaking to Yeni Asır Newspaper, Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University Fisheries Faculty Fisheries Basic Sciences



Department academic member Assoc. Dr. Nurçin Killi said, "Cone snails are poisonous species. They can poison with their needle-like teeth and venom glands when touched. Small species affect them in the form of bee stings, while tropical ones can be deadly. Studies have been started to carry out investigations."

What is a cone snail?

Cone snails produce a variety of sophisticated chemicals in their bodies and use them sequentially in a hunting strategy. Some cone snails living in the warm waters of Asia and the Pacific Ocean in Australia, Indonesia are highly venomous and deftly use poisonous spears to hunt small fish, worms and mollusks.

Cone Snail Toxicity

By Sasha Kapil, Stephen Hendriksen, and Jeffrey S. Cooper

StatPearls Publishing

Source [full text]: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29262115/>

Feb 2022 – Both experienced and novice scuba divers are drawn to warm, tropical seas, but when traveling to these areas, divers must practice additional cautionary measures to avoid predators specific to these environments. One example is the *Conus* genus, which includes over 500 different species of predatory snails. While humans are not the intended prey for these mollusks, naive divers may inadvertently pick up cones with the intention of keeping them as souvenirs. The handful of humans that are stung by a cone snail is often subject to a venom potent enough to immediately paralyze and eventually kill its prey. The venom from one cone snail has a hypothesized potential of killing up to 700 people.

The *Conus* genus, within the Conidae family, is a group of predatory gastropod mollusks. The spiral shells of the snail are the life-long habitat for the indwelling predator. As the snail continues to grow, it builds upon its patterned shell. All members of the genus appear similar, but many different *Conus* species fall under this umbrella, some of which pose a greater threat to humans than others. Cone snails range in size from a few centimeters up to 29 cm long. These snails sense prey within their environment using an appendage



called a siphon. While some species do have eyestalks, the siphon provides a more sensitive method of locating prey, as well as performing additional respiratory functions. There is variability in the prey each *Conus* species tends to hunt. Some feed on worms (vermivores), others on mollusks (molluscivores), and those most toxic to humans feed on fish (piscivores). Knowing these specific feeding patterns make differentiation of deadly *Conus* species easier; though all cone snails are capable of envenomation. The geographic cone is the most toxic of the known species, and several human deaths have resulted from envenomation. Humans are not typical cone snail prey and envenomation is most likely to occur during handling. Unsurprisingly, envenomation occurs most often on the palms and fingers.

Within piscivorous snails, two primary methods of hunting have been documented: hook and line versus net hunting. The species that utilize the hook and line method use an additional appendage called a proboscis. Within the proboscis is a tooth or harpoon, coated with species-specific venom. This proboscis can extend to all parts of the shell and handling. Only a certain part of the cone does not protect from envenomation. The second method of hunting also involves a venom-covered harpoon, but instead, the snail opens its mouth to catch fish and the harpoon is released within the mouth. Once a harpoon is engaged, it is discarded. At any time, a cone snail has about twenty harpoons in various stages of growth and development.

Office Pursues New Ways to Protect Warfighters from WMD

Source: <https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2022/8/29/office-pursues-new-ways-to-protect-warfighters-from-wmd>



The Joint Biological Agent Decontamination System (JPO CBRN Defense photo)

Aug 29 — The Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense has a lot on its plate. There are currently 93 acquisition programs in the pipeline with \$807 million annually to pay for them all, its leader Darryl J. Colvin said at the National Defense Industrial Association's CBRN Defense Conference and Exhibition held in Baltimore.

"The onus is on us — this enterprise, from the industry on down — to make every dollar count," he said in a keynote speech.

Defending against weapons of mass destruction falls under three distinct sciences: biology, chemistry and nuclear physics. The office is charged with developing vaccines for pathogens, sensors to detect exposures to all three of the categories, protective garments, cures if exposed and decontamination technologies for both personnel and equipment.

"The metric to say how successful we are is: have we denied our adversaries any advantage to using those CBRN weapons?" he said.

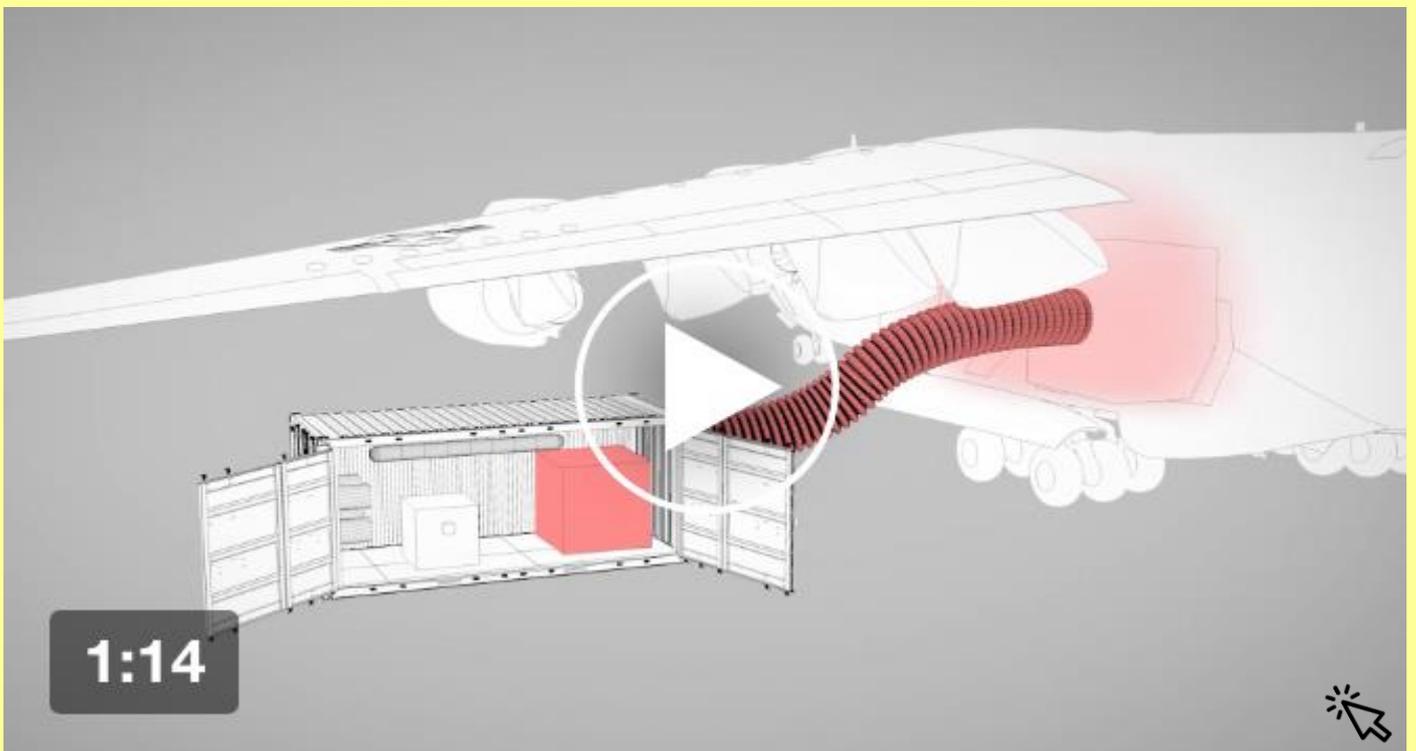




These are data-driven sciences, which is why Colvin sees promise in artificial intelligence to help the JPO solve some of its tough problems. “Our ability to optimize AI solutions is at our fingertips. We just have to get the data,” he said, citing a common problem across the military — accessing the massive amounts of information out there.

As for sensing attacks, the office wants to leverage work the services are doing to connect 5G-enabled networks, he said.

“It means developing network sensors that that can communicate and share information with each other in a very timely manner. And it must be done in such a way that we’re not overwhelming that commander,” he said. In the protection category, the office continues to tackle the age-old size, weight and comfort problem. “We’re trying to shed weight off of the soldier because every battery, every component, every communication device, every CBRN piece of equipment that we provide a warfighter adds weight to what they’re already carrying around,” he said. For the decontamination problem, the office is developing coatings and barriers that can absorb a threat, neutralize it and then “shear it off,” he said.



One recent project that has come to fruition is the **Joint Biological Agent Decontamination System** that deals with extra-large equipment. He described it as a “large Pac-Man” that can



wrap around an aircraft the size of a C-130. It applies heat and humidity to decontaminate the platform and put it back in service. "That's here today," he said.

UK Contaminated Fatalities Management

By Insp. David Lowe

NCT Magazine 6/16 | August 2022

Source: <https://nct-magazine.com/nct-magazine-august-2022/uk-contaminated-fatalities-management>

The dignified recovery of people killed in terrorist attacks is paramount to the ever-lasting legacy placed upon those family and friends of the deceased left behind. Recovery conducted in an intrinsically secure forensic manner will also increase conviction opportunities against those responsible. The needs of next of kin versus forensic management versus legal requirements is a tricky balance to achieve.

Recovery in CBRN environments of those victims who may still be contaminated, combined with the potential forensic and pathological requirements that may ensue, presents additional unique operational challenges.

The UK has always maintained a capability for managing contaminated fatalities and has learnt many lessons over years of response, not least with the recent management of the Salisbury Novichok incidents. The management of fatalities exposed to and contaminated by a highly sophisticated nerve agent presented unprecedented challenges. The means to detect and identify the potential contaminant, PPE options to achieve recovery, forensic and pathology tasks. How to conduct pathology procedures against such a threat all needed rapid and innovative development.

The issue of contaminated facilities

But there are also many cases of industrial hazardous materials accidents, chemical exposures, suicides and other incidents that lead to frequent incidents of contaminated fatalities management. Therefore, there has and will always be a desire to enhance the capability and provide responders who perform this function with the best training and equipment available against all forms of contaminated fatality threat.

Experience has shown that each and every contaminated fatality incident has unique factors meaning that a rigid pre-determined plan will never work on every occasion. What was required was a system that could be adapted and overlaid on every unique incident tailoring the response required according to that specific incidents needs.

In 2011 the UK created a new contaminated fatalities course in a collaboration between UK Disaster Victim Identification (UK DVI), the UK Counter Terrorism Forensic Management Team (UK FMT) and the UK CBRN Centre, drawing on the expertise of each to provide the most up to date and relevant course. The training also benefits from government support and planning from the Home Office, linked with pathology and coronal legal processes, providing an end to end process of victim retrieval, identification and final disposition intrinsically coordinated.

The UK Counter Terrorism (CT) Forensic Management Team, with its excellent reputation in CT scene examination based on years of experience in UK and international deployments, focusing on the high standards of investigation, identification and evidential process required. UK DVI, the national coordination body for DVI response, and the College of Policing which is the national training development body. Organizations that have many decades of UK and international experience to draw on, from deployments for 'conventional' mass fatality incidents.

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

Inspector David Lowe is currently employed as the Training and Development Manager for the UK in Counter Terrorism against Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threat, he leads a multi-agency team and coordinates partner agencies, including specialist



scientific support, to develop training and doctrine against CBRN threat to the UK for all emergency services. He provides assurance to the Office for Security & Counter Terrorism within the Home Office that the UK is in a state of preparedness against identified and emerging threats. In 2016, as programme manager, he launched the Next Generation CBRN PPE projects to replace all front-line CBRN PPE for UK Emergency Services, with the next bespoke ensemble launched for UK Police Counter Terrorism Units in 2020. For the past 4 years, as training and development manager, David reviewed all CBRN training delivered to UK emergency responders and developed joint CBRN command doctrine, including interactive CBRN command applications and commanders' guides for 'use in the field'. Training over 1000 delegates per year, including commanders from all UK emergency services and overseas, his team maintains satisfaction rates for delivery and quality of content of over 95%.

Country Overview: France

By Ms. Nora Ljubojevic

NCT Magazine 10/16 | August 2022

Source [+video](https://nct-magazine.com/nct-magazine-august-2022/country-overview-france): <https://nct-magazine.com/nct-magazine-august-2022/country-overview-france>

France enjoys a privileged position in the international fora, being one of the leading countries of the EU institutions, one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (the only one from the EU since Brexit) and therefore one of the five states that are allowed to possess a nuclear arsenal.

It also stands as one of the main negotiators of the JCPOA with Iran, and its role at NATO and in the overall geopolitical and defense realms remain crucial, despite the public frenzy regarding the Australian snub and Macron's much-vaunted statements on NATO's "brain death".

[Véhicule de l'Avant Blindé \(VAB\) de reconnaissance Nucléaire, Biologique et Chimique \(NBC\)](#)

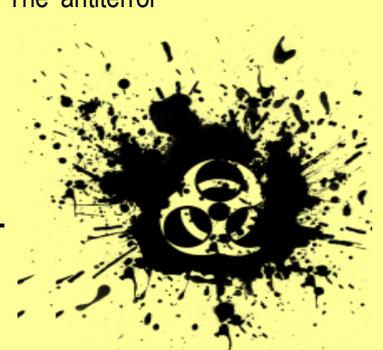


France has lost its preponderance in this new political scenario only suitable for great superpowers. For instance, businesswise, its decaying leverage power in Africa in favor of China is quite remarkable, and Mali's

termination of all military agreements with France after accusing it of attacking its sovereignty has been a reputational blow. Nevertheless, the country's defense industry remains the third biggest in the world in terms of income (\$59 billion as of 2022) and the country stands as the 7th largest economy in the world. Indeed, the French state has renowned defense companies such as Thales, Airbus Group and Dassault under the close surveillance of the French state due to their strategic value. Especially since the pandemic, the French state authorizes who can invest (to varying degrees) in industries deemed as key to state safety and security, be them EU nationals or not. This is performed in coordination with EU authorities as per EU Regulation 2019/452.

Cyberattacks and cyberespionage are increasingly affecting France, with the financial sector on high alert since the war in Ukraine erupted, the government being a sought target for all purposes. The incidents of [Centreon services](#), the [presidential campaign](#) in 2017 and [Pegasus software](#) stand out.

On a domestic level, the French state system is stable and highly centralized. France's main security threats come from terrorist networks attacking its military forces and civilians, both within French soil and abroad. The antiterror operation 'Sentinelle' involving civil-military cooperation in surveillance tasks is still active, ensuring the safety of all strategic points of French territory. Casualties of French army officers deployed in Sahel countries as a response to rampant terror groups are often reported, showcasing the high cost of these operations that run the risk of becoming widely



unpopular, especially due to social media [misinformation](#). Like the broad majority of EU countries, France will struggle with energy security issues (17% of its energy supply comes from Russia), although its reliance on nuclear energy and Spain's leading [regasification capacity](#) help to cushion the blow of any potential Russian gas shortages.

●► [Read the full article at the source's URL.](#)

Ms. Nora Ljubojevic is an Analyst at IB Consultancy. Her prior work experience includes the EU Delegation to the UN in New York, the Council of Europe, the Centre for European Policy in Belgrade and the Human Rights Foundation. She holds an MLitt. in Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia Security Studies from the University of St. Andrews and a BA in Political Science from the Complutense University of Madrid.

North Korea has up to 5K tons of cyanide and other chemical weapons: Report

By Ethan Jewell

Source: <https://www.nknews.org/2022/08/north-korea-has-up-to-5k-tons-of-cyanide-and-other-chemical-weapons-report/>



North Korean soldiers wearing gas masks during a parade on Oct. 10, 2020
Image: KCTV

Aug 30 – North Korea has amassed a “significant inventory” of chemical weapons and likely possesses enough nukes to conduct electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attacks, according to a new joint report from leading U.S. and South Korean think tanks.

The report, [published Tuesday](#) by the RAND Corporation's National Security Research Division and the Seoul-based Asan Institute for Policy Studies, states that the DPRK likely possesses between 2,500 to 5,000 tons of chemical warfare agents, including chlorine gas, cyanide, sarin and VX. **If deployed in ideal conditions, the report estimates that a 1,000-kilogram sarin attack could kill as many as 125,000 people in South Korea — the same estimate they place on a 12.5-kiloton nuclear air blast over the ROK.**

For this reason, the authors say the U.S. and South Korea must “adjust their war paradigm to focus on the actual threat that North Korea poses” and “prepare for the right war.”

Research Report
BRUCE W. BENNETT, KANG CHOI, GREGORY S. JONES, DU-HYEON CHA, JIYOUNG PARK,
SCOTT W. HAROLD, MYONG-HYUN GO, YUN-KANG

Characterizing
the Risks of North
Korean Chemical and
Biological Weapons,
Electromagnetic Pulse,
and Cyber Threats



RAND

THE ASAN INSTITUTE
FOR POLICY STUDIES

Must read



Chemical	Type	Usual Form	Lethal Doses (LD) and Casualty-Causing Doses (ED) ^a			
			Skin LD ₅₀	Skin ED ₅₀	Inhaled LCT ₅₀	Inhaled ECT ₅₀
Chlorine (CL)	Choking	Gas	—	—	13,500 mg-min/m ³	1,300 mg-min/m ³
Phosgene (CG)	Choking	Gas	—	—	1,500 mg-min/m ³	250 mg-min/m ³
Cyanide (AC)	Blood	Gas	—	—	2,860 mg-min/m ³	1,100 mg-min/m ³
Mustard (HD)	Blister	Liquid	1,400 mg	600 mg	1,000 mg-min/m ³	25 mg-min/m ³
Sarin (GB)	Nerve	Liquid/gas	1,700 mg	1,000 mg	35 mg-min/m ³	25 mg-min/m ³
Soman (GD)	Nerve	Liquid	350 mg	200 mg	35 mg-min/m ³	25 mg-min/m ³
VX	Nerve	Liquid	5 mg	2 mg	15 mg-min/m ³	10 mg-min/m ³

Likely North Korean Chemical Weapons (^a Lethal and effective (injury-causing) doses are given for a roughly 70 kg man)

The analysts also warn that North Korea has likely developed enough atomic weapons to conduct high-altitude EMP attacks, which use powerful electromagnetic radiation from distant nuclear reactions to fry electronics over vast areas.

But they add that EMP attacks over the Korean Peninsula would likely damage devices in both Koreas and even in parts of China, meaning Pyongyang may seek to develop non-nuclear means of producing EMPs.

Delivery Means	Postulated Quantity	Postulated Rounds ^a
Artillery shells, rockets	2,400 tons	800,000 shells and rockets
Ballistic missiles	150 tons	500 warheads
Aircraft, drones, special operations forces (SOF)	150 tons	?
Bulk agent	300 tons	Refills for any of the above

^aThe numbers here postulate that the average North Korean artillery shell and rocket warhead is about 3 kg of chemical weapons and that the average ballistic missile carries 300 kg of chemical weapons.

Possible delivery means of N Korean chemical weapons

Although North Korea's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons are primary concerns, RAND and the Asan Institute argue in their report that the country's cyber capabilities still pose a significant threat, even during peacetime.

"While the North's use of offensive cyber may not be as relatively consequential as nuclear usage or even large-scale conventional long-range artillery, it could still cause hundreds of millions to billions of dollars in damages and potentially kill thousands of people in South Korea, the United States, Japan, or elsewhere, both directly and indirectly," the report states. "Thus far, deterrence by punishment or negotiation seems poorly suited to the challenge of reducing the North Korean cyber threat," it adds.

The U.S. and South Korea recently kicked off [Ulchi Freedom Shield \(UFS\) exercises](#), including large-scale joint field training for the first time since 2018. The allies have repeatedly stressed the drills are defensive in nature, a characterization that Pyongyang rejects. During the drills, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol said the countries needed to "[urgently](#)" update the country's war plans, citing the increasing threat of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Ethan Jewell is a Seoul-based correspondent for NK News focused on sanctions, trade and maritime issues. He previously worked as an investigation and intelligence specialist for Pinkerton Comprehensive Risk Management and as a research intern for the Brookings Institution's Center for East Asia Policy Studies.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Wrong Western gambling! This is the real enemy of the world; not Russia!



Protein that could prevent chemical warfare attack created

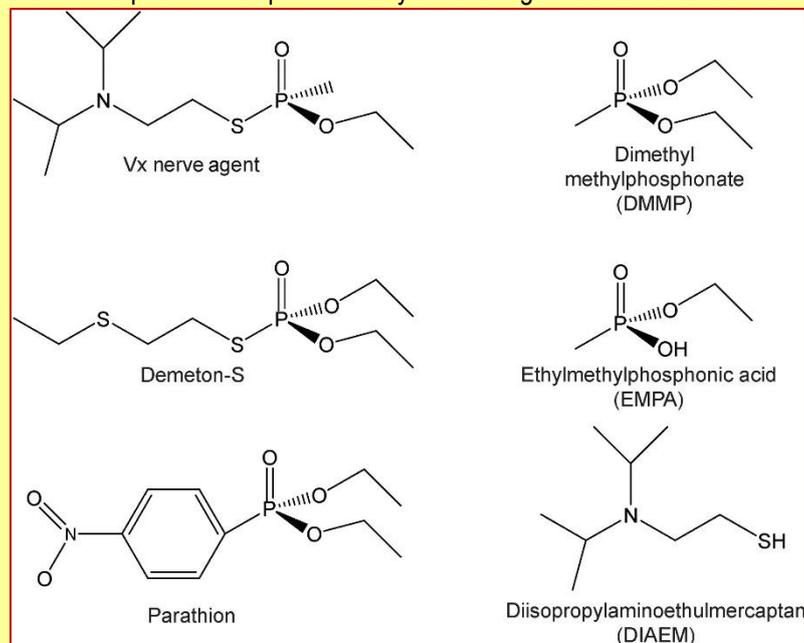
Rutgers University | September 1, 2022

Source: <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.abh3421>



A team that includes Rutgers scientists has designed a synthetic protein that quickly detects molecules of a deadly nerve agent that has been classified by the United Nations as a weapon of mass destruction and could be used in a chemical warfare attack.

This development could pave the way for a new generation of tailor-made biosensors and treatments that could be deployed against the chemical warfare agent, VX, scientists said.



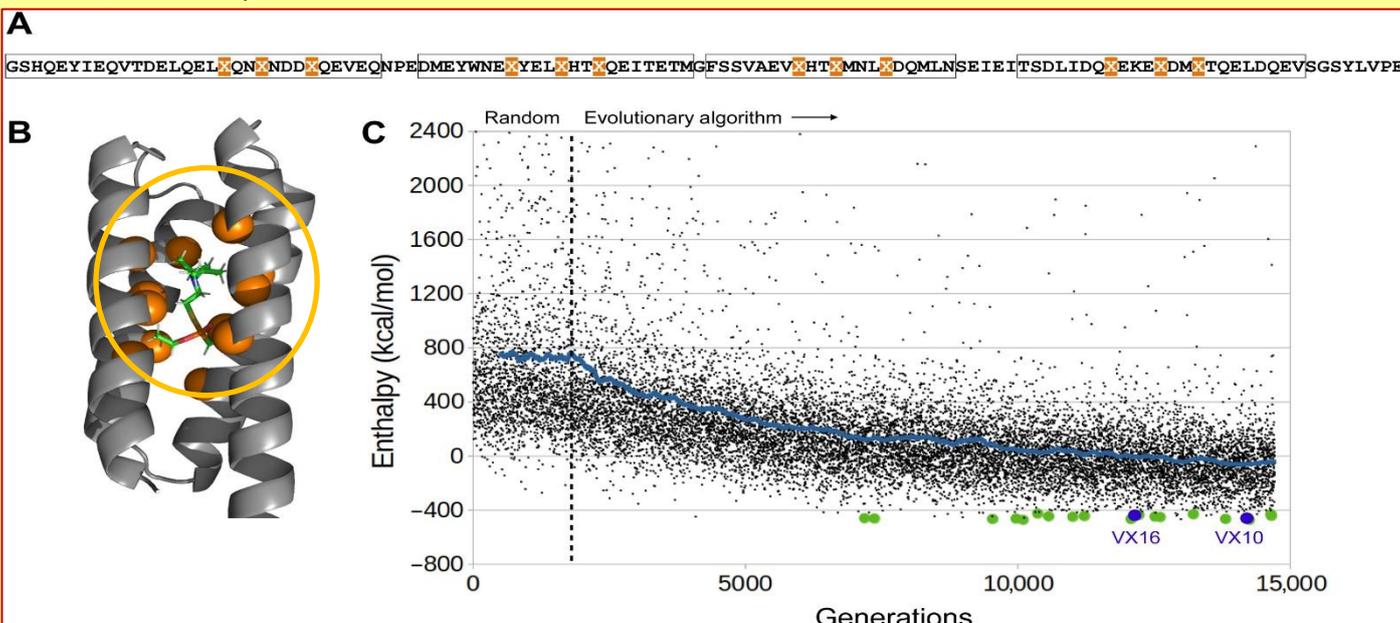
As described in *Science Advances*, the team created the protein through a special design on high-speed computers in Rutgers laboratories.

VX is chemically similar to both common organophosphates used as insecticides (left) (middle and bottom) and its still toxic breakdown products (right).

"We've made an artificial protein that binds a chemical target -- in this case, the VX nerve agent," said Vikas Nanda, an author on the study and a scientist at Rutgers' Center for Advanced Biotechnology and Medicine (CABM). "We wanted to design it to generate a signal that could be coupled to a device, making a biosensor for chemical weapons. And we've been able to achieve that."

VX is an odorless, tasteless, human-made chemical compound that is the most toxic and rapidly acting of

any of the known chemical warfare agents. It works by attacking the nervous system, causing muscle paralysis and death via asphyxiation within minutes. Because VX is classified as a weapon of mass destruction, countries are banned from stockpiling it. However, nations are permitted to store small amounts for research.

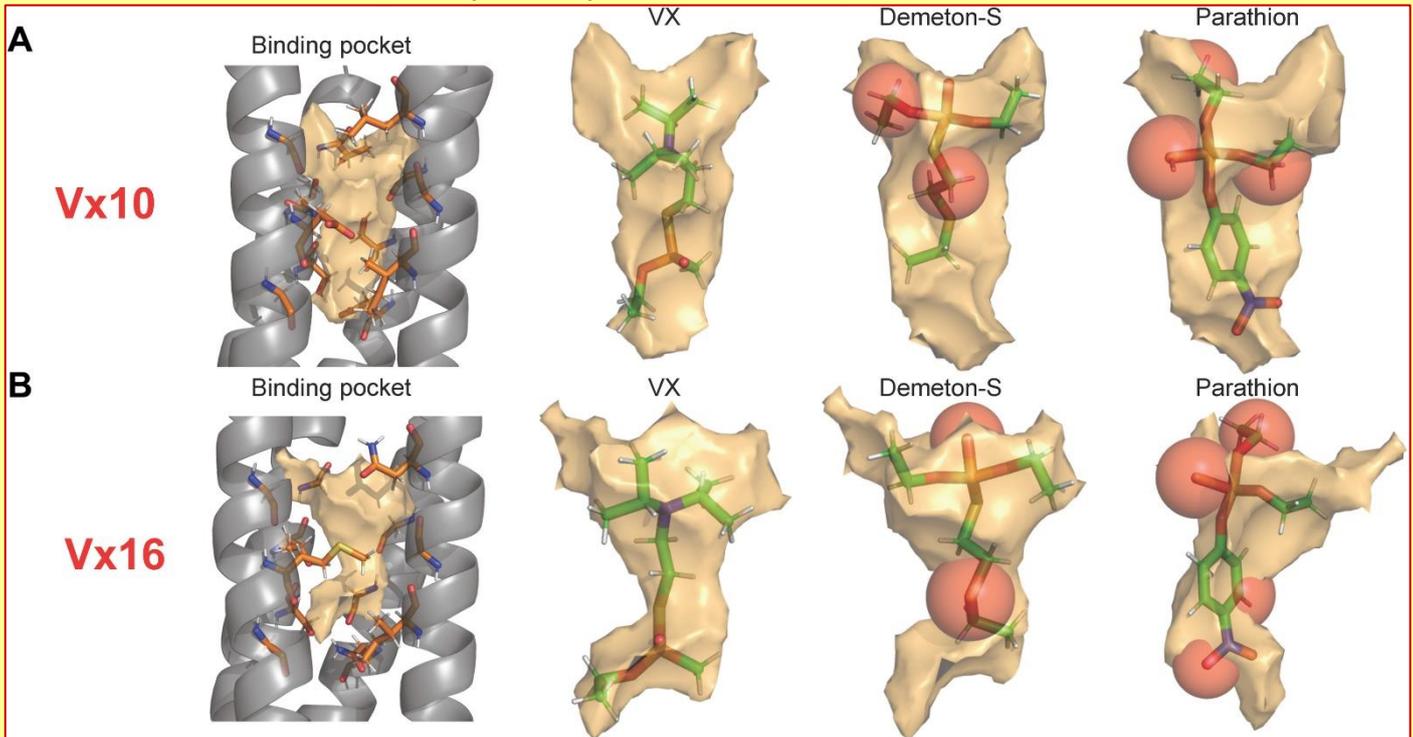


VX-binding site design (A) Core positions to be sampled during design are highlighted in orange, chosen based on contact with a centrally placed VX molecule (16). (B) Orange spheres show sampled positions in the DRNN structure.



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The Rutgers team designed the protein to have a cavity at its center that matched the precise shape and chemical composition of VX. Collaborators at the City College of New York took the Rutgers design and produced a real version of the protein, purified it and shipped the sample on ice overnight to an approved chemical weapon testing facility, MRIGlobal in Kansas City, Mo. There, the protein was tested against VX within 24 hours. **"The protein underwent a dramatic shape change, burying VX in the cavity we designed,"** said Nanda, who also is a professor in the department of biochemistry and molecular biology at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. "This shape change is the signal which could be coupled to a sensor device."



Steric exclusion of the VX simulants demeton-S and parathion. The VX-binding cavities of (A) VX10 and (B) VX16 proteins are depicted in tan, and steric clashes from bound simulants are depicted as red spheres.

The protein, Nanda said, can detect VX at levels thousand times more sensitive than current technologies. In addition, the protein doesn't produce false positives that occur when present-day sensors accidentally detect non-nerve agent chemicals that are similar, like some pesticides. According to the website of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, VX or other nerve agents were possibly used in chemical warfare during the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s. Chemical weapons experts have alleged it also has been used more recently in warfare and, in one case, an assassination. While antidotes are available for VX, they are most useful if given as soon as possible after exposure. "The design method presented here should enable the development of a new generation of biosensors, therapeutics and diagnostics," Nanda said. Douglas Pike, a graduate student at CABM, was involved in the study. In addition, James McCann, Mia Brown, and Ronald Koder of the Department of Physics, City College of New York, and David Crouse of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Clarkson University, were in the study.



Οδηγός επικοινωνίας στη χρήση των χημικών στολών
προστασίας με **7 σήματα χεριών** (in Greek)

By John Retsios

September 2022



John Retsios is a training and applications supervisor @ Draeger Hellas S.A. and a volunteer warranty officer at the Hellenic Fire Service.



Revolution In Hazard Recognition Technology

Source: <https://i-hls.com/archives/110520>

Sep 06 – New military uniform nanocoatings can add fire and UV-light protection and chemical recognition capabilities to uniforms. In a NATO-funded research, Jaime Grunlan, from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University, is applying water-based nanocoatings to military clothing, adding protective properties. Military clothing is made from a variety of textiles such as cotton, wool and synthetic blends. **When adding a protective property, the initial benefits of the material are generally lost.**

“The reason we like cotton is its soft texture, just like we use nylon because it’s strong,” Grunlan said. “If the cotton is given flame-resistance properties, the fiber itself is modified, and the cotton will stiffen. Similarly, nylon exposed to a flame resistance treatment will weaken. Changing its structure essentially takes away its valuable intrinsic properties.”

Grunlan has developed a water-based, nontoxic solution that can add properties without changing the inherent structure of the clothing.

A piece of clothing is dipped into a curated solution with a positive charge, extracted, then placed into a solution with a negative charge. The attraction of the opposing charges bonds the chemicals, creating a microscopic nanocoating that adheres to the clothing’s surface in an imperceptible layer.

This technique, commonly referred to as pad-dry processing, can be duplicated with various solutions, creating multiple layers with each new deposition. Each solution is tailored specifically to add certain qualities to the fabric.

A unique aspect of the design is chemical recognition. If the nanocoating is exposed to a hazardous substance, the material will **change colors**. “Chemical warfare is increasingly becoming a threat,” Grunlan said. “Many chemicals or gases cannot be seen in the air. For that reason, we’re focused on detection based upon a color change, which will notify the user of the chemical agent, allowing them time to react quickly.”

A Prosecutor’s Guide to Chemical and Biological Crimes – May 2022

Source: <https://unicri.it/Publication/Prosecutor-Guide-Chemical-Biological-Crimes>

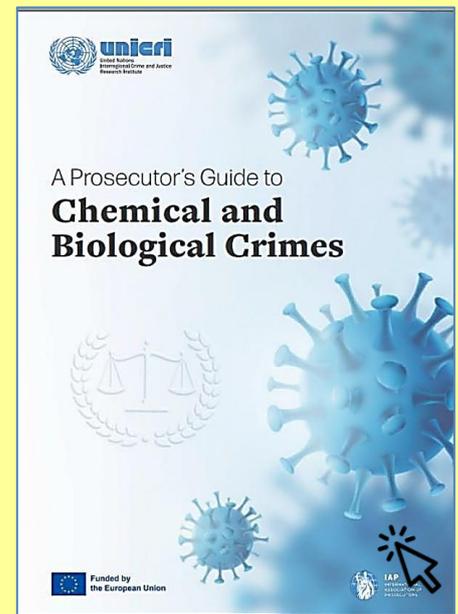


The purpose of the Guidebook is to provide police and civil prosecutors, and relevant investigative agencies, with guidance to support the successful prosecution of incidents involving the deliberate use of a chemical or biological agents. The Guidebook aims to provide awareness and insight into the current and emerging challenges related to the investigation and prosecution of such crimes.

Foreword by the Director of UNICRI Antonia Marie De Meo

The world we currently live in is complex and ever changing. Criminal entities are responding to evolving threat landscapes and advancing technology with ease, presenting a multitude of challenges to those who investigate and prosecute crime. Particularly challenging crimes involve the deliberate acquisition and use of hazardous chemical and biological agents to cause harm to humans, animals, the environment, or to disrupt our way of life.

Chemical and biological agents have often been used deliberately to harm human beings and the surrounding environment. For example, the world was shocked by the deliberate use of mustard gas on civilians in the town of Halabja in northern Iraq in the 1980s, repeated in Damascus some 25 years later; the deliberate dispersal of nerve agent Sarin in the Tokyo subway by the domestic cult group Aum Shinrikyo in 1995; and the deliberate distribution of letters containing biological anthrax spores sent to individuals in the United States in 2001. Between 2013 and 2017, we again experienced the deliberate use of chemical weapons on civilian targets in Iraq and Syria, impacting the civilian population, and in 2017, the deliberate use of toxic chemicals at the Kuala Lumpur international airport, followed one year later by the use of another chemical agent in the United Kingdom. These cases confirm the need to increase awareness and skills related to the investigation and prosecution of chemical and biological crimes.



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Multi-agency coordination and cooperation is essential for the successful investigation and prosecution of these criminal cases. The chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) world is full of technical and scientific terminology, procedures, and regulations. Prosecution teams need an increased appreciation of the challenges and greater insight into the key considerations related to CBRN crimes.

UNICRI, in close cooperation with its international partners and stakeholders, has identified the need to advance guidance in this field. To this end, the Institute brought together international and regional subject matter experts with relevant experience in the CBRN domain as well as senior prosecutors and trial attorneys, to develop this first edition of the Prosecutors Guide to Chemical and Biological Crimes.

This Guide aims to provide police, prosecutors, and relevant investigative agencies with guidance to support the successful prosecution of incidents involving the deliberate acquisition, stockpiling, production, transfer, or use of a chemical or biological agent. It is a non-binding high-level guidance document with considerations across key elements associated with the deliberate use of chemical and biological agents and toxins and the impact of these elements on the prosecutorial process. This guidance builds foundational awareness from which additional phases, including practical training for prosecutors, can be developed and implemented.

We are thankful to the European Commission for funding the production of this Guide within the framework of the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Centres of Excellence Initiative (EU CBRN CoE). The request to produce such guidance came as a result of implementing two projects in Southeast and Eastern Europe aimed to enhance the CBRN forensic capabilities of its partner countries. We are committed to listening carefully to the needs and priorities of our Member States and addressing them through the development of sustainable programs, including the delivery of theoretical content, tailored training, educational videos, and e-learning platforms.

We are confident that this Guide will provide opportunities for strengthening the knowledge, systems, and frameworks from which we strive to support investigative agencies and prosecutorial teams in their quest for justice.

Toxic Valley 2022

Source: https://www.linkedin.com/feed/?msgControlName=reply_to_sender&msgConversationId=2-OWYxMTYxMWQtMDBiMy00ODM3LThmYWVtMjk2ZjU3OWUxZDFjXzAxMw%3D%3D&msgOverlay=true&trk=false



Sep 07 – The multinational Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear exercise Toxic Valley 2022 kicked off yesterday in the CBRN testing and training Centre Zemianske





Kostofany, **Slovakia**. The exercise creates a venue to train teams from **12 NATO** Allied and Partner Nations (AUT, BEL, CZE, FRA, DEU, HUN, ITA, LTU, POL, SVK, SVN, USA) in the special capability of sampling and identifying Chemical Warfare Agents (CWA), drugs and others, in conditions close to operational needs in accordance with NATO AEP-66. TOXIC VALLEY 2022 (TOVY22) is a Live Exercise (LIVEX) sponsored and organized by Slovak Armed Forces.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: After two decades of involvement in CBRN drills, still the same question: Gloves over or under the sleeves? 😊

Chemical Weapons allegations and Russia's invasion in Ukraine

Source: <https://cbwnet.org/publications/chemical-weapons-allegations-and-russia-s-invasion-in-ukraine>

Sep 08 – In the course of its war of aggression against Ukraine, Moscow has repeatedly accused Kyiv of planning to stage "false flag" operations involving chemical weapons. The Kremlin alleges that Ukraine is doing this in order to put the blame for a chemical weapons use on Moscow. In a [newspaper article](#) from mid-July, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov placed the current chemical weapons allegations within a narrative that portrays a conspiracy by Western and other states against Russia. This narrative is so diffuse and all-encompassing that it hardly seems refutable in its entirety. This makes it all the more important to analyse and evaluate its central building blocks that are important from a disarmament perspective, such as the accusations that Ukraine is preparing to use chemical weapons.

Ukraine has consistently and persistently rejected all these Russian accusations. At the same time, Kyiv, for its part, accused Moscow of preparing the ground for its own use of chemical weapons by disseminating these false allegations. Verifiable evidence for the respective claims has yet to be made available in public. Neither party has so far activated international mechanisms to have their respective complaints independently investigated.



Without substantive evidence, however, and as long as they go unchallenged, un rebutted or unaddressed, such allegations could have negative reverberations for the set of rules that prohibit chemical weapons under international law. A failure of States to respond to such allegations can undermine the trust in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the legitimacy of the mechanisms under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as its ability to investigate and sanction treaty violations could be called into question. It could also adversely affect the practical work of the OPCW. Conversely, if the international community were to unite in finding effective responses to real or fabricated accusations of treaty violations, this would protect the norm against chemical weapons.

The Russian accusations fit into a pattern of behaviour that had raised doubts about Russian support for the CWC already in the past. For example, Russia had attempted to undermine the OPCW's authority to investigate Syrian chemical weapons use, through a disinformation campaign.

A deliberate release of a toxic substance "[which through its chemical action on life processes can cause death, temporary incapacitation or permanent harm to humans or animals](#)" is considered a use of a chemical weapon under the 1997 CWC. This applies to the use of classical chemical weapons manufactured for military use. But it also applies to the deliberate release of poisonous substances by other means, such as the bombardment of civilian chemical facilities, provided that this was done with the intention of achieving the effect cited above. Both Russia and Ukraine are parties of the CWC and thus bound by the comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons. Furthermore, the use of chemical weapons is prohibited for all states under customary international law.

What specifically are these accusations about?

In [several letters to the OPCW](#), Moscow has accused Ukrainian forces of trying to release chemicals in the Donbass and other regions in order to then blame Russia. Russia claims that Ukrainian "rebels" had exploited Russian attacks on chemical plants, such as the Azot chemical plant in Severodonetsk, to release dangerous chemicals using explosive charges. The Ukrainian "nationalists" alone had reason for such actions, which entailed considerable risks for people and the environment, according to Moscow's accusations. Ukraine, the Kremlin claimed, had been supported in these actions by Western states and especially the USA.

Ukraine, on the other hand, [accuses Russia](#) of making false claims in order to prepare its own chemical weapons operations or to justify its own conventional attacks. Thus, Ukraine argues that Moscow itself were planning so-called "false flag" operations, i.e., operations carried out in order to deliberately create the impression that another party or parties were responsible for them. Kyiv also asked the OPCW to closely monitor all "violations of the CWC by Russia in Ukraine", most recently in a note verbale dated 28 July 2022.

Russian attacks on chemical facilities had already led to the release of dangerous chemicals, Kyiv alleges. Furthermore, Russia had on several occasions since 24 February 2022 "used chemical weapons against units of the Ukrainian armed forces", according to a [Ukrainian accusation](#) made on 11 May. Media research suggests that these allegations relate to the following events, among others: the [Ukrainian Pravda](#) reported that British intelligence reports indicated that on 11 April, Russian troops had used phosphorus munitions with "high probability" in the battle for Mariupol. An incident of 1 May near Mykolaiv, reported in a [Ukrainian government press release](#), is believed to have been a fire at a nitrogen fertiliser warehouse triggered by Russian bombardment. On [Twitter](#), there appeared reports of the bombing and subsequent explosion of an ammonium nitrate warehouse on 11 May near the town of Izyum. No suitable publicly available reports could be found on the allegation of an operation on 7 May.

If the unquestionable intent of these attacks was to harm humans or animals through the toxic effect of the chemicals released, this would constitute a violation of the CWC. Such an intent, however, may be difficult to prove. On the other hand, releases of chemicals without this intention are not covered under the CWC, and neither are uses of chemicals intended for other military purposes if their effects do not depend on the toxic effects of the substances used. Examples of this would be toxic rocket fuels, the use of phosphorus munitions to create smoke screens or the use of defoliants (see the use of "agent orange" in the Vietnam War) to create a clear field of vision for firing at enemy forces.

The deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure of the chemical industry as a method of warfare could, however, violate other international norms and rules, as could attacks on civilians: The [Geneva Conventions](#) and the [Statute of the International Criminal Court](#) (ICC) prohibit, among others, the destruction of non-military targets unless proportionate to the military objectives sought. They also prohibit deliberate attacks on exclusively civilian targets, and the use of asphyxiating or poisonous gases and other substances with such properties. However, the Rome Statute of the ICC does not specify a particular class of weapons or agents that fall under this definition. While neither Russia nor Ukraine have acceded to the ICC Statute, Ukraine has accepted its jurisdiction. The use of incendiary weapons against civilians and of other conventional weapons capable of causing excessive



suffering or indiscriminate effects is also regulated in the Third Protocol as well as the main text of the [UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons](#); Russia and Ukraine both are parties to the relevant agreements.

Do the Russian allegations represent a new development, and what incidents are known so far?

The latest Russian allegations are part of a series of similar accusations that Moscow had already spread in the years before its attack on Ukraine in February 2022. For example, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu claimed in a speech on 21 December 2021 that unidentified chemical substances had been delivered to eastern Ukraine in order to carry out "provocations". Also, in December 2021, the [Russian news agency TASS](#) reported that the USA had delivered a consignment of botulinum toxin with associated antidote to Ukraine. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the allegations have become more serious and specific. The botulinum story, for example, was rehashed in the summer of 2022 with [reports of alleged poisonings](#) of Russian soldiers with this neurotoxin. Ukraine dismissed this by pointing out that the cause was more likely poisoning with expired canned meat.

Releases of chemicals from facilities where hazardous substances are produced, used or stored had occurred already before 2022. As early as 2017, the open-source investigation organisation Bellingcat published an [overview](#) of all Ukrainian chemical plants attacked by Russia since the annexation of Crimea in 2014. This included, for example, the coke plant in Avdiivka which produces, among others, sulphuric acid, ammonium sulphate, phenolates and other toxic substances; the Novhorodske phenol factory which uses naphthalene, phenol and other hazardous chemicals; several water treatment plants near Donetsk, one of which alone stored 300 tonnes of liquefied chlorine; and the Mikhailivka transformer station which contained a total of 3.2 tonnes of mercury. In addition to the incidents already mentioned above, a continuously updated [OPCW compendium](#) of relevant correspondence from States Parties includes, for example, the shelling of a nitric acid storage facility in Rubizhne on 4 April 2022 and repeated attacks on the Azot factory in Severodonetsk.

How has the international community reacted to the allegations?

The OPCW is [closely monitoring the developments](#) in Ukraine and documents the mutual accusations related to chemical weapons in the above-mentioned [compendium](#). This compendium has meanwhile grown to more than 100 pages. On 10 June, the Organisation itself rejected Russian accusations made the previous day that claimed that it was helping to prepare Ukrainian "false flag" operations by having OPCW experts on standby to verify the use of chemical weapons. At the time, the Technical Secretariat called on Moscow's representative to the OPCW to refrain from such "baseless allegations".

In addition to Ukraine, the EU, the United States, and the UK have also officially and comprehensively refuted the Russian allegations within the framework of the OPCW; these statements, too, are included in the compendium. Speaking for the EU, France expressed "deep concern" already on 3 March about information that Russian forces could be preparing "false flag" provocations involving chemicals. This could include the destruction of industrial chemical facilities, thus exposing the Ukrainian population to the risk of exposure to dangerous chemicals. The EU condemned the "Russian disinformation campaigns" and "baseless allegations" by Russian government officials regarding chemical provocations in Ukraine.

During the Executive Council meeting in March, a group of [49 States Parties of the CWC](#) objected to the "false suspicions" raised by Russia against Ukraine. On 11 March, the [United States](#) also rejected as completely false the accusations "that alleged radical groups under the control of American services were preparing possible chemical weapons operations in Ukraine". Furthermore, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg [warned in March 2022](#) that Russia's accusation that Ukraine had biological weapons could be used as a pretext for Russian chemical weapons attacks.

On 1 June, [London](#) rejected as "baseless" Russian insinuations that the UK itself supported "chemical provocations" by Ukraine. Referring to the war against Ukraine and the activities of Russian allies in Syria, London also noted that Russia had demonstrated "its willingness to disregard the essential foundations of the CWC".

Members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and several developing countries, on the other hand, have taken a less clear position. For example, on 8 March, NAM members represented at the OPCW and China expressed their "deep concern" about any attempt to accuse a CWC State Party of chemical weapons use "[on the basis of unsubstantiated allegations made by media reports or any other open sources, including non-governmental entities](#)". This can be read as a criticism of Ukrainian accusations directed against Russia, as well as of the public debate in the West on chemical weapons allegations. On principle grounds, Beijing criticises Western states for including information collected and disseminated by non-governmental institutions in official assessments of other states' treaty compliance. The wording is also reminiscent of Russian accusations that Western states base their own positions on information provided by civil society groups.



India takes a more moderate position and avoids a clear stance. Thus, on 8 March, Delhi [expressed its conviction](#) that "any allegation of use of chemical weapons must be dealt with strictly as per the provisions and procedures laid down in the [Chemical Weapons] Convention" and that relevant "concerns must be addressed through consultations and cooperation" among all parties concerned. To this end, provisions of the CWC as well as additional ad hoc instruments within the framework of the CWC can be used. Examples would be those established by the international community to investigate chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

Which reaction would be possible?

The CWC offers several ways to determine whether chemical weapons-related allegations are based on factual evidence. Normally, the OPCW's routine inspections, among other things, serve to demonstrate that Member States are in compliance with the treaty. However, such measures [are currently severely hampered](#) in Ukraine by the war. The lowest level of other compliance assurance mechanisms involves a bilateral exchange of information between the states concerned, in accordance with [Article IX](#) of the CWC. However, in view of the current war situation and the lack of confidence in Russia's willingness to cooperate, the political preconditions for using this procedure to establish the truth seem to be lacking.

Clarification can also be sought through the OPCW Executive Council. This body, in which 41 CWC States Parties regularly take decisions on the implementation of the CWC, can appoint a team of experts to review all available information on the case in question. While Ukraine has not formally initiated this clarification procedure, it has [repeatedly asked](#) the Executive Council to monitor the situation closely, and has also recalled its right under the CWC to request assistance and protection in case of a threat of use of chemical weapons or an actual chemical weapons attack (see below).

Another important fact-finding mechanism of the CWC, albeit one that so far has not been used, is challenge inspection - a special investigation to look into possible treaty violations. The procedure is governed by [Article IX](#) of the CWC and [Part X of the Verification Annex](#). Russia, whilst providing relevant evidence, could request the OPCW to investigate its allegations against Ukraine regarding the possible preparation of "false flag" attacks. Ukraine or any other CWC State Party could also activate this mechanism in an attempt to determine the veracity of Russia's allegations.

If there were concrete indications that chemical weapons had actually been used, the CWC would have another as yet unused instrument at its disposal: a mechanism for investigating suspected chemical weapons use under [Articles IX, X](#) and [Part XI of the Verification Annex](#).

In order to plan and prepare for such contingency operations, the OPCW has established a Capacity-Building and Contingency Planning Cell. It also conducts targeted trainings and exercises. The Organisation is in the process of expanding its own analytical and forensic capabilities, including in designated laboratories of Member States and with the OPCW's own Centre for Chemistry and Technology, which is under construction. The OPCW Situation Centre provides round-the-clock support to teams in the field. While conducting a challenge inspection or other investigation in the Ukrainian war zone would not be an easy task, the OPCW's work in Syria has demonstrated that it is quite capable of conducting fact-finding and other special missions in extremely challenging circumstances and in an ongoing war situation.

The example of Syria has also shown that the OPCW can adapt to novel situations and develop new, tailored tools. In addition to conducting a challenge inspection or investigation of an alleged chemical weapons use - both of which would have to be requested by a CWC State Party for the OPCW to act - ad hoc instruments analogous to the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) or the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) for Syria could thus theoretically also be deployed to Ukraine to investigate possible chemical weapons uses. The OPCW had created these two instruments in order to be able to make reliable assessments under the conditions of the Syrian civil war as to whether chemical weapons were used, or to identify those responsible for such war crimes. CWC parties could also mandate the IIT to identify those responsible for chemical weapons attacks in other states, such as in Ukraine.

Both the OPCW and the States Parties may also provide assistance to Ukraine under [Article X](#), in the area of assistance and protection against a possible chemical weapons attack. [The OPCW and Ukrainian representatives and parliamentarians](#) have already discussed such steps. Furthermore, Ukraine has already requested bilateral assistance from States Parties in the protection against chemical weapons on [18 March](#), making reference to Article X, paragraph 3 of the CWC. The OPCW could also mobilise assistance from Member States under Article X, for example in the form of providing protective equipment such as detectors, respirators and protective clothing, means for decontamination, and medical countermeasures. The Director-General could release emergency assistance to victims of chemical weapons use and, by conducting an investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons, determine whether such weapons were actually used and, if so, by whom (see above).

Why would clarification be important?

Although there is no reliable publicly available evidence for the Russian accusations, it is important to counter them resolutely and assiduously. False accusations can weaken the



international control of chemical weapons if they are repeated again and again (as Russia [does](#)), mixed with half-truths and incorporated into a narrative that calls into question the bona fide intentions of other parties. Clear and consistent stances are also important to make it plain that any use of chemical weapons would be punished. Finally, it is a matter of isolating internationally those states whose discernible aim it is to put sticks in the wheels of multilateral institutions such as the OPCW in order to further their own interests. How robust norms such as the chemical weapons ban depends not only on how often and severely they are violated, but also on how united the international community responds to such breaches.

How should Russia's behaviour be assessed?

While Russia has repeatedly defended its ally Syria against the OPCW's legitimate investigative work on Syrian treaty violations since 2015, Russian accusations in the case of Ukraine are directed against a CWC State Party whose treaty compliance the OPCW has never called into doubt. In contrast, 55 OPCW member states have addressed [a number of open questions to Russia](#), such as in connection with assassination attempts which employed novel nerve agents, so-called Novichoks. When it joined the CWC in 1997, Russia had declared the world's largest CW stockpiles to the OPCW, amounting to some 40,000 tonnes, and subsequently destroyed them under international verification by the end of 2017. The corresponding production facilities were also declared and either destroyed or converted for peaceful purposes. However, the US, among others, has long [expressed suspicions](#) that the declarations may not have been complete, that some stockpiles or facilities may not have been declared, and that Russia may thus have continued its chemical weapons programme or withheld stockpiles. A clue to this suspicion was the 2002 [hostage situation in a Moscow theatre](#), where an aerosolised fentanyl derivative, a powerful narcotic, was used to free the hostages. The rapid deployment capability as well as the [chemical structures of the agents used](#) raised questions about possible continuing research and development activities by Russia. In recent years, there have been further indications of offensive chemical weapons activities in connection with the attempted assassinations of [Sergey Skripal](#) (2018) and [Alexei Navalny](#) (2020). In both cases, the victims were poisoned with substances of the Novichok group, which was developed by the Soviet Union as part of its chemical weapons programme. Novichok agents were not initially included in the OPCW Schedules of controlled substances. Some of them were included, however, after the Skripal attack. These Schedules are merely an instrument to assist in the verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention. They do not list banned substances and do not define what a chemical weapon is. However, the [amendment to the Schedules](#), the first ever, only related to certain Novichok structures. For example, a technical investigation conducted by the OPCW at Germany's request in connection with the Navalny case revealed that the agent used in that case was not covered by the 2019 expansion of the Schedules. The emergence of such new Novichok substances reinforced [suspicions](#) that Russian laboratories continue with a chemical warfare agent development programme. Yet, while there are suspicions of Russian treaty violations, there is no undisputable evidence that could stand up in court to prove that Russia has weaponised such highly toxic nerve agents.

What can be done?

Allegations of planned or suspected treaty violations are a serious matter and must be supported with verifiable facts. Such evidence may be secured internally or by independent investigations, including CWC mechanisms, and presented to the international community for assessment and action. The results of such investigations can also form the basis for imposing sanctions on rule-breakers. Meaningful investigation results could also make disinformation a less attractive strategy and help deter the use of chemical weapons. However, invoking the OPCW's formal investigation procedures must be weighed against the risk that Russia might try to exploit a possible negative or unclear investigation result for propaganda purposes. The article by Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov quoted above would suggest that such behaviour might be expected. Although as yet, no action has been taken in the CWC framework to deal with possible Russian violations of the CWC or with false accusations against Ukraine, it would be important to counter these Russian allegations against Ukraine with careful analysis and independent investigations. Together with clear public statements, such analyses and investigations could counteract an escalation of the war situation and of further inter-state tensions within and outside the OPCW. In addition, they could create conditions that would enable at a later stage to draw on hard evidence, had the prohibition of chemical weapons use indeed been violated and sanctions were to be applied or criminal proceedings opened. In addition, Ukraine should also consider having its allegations of Russian chemical weapons uses investigated internationally. The persistent failure to use international procedures to investigate such suspicions can give the false and risky impression that they are not fit for purpose and that member states lack confidence in their effectiveness.

However, should States, for whatever reason, avoid formal international investigations, the Director-General of the OPCW still has a basic obligation, stemming from the authority of his office, to defend the norm against chemical weapons and to systematically follow up on allegations of possible treaty violations, including, if necessary and possible, through on-site investigations.



Russia accused Turkey of planning to equip Bayraktar drones with biological/chemical weapons

Source: <https://nordicmonitor.com/2022/09/russia-accused-turkey-of-planning-to-equip-bayraktar-drones-with-bio-chemical-weapons/>



Sep 12 – In a cache of documents submitted to the UN Security Council, Russia accused Turkish drone manufacturer Baykar Makina of involvement in a plot to equip its drones with chemical and biological warfare capabilities at the request of Ukraine, an accusation that was denied by Turkey. Delivering a statement at the UN Security Council in March 2022, Russia's Permanent Representative to the UN Vassily Nebenzia said Russian authorities intercepted documents from Baykar Makina, the manufacturer of Bayraktar drones, that suggested Ukraine wanted to convert drones into a delivery mechanism for deadly airborne agents. "The documents indicate that the Kiev regime attempted to get access to technical opportunities for delivery of hazardous biological agents by air. Last year Ukraine sent a request to the Turkish manufacturer of UAVs Baykar Makina regarding the possibility of equipping the Bayraktar

drones with equipment enabling them to spray more than 20 liters of aerosol while flying for more than 300 kilometers," Nebenzia said. "If equipped with such aerosol system and having 300-kilometer flight range, such a drone will pose a real threat of spraying hazardous biological aerosols over the territory of Russia." A copy of the letter sent to Baykar Makina by Ukrainian authorities and the response from the Turkish manufacturer were provided to members of the UN Security Council on April 19, 2022.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: The problem is not if the Turkish manufacturer will add two or more tanks to the drone. The problem is who will load these tanks with deadly chemical and/or biological (or even R) liquids to be sprayed – Turkey or Ukraine? And if it is Turkey, should its neighbors worry about this possibility?

Two things about the CBRN defense of the 2022 FIFA Games

By the Editor of the "C²BRNE Diary"



1. Deploy CBRN forces at least 500 m from the stadium (yellow lines). If too close to exits (orange lines) the human tsunami will overcome defense premises and escape in all possible directions.



FIFA WORLD CUP
Qat_ar2022

2. Close the Metro Station located just outside the Hamas General Hospital. In case of a real incident, victims will rush to the Emergency Department of the hospital that is not adequately prepared to receive mass contaminated casualties. Existing infrastructure (if not upgraded, is for a small number of HAZMAT contaminated casualties). This will give hospital time to organize its defenses in a nearby open space.



CBRN threats and new technologies

Source: <https://www.army-technology.com/comment/cbrne-defence-technology-trends/>

Breakthrough technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), internet of things (IoT), advanced materials, nanotechnology and remote sensing will be leveraged in novel CBRNE solutions to speed up reaction time against the threats and mitigate their adverse effects. Listed below are the key technology trends impacting the CBRNE defence theme.

Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) for CBRNE training

The potential for VR and AR training applications has long been recognised by the aerospace and defence industry. VR enable trainees to undertake virtual simulated practice to gain real-world experience cost-effectively and safely without putting them in harm's way. A virtually constructed simulation of a dangerous scenario allows the soldiers to familiarise themselves with combat scenarios and adapt newer skills and techniques necessary for combat.

While VR creates an artificial environment where the user can live; AR is used to enhance live exercises in a real environment by overlaying computer-generated images onto the user's real-world view.

Defence forces are benefitting from VR and AR technologies in CBRNE training solutions for their troops. For instance, Polish Armed Forces are developing a virtual training centre for Polish chemical forces. In addition, the US Department of Defence released a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) tender in April 2021, to develop software to support testing and evaluation of radiation detectors and their use in challenging life-like nuclear response scenarios without the use of radiological sources using VR and AR.

AI

AI technology can be used in the detection of CBRNE threats and protection from them, as well as in training and simulation. Facial recognition and behaviour recognition systems helps detect abnormal behaviours at important passengers' checkpoints such as airports, train stations and ports. In the Covid-19 context, AI is assisting in combating the virus by helping in the early detection and diagnosis of the infection to contact tracing, development of drugs and vaccines, and training of healthcare workers.

For example, the Mount Sinai Health System has partnered with Sana Labs to train nurses treating Covid-19 patients using AI-enabled assessments. According to a GlobalData survey, 43% of respondents stated that AI had played a significant role in helping the company survive the pandemic, with a further 34% saying it had played a minor role. Conversational platforms have become more important than ever following dramatic increases in demand for support services. The pandemic has also accelerated AI research in federated learning, which allows for collaboration on models without forcing users to disclose sensitive information.

In June 2021, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program awarded \$2m funding to two small businesses to develop machine learning technologies for detection of CBRNE threats. DHS aims to reduce time, redundancy, cost, and improve accuracy in detecting threats, such as explosives, chemical agents, and narcotics.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR EARLY WARNING INTELLIGENCE AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE FOR CBRN THREATS

👤 Rajesh Uppal 📅 June 3, 2022 📁 AI & IT, Threats, Weapons

💬 Comments Offon Artificial Intelligence for Early Warning Intelligence and effective response for CBRN threats

👁️ 859 Views



CBRN in Europe: Prospects and Developments

Source: <https://estonianfreepress.com/news/europe/cbrn-in-europe-prospects-and-developments/>

Sep 15 – The overwhelming narrative in European defence and security is the war in Ukraine. In military affairs, the best news involving CBRN is that, in fact, there has been no news in CBRN. The ongoing conflict has not seen the use of CBRN weapons or materials. The handful of reported incidents have, so far, been erroneous reporting or situations being



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taken out of context. Even the occupation and liberation of the contaminated area around Chernobyl seems to have been largely a non-issue.



Defending Territory

What has happened, though, as has been discussed in every outlet for serious defence journalism, has been a cosmic realignment in defence priorities and budgets in Europe. As Ukraine faces invasion, the rest of Europe has started to realise that actually fighting wars on the ground, in their own country or nearby, is still very much a thing in the modern era. Defence policy is not about vague commitments and occasionally sending a company or battalion on an EU, UN, or NATO mission somewhere else. It is, and always has been, about defending territory. Some people are just now re-learning this harsh fact. Furthermore, the potential war in front of us all is not another Afghanistan conflict, with negligible CBRN threats. Many practical CBRN deficits exist in European militaries, and years of underinvestment lead to gaps in capability or capacity.

To the veteran observer of CBRN defence and security, the logical question to ask is just how much of this epiphany results in additional expenditures on CBRN defence and security. It is too early to learn the answer to the question. But there are at least two possible ways to venture an answer. The optimistic answer is that a rising tide will raise every boat. Expansion of force structure and modernisation of land forces would necessitate additional spending on CBRN force protection, at least in theory. The pessimistic answer would be that the exigencies of the Ukraine crisis point to a wide variety of small and large deficits in defence capability and capacity. Money spent on respirators and decontamination units is money that could be spent on tanks, artillery, ammunition, and, well, everything else. Eventually, CBRN defence expenditures may lose out to other, necessary imperatives. It is too early to tell which way this will break, but we have a few hints in a new NATO document.

Collective Efforts: NATO

The conflict has had many effects on NATO, but has it affected NATO's CBRN defence policies? It is rare that we get a quick response to a NATO-based question. The answer is yes. On 14 June 2022, NATO published a new policy document entitled "NATO's Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Policy." Replacing a document from



2009, the new policy includes some interesting material. The paragraphs on Russia cite “Novichok” agents and the Skripal and Navalny poisonings. The document shows that there is consensus among the NATO members that Russia remains a serious CBRN threat. The document is the closest thing to a formal accusation of Russian non-compliance with treaties that this correspondent has seen.

The NATO policy gives appropriate attention to threats posed by new technologies, such as nanotechnology and pharmaceutical developments, whereas older policies on CBRN often looked back in time at cold war-era threats and technologies. The new policy establishes two “core principles and commitments.” The first is “Enhanced and Integrated CBRN Military Capabilities” and the second is “Improved Resilience against CBRN Threats.” Of significant interest is that the document spends much effort talking about civilian response and population protection and not just military CBRN defence. Five or ten years ago, one might be forgiven for a bit of cynicism about such a document emerging from NATO. But the Ukraine crisis has been a moment of clarity for NATO. Things are suddenly being taken more seriously, so this policy document will have some clear traction. On a related note, Sweden and Finland joining NATO also will have some effect on the alliance, as both of these countries take CBRN defence rather seriously.

More long-standing NATO efforts have contributed to the overall CBRN operational climate in Europe in recent years. NATO’s standardisation efforts are essential to the CBRN industry. NATO fields a Combined Joint CBRN Defence Task Force consisting of a Joint CBRN Battalion and a CBRN Joint Assessment Team. NATO’s CBRN Centre and school in Vyškov (CZ) is well regarded. NATO also consistently conducts multinational CBRN exercises across the region. CBRN in a broader NATO context was discussed in issue 06-2017, but the subject is worthy of a re-visit in future issues.

EU Efforts

NATO is not the only collective body in Europe. The European Union (EU) has had a CBRN Action plan for some years now, analysed in detail in issue 08/2018 of this publication. This plan sets strategic directions, and nothing in it is out of place or incorrect. But in a more direct sense, the EU is taking action on CBRN in the context of the Ukraine war. The EU announced in June that it has used the rescEU component of its Civil Protection Mechanism to send €11.3M worth of CBRN defence kit, such as suits and decontamination supplies, to Ukraine. These were drawn from reserve stockpiles in member states, but even merely replacing this outlay would represent, by recent European standards, a medium to large CBRN procurement.

A more long-standing effort is the European Union CBRN Centres of Excellence (CBRN CoE) programme. Now into its second decade of life, the CoE have worked extensively to project EU-based expertise to other parts of the world, funding 91 projects through eight regional secretariats and 62 partner countries. The global COVID-19 pandemic saw a bit of a pivot by CBRN CoE, but arguably pandemics lie within the ‘B’ of CBRN.

The CBRN space is one that is heavily driven by science and technology. Within the European Union (and some associated countries), a major force in research and development has been European Union expenditures. The current mechanisms for such are Horizon 2020 and its successor Horizon Europe, replacing older funding programmes like FP6 and FP7. There have been many grants directly in the CBRN space for decades now. Projects like EU-RADION, TERRIFFIC, eNOTICE, Proactive, EU Sense and many others push the frontiers of knowledge in CBRN response. Readers wanting a full accounting of EU-wide research efforts are encouraged to look up the ENCIRCLE project, which attempts a full accounting of the entire situation.

A common criticism of such EU-funded projects is that they often result in little beyond a website and reports. The European Commission acknowledges some problems historically with this and is further stressing actual impact in the real world as part of its proposal review process. However, it is too early to tell what long-term impact many of the current generation of Horizon projects will have in CBRN. In fairness, it should be noted that a number of Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects not specifically naming CBRN in their titles or mission are also in adjacent spaces with possible applications in CBRN defence. Various projects in border security, aviation security, fighting crime and terrorism, and disaster resilience have had both direct and indirect applications in the CBRN space.

National Efforts

Most practical spending on training and equipment in CBRN happens at the national level. But despite all the broader developments mentioned above, actual procurement tenders and contracts in CBRN equipment and services remains only moderate. Perhaps some of the biggest activity recently has been by Avon Protection, the UK-based respirator and protective clothing manufacturer. Avon is the manufacturer of the FM50 mask, adopted in the USA as the M50 Joint Service General Purpose Protective Mask. This adoption by the USA has been leveraged into significant uptake elsewhere. Avon has recently reached a



figure of 100,000 FM50 masks sold to NATO members through NATO's Support and Procurement Agency. Furthermore, Latvia and Netherlands have made the decision to adopt this mask.

Looking through current procurement and tenders, the range of opportunities at the time of writing (July 2022) remains modest. Luxembourg appears to be procuring CBRN detection equipment and decontamination equipment, according to various sources. CBRN laboratory equipment appears to be sought by Hungary and CBRN training services are being sought by Romania. This correspondent has also heard talk of German procurement of CBRN equipment for civil defence in Germany. The aggregate value of all of these appears modest, and one awaits broader developments from the overall rise in defence spending.

EU CBRN Industrial Base

As various articles in this publication have been keen to note for a number of years, much of the world's industrial base and technical expertise in CBRN is based in Europe. The output, both economically and intellectually, of this CBRN industrial and technical base, has traditionally exceeded domestic European demand and competes well in the export market. For detailed analysis of the major sectors of the CBRN industry, this correspondent has done a number of sector-specific articles over the past five years, but it is worth a quick tour of the space as there are clearly Europe-based industry leaders.

Decontamination systems and solutions is a segment with three global leaders from Europe. Kärcher (DE), OWR (DE), and Cristanini (IT) are decontamination manufacturers with global uptake and firmly established European clients. Any uplift in CBRN spending will almost certainly increase business for all three. The detection instrument market also has European leaders. Military chemical warfare detection has consistently been a rivalry between Smiths Detection (UK) and Brüker (DE), with EnviroNics (FI) and Proengin (FR) somewhat behind them in size of market share. All of them produce chemical warfare agent detectors of hand-held size, as well as a variety of other detector systems. In terms of total units in service, Smiths by far is the chemical detection market leader with its LCD series of detectors.

Respiratory protection and CBRN protective clothing are a significant percentage of CBRN defence spending, both in Europe and in the broader export market. Avon Protection (UK), mentioned above, is one of the global leaders in this space. At Eurosatory this year, Avon also unveiled their "Exoskin" line of CBRN boots and gloves. Nonwovenn (UK) and OPEC-CBRNe (UK) are very active in the CBRN protective clothing arena. Blücher (GE) and Paul Boyé (FR) are very active in the suit manufacturing space. Dräger (DE) provides a wide range of gear in both civil and military market spaces.

Several larger defence conglomerates have branches or divisions that do some CBRN work, particularly Rheinmetall (DE) and Saab (SE). But there are a wide range of smaller firms in various segments of the European CBRN industrial space. Kromek (UK) and Serstech (SE) are merely two up and coming players in the detection segment. Various Czech firms leverage long-existing expertise left over from the Cold War. Some European firms have become world leaders in their specific CBRN niches. Bruhn Newtech (DK) is one of the finest vendor-neutral integrator of other manufacturers' CBRN detection systems. Hotzone Solutions (NL) is a world-class training provider, with access to live agent facilities in Czechia.

Conclusion

Roughly half of the world's CBRN budget and activity is in the North America market, but perhaps 25 per cent is in the broader European space, if history is our guide. The general consensus within the CBRN industry is that the conflict in Ukraine will result in somewhat increased CBRN industrial activity directly, but that there will likely be large opportunities in the following years as force modernisation and force expansion across Europe start to take hold. The only serious arguments and speculation will about what percentage of the general uplift will be devoted to CBRN.

How simulators are aiding the UK's counter-CBRN capabilities

By Steven Pike

Source: <https://www.argonelectronics.com/blog/how-simulators-are-aiding-the-uks-counter-cbrn-capabilities>

Preparing for the possibility of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) attack on British soil is something that has taken a back seat over the last couple of decades, with the UK's military efforts being largely focused on CBRN concerns in the Arab Gulf and Syria.

But as [David Oliver](#) outlined in an article for the Chemical, Biological and Nuclear Warfare magazine CBNW earlier this year, that focus had to be rapidly redirected in March 2018 in response to the Novichok [nerve agent](#) attack in Salisbury, Wiltshire.





AP2C-SIM – A simulation training system for the Proengin AP2C.

The UK's counter-CBRN response

As the severity of the Salisbury incident quickly became apparent, hundreds of military personnel from the British Army and Royal Air Force (RAF) were brought in to take control of the surrounding area and to remove material, under the direction of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

In addition, thirty-two members of the British Army's mounted counter-CBRN unit, the Falcon Area Survey and Reconnaissance Squadron, were called on to provide CBRN-specific expertise and tactical support.

At the time, the Falcon Squadron's unit comprised a team of just 70 and their fleet of 6x6 Fuchs TPz CBRN reconnaissance vehicles was known to be rapidly approaching obsolescence.

What the Salisbury incident demonstrated was just how important it is to maintain the highest-quality, UK-based CBRN expertise, training and equipment - and to ensure that the UK military is prepared and appropriately protected against the full range of CBRN threats.

In March 2018, the UK's Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced a [£48m investment](#) in a new Chemical Weapons Defence Centre located at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) at Porton Down.

One of the pivotal CBRN training events to result from this investment was [Exercise Toxic Dagger](#) - the UK's largest-ever chemical warfare training exercise of its kind - which took place on Salisbury Plain just eight weeks after the Novichok attack.

The launch of Exercise Toxic Dagger

Exercise Toxic Dagger offered an unprecedented CBRN training opportunity for the UK's armed forces.

Over the course of the three-week programme, 40 Commando Royal Marines participated in a vast array of scenarios designed to test their abilities in detecting, assessing and mitigating CBRN threats.

The highly realistic exercises were devised by CBRN specialists from the Dstl and the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) - including a range of Company-level attacks, comprising typical CBRN hazards, and a full-scale casualty treatment exercise.

Subsequent to the Salisbury incident, the Royal Marines 45 Commando has now also established Zulu Company - a specialist CBRN unit whose sole focus is the training and maintaining of chemical warfare skills.

The company continues to refresh its CBRN skills at the UK's specialist training centre at Westdown Camp on Salisbury Plain where the team takes part in a rigorous programme of classroom learning and hands-on exercises.



Hands-on chemical warfare training

A crucial aspect of practical CBRN-based training is having the opportunity to test and refresh operational skills in [realistic scenarios](#) that mirror the challenges and the unpredictability of real-life incidents.

Importantly too, it is vital that trainees are competent and confident in the use of their operational equipment.

The Smiths Detection LCD3.3, for example, is one of the most widely deployed chemical detection devices used by the armed forces to aid in the detection of chemical warfare agents (CWAs) and Toxic Industrial Chemicals (TICs.)

As CBRN instructors know all too well though, incorporating the use of actual chemical detector equipment into training exercises can be problematic. Even in cases where the smallest of quantities of chemical simulants are used, a training area can quickly become saturated and can pose a risk to both personnel and the environment.

In addition, the set-up time for such exercises can be onerous, the locations in which exercises can be safely conducted is tightly regulated, and the operational readiness of actual detectors can frequently be compromised.

These operational challenges can easily be averted however if actual detector equipment is replaced with a high-fidelity simulator detector.

The benefits of simulator-based training

By replacing the LCD3.3 with its [simulator equivalent](#), instructors can quickly and safely create realistic chemical scenarios that mimic the effects of chemical vapours, TICs and false positives and that accurately simulate contamination, decontamination and persistency.

Hands-on training is a vital aspect of CBRN preparedness - and providing CBRN teams with the opportunity to experience simulator tools that replicate their actual operational equipment is key to the success of that training.

Steven Pike is Founder and Managing Director of Argon Electronics (UK) Ltd, a world leader in the development and manufacture of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) and hazardous material (HazMat) detector simulators.

Japan is urged to correct attitude and eliminate legacy of chemical weapons asap

Source: http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2022-09/19/content_10185757.htm

Sep 19 – The Japanese side should have been soberly aware that it will not work if its words do not match with its actions on the issue of chemical weapons abandoned by Japanese in China during the Second World War (hereinafter referred to as "abandoned chemical weapons", ACWs) and tries to slip away unpunished. As long as those weapons have not been completely destroyed, the Chinese people will not give up holding it accountable, and the pressure from the international community on the Japanese side will also increase day by day. Recently, a delegation of more than 40 personnel, including Fernando Arias, Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and permanent diplomatic envoys or representatives of many countries to the OPCW, paid a virtual visit to China. During the visit, all parties listened to the briefing on the overall situation and the progress of destruction of ACWs, and took a virtue visit to Haerbaling, in Dunhua City, Northeast China's Jilin Province, the largest burial site of Japan's ACWs known so far in China. The delegation unanimously agreed that the Japanese side should attach great importance to the issue, completing the destruction as soon as possible, eliminating the harm to China, and making practical efforts to build a "chemical weapons-free world".

The Japanese invaders used quantities of chemical weapons in the war of aggression against China. Before its declaration of defeat, the Japanese side buried or dumped a large number of chemical weapons in rivers and lakes in order to cover up its crimes. As of today, the Japanese ACWs have been discovered in more than 120 locations in 18 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities in China once ravaged by the Japanese Aggression. There are as many as 330,000 chemical weapons found in Haerbaling alone. It is really astounding to have so many places with such a large number. Japanese ACWs are but one of the Japanese atrocities committed against China, which has long endangered the lives, health and ecological security of the people in relevant areas of China. China will eliminate Japanese ACWs in China and the legacy of the Japanese war of aggression against China in a thorough manner. This is a solemn commitment of the Chinese government to the Chinese people, and also an integral part of safeguarding the victory of the world's anti-fascist war. Since the 1990s, China and Japan have negotiated the destruction of AWCs. In 1997, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), came into force. With the great efforts of China and the strong support from the international community, the CWC has clearly



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stipulated that for the purpose of destroying abandoned chemical weapons, the Abandoning State Party shall provide all necessary financial, technical, expert, facility as well as other resources. Under strong political, legal and public pressure, the Japanese side had to bow its head and admit its mistake. China and Japan signed a memorandum in 1999 on the destruction of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan in China, indicating the disposal of Japanese ACWs has entered a substantive stage.

However, the disposal process has been stumbling all the way. According to the provisions of the CWC, Japan should have completed the destruction by 2007. However, the Japanese side has not paid enough attention as shown by insufficient investment



and weak will, and the destruction progress has seriously lagged behind. So far, only more than 60,000 pieces have been destroyed, and more than 90,000 pieces have been excavated and recovered. The results are not acceptable to the Chinese people or to the international community. Japan has not provided China with complete and accurate burial clues, with the total number and specific burial locations of the Japanese ACWs yet to be discovered. These ACWs have been underground for decades, causing a large amount of contaminated soil in urgent need of dealing with, while the Japanese side has shied away in every possible way, unwilling to take responsibility. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan. It is an important opportunity for the two sides to sum up history and create a future together. The issue of Japanese ACWs left behind serves as a ground to test whether Japan can face up to history, and also a touchstone to test whether Japan can truly contribute to regional peace, stability and development. The Japanese side should have been soberly aware that it will not work to try to say one thing and do another thing on the issue of Japanese ACWs left behind in China and try to slip away unpunished. As long as the Japanese chemical weapons could not be completely destroyed, the Chinese people will not give up holding it accountable, and the pressure from the international community on the Japanese side will also increase day by day. The CWC has been in force for 25 years. To solve the issue of Japanese ACWs and realize the vision of a "chemical weapons-free world" earlier have been a common voice of the international community. The Japanese side is thus supposed to earnestly increase its investment to eliminate the legacy of ACWs as soon as possible thoroughly to return to the Chinese people pure land, demonstrating the political will to fulfill its international obligations and the political courage to atone for its historical guilt.



022/23 CBRNe-related conferences

CBRNe Summit USA 2022

4-6 Oct 2022 | Denver, Colorado USA

<https://intelligence-sec.com/events/cbrne-summit-usa-2021-2-2/>

INTELLIGENCE-SEC

Our 2nd annual CBRNe Summit USA will be coming to Denver, CO on the 4th – 6th October 2022. This event brings together leading officials from the military, civil and scientific agencies to provide you will a full perspective on all CBRNe threats and challenges. Over the 2-day conference and exhibition you will hear different perspectives on CBRNe preparedness, resilience and response. With the world entering a new chapter with the global COVID pandemic behind us many governments are now seeing the importance to improve CBRNe capabilities to deal with a future pandemic.

CBRNe Summit USA will also focus on Colorado State CBRNe response capabilities and analyse the challenges they face across the State; Chem-Bio countermeasures and emergency response procedures and agency collaboration; First responder techniques and training to allow inter-agency response to CBRNe incidents; International CBRNe threats and response techniques and Military CBRNe capabilities and development.

To take part in our inaugural CBRNe Summit USA conference and exhibition as either a speaker, sponsor, exhibitor or delegate please contact us at events@intelligence-sec.com or call us at +44 7792 47 32 46.

**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!



Dear colleagues,

I am pleased and honoured to invite you to participate in the first edition of the Cannes International Resilience Forum (CIRF). CIRF is an international conference dedicated to crisis management and resilience, which will take place at the Palais des Festivals et des Congrès in Cannes from Sunday 23rd to Wednesday 26th, October 2022.

IsraTeam Ltd., established in Israel in 1988, has a renowned expertise in the field of emergency management and mitigation, particularly during times of war, natural disasters or terrorist attacks. Its team is comprised of highly qualified experts, including high ranking personnel in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and Ministry of Health.

Regarding the prevention and management of major risks, Cannes is a pioneer city as it was certified in 2018 by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs for its expertise in “preventing terror risk during the organisation of events”. In March 2021, the City of Cannes obtained an enlargement of this labelling to “sanitary and natural risk”, as part of the Ministry program meant to highlight the expertise of local authorities.

The first edition of the Cannes International Resilience Forum will focus on building resilience strategies to face the consequences of Covid-19 pandemic as well as on sanitary crisis management.

Main issues to be discussed at the conference will be - Building the Resilience today to be ready for the next generation and will dive into such topics as:

1. "COVID-19" – LESSONS LEARNT.
2. "POST – COVID-19 ERA" Health Systems Preparedness.
3. CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
4. The Mayor leadership
5. RADIOLOGICAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT
6. BUILDING RESILIENCE.
7. "THE CYBER WORLD" Threats and responses.
8. The Financial Challenge in a Disaster
9. The Functional Continuity in the Supply of electricity and Water
10. The Activity of First Responses
11. "THE WORLD TERRORISM" Counter terrorism and responses
12. Multidisciplinary Simulation Exercise Simulation systems to emergencies and crises events
13. TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION FOR BETTER RESILIENCE
14. The advance methodology to deal with MASS CASUALTY INCIDENT (MC)

Undoubtedly, the lessons learnt from COVID-19 Pandemic would be very useful for any case of mass disaster mitigation; it will be extremely crucial factor in any mitigation planning or crisis management in the future.

Your contribution to the conference will surely lead to a better understanding of the governing powers, the participants' roles, and the possibilities to be properly prepared in the future at the national and global levels.

General Abraham Bachar

Chair of the Cannes International Resilience Forum

Founder and CEO of IsraTeam

Former Chief of Staff, Israeli Home Front Command and

Former Head of the Israeli National Emergency

Management Agency.



3rd CBRN-E Forensic Course

Dates: 23 September – 02 October 2022

<https://www.cbrndefence.com/yazi/3-adli-kbrn-p-kursu>

Organized by:

In cooperation with CBRN Defense Policy Development Association & Forensic Scientists Association



Deadline for registration: September 25, 2022

Recent events including the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, the chemical attack on the Tokyo subway, the bioterrorist attacks after the September 11, 2001 attack, the chemical weapons used numerous times in our neighboring Syria, the nuclear power plant accidents, the misuse of radiation in our daily lives, the recent Russian-Ukrainian war where chemical and nuclear danger's been on agenda, and especially the COVID-19 pandemic, which is claimed to be a biological weapon, have shown that "Chemical Biological-Radiological and Nuclear" threat, called CBRN, will, unfortunately, increase in the coming years, perhaps this unseen dangerous agents will be used conflicts like wars and terrorist events. It shows us that it will increase the possibility of using advanced technological weapons insidiously. However, more importantly, the threat of CBRN weapons, which has evidently increased more in the Middle East geography, including our country, has taken its place in the asymmetric war/terror threat. Defense and protection against these events is a situation that not only the security forces react to but also all civilian citizens should know, and that forces us to increase our awareness and consciousness on this issue.

Based on the reasons mentioned above; As the Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Defense Policy Development Association (CBRN Defense Platform) together with the Forensic Scientists Association, we will organize an online 3rd CBRN-E Forensic course between September 23-October 02, 2022 to raise awareness of CBRN threat in our country and to increase the awareness of this danger.

The training of the 3rd of the Forensic CBRN-P course whose first two of which were held in the year 2001 with great attention will be delivered at a very sensitive period when our world is talking about CBRN threat. In this training course, our expert academicians' lectures will cover topics including Forensic Sciences, Food Safety, Food Defense and Agroterrorism, Bioterrorism, Chemical Warfare Agents, Weapons of Mass Destruction, CBRN-P Substances Usage Methods, Targets, Dissemination Devices, Bomb / Dirty Bomb, Radioactive threats, Radionuclear Accidents, and Incidents, Suspicious Biological Package, Crime Scene Investigation and Forensic CBRN (Dirty Evidence) Investigation Laboratory in CBRN-P Attacks, Toxic Industrial Chemicals, Emergency, and Disaster Management in CBRN Incidents, CBRN Crime Scene Management. During this course, applications like scenario-based interactive studies of referee/cross-examination and table-top exercises on CBRN event management will also be performed.

The lessons are 60 hours in total and will be held between 09.00-18.00 on weekends and between 18.00-23.00 on weekdays. Attending at least 70 percent of the courses and being successful in the exam is mandatory for certification. It is also mandatory to open the camera during the lesson. Since the course will be given in return for a donation, there is no refund.

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Sponsorship Registration Procedures:

Sponsorships from worldwide CBRN companies are kindly welcome for the 60-hour 3rd Forensic CBRN-E Course to be organized by the Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Defense Policy Development Association (CBRN Defense Platform) together with the Forensic Scientists Association.

GOLD SPONSORSHIP - 2000 USD

DURING THE 60-HOUR COURSE, THE SPONSORING COMPANY LOGO WILL BE PUBLISHED DURING THE ENTIRE PANEL PRESENTATIONS. THE SPONSORING COMPANY WILL ALSO BE PROMOTED AS ONE COURSE HOUR COMPANY PRESENTATION.

SILVER SPONSORSHIP - 1500 USD



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DURING THE 60-HOUR COURSE, THE SPONSORING COMPANY LOGO WILL BE PUBLISHED DURING THE ENTIRE PANEL PRESENTATIONS.

BRONZE SPONSORSHIP - 1000 USD

THE SPONSORING COMPANY WILL MAKE A ONE-HOUR PRESENTATION ABOUT THE COMPANY

Sponsorship fees will be deposited to the account of the Forensic Scientists Association, with the explanation of "Forensic CBRN Education Donation Gold/Silver/Bronze Sponsorship" to the IBAN address. Please contact us by e-mail or telephone before depositing. After the sponsorship process, Training materials will start to be sent to you and if you submit your mobile phone number, you will be registered to the 3rd Forensic CBRN-P whatsapp group.

Account Name: KİMYASAL BİYOLOJİK RADYOLOJİK NÜKLEER, QNB Finansbank Batıkent Şubesi (USD account)

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Turkish Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Defense Policy Development Association (CBRN Defence Platform)

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CBRNe Convergence 2022

CBRNe Convergence, 31 October - 2 November 2022 - Boston,
Massachusetts

<https://cbrneworld.com/events/cbrne-convergence-boston>

Sadly the pandemic dislocated our previous Boston event in 2020... so now we have had another two years to make this the best CBRN event that Boston has seen! Working closely with state and local agencies we are going to have a three-day event, with a larger range of pre-event workshops than ever before, a programme packed with international, national and regional speakers, a practical demo and the largest CBRNE exhibition in the US in 2022!

Massachusetts is dense with CBRN expertise, from local responders through to national labs, and CBRNe Convergence will pull on all of those strands. Set in downtown Boston, a short walk from historic Fenway Park, the 15th Annual CBRNe Convergence will be the definitive international CBRNE event in 2022. There'll be over 70 stands from all CBRNE elements, 40 speakers from Federal, State, Local and international agencies, and six workshops.

► Registration for CBRNe Convergence is now live, you can complete your registration [here](#)



<https://cbdstconference.com/>

The Chemical and Biological Defense Science & Technology (CBD S&T) Conference brings together the most innovative and influential chemical and biological defense community members from around the world to share insights and collaborative ideations on the pressing chem-bio threats of tomorrow.

Join the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's (DTRA) Chemical and Biological Technologies Department, in its role as the Joint Science and Technology Office

(JSTO) for the Chemical and Biological Defense Program, as we explore change-making concepts in the chem-bio defense landscape.

The 2022 CBD S&T Conference will be held December 6-9, 2022, at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, California.

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Why Attend?**STIMULATING LEARNING**

Hear from thought leaders and experts on the latest ideas and innovations in chem-bio defense research. Participants can look forward to thought-provoking keynote speakers, parallel sessions, special sessions, and hundreds of poster presentations.

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Learn about DTRA's current and upcoming research opportunities for small and large business, academia, and national laboratories directly from science and technology managers, small business contracting representatives, contracting officers, and program managers.

ENGAGING COLLABORATION

Connect with colleagues, exchange ideas, and discuss the common chem-bio defense issues we all face together. In fact, we encourage this important dialogue and camaraderie between scientists and researchers, government agencies, industry, and academia.

GET INSPIRED

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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

21-26 May: International CBRN Commandants and Commanders Conference (ICCC) 2023

Rotterdam, The Netherland

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



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BIO NEWS



Governments Discuss Bioterrorism – “Too Risky to Ignore”

Source: <https://i-hls.com/archives/111291>



Aug 22 – Pressure has ramped up globally for better biosafety and security over the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its impact could inspire “bad actors” to explore the potential of viruses as bioweapons, the British Army’s former chemical and nuclear weapons chief told telegraph.co.uk.

Research into viruses with pandemic potential should be policed in the same way as work on atomic bombs or sarin gas, said Hamish de-Bretton Gordon, now a biosecurity fellow at Cambridge University. With the ease of synthetic biology, bad actors could try and replicate COVID-19’s consequences for their own gains, a threat that cannot be ignored. “The chances of a deadly accident occurring is also too risky to ignore.” The risks must be better policed, either by extending the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to cover bioweapons, or by setting up a new organization. Others have called for a new body to mimic the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which monitors nuclear weapons.

Laboratories working around the world on dangerous pathogens study the threat to understand and mitigate it, but experts warn that it is up to nation-states to regulate the work. Biosafety levels, which run from one to four, monitor how safe a lab is and which pathogens it can study; biosecurity is more about protecting the lab from external bad actors seeking to access its work.

The explosion of gene-editing technologies, which can now be bought by mail-order, also needs to be monitored, experts argue.

The Worldwide Corona Crisis, Global Coup d'Etat Against Humanity

Destroying Civil Society, Engineered Economic Depression

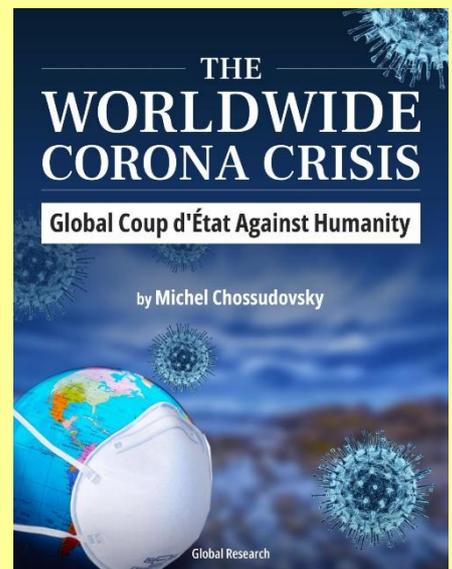
By Michel Chossudovsky

Source: <https://www.globalresearch.ca/new-pdf-ebook-the-worldwide-corona-crisis-global-coup-detat-against-humanity-by-michel-chossudovsky/5791054>

From the very outset in January 2020, people worldwide were led to believe and accept the existence of a rapidly progressing and dangerous epidemic. Media disinformation and the fear campaign were instrumental in sustaining the COVID-19 narrative.

Scientific lies and falsehoods have been used to sustain the legitimacy of the COVID-19 policy mandates including lockdowns, the imposition of the face mask, social distancing and the suppression of fundamental human rights.

People worldwide were led to believe that Big Pharma’s COVID-19 vaccine injections were the “solution”.



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – September 2022

A structure of “Global Governance” dominated by powerful financial interests is unfolding which undermines democracy and the institutions of civil society. More than 7 billion people worldwide are directly or indirectly affected by the corona crisis and the destructive mandates implemented by morally depraved national governments. The entire planet is in state of economic and social chaos.

Michel Chossudovsky reviews in detail how this insidious project “destroys people’s lives”. He provides a comprehensive analysis of everything you need to know about the “pandemic” — from the medical dimensions to the economic and social repercussions, political underpinnings, and mental and psychological impacts.

“My objective as an author is to inform people worldwide and refute the official narrative which has been used as a justification to destabilize the economic and social fabric of entire countries, followed by the imposition of the “deadly” COVID-19 “vaccine”. This crisis affects humanity in its entirety: almost 8 billion people. We stand in solidarity with our fellow human beings and our children worldwide. Truth is a powerful instrument.”

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Editor of Global Research. He has taught as visiting professor in Western Europe, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. He has served as economic adviser to governments of developing countries and has acted as a consultant for several international organizations. He is the author of eleven books including *The Globalization of Poverty and The New World Order* (2003), *America’s “War on Terrorism”* (2005), *The Global Economic Crisis, The Great Depression of the Twenty-first Century* (2009) (Editor), *Towards a World War III Scenario: The Dangers of Nuclear War* (2011), *The Globalization of War, America’s Long War against Humanity* (2015). He is a contributor to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. His writings have been published in more than twenty languages. In 2014, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit of the Republic of Serbia for his writings on NATO’s war of aggression against Yugoslavia.

Why the production of the monkeypox vaccine is so difficult

Source: <https://globeecho.com/news/europe/germany/why-the-production-of-the-monkeypox-vaccine-is-so-difficult/>

Aug 24 – After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, fears of a possible bioterrorist attack by viruses or other pathogens also increased in the United States. This prompted the US agency BARDA (Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority), which is part of the Ministry of Health, to also promote research in the field of long-forgotten diseases such as smallpox, which have been considered eradicated since 1980.

Among other things, the state authority supported the Danish-German biotech company Bavarian Nordic, which was researching the further development of the already known smallpox vaccine. With success: at the beginning of August, the company, based in Tuborg Havn north of Copenhagen, received approval from the EU Commission for its vaccine against monkeypox and is therefore still the only manufacturer of the preparation worldwide. In order to meet the demand, the group now wants to expand production. The company is currently planning to deliver around four million vaccine doses by the end of 2022 from batches that have been manufactured since May. “We will do everything we can to meet the high demand around the world,” said company boss Paul Chaplin.



However, the vaccine is not new. The vaccine was approved in the EU nine years ago – but at that time it was limited to use against conventional smallpox.

Large sums from the USA

Bavarian Nordic, which also maintains a large research facility in Martinsried near Munich, was founded in 1994 and initially focused primarily on cancer research. The history of the development of the vaccine only began when fear of bioterrorism increased in the USA after



September 11, says Gerd Sutter in an interview with *tagesschau.de*. The virologist and professor at the Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich has been researching vaccines and smallpox viruses for more than 30 years.

BARDA threw billions of dollars on the market to develop various vaccines and therapeutics in the early 2000s, Sutter said. They were intended to serve as a countermeasure to bioterrorism. There was nothing comparable anywhere in the world. “The development of Bavarian Nordic’s MVA-based smallpox vaccine was funded almost entirely by the United States.” The advanced smallpox vaccine is based on a modified form of the old vaccine virus, also known as the vaccinia virus. The adapted form is called Modified Vaccinia Ankara, MVA for short.

Business model that hasn’t been very attractive for a long time

In Germany, people played more at risk, says virologist Sutter. The old smallpox vaccine is still stored in sufficient numbers in Germany in the event of an outbreak. For a long time it was not foreseeable whether the vaccine would ever be needed again. For many companies, this was not an attractive business model. “That’s also the reason why Bavarian Nordic is currently relatively unrivaled on the market,” says Sutter.

In Europe, the monkeypox vaccine from the Danish-German company is called Imvanex. In the US and Canada it is marketed under the brand names Jynneos and Imvamune. However, the vaccine is not the same vaccine that was used against smallpox more than 40 years ago.

It has been known for decades that these old vaccines can cause strong and dangerous side effects, says Sutter. There was an interest in America to develop a more tolerable and modern smallpox vaccine, says Thomas Duschek of Bavarian Nordic *tagesschau.de*. It was a matter of national security for the US to have enough vaccine in case smallpox broke out again.

Modified vaccine with fewer side effects

According to Hartmut Hengel, virologist at the University Hospital Freiburg and head of the scientific advisory board at the Paul Ehrlich-Ehrlich Institute, the modified form has fewer side effects and “is therefore safer than the traditional vaccine”. People who have not yet been vaccinated against smallpox should receive two doses of the vaccine. In the case of people who have already been vaccinated, one can assume that a one-time booster vaccination with Imvanex is sufficient, according to Sutter.

Imvanex from Bavarian Nordic is the only vaccine against monkeypox that has been approved so far – and the demand is increasing. So far, the authorities have reported more than 40,000 confirmed cases from more than 80 countries. According to the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), more than 3,300 people in Germany have contracted the virus. The true number, says Hengel, is probably higher. If you want to catch the spread, you need a coordinated global vaccination strategy. The good news is that there is already a vaccine with a fairly good protective effect.

Orders worldwide

The EU has so far ordered more than 160,000 doses of the Imvanex vaccine. Most importantly, the US has secured vaccine doses. By next year alone, the United States will receive seven million doses, according to Duschek. Most of them are currently stored by Bavarian Nordic in Denmark and are gradually being shipped from there to the USA. When it comes to storage and transportation, Sutter says there are few concerns at the moment. The smallpox vaccine virus is very long-lasting and very durable. However, the requirements of the current approval must be observed.

The vaccine is stored at a temperature of minus 20 to minus 50 degrees, says Duschek. But if you use the vaccine directly, you can also thaw it. But then it has to be used within days or weeks.

Quantity increase not easily possible

Bavarian Nordic can produce around 30 million doses of the vaccine annually – at least in theory, says Duschek. So far, the company had planned to make 1.5 to two million doses available this year – which is now to be increased to around four million. The manufacturer is also examining the possible use of cans with an expired use-by date.

From the point of view of the Freiburg virologist Hengel, the vaccine cannot easily be produced inexpensively in large quantities. It is a sophisticated vaccine in which an increase in production is not as easy to handle as, for example, with the mRNA vaccines against corona. The vaccine virus has to be grown in cell cultures, and that is much more complex.

Distribution across the federal states

Producing the vaccine from scratch is a sensitive process, says Duschek from Bavarian Nordic. He estimates that it will take between six and twelve months to implement the



process in new plants. The biotech company is currently in talks with other contract manufacturers to further increase capacity. From the fall, an American manufacturer should help to fill the vaccine.

In Germany, according to the RKI, the vaccine doses are distributed by the federal states due to the limited availability. The vaccine against monkeypox has already been vaccinated in Brandenburg, Hamburg and Bavaria, and some practices in Berlin are already offering the Imvanex vaccine.

How much the company can make from selling the cans depends on what's being negotiated in each state, the quantity ordered, and the length of the contracts, Showerk says. The company's long-term relationship with the United States means that US pricing differs from that of the EU. There is currently no commercial market, so Duschek. One is currently only negotiating with states about deliveries.

Vaccine also against Ebola

But the biotech company's business isn't just limited to smallpox. In the past, it researched, among other things, a vaccine against rabies. Together with Johnson & Johnson, Bavarian Nordic also developed a vaccine against Ebola. In the corona pandemic, the company, like many other vaccine manufacturers, expanded its business to include corona vaccines.

Briton Paul Chaplin has been at the helm of Bavarian Nordic for eight years. Last year, the biotech company achieved more than 50 percent of its sales with the sale of smallpox and Ebola vaccines – a value that is likely to increase significantly this year. In 2021, the income from the sale of the smallpox vaccine, which went mainly to the USA, was the equivalent of almost 100 million euros.

Tomato flu outbreak in India

By Vivek P Chavda, Kaushika Patel, and Vasso Apostolopoulos

The Lancet, Respiratory Medicine | August 17, 2022

Source: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(22\)00300-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(22)00300-9/fulltext)



Aug 17 – Just as we are dealing with the probable emergence of fourth wave of COVID-19, a new virus known as tomato flu, or tomato fever, has emerged in India in the state of Kerala in children younger than 5 years.¹

The rare viral infection is in an endemic state and is considered non-life-threatening; however, because of the dreadful experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, the vigilant management is desirable to prevent further outbreaks.²

Although the tomato flu virus shows symptoms similar to those of COVID-19 (both are associated with fever, fatigue, and bodyaches initially, and some patients with COVID-19 also report rashes on the skin), the virus is not related to SARS-CoV-2. Tomato flu could be an after-effect of chikungunya or dengue fever in children rather than a viral infection.^{3, 4}

The virus could also be a new variant of the viral hand, foot, and mouth disease, a common infectious disease targeting mostly children aged 1–5 years and immunocompromised adults, and some case studies have even shown hand, foot, and mouth disease in immunocompetent adults.⁵

Tomato flu is a self-limiting illness and no specific drug exists to treat it.

The tomato flu was first identified in the Kollam district of Kerala on May 6, 2022, and as of July 26, 2022, more than 82 children younger than 5 years with the infection have been reported by the local government hospitals.⁶

The other affected areas of Kerala are Anchal, Aryankavu, and Neduvathur. This endemic viral illness triggered an alert to the neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Additionally, 26 children (aged 1–9 years) have been reported as having the disease in Odisha by the Regional Medical Research Centre in Bhubaneswar. To date, apart from Kerala, Tamilnadu, and Odisha, no other regions in India have been affected by the virus. However, precautionary measures are being taken by the Kerala Health Department to monitor the spread of the viral infection and prevent its spread in other parts of India.

The primary symptoms observed in children with tomato flu are similar to those of chikungunya, which include high fever, rashes, and intense pain in joints.⁷

Tomato flu gained its name on the basis of the eruption of red and painful blisters throughout the body that gradually enlarge to the size of a tomato. These blisters resemble those seen with the monkeypox virus in young individuals.^{8, 9}

Rashes also appear on the skin with tomato flu that lead to skin irritation. As with other viral infections, further symptoms include, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, dehydration, swelling of joints, body aches, and common influenza-like symptoms, which are similar to those manifested in dengue.¹⁰

In children with these symptoms, molecular and serological tests are done for the diagnosis of dengue, chikungunya, zika virus, varicella-zoster virus, and herpes;¹¹ once these viral infections are ruled out, contraction of tomato virus is confirmed. Because tomato flu is similar to chikungunya and dengue as well as hand, foot, and mouth disease, treatment is



also similar—ie, isolation, rest, plenty of fluids, and hot water sponge for the relief of irritation and rashes. Supportive therapy of paracetamol for fever and bodyache and other symptomatic treatments are required.

Children are at increased risk of exposure to tomato flu as viral infections are common in this age group and spread is likely to be through close contact. Young children are also prone to this infection through use of nappies, touching unclean surfaces, as well as putting things directly into the mouth. Given the similarities to hand, foot, and mouth disease, if the outbreak of tomato flu in children is not controlled and prevented, transmission might lead to serious consequences by spreading in adults as well.

Similar to other types of influenza, tomato flu is very contagious. Hence, it is mandatory to follow careful isolation of confirmed or suspected cases and other precautionary steps to prevent the outbreak of the tomato flu virus from Kerala to other parts of India. Isolation should be followed for 5–7 days from symptom onset to prevent the spread of infection to other children or adults. The best solution for prevention is the maintenance of proper hygiene and sanitisation of the surrounding necessities and environment as well as preventing the infected child from sharing toys, clothes, food, or other items with other non-infected children.

Drug repurposing and vaccination are the most efficacious and cost-effective approaches to ensure the safety of public health from viral infections, especially in children, older people, immunocompromised people, and those with underlying health issues. As yet, no antiviral drugs or vaccines are available for the treatment or prevention of tomato flu. Further follow-up and monitoring for serious outcomes and sequelae is needed to better understand the need for potential treatments.

'Tomato fever' is misleading name for Hand Foot and Mouth Disease, says expert

Source: <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/tomato-fever-is-misleading-name-for-hand-foot-and-mouth-disease-says-expert-11661076331926.html>



Aug 21 – Medical professionals have called 'tomato fever' a misleading colloquial name for Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) and have raised concern about its possibility of creating panic among people

After the alert issued by Lancet health magazine on the rising cases of tomato fever or tomato flu in India, medical professionals have called it a misleading colloquial name for Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD), reported ANI. Dr.

Rajeev Jayadevan, co-chairman of IMA's National task force on Covid-19 said, "Tomato fever is a misleading colloquial name for hand, foot, and mouth disease. This is a mild viral illness commonly affecting young children typically below age 10. It is usually caused by a Coxsackie virus."



► Notably, the count of people infected with the [HFMD virus reached 82 on Sunday.](#)



Symptoms of the infection

Talking about the symptoms of HFMD, Dr Jayadevan informed that many people call it tomato fever because of the red spots it produces on the skin. It took no time for the name to gain popularity among people. But he cautioned that it is not a good idea to use such a name for a disease that has hardly any association with tomatoes. The name 'tomato fever' can lead to people mistakenly believe that it comes from tomatoes. Health experts also cited some publications in Kerala that referred to the endemic disease as tomato fever. On this Dr Dhiren Gupta, Senior Consultant of Sir Gangaram Hospital, highlighted the fact that the community is just recovering from Covid pandemic, and is very sensitive to new endemics. News of the break out of Tomato flu can cause panic among people. That's why he suggested checking facts about the disease.

"It looks like it's a form of hand, foot, mouth disease with additional symptoms of joint pains and high-grade fever. Anyway hand foot mouth disease itself is a syndrome which can be caused by different enteroviruses. Symptoms vary from type of virus, age group and immunity status of the patient. In general, it's not life-threatening in the general population," Dhiren Gupta said.

The fever can also cause rashes to appear on hands, feet and buttocks and can also cause ulcers in the mouth.

How much contagious is HFMD?

HFMD is highly contagious. It can easily spread from human secretion (especially nose and throat), close contact, etc. A person who comes into contact of an infected person is likely to get contracted with the infection. "It spreads from person to person just like a common cold, through contact with the patient's secretions including stool, for example during a diaper change in child care facilities," said Dr Rajeev Jayadevan. To avoid getting contracted with HFMD, Dr. Rajeev suggests the most common but highly effective measures like regular hand washing, maintenance of hygiene, etc. According to him, the infection can be handled through normal supportive treatment and it is very rare to experience any kind of complications.

"Likely this correspondence must be sent for publication in early part June when an epidemic of HFMD was just started and clinicians were not aware about likely epidemic (all over India this disease is there) termed this as tomato because of its lesions. In conclusion, there is no need to panic for anyone. More definitive studies are required," said Dr Dhiren.

Lancet Study on HFMD

According to the Lancet study, tomato fever broke out in India mainly among children. So far more than 80 cases have been registered. Mostly, children below the age of 5 years are getting contracted with the virus.

"The rare viral infection is in an endemic state and is considered non-life-threatening; however, because of the dreadful experience of the Covid19 pandemic, vigilant management is desirable to prevent further outbreaks," reads the study.



Malaria Protection Conferred by Genetically Engineered Whole-Parasite Vaccine

Source: <https://www.genengnews.com/topics/drug-discovery/malaria-protection-conferred-by-genetically-engineered-whole-parasite-vaccine/>



Aug 25 – Results from a controlled human malaria infection (CHMI) trial show that a new type of vaccine for malaria protects healthy volunteers from infection. The researchers deleted three genes from the malaria-causing parasite *Plasmodium falciparum*, and then delivered the vaccine—the genetically attenuated parasite—to healthy volunteers through hundreds of mosquito bites. The vaccine elicited antibodies that blocked infection and was shown to be safe and protective for at least one month.

The study was led by Lisa Jackson, MD, senior investigator at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute, and Stefan Kappe, PhD, principal investigator at Seattle Children's Research Institute and the University of Washington, and was published in a *Science Translational Medicine* article entitled, "[A genetically engineered *Plasmodium falciparum* parasite vaccine provides protection from controlled human malaria infection.](#)"

Malaria is a leading cause of illness and death worldwide, especially in young children and pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa. [According to the World Health Organization](#), about 240 million people had malaria in 2020 and about 627,000 of them died.

[Vaccines](#) are critical for controlling and eradicating the disease. The recently approved RTS,S vaccine (Mosquirix), which is based on subunits of proteins that are expressed by the parasite during early infection, provides limited protection against naturally transmitted malaria.

Instead of protein subunits, the researchers in the current study used whole *P. falciparum* parasites that they had weakened by genetic engineering. These genetically attenuated



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parasites (GAPs) contain deletions in the P52, P36, and SAP1 genes, which are essential for establishing infections in humans. The vaccine is named PfGAP3KO, which stands for *Plasmodium falciparum* GAP with three knockouts (deletions).

The researchers set out to evaluate the PfGAP3KO vaccine by CHMI in malaria-naïve subjects. They administered the vaccine through either three or five immunizations to 16 healthy volunteers, who received the vaccine through mosquitoes infected with PfGAP3KO. The vaccine was safe and well-tolerated, as the volunteers showed only localized rashes and general malaise likely related to the large number of mosquito bites required for vaccine administration.

One month after the last immunization, the volunteers were then exposed to bites from mosquitoes carrying fully infectious *P. falciparum* parasites. Half of the volunteers showed no evidence of infection in the blood after 28 days, and one of the protected participants remained completely protected against infection after a second exposure six months later.

"In conclusion, our study establishes a proof of concept for the safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy of PfGAP3KO," the researchers wrote, indicating that it warrants further clinical trial investigation.

Because of the mosquito bite delivery method, the exact dose of PfGAP3KO administered in the current study was unknown. "Furthermore, the predominant AEs [adverse events] observed in our study were related to the mosquito bite administration and transition to DVI [direct venous injection] will reduce such AEs," they wrote. "Thus, an aseptic, purified, cryopreserved, vialled, and DVI-administered formulation PfGAP3KO will allow for safe and precise dose-finding trials to achieve complete sterilizing protection with this candidate vaccine."

Future studies also will help answer lingering questions about the vaccine's mechanisms and effects on T cells, the authors noted.

COVID Incubation Periods Have Fallen Over Time

Source: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/979644>



Aug 23 – The incubation period from infection to symptoms or a first positive COVID-19 test has decreased as the coronavirus has evolved, dropping from 5 days to 3.5 days, according to a [new study](#) published in *JAMA Network Open*. With the Alpha variant, the incubation period was about 5 days, which fell to 4.5 for Beta, 4.41 for Delta, and 3.42 for Omicron.

"Knowledge of the disease's incubation period is of great significance for case definition, management of emerging threats, estimation of the duration of follow-up for contact tracing and secondary case detection, and the establishment of public health programs aimed at reducing local transmission," the study authors wrote.

Researchers at Peking University and Tsinghua University in China analyzed 142 studies published between December 2019 and February 2022. The studies included data about more than 8,100 COVID-19 patients.

Most of the studies (65.5%) were done between January and March 2020, and 76.1% were done in China. The remaining studies came from multiple countries or were based in Australia, France, India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Vietnam.

About 84% of the studies included patients infected with the wild-type (or non-mutated) COVID strain, while 3.5% included patients infected with multiple strains, and 7.7% involved unknown strains.

Among the studies, 45 were considered to have strong evidence, 82 were moderate, and 15 were weak.

Overall, the average incubation period of all the variants was 6.57 days, ranging from 1.8 to 18.87 days. Among people ages 60 and older, the average incubation was 7.43 days. Among children, the average incubation period was 8.82 days.

The incubation period was about 7 days among those with mild or moderate illness and 6.7 days among those with severe illness.

The average incubation periods fell over time with each new variant, the study authors found. For Alpha, which had one study with 6,374 patients, the incubation period was about 5 days. For Beta, which had one study with 10 patients, the incubation period was 4.5 days. For Delta, which had six studies with 2,368 patients, the incubation period was 4.41 days. For Omicron, which had five studies with 829 patients, the incubation period was 3.42 days.

"The findings of this study suggest that SARS-CoV-2 has evolved and mutated continuously throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, producing variants with different enhanced transmission and virulence," the study authors wrote. "Identifying the incubation period of different variants is a key factor in determining the isolation period."

COVID-19 appears to have a longer incubation time than other viral respiratory infections, they noted, including human coronavirus or [upper respiratory tract infection](#) (3.2 days); [influenza A](#) (1.43 to 1.64 days); parainfluenza or [bronchitis](#) (2.6 days); respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV (4.4 days); rhinovirus, or the common cold (1.4 days); and [severe acute respiratory syndrome](#), or SARS (4 days).

Two weeks ago, the CDC [released guidance](#) that said close contacts of COVID-19 patients no longer need to quarantine. Instead, they should wear a high-quality mask for 10 days and



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get tested 5 days after exposure. Infected people should isolate for at least 5 days after a positive test. But based on the assumption that the COVID-19 incubation period ranges from 1 to 14 days, some countries and the World Health Organization still recommend close contacts to isolate for 14 days, the study authors wrote. "With the shortening of the incubation period of new variants, the isolation period can be adjusted appropriately to reduce the pressure on the health system," they said.

Monkeypox Antiviral Originated as Post-9/11 Bioterrorism Defense

Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/monkeypox-antiviral-originated-as-post-9-11-bioterrorism-defense-11661400471>

Aug 25 – In the aftermath of 9/11, [SIGA Technologies](#) Inc. started work on a drug it hoped would never be used. Now, Tpoxx is playing a surprising role as one of the few available treatments thought to be effective against monkeypox. SIGA's employees spent nearly two decades developing Tpoxx to treat smallpox in case of a bioterrorism attack. [Monkeypox is a related virus](#) that is mainly infecting men in the U.S. and other countries who have sex with men.

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Like [Bavarian Nordic](#) AS, the [only maker of a vaccine](#) licensed for monkeypox, SIGA is largely alone on one front of the response to an epidemic that has caused more than 13,500 cases in the U.S.

The company said it is juggling calls from governments around the world, leading to \$60 million in Tpoxx orders from places including Europe and Canada. SIGA's market value has more than doubled this year to \$1.54 billion. SIGA Chief Executive Officer Phil Gomez compared the experience to being a reserve player on a team that has made it to the championships.

"All of a sudden you have to be ready to get on the court," he said.

U.S. officials have made Tpoxx available for seriously ill monkeypox patients, drawing on its stockpile of 1.7 million treatment courses that it acquired in the event of a smallpox outbreak. The Biden administration said it would make available 50,000 treatment courses to local health departments this week in addition to 20,000 courses sent previously.

SIGA relies on partners including [Catalent Inc.](#) to make the pills and Packaging Coordinators Inc. to bottle and box them. Tpoxx was approved in the U.S. to treat smallpox in 2018. Because Tpoxx hasn't been approved to treat monkeypox, it isn't always easy for infected patients to get it.

Under special protocols created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Tpoxx can be used to treat patients with severe symptoms, which can include bleeding and [excruciatingly painful sores](#) on the genitals. Doctors and support staff have to submit paperwork on each patient they treat and conduct patient follow-up visits.

Tpoxx never underwent human testing because smallpox was eradicated decades ago. Instead, the drug was tested in animals against viruses from the same genus as smallpox, including in monkeys with monkeypox.

The data showed that monkeys given a lethal dose of monkeypox were saved when given Tpoxx, said SIGA Chief Scientific Officer Dennis Hruby, who works from his home in Bend, Ore. Most of SIGA's employees work at the company's research-and-development facilities



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in Corvallis, Ore., near Oregon State University, where Dr. Hruby previously served as chairman of the microbiology department. SIGA, which has its corporate headquarters in New York City, was founded in 1995 to develop a strep-throat vaccine using technology created by founding scientists Vincent Fischetti at Rockefeller University in New York and Dr. Hruby.

By 2001, SIGA shares were faltering, and the company was largely relying on grants from the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Hruby said. After Sept. 11, the federal government made billions of dollars in new research funding available for biodefense research. SIGA shifted its focus to drugs and vaccines that could be used in the event of a bioterrorism attack. SIGA was awarded more than \$1 billion in government contracts to develop a smallpox drug and manufacture it for the U.S. stockpile.

SIGA acquired the rights to Tpoxx in 2004. The drug appeared to be effective against smallpox in laboratory testing, but animal studies looked less promising, said Dr. Hruby. The company bet that it might bring the drug to market if it could figure out dosing, he said. “We were developing a drug for a disease that doesn’t exist,” said Dr. Hruby. “It took a long time to figure out.”

SIGA’s phones began ringing soon after the monkeypox virus was detected [in the U.K. in May](#). Doctors outside the U.S. asked how to obtain Tpoxx. U.S. doctors had questions about administering the drug, which typically requires six pills daily over two weeks. To boost the drug’s effectiveness, patients take the pills after a high-fat meal.

Dr. Gomez said he fielded a Saturday-night phone call in May from a European public-health official eager to obtain Tpoxx doses as cases mounted in the official’s country. It took two months of wrangling with the country’s contracting officials to secure the order.

Tpoxx appears to be safe, and the animal data supports its use as an antiviral against monkeypox, doctors said. Doctors reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on Monday that among 25 patients treated with Tpoxx from early June to mid-August, [40% had their lesions healed](#) after one week and 92% had their lesions healed and were without pain within three weeks. The study’s authors said large-scale studies are needed to determine whether patients recover because of the drug or the natural course of disease.

Because the drug hasn’t been proven to work in humans, the CDC requires that doctors collect and submit data from patients and have at least two follow-up visits with patients who have been prescribed the drug, even if they are feeling better.

The U.K. approved Tpoxx to treat monkeypox in July, and the European Medicines Agency approved it in January for smallpox, monkeypox and cowpox. The U.S. is unlikely to authorize Tpoxx formally for monkeypox before it sees human study data, which could start coming in by the end of this year, SIGA executives said. A U.S. study is being planned by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, a spokeswoman said. Oxford University researchers in the U.K. [began a study this month](#).

“It is really important to know whether or not this drug works,” said Jason Zucker, an assistant professor of medicine at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, which has prescribed Tpoxx to more than 100 patients.

Did you know?

16.3 million working-age Americans currently have long COVID. Among those people, 2 to 4 million are out of work due to the condition, new [Brookings](#) research shows.

Unusual Toxic Components Found in COVID Vaccines, ‘Without Exception’: German Scientists

By Enrico Trigoso

Source: https://www.theepochtimes.com/mkt_app/unusual-toxic-components-found-in-covid-vaccines-without-exception-german-scientists_4673873.html

Aug 26 – A group of independent German scientists found toxic components—mostly metallic—in all the COVID vaccine samples they analyzed, “without exception” using modern medical and physical measuring techniques.

The Working Group for COVID Vaccine Analysis says that some of the toxic elements found inside the AstraZeneca, Pfizer, and Moderna vaccine vials were not listed in the ingredient lists from the manufacturers.

The following metallic elements were found in the vaccines:

- Alkali metals: caesium (Cs), potassium (K)
- Alkaline earth metals: calcium (Ca), barium (Ba)
- transition metals: cobalt (Co), iron (Fe), chromium (Cr), titanium (Ti)
- Rare earth metals: cerium (Ce), gadolinium (Gd)
- Mining group/metal: aluminum (Al)
- Carbon group: silicon (Si) (partly support material/slide)



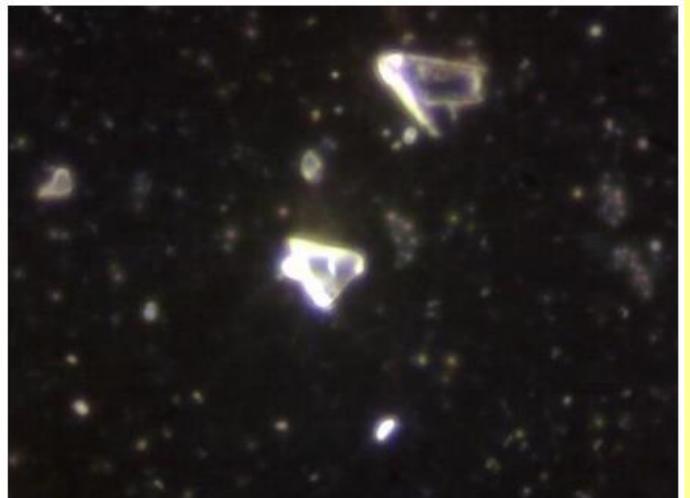
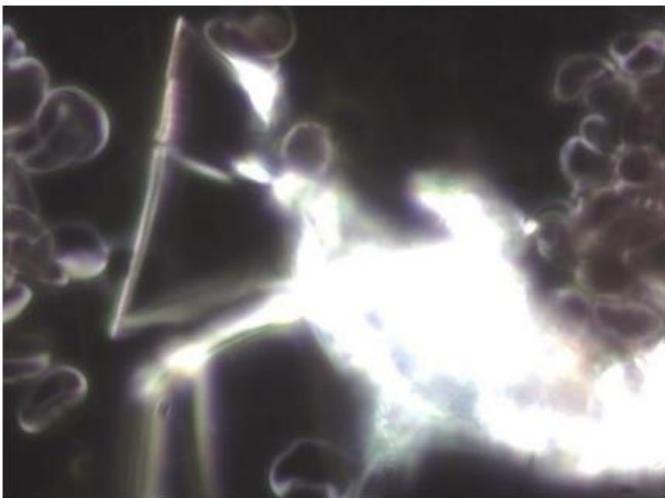
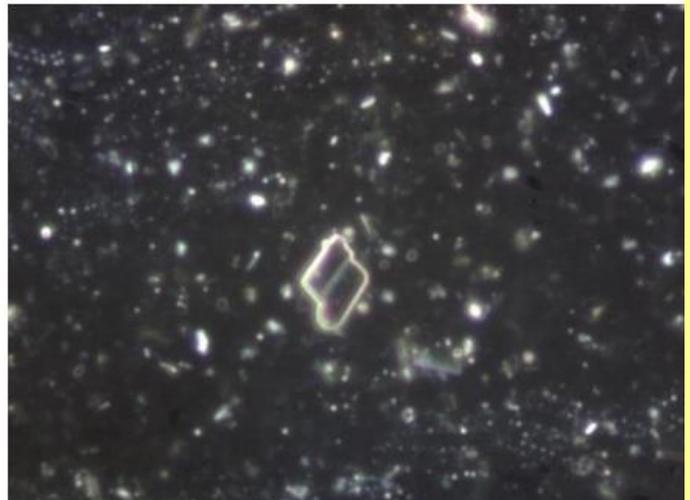
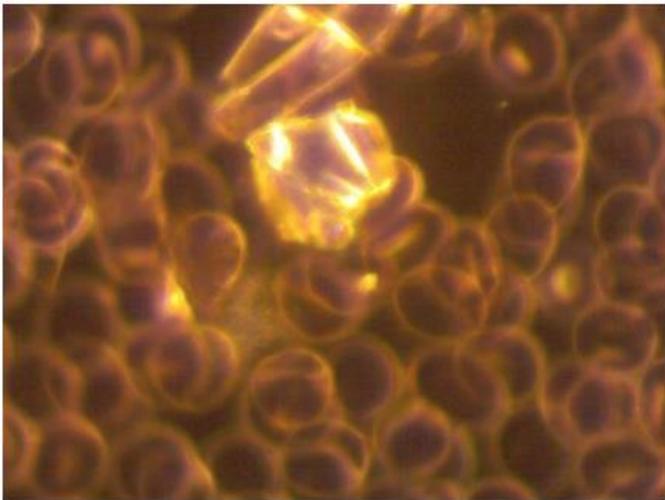
- Oxygen group: sulphur (S)

These substances, furthermore, “are visible under the dark-field microscope as distinctive and complex structures of different sizes, can only partially be explained as a result of crystallization or decomposition processes, [and] cannot be explained as contamination from the manufacturing process,” the researchers found.

They declared [the findings](#) as preliminary.

The findings “build on the work of other researchers in the international community who have described similar findings, such as Dr. Young, Dr. Nagase, Dr. Botha, Dr. Flemming, Dr. Robert Wakeling, and Dr. Noak,” Dr. Janci Lindsay, Ph.D., a toxicologist not involved in the study, told The Epoch Times.

“The number and consistency of the allegations of contamination alone, coupled with the eerie silence from global safety and regulatory bodies, is troublesome and perplexing in terms of ‘transparency’ and continued allegations by these bodies that the genetic vaccines are ‘safe,’” Lindsay added.



Comparison of crystals in the blood and in the vaccine; on the left, crystalline formations are found in the blood of test subjects vaccinated with Comirnaty ([BioNTech/Pfizer](#)), the images on the right show that these types of crystals are also found in Comirnaty vaccines. (Courtesy of Helen Krenn)

Helena Krenn, the group’s founder, submitted the findings to German government authorities for review.

“We had submitted it to the participants of the government and further addresses from newspapers with the platform open-debate.eu, only in Germany, Austria, and Suisse,” Krenn told The Epoch Times. Two other important findings were that blood samples from the vaccinated had “marked changes” and that more side effects were observed in proportion to “the stability of the envelope of lipid nanoparticles.”



A lipid nanoparticle is an extremely small particle, a fat-soluble membrane that is the cargo of the messenger RNA (mRNA).

Methodology

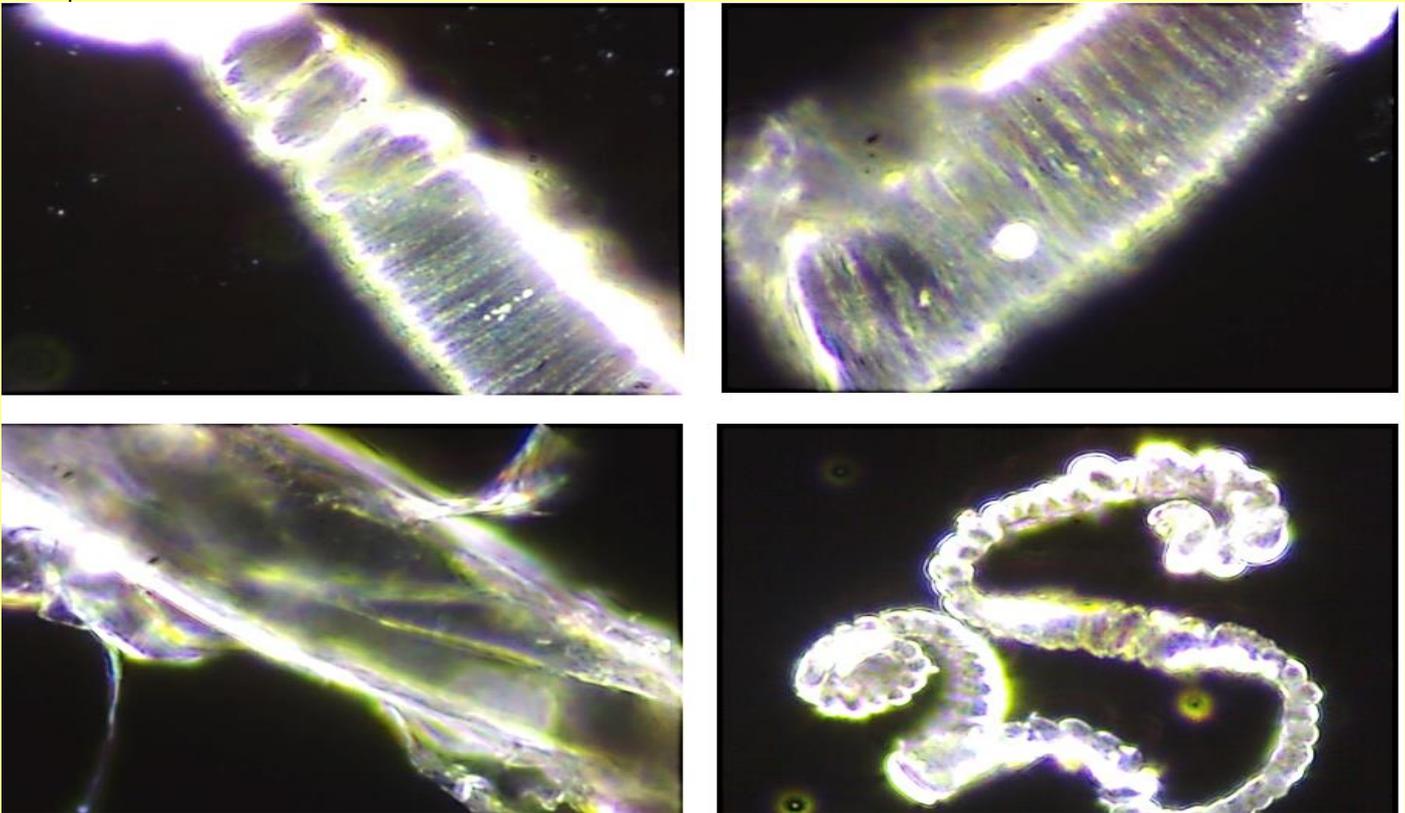
“Using a small sample of live blood analyses from both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, we have determined that artificial intelligence (AI) can distinguish with 100% reliability between the blood of the vaccinated and the unvaccinated. This indicates that the COVID-19 vaccines can effect long-term changes in the composition of the blood of the person vaccinated without that person being aware of these changes,” the study states.

The findings of acute and chronic physiological changes to the blood of those inoculated with the vaccines, consistently discerned via AI software, “also echoes the findings of many other researchers and support the contentions of contamination and/or adulteration,” Lindsay said.

“We have established that the COVID-19 vaccines consistently contain, in addition to contaminants, substances the purpose of which we are unable to determine,” their study says.

The group consists of 60 members, including physicians, physicists, chemists, microbiologists, and alternative health practitioners, supported by lawyers and psychologists.

They said that critics of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines “have been publicly defamed, ostracised and economically ruined,” and as such, “contrary to the customary practice in science, we have decided to protect ourselves by remaining anonymous as authors of this report.”



Anomalous objects in **Johnson & Johnson's Janssen** vector vaccine. It should be noted that objects of this type were not found in all of the samples. (Courtesy of Helen Krenn)

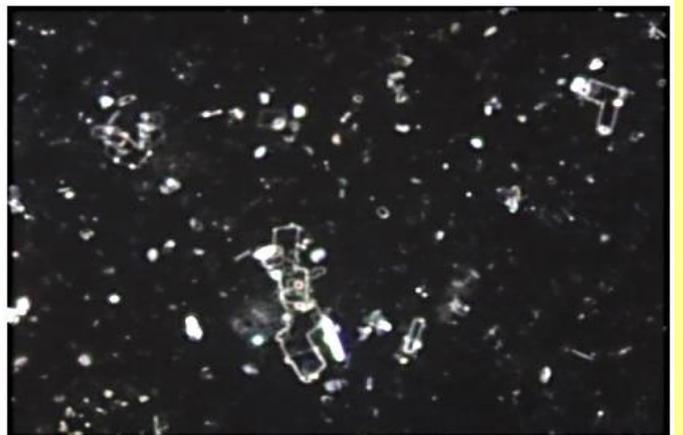
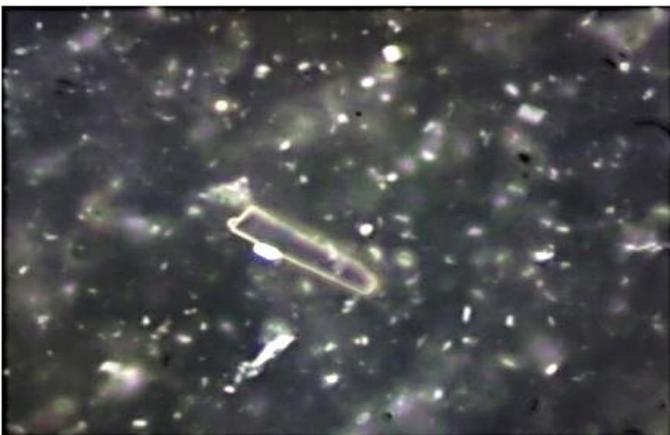
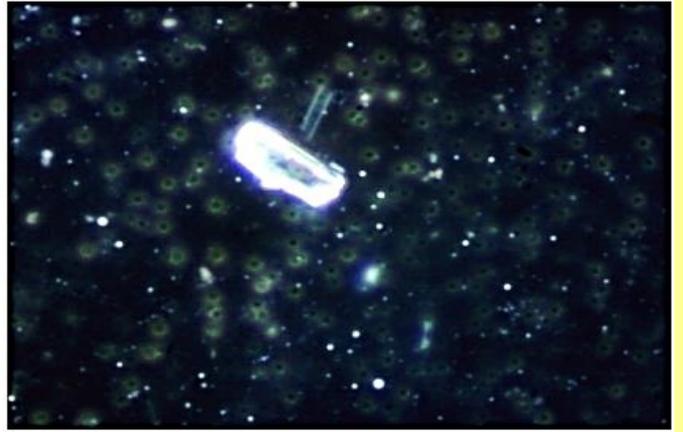
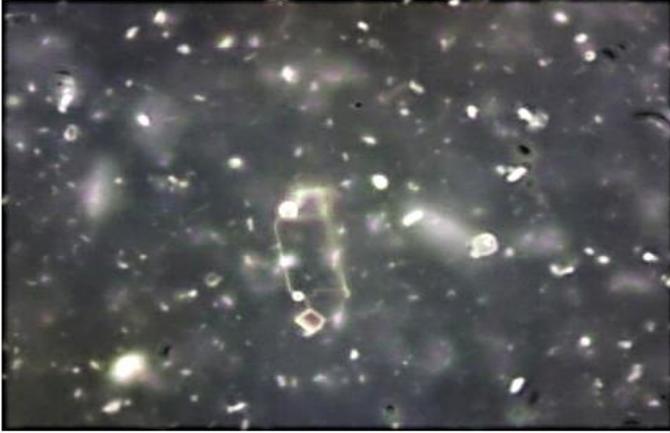
The scientists claim that their results have been cross-confirmed using the following measuring techniques: “Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM), Energy Dispersive X-ray Spectroscopy (EDX), Mass Spectroscopy (MS), Inductively Coupled Plasma Analysis (ICP), Bright Field Microscopy (BFM), Dark Field Microscopy (DFM) and Live Blood Image Diagnostics, as well as analysis of images using Artificial Intelligence.”

The analysts explain that they have been cooperating with other groups in different countries that have been executing similar investigations and have obtained results consistent with their own. “The results from our analysis of the vaccines can, consequently, be regarded as cross-validated,” the summary report of their findings states.



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“It should be acknowledged of course that [German Working Group’s] work is described as ‘Preliminary Findings,’ not yet published in a peer-reviewed journal and that chain of custody as well as the identity of many of these scientists is unknown. However, in this heavily charged and censored climate when it comes to any challenges to the ‘safety and efficacy’ of the genetic vaccines, I myself can attest to the difficulties in conducting the basic research, much less publishing that same research in a peer-reviewed journal, in order to get at these questions as well as disseminate the findings,” Lindsay said.



The Comirnaty vaccine from [BioNTech/Pfizer](#) exhibits a diversity and large number of unusual objects. The vast number of crystalline platelets and shapes can hardly be interpreted as impurities. They appear regularly and in large numbers in all samples. (Courtesy of Helen Krenn)

Astra Zeneca, Moderna, Pfizer, and J&J did not respond to a request for comment.



This Is Not the Monkeypox That Doctors Thought They Knew

Source: <https://news.yahoo.com/not-monkeypox-doctors-thought-knew-142944304.html>



Aug 27 – Early in the monkeypox outbreak, a man in his 20s arrived at an emergency department in Northern California, tiny blisters on his lips, hands and back. Within 12 hours, doctors diagnosed him with monkeypox.

That's where their certainty ended. The patient did not have fever, aches, weakness, pain or other symptoms typical of the disease. He did not know when or how he had become infected. He had not had sexual contact with anyone for months, he said, and had not touched — as far as he knew — anyone with pox, as the lesions are called, or other symptoms.

At the onset of the outbreak, scientists thought they knew when and how the monkeypox virus was spread, what the disease looked like and who was most vulnerable. The 47,000 cases identified worldwide have upended many of those expectations.

Monkeypox patients have turned up with what looked like mosquito bites, pimples or ingrown hairs, not the large pustules usually associated with the infection. Some did not even have visible lesions but felt excruciating pain when swallowing, urinating or emptying their bowels.

Some had headaches or depression, confusion and seizures. Others had severe eye infections or inflammation of the heart muscle. At least three of the six deaths reported so far were linked to encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain.

"We really are seeing a very, very wide range of presentation," said Dr. Boghuma Titanji, an infectious-disease physician at a clinic in Atlanta that serves people living with HIV.

Scientists now know that the monkeypox virus lurks in saliva, semen and other bodily fluids, sometimes for weeks after recovery.

The virus has always been known to spread through close contact, but many researchers suspect the infection may also be transmitted through sex itself.

The California patient had virus in his throat, but no respiratory symptoms, and in his rectum, but without pain or pox. The case underscores other research suggesting that the virus may be spread even by people with atypical or asymptomatic infections, said Dr. Abraar Karan, who diagnosed the patient and published a recent case report.

In another study, also published this month, anal swabs of 200 men without symptoms turned up 13 who were positive for monkeypox. Only two of them later developed symptoms.

"It's no longer correct to say it can't be transmitted asymptotically," said Dr. Chloe Orkin, an infectious-disease physician at Queen Mary University of London. "I think that it means that our working model of how it's spread is incorrect."

Early in the outbreak, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that "people who do not have monkeypox symptoms cannot spread the virus to others." The agency on July 29 changed that phrasing to say that "scientists are still researching" the possibility of asymptomatic transmission.

In a statement to The New York Times, an agency spokesperson acknowledged recent evidence that asymptomatic cases were possible but said that it was still uncertain whether people without symptoms could spread the virus and that more research was needed.

When the first few dozen cases of monkeypox emerged in Europe, spreading of the virus through sexual contact and genital lesions came as a surprise to many scientists. But it shouldn't have.

Nigerian researchers reported a similar pattern in 2017, when they documented 228 cases, many of them young men with genital ulcers. (The patients identified as heterosexual in a subsequent study, but Nigeria criminalizes same-sex behavior.)

Those cases were the first reported in Nigeria in 40 years, and the World Health Organization helped the country "mount the local response, with the goal to control spread," said Fadela Chaib, a WHO spokesperson.

But the unusual symptoms of the patients went unnoticed. "If what is happening in Europe and the global North had not happened, I don't think that paper would be discussed," said Dr. Dimie Ogoina, who led a study describing the cases.

"We have this disease that's more than 50 years old, and there's a lot of things we still don't know — and that's because the condition has been largely restricted to Africa," he said.

In late May, Orkin contacted several international colleagues to put together what turned out to be the largest study of monkeypox. Hundreds of physicians from 16 countries eventually contributed information about the cases they were seeing.

They changed the reporting forms as the disease came into sharper focus, adding the possibility of a single pox, lesions in the throat or rectum, and medical complications — features that were "not included in international case definitions of monkeypox," Orkin said.

The resulting analysis of 528 patients was published in The New England Journal of Medicine on July 21. A few days later, Orkin alerted several national health agencies,



knowing the findings should alter the case definitions that doctors consult when diagnosing patients.

Britain's Health Security Agency and the European Centers for Disease Control both replied the same day. Britain added some of the new symptoms to its monkeypox case definition three days later.

The European agency invited Orkin to present her findings.

In an interview in late July, Orkin reflected that during pandemics, public health agencies are considered the experts, and officials educate doctors on the disease and its treatment. Yet, it's clinicians who see the symptoms firsthand.

"It seems to me that consulting with clinicians in the field may have been helpful," she said. National health agencies have been slow to understand the virus's many manifestations in the current outbreak, she added.

Orkin is president of the Medical Women's Federation, past president of the British HIV Association and a governing councilmember of the International AIDS Society. "I've got a loud voice," she said, "and I'm still finding it difficult to get a response."

Senior members of the WHO responded to Orkin on Aug. 2, asking to discuss the cases that she and her colleagues had described. The CDC did not reply to Orkin but added rectal pain and bleeding, along with other new symptoms, to its guidance to clinicians on Aug. 5.

The new CDC definition mentions lesions in the mouth but does not describe the range or importance of pox in the mouth, eyes and urethra. In its statement, the agency said it was aware of Orkin's findings and had begun studies "that will help us better understand the range and importance of lesions at these and other bodily sites."

Based on reports that the virus persists in semen for weeks, Britain recommended that men who recover from monkeypox use condoms for 12 weeks after infection, a tacit acknowledgment that this may be a transmission route.

The CDC has not gone along, saying that "researchers are working with our partners to learn if, and how frequently, the virus is being spread through contact with semen."

The agency should advise men to wear condoms for a few weeks, as Britain has, Karan said. "We do not know how long people can transmit through semen," he said. "I think they should communicate that clearly."

For patients, outdated case definitions and guidance can have serious implications. Cameron French, 30, was exposed to the virus on July 6. Two weeks later, he developed a sore throat, head and body aches, painful urination and three bumps — on his face, a thigh and an elbow.

Yet, on his first visit to a clinic, on July 25, his doctor did not connect the symptoms. She told him the bump on his thigh was an ingrown hair and tested him for a urinary tract infection.

He went back three days later. This time, the doctor agreed to test him for monkeypox. After he tested positive, he had to push once again, this time to get the antiviral tecovirimat.

French said he was most frustrated by the lack of guidance on how to distinguish a potential new pox from a pimple so he could end his monthlong isolation. "That's been a big ambiguous question mark," he said. "That's been hard."

●► The article has more than 900 comments – some of them are very interesting.

Taiwan fears biowar amid tensions with China | Ground Report

By Geeta Mohan

Source: <https://www.indiatoday.in/amp/news-analysis/story/taiwan-fears-biowar-amid-tensions-with-china-ground-report-1990393-2022-08-20>

Aug 20 – With Taiwan-China tensions at its peak, journalists are seeking to go to Taiwan. But, the challenges of undertaking this trip are multi-layered. Not only do they have to deal with a belligerent Beijing, that has been extensively carrying out military operations around Taiwan, they also have to deal with fears of biological warfare in the wake of the Covid pandemic and its alleged origins being Wuhan Institute of Virology in China.

Now, when I set out on my journey to Taiwan, the process was tedious. We had to apply for a visa and wait for Taipei to clear our request. Once the clearances came, we had to agree to a three-day mandatory quarantine in a designated quarantine hotel.

Why is Taipei still following these stringent Covid protocols when the whole world has relaxed regulations? That is because Taiwan is afraid that China is indulging in biological warfare and according to some reports, weaponising 'bacteria bombs'.

As I reached the airport, I was asked to show a negative RT-PCR test (which most nations have discontinued) and the 'health declaration form' that I had to submit online. In the form, I had to fill out all my contact details and the details of the quarantine hotel.



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Once on board, there was an announcement regarding food products strictly prohibited over fear of any virus entering Taiwanese territory - Covid-19, swine flu, H1N1 virus, among others. There is a huge penalty for violators who carry products that could be carriers of viruses.

On landing, there was a system in place and the authorities took over. There were employees wearing protective gear and hazmat suits, directing us where to go and what to do.

The first thing you notice are counters for SIM cards. It was a mandatory requirement to purchase a local SIM card for 'contact tracing' purposes.

A little further down, there was another queue where officials were checking the health declaration form. The number is updated on the online form so that officials



入境檢疫流程 Entry Quarantine Process

第一關 完成入境檢疫申報

1st Pass:
Complete the online health declaration

第二關 發燒篩檢站

2nd Pass:
Walk through the Quarantine Station

第三關 入境大廳領取檢體盒及 家用快篩試劑

3rd pass:
Receive a specimen container and Covid-19 antigen self test kit at the arrival hall

第四關 至採檢站進行深喉唾液採檢

4th Pass:
Take a deep throat saliva specimen at the testing station

檢疫 最後完成後貼上檢疫貼紙 才能搭乘防疫車離開機場

Lastly, affix the QUARANTINE sticker before taking a quarantine vehicle to leave the airport

衛生福利部疾病管制署
TAIWAN CDC
疫情通報及諮詢專線：☎1922
<https://www.cdc.gov.tw>

can reach you should you test positive for Covid-19. Then a fresh page with a QR code pops up. Take a screenshot of the page and move further on.

Just before immigration, there were desks where medical officials handed over a container with a small form that had all your details filled in. The container is for a saliva specimen for the RT-PCR test, explained the official. He showed a chart which specifies the number of days one needs to stay in the hotel room. He also handed over two sets of RAPID test kits which are to be taken after the quarantine period is over.

After clearing immigration and collecting my luggage, I stepped outside the airport where there were another set of officials guiding us to the booths where we were given the specimens and then a green sticker was put on our arms which read "Quarantine - Taiwan".

I was then ushered into another queue for a cab for the trip to the hotel. The airport has designated quarantine cabs and buses. Private vehicles coming to the airport are for locals who would quarantine at home.

The taxi took me to the hotel where, soon after

I entered, I was asked to go to my room with instructions that I was not to step out for the next three days and food would be delivered outside the room. Garbage from the room is to be tightly packed in garbage bags and to be left outside before collection time.

While the rules are strict, the reasons and fears for Taiwan are real. Last year, Taiwan's annual military exercise (37th Han Kuang war games) included troops simulating a biological and chemical attack by China and preventing a decapitation strike against the country and President Tsai Ing-Wen.

Army troops in the southern city of Tainan were trained in treatment and decontamination following a mock bioweapon attack, Taiwan's Defense Ministry had said. Reports said that the soldiers were triaged and sent to field hospitals, while affected vehicles and equipment were hosed down by members of the 39th Chemical Group.

With China upping the ante and tensions at their peak, Taiwan is not taking any chances of biological warfare and therefore, precautions and severe measures.



Geeta Mohan has been a journalist covering international relations and diplomacy. She presently is the Foreign Affairs Editor at India Today, TV Today Network. Apart from heading the desk, she also anchors her show 'World Today'. Passionate about sharing real stories from the ground, she is widely recognised for her reporting. She is also a published author of the book 'Hamid' (Penguin Publication).

How the media got its “tomato flu” coverage so very wrong

By Rich Haridy

Source: <https://newatlas.com/health-wellbeing/virus-tomato-flu-media-coverage-critical-not-new/>

Aug 28 – Did you hear about a new virus sweeping through kids in India? It’s called “tomato flu,” and according to some reports we all should be very concerned. But it turns out “tomato flu” is not new, has potentially been around in some form for at least 15 years, and is probably just a relatively novel manifestation of a common childhood virus. On August 17th, a correspondence letter was published in the journal [The Lancet Respiratory Medicine](#). The letter, titled “Tomato flu outbreak in India,” reported on the potential emergence of a “new virus,” with 82 children diagnosed with a mystery illness between early May and late July.

Red flags could be found in the letter’s very first paragraph as its authors described this viral illness as “new”, “emerging” and “endemic” – terms [one researcher described](#) as entirely contradictory. How can a virus be new and emerging but also simultaneously in an endemic state?

The letter went on to characterize tomato flu as an illness similar to COVID-19 – with symptoms of fever, fatigue and body aches - but also presenting with large and painful blisters that can reach the size of tomatoes. Hence the name, tomato flu.

Although the letter did speculate the illness could potentially be anything from a new form of a common childhood infection to a type of post-viral condition, it essentially framed the whole idea of “tomato flu” as a “new virus.” However, no actual laboratory data was offered to back up this suggestion and the main references to “tomato flu” cited in the letter were news reports from local Indian websites.

These kinds of correspondence letters to journals are not peer-reviewed, despite coming with the veneer of being in a journal such as *The Lancet*. They are published without any oversight and often serve as valuable sirens to other scientists, highlighting things that are worthy of closer investigation. But in a post-COVID world, news of a potential “new virus” could never stay quiet for the few weeks scientists would need to actually verify the suggestion.

Within days the story was amplified via hundreds of articles, and tomato flu had become a real thing based on this single correspondence with no actual lab-verified evidence. Headlines loudly declared, “[India on Alert as Rare Viral Illness Tomato Flu Spreads](#),” and other [outlets warned the “mysterious new illness”](#) was likely to spread to your country and infect your children.

While these hyperbolic stories were spreading, several researchers began to question the veracity of this initial research letter. Australian epidemiologist Gideon Meyerowitz-Katz quickly [published a response](#) to the letter, arguing there is no evidence these illnesses in India are caused by a new virus and that the current news cycle seems mostly based on “hot air.”

“All of the news is essentially based on a single case-report from a public official describing an outbreak of something that is apparently locally called ‘tomato flu,’” [explained Meyerowitz-Katz](#). “But that’s ... really not a lot to go on. The authors don’t even provide evidence that this is, indeed, a virus, leaving the door open to other pathogens that might cause a similar rash.”

Meyerowitz-Katz and other researchers quickly pointed to a letter published in the [Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal](#), two days after *The Lancet* correspondence. This letter, from a team of infectious disease researchers in the United Kingdom, reported on two suspected “tomato flu” cases.

The two children, a five-year-old boy and a 13-month-old girl, developed signs of the mystery “tomato flu” illness a week after returning from a family holiday in Kerala, India. Lab testing revealed the children did not have a mystery new virus, but in fact were infected with a common childhood enterovirus named coxsackie A16.

“Coxsackie A16 causes hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD), so-called because the patient has blisters on the palms of their hands, soles of their feet and in their mouth,” explained microbiologist Sarah Pitt in [The Conversation](#). “So it seems that tomato flu is actually HFMD. It is not a type of influenza, has nothing to do with tomatoes and is not a new disease at all.”



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Not only that, but the UK researchers indicated the particular viral strain wasn't even especially unique. Genomic testing connected the viral samples to a strain of coxsackie A16 previously identified in China a decade ago.

Meyerowitz-Katz said this UK data isn't a "[slam dunk](#)" allowing us to entirely write off concerns over a new disease emerging in India, but it is enough evidence to make a reasonable scientist hesitant about claiming "tomato flu" is a whole new thing. And perhaps even more relevant is the simple fact that the terms "tomato flu" and "tomato fever" have long been used in India to reference outbreaks of unexplained illness.

Back in 2007, for example, several thousand people in Kerala were diagnosed with a mystery illness that [at the time was called "tomato fever."](#) Symptoms included fever, rashes and, "tomato like wounds especially on hands and legs, from which fluid oozes out."

During this mystery outbreak the illness was suspected as being a post-viral condition following earlier infection with a mosquito-borne virus called Chikungunya. The hypothesis was the "tomato fever" illness could be an after-effect of the earlier viral infection.

And now, some researchers are already speculating this wave of "tomato flu" could be related to COVID-19. [Sarah Pitt said](#) viruses have been behaving strangely since the COVID-19 pandemic began, from the outbreak of hepatitis in children last year to the recent global spread of monkeypox.

Ashley Quigley, a research associate in Global Biosecurity at the Kirby Institute, said her team's AI-driven epidemic watch system has picked up signals of unusual disease activity in India but that doesn't mean "tomato flu" is some kind of new virus. Instead, it is possible SARS-CoV-2 infections have weakened immune systems to the point where a pre-existing virus is manifesting in new or unusual ways.

"In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, hyper vigilance and improvement in surveillance techniques and reporting may be picking up more infections, however, the long-term effects of COVID-19 could lead to an increase in illnesses in an already weakened immune system and so we need to be cautious until more is known about this infection," [noted Quigley](#).

Virologist Angela Rasmussen has been particularly frank in her criticism of the media over recent coverage of "tomato flu." According to Rasmussen, the recent reports of "tomato flu" are certainly interesting from an epidemiological perspective, and worthy of investigation, but "alarmist", "unhelpful" and "sensationalized" news stories are a great example of "how not to report on an infectious disease."

"After 2.5 years of this s**t, I expect journalists to know better than to uncritically report on "novel tomato flu virus." It says a lot about what an outlet values in its coverage of health and science: clicks or truth," [Rasmussen tweeted](#).

Researchers Find 'Weak Spot' on Major SARS-CoV-2 Variants

Source: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/979732>

Aug 25 – Researchers have discovered a "weak spot" on the spike protein of the major SARS-CoV-2 variants, as well as a specific antibody fragment that attaches there to neutralize the virus.

This discovery could pave the way for developing an antibody treatment that is effective against current and future strains of the virus.

The study by Dhiraj Mannar, an MD/PhD student at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and colleagues [was published](#) online August 18 in *Nature Communications*.

Neutralizing Viral Variants

In [a study](#) published earlier this year in *Science*, Sriram Subramaniam, PhD, a professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at UBC's faculty of medicine, and colleagues were the first to report the structure of the contact zone between the Omicron spike protein and the human cell receptor ACE2, a finding that offered a molecular explanation for the enhanced viral fitness of the Omicron variant.

For the current research, the investigators used cryo-electron microscopy (cryo-EM) imaging to study the epitope (the part of the virus to which an antibody binds) of SARS-CoV-2 variants. The investigators collaborated with another team led by Mitko Dimitrov, PhD, and Wei Li, PhD, at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that screened antibody libraries and tested their effectiveness against SARS-CoV-2 variants.

"We describe an antibody fragment (V_Hab6) that neutralizes all major variants, including the recently emerged BA.1 and BA.2 Omicron subvariants, with a unique mode of binding revealed by cryo-EM studies," the researchers wrote.



"Our results provide mechanistic insights into the structural, functional, and antigenic consequences of SARS-CoV-2 spike mutations and highlight a spike protein vulnerability that may be exploited to achieve broad protection against circulating variants," they added. The SARS-CoV-2 viruses that cause COVID-19 "evolve over time and are looking to be better in infecting and replicating, and they undergo mutations to evade the immune system," Subramaniam explained to *Medscape Medical News* in an interview.

The virus attaches to and infects human cells via its spike proteins, and the Omicron variant has 37 spike protein mutations, Subramaniam added.

The epitope described in the current study is outside of the hot spots for mutation, which is likely why the site has not mutated much over time.

"The Holy Grail," said Subramaniam, "would be if you could take out the variants from the past and variants yet to come in the future."

Master Key for Mutations

"Antibodies attach to a virus in a very specific manner, like a key going into a lock," Subramaniam explained in a statement from UBC. "But when the virus mutates, the key no longer fits. We've been looking for master keys — antibodies that continue to neutralize the virus even after extensive mutations," he said.

The researchers found that the antibody fragment V_Hab6 is the "master key" to SARS-CoV-2. The fragment was effective against the Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Kappa, Epsilon, and Omicron BA.1 and BA.2 variants. V_Hab6 neutralizes the virus by attaching to the epitope on the spike protein and blocking the virus from entering human cells, said Subramaniam.

The real proof, he added, would be to see whether this antibody fragment is effective against the newer BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron variants. The researchers plan to investigate this question.

It also remains for others to build on these basic science findings to develop a potential antibody treatment for COVID-19. Several antibody treatments exist, but they have reduced effectiveness against highly mutated newer variants of the virus, said Subramaniam.

Having an antibody that is safe and effective against new and emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants would be another tool in the toolbox to fight COVID-19, along with vaccinations and antiviral drugs like Paxlovid.

'Major Step Forward'

The study findings are "a major step forward" in the fight against COVID-19, Matthew Miller, PhD, director of the DeGroot Institute for Infectious Disease Research at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, told *Medscape* in an interview. Miller was not involved in the research.

The group "identified an epitope on spike proteins even in Omicron, by far the most evolved variant," and found a "cool antibody" that seemed to be effective in all the variants, said Miller.

The next steps would be for a drug company to undertake clinical trials to demonstrate the safety and efficacy of this antibody, he said. It would also need to determine dosing and feasibility.

Antibody therapies, such as those developed for [rheumatoid arthritis](#) or [irritable bowel syndrome](#), Miller noted, need to be administered at relatively low doses to be economically feasible.

Future research could also investigate prophylactic use of antibody therapies to prevent COVID-19 in, for example, frail, elderly people in long-term care, he added.

Risk for Myocardial Infarction, Stroke, and Pulmonary Embolism Following COVID-19 Vaccines in Adults Younger Than 75 Years in France

By Jérémie Botton, PharmD, PhD, Marie Joelle Jabagi, PharmD, PhD, et al

Source: <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M22-0988>



The BNT162b2 (Pfizer–BioNTech) vaccine has been shown to be safe with regard to risk for severe cardiovascular events (such as myocardial infarction [MI], pulmonary embolism [PE], and stroke) in persons aged 75 years or older. Less is known about the safety of other COVID-19 vaccines or outcomes in younger populations.

Objective: To assess short-term risk for severe cardiovascular events (excluding myocarditis and pericarditis) after COVID-19 vaccination in France's 46.5 million adults younger than 75 years.

Design: Self-controlled case series method adapted to event-dependent exposure and high event-related mortality.



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Setting: France, 27 December 2020 to 20 July 2021.

Patients: All adults younger than 75 years hospitalized for PE, acute MI, hemorrhagic stroke, or ischemic stroke ($n = 73\ 325$ total events).

Measurements: Linkage between the French National Health Data System and COVID-19 vaccine databases enabled identification of hospitalizations for cardiovascular events (MI, PE, or stroke) and receipt of a first or second dose of the Pfizer–BioNTech, mRNA-1273 (Moderna), Ad26.COVS.2.S (Janssen), or ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 (Oxford–AstraZeneca) vaccine. The relative incidence (RI) of each cardiovascular event was estimated in the 3 weeks after vaccination compared with other periods, with adjustment for temporality (7-day periods).

Results: No association was found between the Pfizer–BioNTech or Moderna vaccine and severe cardiovascular events. The first dose of the Oxford–AstraZeneca vaccine was associated with acute MI and PE in the second week after vaccination (RI, 1.29 [95% CI, 1.11 to 1.51] and 1.41 [CI, 1.13 to 1.75], respectively). An association with MI in the second week after a single dose of the Janssen vaccine could not be ruled out (RI, 1.75 [CI, 1.16 to 2.62]).

Limitations: It was not possible to ascertain the relative timing of injection and cardiovascular events on the day of vaccination. Outpatient deaths related to cardiovascular events were not included.

Conclusion: In persons aged 18 to 74 years, adenoviral-based vaccines may be associated with increased incidence of MI and PE. No association between mRNA-based vaccines and the cardiovascular events studied was observed.

How Do You Live With COVID? One Doctor's Personal Experience

Source: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/979892>



Early in 2020, Anne Peters, MD, caught COVID -19. The author of Medscape's "Peters on Diabetes" column was sick in March 2020 before state-mandated lockdowns, and well before there were any vaccines.

She remembers sitting in a small exam room with two patients who had flown to her Los Angeles office from New York. The elderly couple had hearing difficulties, so Peters sat close to them, putting on a continuous glucose monitor. "At that time, we didn't think of COVID-19 as being in LA," Peters recalls, "so I think we were not terribly consistent at mask-wearing due to the need to educate."

"Several days later, I got COVID, but I didn't know I had COVID per se. I felt crappy, had a terrible sore throat, lost my sense of taste and smell (which was not yet described as a COVID symptom), was completely exhausted but had no fever or cough, which were the only criteria for getting COVID tested at the time. I

didn't know I had been exposed until 2 weeks later, when the patient's assistant returned the sensor warning us to 'be careful' with it because the patient and his wife were recovering from COVID."

That early battle with COVID-19 was just the beginning of what would become a 2-year struggle, including familial loss amid her own health problems and concerns about the under-resourced patients she cares for. Here, she shares her journey through the pandemic with Medscape.

Thanks for talking to us. Let's discuss your journey over these past 2.5 years.

Everybody has their own COVID story because we all went through this together. Some of us have worse COVID stories, and some of us have better ones, but all have been impacted.

I'm not a sick person. I'm a very healthy person but COVID made me so unwell for 2 years. The brain fog and fatigue was nothing compared to the autonomic neuropathy that affected my heart. It was really limiting for me. And I still don't know the long-term implications, looking 20 to 30 years from now.

When you initially had COVID, what were your symptoms? What was the impact?

I had all the symptoms of COVID, except for a cough and fever. I lost my sense of taste and smell. I had a horrible [headache](#), a sore throat, and I was exhausted. I couldn't get tested because I didn't have the right symptoms. Despite being sick, I never stopped working but had just switched to telemedicine. I also took my regular monthly trip to our cabin in Montana. I unknowingly flew on a plane with COVID. I wore a well-fitted N95 mask, so I don't think I gave anybody COVID. I didn't give COVID to my partner, Eric, which is hard to believe as — at 77 — he's older than me. He has diabetes,



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heart disease, and every other high-risk characteristic. If he'd gotten COVID back then, it would have been terrible as there were no treatments, but luckily he didn't get it.

When were you officially diagnosed?

Two or three months after I thought I might have had COVID, I checked my antibodies, which tested strongly positive for a prior COVID infection. That was when I knew all the symptoms I'd had were due to the disease.

Not only were you dealing with your own illness, but also that of those close to you. Can you talk about that?

In April 2020, my mother who was in her 90s and otherwise healthy except for dementia, got COVID. She could have gotten it from me. I visited often but wore a mask. She had all the horrible pulmonary symptoms. In her advance directive, she didn't want to be hospitalized so I kept her in her home. She died from COVID in her own bed. It was fairly brutal, but at least I kept her where she felt comforted.

My 91-year-old dad was living in a different residential facility. Throughout COVID he had become very depressed because his social patterns had changed. Prior to COVID, they all ate together, but during the pandemic, they were unable to. He missed his social connections, disliked being isolated in his room, hated everyone in masks.

He was a bit demented, but not so much that he couldn't communicate with me or remember where his grandson was going to law school. I wasn't allowed inside the facility, which was hard on him. I hadn't told him his wife died because the hospice social workers advised me that I shouldn't give him news that he couldn't process readily until I could spend time with him. Unfortunately, that time never came. In December 2020, he got COVID. One of the people in that facility had gone to the hospital, came back, and tested negative, but actually had COVID and gave it to my dad. The guy who gave it to my dad didn't die but my dad was terribly ill. He died 2 weeks short of getting his vaccine. He was coherent enough to have a conversation. I asked him, 'Do you want to go to the hospital?' And he said, 'No, because it would be too scary.' Since he couldn't be with me. I put him on hospice and held his hand as he died from pulmonary COVID, which was awful. I couldn't give him enough [morphine](#) or valium to ease his breathing. But his last words to me were "I love you," and at the very end he seemed peaceful, which was a blessing.

I got an autopsy because he wanted one. Nothing else was wrong with him other than COVID. It destroyed his lungs. The rest of him was fine — no heart disease, cancer, or anything else. He died of COVID-19, the same as my mother.

That same week, my aunt, my only surviving older relative, who was in Des Moines, Iowa, died of COVID-19. All three family members died before the vaccine came out.

It was hard to lose my parents. I'm the only surviving child because my sister died in her 20s. It's not been an easy pandemic. But what pandemic is easy? I just happened to have lost more people than most. Ironically, my grandfather was one of the legionnaires at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia in 1976 and died of Legionnaire's disease before we knew what was causing the outbreak.

Were you still struggling with COVID?

COVID impacted my whole body. I lost a lot of weight. I didn't want to eat and my gastrointestinal system was not happy. It took a while for my sense of taste and smell to come back. Nothing tasted good. I'm not a foodie, I don't really care about food. We could get takeout or whatever, none of it appealed to me. I'm not so sure it was a taste thing, I just didn't feel like eating.

I didn't realize I had "brain fog" per se, because I felt stressed and overwhelmed by the pandemic and my patients' concerns. But one day, about 3 months after I had developed COVID, I woke up without the fog. Which made me aware that I hadn't been feeling right up until that point.

The worst symptoms, however, were cardiac. I noticed also immediately that my heart rate went up very quickly with minimal exertion. My pulse has always been in the 55-60 bpm range and suddenly walking across a room made it go up to over 140 bpm. If I did any aerobic activity it went up over 160 and would be associated with dyspnea and chest pain. I believed these were all post-COVID symptoms and felt validated when reports of others having similar issues were published in the literature.

Did you continue seeing patients?

Yes, of course. Patients never needed their doctors more. In East LA, where patients don't have easy access to telemedicine, I kept going into clinic throughout the pandemic. In the more affluent Westside of Los Angeles, we switched to telemedicine, which was quite effective for most. However, because diabetes was associated with an increased risk of hospitalization and death from COVID, my patients were understandably afraid. I've never been busier, but (like all healthcare providers), I became more of a COVID provider than a diabetologist.



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Do you feel your battle with COVID impacted your work?

It didn't affect me at work. If I was sitting still, I was fine. Sitting at home at a desk, I didn't notice any symptoms. But as a habitual stair-user, I would be gasping for breath in the stairwell because I couldn't go up the stairs to my office as I once could. I think you empathize more with people who had COVID (when you've had it yourself). There was such a huge patient burden. And I think that's been the thing that's affected healthcare providers the most — no matter what specialty we're in — that nobody has answers.

What happened after you had your vaccine?

The vaccine itself was fine. I didn't have any reaction to the first two doses. But the first booster made my cardiac issues worse. By this point, my cardiac problems stopped me from exercising. I even went to the ER with chest pain once because I was having palpitations and chest pressure caused by simply taking my morning shower. Fortunately, I wasn't having an MI, but I certainly wasn't "normal."

My measure of my fitness is the cross-country skiing trail I use in Montana. I know exactly how far I can ski. Usually I can do the loop in 35 minutes. After COVID, I lasted 10 minutes. I would be tachycardic, short of breath with chest pain radiating down my left arm. I would rest and try to keep going. But with each rest period, I only got worse. I would be laying in the snow and strangers would ask if I needed help.

What helped you?

I've read a lot about long COVID and have tried to learn from the experts. Of course, I never went to a doctor directly, although I did ask colleagues for advice. What I learned was to never push myself. I forced myself to create an exercise schedule where I only exercised three times a week with rest days in between. When exercising, the second my heart rate went above 140 bpm, I stopped until I could get it back down. I would push against this new limit, even though my limit was low.

Additionally, I worked on my breathing patterns and did meditative breathing for 10 minutes twice daily using a commercially available app. Although progress was slow, I did improve, and by June 2022, I seemed back to normal. I was not as fit as I was prior to COVID and needed to improve, but the tachycardic response to exercise and cardiac symptoms were gone. I felt like my normal self. Normal enough to go on a spot packing trip in the Sierras in August. (Horses carried us and a mule carried the gear over the 12,000-foot pass into the mountains, and then left my friend and me high in the Sierras for a week.) We were camped above 10,000 feet and every day hiked up to another high mountain lake where we fly-fished for trout that we ate for dinner. The hikes were a challenge, but not abnormally so. Not as they would have been while I had long COVID.

What is the current atmosphere in your clinic?

COVID is much milder now in my vaccinated patients, but I feel most healthcare providers are exhausted. Many of my staff left when COVID hit because they didn't want to keep working. It made practicing medicine exhausting. There's been a shortage of nurses, a shortage of everything. We've been required to do a whole lot more than we ever did before. It's much harder to be a doctor. This pandemic is the first time I've ever thought of quitting. Granted, I lost my whole family, or at least the older generation, but it's just been almost overwhelming.

On the plus side, almost every one of my patients has been vaccinated, because early on, people would ask, "Do you trust this vaccine?" I would reply, "I saw my parents die from COVID when they weren't vaccinated, so you're getting vaccinated. This is real and the vaccines help." It made me very good at convincing people to get vaccines because I knew what it was like to see someone dying from COVID up close.

What advice do you have for those struggling with the COVID pandemic?

People need to decide what their own risk is for getting sick and how many times they want to get COVID. At this point, I want people to go out, but safely. In the beginning, when my patients said, "Can I go visit my granddaughter?" I said, "No," but that was before we had the vaccine. Now I feel it is safe to go out using common sense. I still have my patients wear masks on planes. I still have patients try to eat outside as much as possible. And I tell people to take the precautions that make sense, but I tell them to go out and do things because life is short.

I had a patient in his 70s who has many risk factors like heart disease and diabetes. His granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah in Florida was coming up. He asked, "Can I go?" I told him "Yes," but to be safe — to wear an N95 mask on the plane and at the event, and stay in his own hotel room, rather than with the whole family. I said, "You need to do this." Earlier in the pandemic, I saw people who literally died from loneliness and isolation.



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He and his wife flew there. He sent me a picture of himself with his granddaughter. When he returned, he showed me a handwritten note from her that said, "I love you so much. Everyone else canceled, which made me cry. You're the only one who came. You have no idea how much this meant to me."

He's back in LA, and he didn't get COVID. He said, "It was the best thing I've done in years." That's what I need to help people with, navigating this world with COVID and assessing risks and benefits. As with all of medicine, my advice is individualized. My advice changes based on the major circulating variant and the rates of the virus in the population, as well as the risk factors of the individual.

What are you doing now?

I'm trying to avoid getting COVID again or another booster. I could get pre-exposure monoclonal antibodies but am waiting to do anything further until I see what happens over the fall and winter. I still wear a mask inside but now do a mix of in-person and telemedicine visits. I still try to go to outdoor restaurants, which is easy in California. But I'm flying to see my son in New York and plan to go to Europe this fall for a meeting. I also go to my cabin in Montana every month to get my "dose" of the wilderness. Overall, I travel for conferences and speaking engagements much less because I have learned the joy of staying home.

Thinking back on my life as a doctor, my career began as an intern at Stanford rotating through Ward 5B, the AIDS unit at San Francisco General Hospital, and will likely end with COVID. In spite of all our medical advances, my generation of physicians, much as many generations before us, has a front-row seat to the vulnerability of humans to infectious diseases and how far we still need to go to protect our patients from communicable illness.

Anne L. Peters, MD, is a professor of medicine at the University of Southern California (USC) Keck School of Medicine and director of the USC clinical diabetes programs. She has published more than 200 articles, reviews, and abstracts, and three books on diabetes, and has been an investigator for more than 40 research studies. She has spoken internationally at over 400 programs and serves on many committees of several professional organizations.

What's Next for mRNA Vaccines?

Source: <https://www.genengnews.com/topics/translational-medicine/infectious-diseases/whats-next-for-mrna-vaccines/>

Aug 29 – Robert Langer, ScD, is the David H. Koch Institute professor at MIT and a co-founder of Moderna, the pharmaceutical company behind a [COVID-19](#) mRNA vaccine. In this Q&A, he tells us about the present and future of these versatile vaccines.

GEN: *The technology behind mRNA vaccines has been available for decades, but it was only with the pandemic that we first saw a publicly available mRNA vaccine. Why didn't this happen sooner?*

Langer: While it is true that over the last thirty years hundreds of scientists have worked on developing mRNA vaccines and therapeutics, real breakthroughs in making an effective and commercially viable mRNA vaccine were greatly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It's important to realize that Moderna and others like BioNtech and Curevac were in clinical trials for multiple different vaccines and therapeutics at the time the COVID-19 crisis started in late 2019/early 2020.

In fact, Moderna had eight vaccines (including a personalized cancer vaccine, a vaccine against Zika virus, and a dual vaccine against metapneumovirus and a type of parainfluenza) in human clinical trials at that point. Moderna recognized the incredible and unique opportunity to quickly meet the global demand for a COVID-19 vaccine by leveraging our mRNA tools and technologies. All the necessary pieces were in place, such as the correct mRNA chemistry and the development of nanoparticles to protect the messenger RNA (this actually had part of its origins in our MIT lab for which I received the Millennium Technology Prize in 2008). So the organization refocused efforts on bringing a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine to patients as quickly as possible without compromising public safety.

Moderna scientists identified the ideal protein candidate on the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 virus (the spike protein), determined the mRNA sequence necessary to encode for this protein and, six months later, was given FDA clearance to proceed.

The many advantages of mRNA versus traditional vaccines prompted scientists to use mRNA vaccines to fight SARS-CoV-2. These advantages include the ability to quickly update



the vaccine as new variants emerge, the ability to develop combination vaccines to fight several variants (and pathogens) simultaneously, and the ability to rapidly scale to serve a global population.

What's more, Moderna's mRNA platform generates antigens with superior biological fidelity and a greater success rate than traditional vaccines—all in record time. mRNA vaccines don't require a giant manufacturing plant to produce them. All mRNA vaccines and therapeutics can be produced at the same location via the same process.

GEN: What are some other diseases or disorders against which mRNA vaccines can provide protection?

Langer: Moderna mRNA vaccines are already in the works to reduce the health risks of latent viruses like Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) and cytomegalovirus (CMV) and to tackle additional areas of unmet need, including an all-in-one mRNA vaccine to treat COVID-19, seasonal flu, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Additionally, Moderna plans to develop mRNA vaccines to help patients beat Herpes simplex virus (HSV), MS, cancer, and HIV once and for all.

HSV, CMV, and EBV are large viruses that gain entry into cells via multiple proteins. Identifying which proteins to target remains a challenge, as does the development of adjuvants to fine-tune the body's immune response. In the case of HIV, the situation is particularly complex.

Simply put, the immune system must be rigorously trained to produce a specific type of antibody (broadly neutralizing antibody or bnAbs), that has been found to be effective at fighting HIV. Further, a truly protective HIV vaccine will likely require a combination of antigens to stimulate the formation of multiple bnAbs classes.

Indeed, mRNA vaccines can provide protection against practically any viral or bacterial infection. Unlike traditional vaccines, mRNA vaccines enable the patient's own cells to "train" the immune system to recognize a pathogen by producing the invader proteins the immune system will need to attack.

Therefore, mRNA vaccines are limited only by the immune system's own ability to fight the pathogen. Once an ideal protein candidate is identified, it is a relatively simple process to identify the mRNA needed to encode for those proteins.

GEN: Can mRNA vaccines provide universal protection against a family of viruses, such as coronaviruses?

Langer: Theoretically, yes. AI, machine learning, and robotic process automation (RPA) are technologies that can help us more rapidly catalog common familial viral elements, predict potential variations and mutations, and identify antigen-protein targets—all while eliminating human error.

Further, these technologies can accelerate the process of identifying the ideal, most productive mRNA sequence needed to generate those proteins. Over time, AI/machine learning refinements will continuously improve the range and effectiveness of this approach by providing ever-larger datasets to draw from.

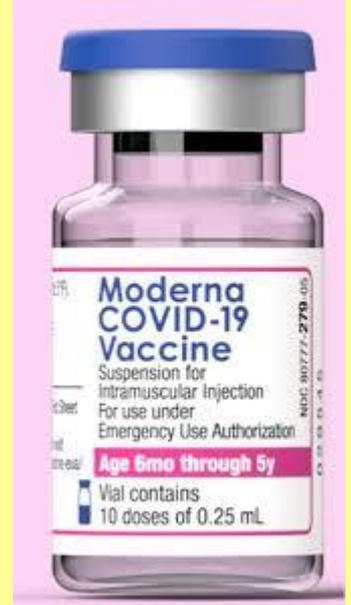
GEN: Do mRNA vaccines have the potential to combat antimicrobial/antibiotic resistance?

Langer: Yes. Antimicrobial and antibiotic resistance arises as a natural evolutionary process, the result of genetic variation ("errors") and mutation in the pathogen, giving rise to novel traits. Organisms that develop traits which make them drug-resistant naturally survive and thrive.

First, mRNA vaccines have the potential to help combat antimicrobial and antibiotic resistance by reducing our reliance on traditional antibiotics. Additionally, Moderna's mRNA platform helps combat resistance by identifying the most desirable and persistent antigens for targeting, by improving the prediction of new strains, and by accelerating the production of vaccines to defeat those strains.

Finally, by training the immune system to look for specific surface proteins on the bacterium, an mRNA vaccine more effectively targets specific pathogens while avoiding the issue of damaging a patient's "good" bacteria with increasingly toxic antibiotics. For instance, through the selection of a "coat protein" as the target-antigen, an mRNA vaccine against a drug-resistant strain of malaria has already yielded encouraging results.

GEN: On the whole, mRNA vaccines are safer, more efficient, and easier to produce than "traditional" vaccines. However, like with all technologies, there is always room to improve its accessibility, affordability, efficacy, and safety. Cold storage requirements and side effects including possible allergic reactions are some of the



issues impacting uptake of these vaccines. Are there any solutions to these (or any other) issues that researchers are currently working upon?

Langer: Moderna is leveraging AI and machine learning technologies to identify ways to make mRNA vaccines safer and more durable (with simpler refrigeration requirements) by minimizing the length of mRNA strands. Moderna is implementing a multi-pronged approach to ease the substantial global disease burden by making mRNA vaccines more widely accessible, affordable, efficient, and safe.

Moderna's mRNA Access program aims to accelerate the creation of new mRNA vaccines through collaboration with global partners. mRNA Access lets outside researchers leverage Moderna's platform to develop mRNA vaccines against emerging and neglected infectious diseases around the world.

This strategy exponentially expands our brain trust, making the discovery of safer and more efficient vaccines an inevitable outcome. To help ensure the success of our mission to combat the top respiratory diseases worldwide, Moderna has entered into ten-year supply agreements with strategic countries.

Finally, Moderna is expanding its COVID-19 vaccine technology patent-free into 92 additional low- and middle-income countries as well as building an mRNA manufacturing facility in Kenya.

In addition, at MIT, we are working on ways of creating self-boosting vaccines that can be given in a single injection that does not require the patient to return for boosters. We are also developing ways to create more stable nanoparticles, as well as microneedle patches that could be shelf stable and shipped around the world.

GEN: Recently, there has been discussion about developing vaccines that can be administered as a pill or a nasal spray. Is this method of delivery possible for mRNA vaccines?

Langer: The possibilities for vaccine administration are endless so long as an appropriate, effective delivery mechanism can be found that protects the mRNA from the local environments (e.g., mucus, saliva, stomach acid [HCL]) yet facilitates the delivery of mRNA into the cell. While the gold standard for vaccine administration is through an intramuscular shot in the arm, intranasal COVID-19 vaccines have already been shown to elicit strong cellular immune response in humans.

Additionally, at MIT, Gio Traverso and myself recently developed a self-orienting mRNA "milli-injector" capsule that uses a polymer coating to deliver mRNA to the stomach via milli-needle injections in the gastric lining, thereby avoiding damaging acids. The experiments successfully produced proteins in gastric mucosa, as well as systemic uptake though, due to volume restrictions, their effectiveness may be limited to diseases of the gastrointestinal tract.

One major roadblock to a nasal mRNA vaccine is nasal clearing. Mucus and nasal cilia act as a protective barrier against pathogens, typically a good thing. Unfortunately, antigen absorption decreases as nasal clearance increases. Another drawback to a nasal mRNA vaccine is cost since a specialized delivery system is required. Unlike an intramuscular injection, an intranasally administered vaccine must survive several biological obstacles to reach the target site and provide long-term protection.

A nasal vaccine's formulation and delivery method must be precisely tuned and would require amplification via immunostimulants. Despite this, several vaccine companies are experimenting with intranasal delivery by tweaking nasal mucosal toxicity, mucoadhesion, and pH. AstraZeneca and the Chalmers University of Technology have initiated mRNA-based nasal spray vaccine development against SARS-CoV-2, where nasal vaccines make the most sense since viral invasion happens via the nasal mucosa. Advantages of a pill or nasal spray include reduced patient hesitancy and increased compliance. Specific advantages of an intranasal spray include ease of combining vaccines, simple vaccine swapping to accommodate variants, a combined mucosal and systemic immune response, protection at distant mucosal sites, and a faster onset of a strong immune response.

GEN: What are some other ways that mRNA vaccine technology can improve human wellbeing that you believe hasn't yet had enough attention or curiosity?

Langer: An mRNA vaccine enables the patient to produce proteins, but these proteins don't have to be used to stimulate the immune system to fight disease. mRNA vaccine technology can be used to replace missing proteins in patients suffering from inherited metabolic disorders (of which hundreds exist, such as phenylketonuria). These potentially debilitating diseases are caused by an enzyme deficiency; the body is unable to manufacture or break down certain proteins.

Phenylketonuria (PKU) results in low levels of the enzyme phenylalanine hydroxylase, a protein that breaks down phenylalanine. Without it, phenylalanine builds up in the body, often to toxic levels, even causing brain damage. Current treatment is simply the dietary reduction of foods that contain phenylalanine (which includes much more than you think: all meats, milk, eggs, cheese, nuts, soy, beans, and more). The dietary requirements are so severe as to require supplementing with a special drink to ensure the essential nutrients.



Similarly, an mRNA vaccine may be used to potentially help treat depression by enabling patients to boost their levels of serotonin or dopamine to elevate their mood or reduce anxiety. In short, an mRNA vaccine can be used to express any protein and possibly treat almost any disease.

GEN: *What advice would you give to budding researchers interested in studying and working on mRNA vaccines?*

Langer: I think it's important to realize that there are few limits. Whether it's mRNA vaccines or anything else, I always tell my students to dream big dreams, dreams that can change the world. But if you do that you may run into obstacles. When I first discovered a way to deliver macromolecules including nucleic acids from small particles, I was ridiculed by the scientific community. My first nine research grants were rejected and no engineering department in the world would hire me for a faculty position. But I didn't give up and I always tell my students to never give up either.

COMMENTARY: Navigating COVID language traps

By Peter M. Sandman, PhD

Source: <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/08/commentary-navigating-covid-language-traps>

Aug 30 – I have been thinking and arguing about COVID-19 terminology since the pandemic started. I am especially interested in how public health professionals—both officials and outside experts—talk about COVID.

There are terms that public health professionals often use imprecisely. There are terms they often use incorrectly. And there are terms they often use in a way that's technically accurate but almost sure to be misunderstood by much of the public. Then, when they're predictably misunderstood, they claim they were clear and the public is "confused." Politicians and journalists fall into these COVID language traps too. But for obvious reasons public health professionals should be held to a higher standard. And if they can do a better job of communicating clearly about COVID, maybe there's hope that others will improve as well.

Here are some of my musings about COVID language traps. This isn't truly an article. It's a list. Read the entries that interest you.

I have posted an [unabridged version](#) of this non-article article that's twice as long—with more terms and more details on each term—on my website.

Misinformation

The term "misinformation" used to mean and should mean verifiably false factual claims—claims that virtually all well-informed people consider disproved.

Sometimes it still means that. But to deeply committed people in many fields, "misinformation" now often means the "other side's" unproven hypotheses and speculations, but not "our side's" unproven hypotheses and speculations. I'd rather we didn't dub as "misinformation" overconfident, unproven claims that might or might not turn out true—though I concede that knowingly pretending an unproven claim is established truth is a kind of misinformation. But what's especially upsetting is when we apply a double standard to these claims depending on which side is making them.

Your unproven hypotheses and speculations are no more or less "misinformation" than mine.

Worse still, in political contexts "misinformation" has all too often come to mean merely statements—even verifiably *true* factual claims—that seem likely to lead people to conclusions or policies the speaker considers undesirable.

And COVID debates are unavoidably political. Any COVID-related statement that makes people less likely to get vaccinated or less likely to wear masks, for example, will be deemed "misinformation" by many public health professionals—and therefore sometimes by social media censors. That's true not just of verifiably false factual claims, but also of debatable factual claims where the evidence is mixed; and of opinions or recommendations that aren't factual claims at all; and even of verifiably true factual claims.

Consider a tweet that COVID is usually mild, so we should just rely on natural immunity and go about our business without boosters or other precautions. I think this is unwise advice.



But its only factual claim, "usually mild," is verifiably true. Calling this tweet "misinformation" misuses the term.

Here's one of my favorite examples of a factually accurate COVID-related claim widely considered misinformation by public health professionals: COVID vaccines were granted Emergency Use Authorizations despite zero proof that they reduced the COVID death rate.

Even false factual claims are generally NOT deemed "misinformation" by public health professionals if they seem likely to lead people to conclusions that public health considers desirable.

This is flat-out true. Demonstrating a reduction in mortality would have required much bigger and longer-lasting trials; enough people in the placebo groups would have had to die to yield a statistically significant benefit of vaccination. That would have delayed the vaccine rollouts unconscionably. So the FDA sensibly settled for proof that the vaccines reduced the incidence of symptomatic illness.

Conversely, even false factual claims are generally *not* deemed "misinformation" by public health professionals if they seem likely to lead people to conclusions that public

health considers desirable.

I could offer a long litany of what I consider officially sanctioned COVID misinformation that public health professionals have declined to call misinformation at various times, including claims about:

- The efficacy of cloth masks
- Whether transmission is nearly always via droplets or often via aerosols
- The risk of outdoor transmission
- The likelihood of breakthrough infections in fully vaccinated and boosted people
- And on and on

Some of these false factual claims seemed likely to turn out true when they were advanced, and are "misinformation" only in hindsight. But even in hindsight public health professionals rarely use that term about their own mistakes. And some of these claims were advanced—almost always for prosocial reasons—by public health professionals who knew they were unproven or even had grounds to suspect they were false.

Mask

The term "mask" is simply too broad. It is applied to face coverings that provide meaningful inbound and outbound protection against COVID, such as N95s. And it is applied to face coverings that provide [little to no protection against COVID](#)—loose-fitting cloth masks, including sometimes even the flimsiest of bandanas and neck gaiters.

Ideally we would have different terms for masks of different protective value. We have one such term—"respirator" for the most effective face covering—but it's probably a lost cause to get people to use it much.

These distinctions are not subtle. You're probably safer wearing a well-fitting N95 respirator in a roomful of unmasked people than wearing a typical cloth mask in a roomful of people also wearing typical cloth masks.

Because most mask mandates deploy a broad lowest-common-denominator definition of "mask," as if all masks were created equal, they end up mandating a precaution that is sometimes more burdensome than beneficial.

[Evidence on the effectiveness](#) of generalized mask

mandates is mixed. It wouldn't surprise me if mask mandates were effective in direct proportion to which masks people voluntarily pick when mandated to wear whatever kind they want.

Mask terminology is just as problematic when advising people to mask up voluntarily. What sort of mask I'm wearing probably affects my health more than whether others around me are wearing any mask at all. Convincing people of this would be a lot easier if all masks didn't have the same name.

Airborne

COVID is transmitted mainly in two ways: via biggish droplets that are expelled into the air by an infected person and reach the face of another person before they can drop to the



ground; and via smaller particles, called aerosols, that are also expelled into the air by an infected person but hang in the air longer and travel through the air farther because they're lighter.

The distinction between droplets and aerosols isn't dichotomous. Nonetheless, it's a distinction that matters. Some precautions like social distancing protect us mostly from droplets, while others like ventilation are effective against aerosols—though it's important to note that aerosols can also transmit SAR-CoV-2 viruses at close range.

After 2-1/2 years of COVID, we still don't know how much transmission is via droplets and how much is via aerosols (with a small remaining percentage via surfaces).

In normal parlance, "airborne" means moving through the air. So in normal parlance, both droplets and aerosols are airborne. For people who talk normally, the COVID transmission question has been airborne (droplets or aerosols) versus surfaces: "Can I breathe it in?" versus "Dare I touch that doorknob?"; wearing masks versus washing packages.

In normal parlance, both droplets and aerosols are airborne.

In public health parlance, on the other hand, the term "airborne" is usually applied only to aerosols, although public health professionals' use of the two terms varies widely. So early in the pandemic, when the World Health Organization (WHO) insisted for many months that COVID was "NOT airborne," it meant not (not ever?) transmitted via aerosols. Even before the consensus

shifted and public health professionals decided the WHO was wrong (though they rarely accused the WHO of "misinformation"), many people found the claim confusing. "Not airborne" seemed to suggest that COVID must be transmitted mostly via surfaces, not when infected people expel virus particles into the air by coughing, sneezing, talking, or breathing.

Immunity

Most people see "immunity" as a dichotomous concept: You're either immune or you're not. But public health professionals use the term non-dichotomously.

But not always. Especially after the first COVID vaccines were introduced, they often overgeneralized about people who "had immunity" to COVID and others who "were not immune." Then they turned around and criticized non-scientists who similarly overgeneralized—who insisted that they were already "immune" from a prior COVID infection so they didn't need to get vaccinated, or who complained that they were misled that getting vaccinated would make them "immune" and then they got infected anyhow.

COVID vaccination gives the vaccinee immunity. How much immunity (and against what—eg, infection versus severe illness) depends on the vaccine, the recipient, and the virus variant. And then that immunity, partial from the get-go, starts to wane.

I'll get to "natural immunity" next; it, too, is partial and wanes.

"How much immunity" vaccination confers is a crucial COVID question. But if you see "immunity" as a dichotomous concept, "how much immunity" is a confusing question. Worse: To many people, "waning immunity" feels like it isn't immunity at all—which means COVID vaccination feels like a fraud.

Public health professionals exacerbated this problem in the early days of the pandemic by sounding like COVID vaccines were a silver bullet, leading people to expect that once vaccinated they'd be "immune" in the dichotomous sense—or impervious to COVID. But

it's not entirely public health's fault; just the word itself set people up to get that impression.

A lot of risk-related terms have this "dichotomous or not" language problem. Two others I could have written about are "protection" and "prevention." If a COVID precaution—a booster, say—sizably reduces your chances of serious illness, but not down to zero, does it "protect" you and "prevent" you from ending up in the hospital? No, if you think these terms are dichotomous. Yes, if you think they're not. Since people use these terms sometimes one way and sometimes the other, if you use them without specifying, you are setting yourself up to be misunderstood.

To many people, "waning immunity" feels like it isn't immunity at all—which means COVID vaccination feels like a fraud.



Natural immunity

From time to time a term that public health professionals have been using for decades gets picked up by the general public—or worse yet, by a movement whose views are anathema to public health professionals (antivaxxers, for example). Sometimes they use the word incorrectly. But even when they're using it correctly, public health professionals are likely to say they're not—simply because they're using it to make a point that public health professionals disapprove of.

That's the fate of "natural immunity." In the public health literature, this term is [routinely used](#) and [has long been used](#) to mean exactly what antivaxxers use it to mean: immunity resulting from prior infection or perhaps from good overall health, but in any case *not* from vaccination.

But when huge numbers of COVID survivors started claiming that they had "natural immunity," many public health professionals suddenly objected that the term is misleading, even "misinformation"—despite its being public health's own term, used the same way public health professionals use it.

The tipoff is how many articles and op-eds [started putting "natural immunity" in quotes](#) to imply that it's somehow not quite real immunity. No one in public health ever puts "vaccine-induced immunity" in disparaging quotes.

Of course "natural immunity" has the same dichotomous-or-not problem as "immunity." Natural immunity doesn't mean you can't catch COVID, just as vaccine-induced immunity doesn't mean you can't catch COVID. But natural COVID immunity is real immunity, partial like all COVID immunity. Although public health professionals rightly want previously infected people to get vaccinated anyway, their objections to the term "natural immunity" are baseless.

I'm not suggesting that it makes sense to get infected on purpose, only that it makes sense to think you're safer after contracting COVID than you were before—and the conventional public health term for that increased safety is "natural immunity."

Just this month, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued revised COVID recommendations that finally took natural immunity into account, albeit without using the term. [A CDC expert explained](#) that "both prior infection and vaccination confer some protection against severe illness, and so it really makes the most sense to not differentiate with our guidance or our recommendations based on vaccination status at this time."

Natural immunity doesn't mean you can't catch COVID, just as vaccine-induced immunity doesn't mean you can't catch COVID. But natural COVID immunity is real immunity.

Case

Early in the pandemic, public health professionals tried to sustain a distinction between the virus named SARS-CoV-2 (not the virus's original name, but that's another story) and the disease named COVID (or more formally, COVID-19). If you're infected with SARS-CoV-2, they said, you might or might not come down with COVID. They failed. Even public health professionals now frequently call both the virus and the disease COVID, both when writing for the general public and when writing for each other.

Best example of this conflation: the term "COVID test." Similarly, experts now routinely point out that "COVID is often asymptomatic"—a sentence that is oxymoronic for those who still insist that COVID is a disease, not merely an infection. Diseases are symptomatic by definition.

So what's a COVID "case"?

When public health professionals are being careful, the word "case" is followed by "of"—or at least there's some nearby specification of what sort of case they're talking about—a case of infection, of a positive test result (with a specified test), of symptomatic illness, of medically attended and lab-diagnosed disease, of hospitalization, of death, etc.

When public health professionals aren't being careful, the word "case" is often ambiguous.



When public health professionals aren't being careful, the word "case" is often ambiguous. And like most of us, public health professionals are often careless about language—with each other because they assume their fellow professionals will understand; and with the general public because they're not working hard enough to be understood.

When the term "case" is used with no specification of what it's a case of, the number of COVID cases is probably one of three numbers:

- The biggest of the three is the number of people who are infected with SARS-CoV-2, whether they're aware of it or not—a number nobody knows, but experts can try to estimate it.
- The middle and most commonly used number is the number of people who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 in some public venue where test results can be counted. This number goes up or down not just depending on how much of the virus is around, but also depending on how many publicly reported tests are being done.
- The smallest and technically most accurate number of "COVID cases" is the number of people who are known to have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 and have also been diagnosed as having COVID because they have symptoms that satisfy the case definition for COVID-19 disease.

What we mean by "case" becomes crucial when we start talking about case-fatality rates. The COVID case-fatality rate is a fraction. It's the number of people who have died of COVID (or *with* COVID—yet another terminological trap) in the numerator and one of these three vastly different "case" counts in the denominator. No wonder we see endless arguments over how deadly COVID is!

Booster

Many people think of a "booster shot" as any dose after the first one against a specific disease. But to experts, "booster" usually means a follow-up dose when protection that used to be sufficient isn't sufficient any longer.

If it takes more than one dose to get people sufficiently protected in the first place, then the second (or third, or nth) dose isn't technically a booster; it's part of what's called the "primary series." The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID vaccines—the ones most commonly used in the United States—both are given as a two-dose primary series.

For most Americans so far, any COVID vaccine dose after the first two Pfizer or Moderna doses is aimed at bumping up prior protection that was originally considered adequate. So it's a booster, regardless of why the bump is "needed" (another word that deserves exegesis): because the virus has changed, or because immunity has waned, or merely because even more immunity seems worth the minimal downsides of yet another shot.

COVID's "booster" terminological tussle is grounded in the controversy over COVID vaccination. It was clear from the outset that convincing millions of reluctant people to roll up their sleeves for a COVID shot was going to be a challenge. Most public health professionals figured the challenge would get even tougher if people realized that boosters might be needed down the road. So anyone who received two Pfizer or Moderna doses (or one Johnson & Johnson dose) was deemed "fully vaccinated" against COVID. Unfortunately, vaccine efficacy waned more precipitously than the experts expected or hoped, especially against the various Omicron subvariants. So boosters became very important. For a while, pre-Omicron, [mainstream public health resisted](#), fearful that a booster campaign would undermine the holdouts' willingness to get vaccinated at all. But with Omicron, [the case for boosting became too strong to oppose](#).

That's when a lot of public health professionals decided it was a mistake to call COVID boosters "boosters." They feared that booster language would make a third shot sound optional rather than essential. Better to claim that the third shot was the completion of a three-shot primary series. That way, people with only two shots would feel some pressure to finish the job. Essentially, they wanted to give up on encouraging people to get their first shots by implying that two were enough, and focus instead on encouraging people to get their boosters by implying that three was the key.

Changing terminology in midstream this way might have been worth trying if there were grounds for confidence that three doses would be enough. But vulnerable people are already being advised to get a second booster. Are public health professionals now going to suggest, "Well, actually, it's a *four*-dose primary series"? And what if they end up recommending periodic boosters for years to come? How many times can they say a newly recommended shot isn't a booster but part of an endlessly lengthening primary series?

So the CDC devised a compromise. It still says anybody with two Pfizer or Moderna doses is "fully vaccinated." And it still calls all additional shots "boosters." But it introduced a new term, "up to date," for people who have gotten all the boosters currently recommended for their cohort. If you want to be up to date, the recommended boosters aren't optional.

Complicating things further, pathogens mutate, and sometimes a new mutation requires a new vaccine. That's why the flu vaccine changes nearly every year, as manufacturers try to



match the flu strains thought likeliest to be circulating in the coming season. Public health professionals rarely call the annual flu shot

Public health professionals don't normally call a reformulated vaccine a "booster." But in the case of COVID, it looks like that's what they're planning to do.

a "booster" because this year's flu vaccine is usually not the same vaccine as last year's.

A reformulated COVID vaccine is expected to roll out this fall, a "bivalent" vaccine combining the original COVID vaccine dose with a new Omicron dose in the same shot. Public health professionals don't normally call a reformulated vaccine a "booster." But in the case of COVID, it looks like [that's what they're planning to do](#). A COVID "booster" is coming to mean any shot beyond the primary series that public health professionals want you to get—even if they now wish the primary series had included more than two shots, and even if the vaccine has been reformulated. That's a different

meaning for "booster" than the usual one for other diseases.

Whatever "booster" means or comes to mean, we can't talk intelligibly about who ought to get another COVID shot without distinguishing the various reasons for getting one: your antibodies have waned, the virus has changed, you never had enough protection in the first place, you simply want more protection, etc.

Emergency

To qualify as an emergency, an event normally should be important, bad, sudden, and short-term. We sometimes deviate from these specifications. We may talk about a "minor emergency," for example, or even a "slow-motion emergency." But the essence of an emergency is the need to put aside your normal concerns and focus on this big new problem. In general, a situation isn't an emergency if it doesn't matter much, or if it comes on slowly with lots of time to prepare, or if it keeps going and you have little choice but to integrate it into how you live.

COVID was clearly an emergency in early 2020. It's debatable whether it's still an emergency in mid-2022—though even if it's not, a virulent new variant might make it an emergency again.

I'm almost certain that most Americans think COVID is no longer an emergency. Many public health professionals, on the other hand, say it is. Some may actually think COVID is still an emergency; others may want to keep calling it an emergency to justify some of the COVID precautions implemented under emergency conditions. And labeling COVID an official Public Health Emergency (PHE) allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to [take various actions](#), including using government funds and waiving

certain legal restrictions while the PHE is in place.

COVID is still a very significant public health problem. We need to debate which precautions to keep in place, though I doubt that continuing to call COVID an "emergency" advances the debate.

It's no surprise that much of the public is highly motivated to "get over" COVID and return to normal life, while many public health professionals want the public to stay focused on the biggest public health emergency of their careers. This disconnect between public health and the public is probably inevitable, but it is one main reason for COVID polarization and declining public trust in public health officials.

Continuing the emergency designation has another

legal element too, especially with regard to [Emergency Use Authorizations](#) (EUAs). Congress created the EUAs in order to let the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) okay drugs, vaccines, and other emergency countermeasures without making the manufacturer jump through all the hoops required for formal licensure. Once the HHS Secretary declares an emergency that threatens public health and safety, the FDA can issue EUAs for that emergency, authorizing temporary use of products that aren't licensed at all, or aren't licensed for a novel use.

This disconnect between public health and the public is probably inevitable, but it is one main reason for COVID polarization and declining public trust in public health officials.



Individual EUAs can be revoked if the product involved turns out ineffective or dangerous. (That's what happened to the EUA for hydroxychloroquine.) Otherwise, they're all good [until the HHS Secretary formally declares the end of the emergency](#), or until licensure. The legal COVID "emergency" will last until some HHS Secretary decides to declare that it's over.

There are [current EUAs in effect](#) for anthrax, Ebola, MERS, Zika, and H7N9 influenza, among others. As far as the US government is concerned, they're all still emergencies.

COVID-related EUAs keep getting issued and amended. They are routinely covered in the media with virtually no attention to whether there's actually still a COVID "emergency" that justifies approving unlicensed products to be used by millions of people.

EUAs are just the tip of the iceberg. A wide range of federal, state, and local laws and regulations are hooked to the pandemic "emergency." All sorts of requirements have been imposed or suspended; everything from Medicare rules to immigration rules to election rules have been altered. Some of these pandemic provisions are worth keeping in place after the pandemic "emergency" is declared to be over. But many were promulgated under emergency provisions, without meeting the procedural requirements for normal legislation or rulemaking. When the pandemic "emergency" ends, these provisions may automatically revert to their pre-pandemic status unless or until they're promulgated in a non-emergency way—reason enough for many public health professionals to want the "emergency" status to continue. Whether or not you think the medical and societal COVID "emergency" is over for now, the legal "emergency" shows no signs of abating.

Pandemic and endemic

There are lots of [competing definitions of pandemics](#). What they all have in common is a disease, usually an infectious disease, that affects people (that's the "-demic" part) and is spread widely over many countries on several continents (that's the "pan-" part).

But even experts don't tend to use the term "pandemic" unless three other conditions are met.

A pandemic affects a lot of people. Rare diseases aren't usually called pandemic no matter how geographically widespread the very few cases are.

A pandemic is nontrivially harmful. We don't talk about pandemics of minor illnesses.

Perhaps most important, something about a pandemic is new in a threatening way. Sometimes it's a pathogen or at least a variant we haven't seen before. Sometimes it's a familiar pathogen that has suddenly changed for the worse: more deadly, maybe, or more transmissible. Something is new and bad.

A circulating disease behaving normally—nothing's new— isn't "pandemic" even if it meets all the other pandemic specs. It is "endemic" in places where it's circulating (which may or may not be worldwide). It's baseline; it's what we've come to expect.

In recent decades, "pandemic" has become a scary word. So declaring an emerging infectious disease a pandemic is a fraught thing for an official agency to do. In 2009, the WHO delayed calling the widely spreading, newly mutated H1N1 "swine" flu strain a pandemic for weeks after virtually all experts were certain it was one. Again in the early months of COVID-19's spread, there was great hesitation to declare or even predict a COVID pandemic. On February 22, 2020, my wife and colleague Jody Lanard and I wrote ["Past Time to Tell the Public: It Will Probably Go Pandemic, and We Should All Prepare Now."](#) We weren't the first to use the word "pandemic" about COVID. But we beat the WHO and the CDC.

Perhaps because the word "pandemic" is now so loaded and scary, the word "endemic" has come to seem to the public like something to hope for. Once COVID is endemic, many people figure (and some commentators claim), life will be normal again: no masks, no social distancing, no tests.

It's true that "endemic COVID" will be in some sense the new normal, so we'll have to get used to it and decide how to live with it. But we don't know how much worse than the old normal it will be. It's possible that a SARS-CoV-2 variant that stabilizes and becomes endemic could be worse (more deadly, more transmissible, more resistant to vaccines and treatments) than the pandemic variants we've endured so far.

To public health professionals, "endemic" has no connotation of "mild" or "manageable" or "easy to live with." Malaria is endemic in much of Africa, where it is far deadlier than COVID. And to public health professionals, "pandemic" doesn't connote horrific or devastating. The H1N1 flu pandemic of 2009 was a genuine pandemic because it was a new nontrivial flu strain spreading worldwide, even though it was less deadly than many endemic flu seasons.

To much of the public, on the other hand, "pandemic" does mean horrific and "endemic" does mean mild.

The actual meanings of the two terms notwithstanding, their connotations are what they are. Claiming that COVID is (or will soon be) "endemic" will be heard as claiming that it's not worth worrying about so much anymore. If you want people to keep worrying or dial their worry level back up, "pandemic" is the more convincing word for your purposes.

All the choices are bad. If you use "pandemic" and "endemic" correctly, you will be widely misunderstood. If you use these two terms the way they're understood by most people, you'll



be using them incorrectly. Since both uses are in circulation, when others use these two terms, you will have to figure out (or guess) which meanings they have in mind. And when you use these terms, people who are aware of the definitional problem will have to figure out (or guess) which meanings you have in mind.

All the choices are bad. If you use "pandemic" and "endemic" correctly, you will be widely misunderstood. If you use these two terms the way they're understood by most people, you'll be using them incorrectly.

The only decent choice is awkward and burdensome: Point out the definitional confusion and specify which meanings you have in mind. "When I say 'pandemic' and 'endemic,' I mean this and not that."

I think that's your best choice for all the terms I have discussed. It's fine to avoid these terms when you can—but more often than not, you can't. In 2005 I wrote a website column titled "[Risk Words You Can't Use.](#)" I was kidding myself. It's almost impossible to talk about risk without using the terms in my 2005 column. And it's almost impossible to talk about COVID without using the terms I've been discussing here.

So once you decide to use these terms, be explicit about what you mean. Just as important: Be explicit about what

you don't mean. Warn your audience that other people often use the terms differently than you are using them. Or expect to be widely misunderstood.

And if you decide to go ahead and use a term in a way you know will be widely misunderstood, don't you dare pretend later that you were clear and "the public is confused."

Peter M. Sandman is a mostly retired risk communication expert. His 60+ articles on COVID risk communication—and hundreds of articles on other aspects of risk communication.

China's Secretive Work in Biotechnology

Aug 31, 2022 3 min read

The Heritage Foundation



Mysterious disease claims third victim in **Argentina**

Source: <https://www.dw.com/en/mysterious-disease-claims-third-victim-in-argentina/a-62998842>

Sept 02 – A third person died from a type of pneumonia of unknown origin in Argentina's Tucuman province, authorities said. Tucuman Health Minister Luis Medina Ruiz told reporters that nine people were diagnosed with the mysterious respiratory illness, including eight medical staff at a private clinic.

So far, all the cases were connected to one health clinic. Two health workers and a patient at the clinic have died of the illness.

The latest fatality was a 70-year-old woman who had undergone surgery at the clinic. The victim is being treated "patient zero," Medina Ruiz said. In medical terms, "patient zero" is the first person to be infected with an illness or disease in a population during an outbreak.

Two people are currently hospitalized with mechanical respiratory assistance and in serious condition, according to the health minister.

'No proof of person-to-person transmission'

The first symptoms of the mysterious illness were recorded between August 18 and 22.

Officials are studying the origin of the outbreak with **symptoms including vomiting, a high fever and diarrhea.**



The medical facility has been placed in preventive isolation for seven days as Argentinian health authorities study the origin and nature of the outbreak.

Even though the symptoms appear [similar to COVID-19](#), epidemiological investigations have ruled out that illness, along with both influenza A and B, or hantavirus, spread by rodents. They have not yet excluded [toxic or environmental causes](#).

Hector Sale, president of the Tucuman provincial medical college said that at this time there is no conclusive proof of person-to-person transmission as there have been no cases among those in close contacts of any of the patients.

UPDATE [Sep 03]: Lab results [revealed](#) infection with *Legionella pneumophila*. End of alarm! **Sep 05:** Six deaths in total.

Public Health Tool Predicts Effects of a Pandemic and Mitigation Efforts

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220901-public-health-tool-predicts-effects-of-a-pandemic-and-mitigation-efforts>

Sept 01 – Epidemiologists and public health officials have a [new predictive tool](#) to analyze the course of pandemics, thanks to a mathematical formula derived by a University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) professor in partnership with a collaborator who is a UAH alumnus.

In work a journal reviewer referred to as seminal, they provide a mathematical solution to a model which describes chemical autocatalysis. Based on an analogy they draw between autocatalysis and epidemiology, their formula accurately predicts the future spread of a pandemic, as well.

The formula, which the researchers say is simple to evaluate, can be used to judge the effects of various mitigation measures designed to stem the epidemic. As such, they say it can aid public health authorities in their efforts to deploy resources to mitigate a pandemic's effects.

Created by Dr. James Baird, professor of chemistry at UAH, a part of the University of Alabama System, and Dr. Douglas A. Barlow (Ph.D., materials science, 2003) of Alderman Barlow Laboratories in Trenton, Fla., the formula calculates the spread of diseases of either viral or bacterial origin and takes into account the effects of various mitigation efforts such as masking, social distancing, quarantine, vaccination rates and the efficacy of medical treatment.

Chemical transformations are autocatalytic when a catalyst molecule combines with a reactant molecule to produce more catalyst molecules, a result that serves to accelerate the reaction.

"In this sense, an autocatalytic reaction is completely analogous to the spread of an infectious disease," Dr. Baird says. "In the disease case, contact between a susceptible individual and an infectious individual results in two infected individuals."

According to Dr. Baird, the formula he derived with Dr. Barlow is a highly accurate approximate solution to the mathematical theory of epidemics developed in 1927 by the British scientists W. O. Kermack and A. G. McKendrick, who published their results in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society*. Kermack was a biochemist and McKendrick was a British army physician, whose mathematical intuition rivaled that of many professionals.

"Kermack and McKendrick showed that, if the rate of transfer of the infectious organism was faster than the rate of recovery of the population of infected individuals, then the disease would spread," Dr. Baird says.

"If the reverse is true, the disease will go extinct," he says. "Although Kermack and McKendrick gave a proof of this assertion, they were unable to provide an exact, closed form, analytic solution of the basic differential equation that governed the time development of the various populations."

No one since has been able to find an exact solution to that equation that doesn't require several pages to write down.

"My coauthor Doug Barlow and I fared no differently from our predecessors in the search for an exact solution," says Dr. Baird. "We did, however, find the next best thing, which was an approximate analytic solution that can be written down on one line."

Dr. Baird presented the model in May at the Southeastern Theoretical Chemistry Association meeting in Atlanta.

"The World Health Organization could program our equation into a hand-held computer," Dr. Baird says. "Our formula is able to predict the time required for the number of infected individuals to achieve its maximum. In the chemical analog, this is known as the induction time."

The formula is capable of predicting the number of hospitalizations, death rates, community exposure rates and related variables. It also calculates the populations of susceptible, infectious and recovered individuals, and predicts a clean separation between the period of onset of the disease and the period of subsidence.



“During the onset, the number of infected individuals steadily increases, and as a result the rate of increase in the number of recovered individuals accelerates,” Dr. Baird says. “To slow down the spread, mitigation effects need to focus their attention on a parameter known as R-zero.”

R-zero is the rate of spread divided by the rate of recovery.

“If the value of R-zero is greater than unity, the disease is spreading,” says Dr. Baird. “If the value of R-zero is less than unity, the disease is going extinct.”

To reach the extinction phase, public health officials want to decrease the rate of spread while increasing the rate of recovery. “The period of subsidence of the disease begins after the number of infected individuals has reached its maximum,” Dr. Baird says. During subsidence, the number of infected individuals begins to decrease, while the number of recovered individuals is still increasing but at a rate which is decelerating.

“Among our results is also a formula, which when combined with population data collected during onset, can be used to predict the time when the number of infected individuals needing hospitalization is expected to reach its maximum,” Dr. Baird says.

“To get an idea of the accuracy of our formula, we compared its predictions with that of a numerical solution of the Kermack-McKendrick equation that we generated using MathCad computer software,” he says. “In all cases tried, the difference between our analytic solution and the computer solution was never greater than 2%.”

Dr. Baird’s curiosity was sparked in 2020 by news reports describing the rapid increase in numbers of people infected by COVID-19. “The rate of infection initially accelerates until it reaches a point where the infection rate is balanced by the recovery rate of infected individuals, at which point the number of infected people peaks and then starts to decay,” he says.

That mechanism reminded him of the mechanism that governs an autocatalytic reaction.

“I subsequently learned that the mathematical description of the spread of infectious diseases was first described by Kermack and McKendrick,” Dr. Baird says.

“When I read their paper, I realized that their mechanism was exactly the same as that of an autocatalytic reaction, where a catalyst molecule combines with a reactant molecule to produce two catalyst molecules,” he says. “The rate of production of catalyst molecules accelerates until it is balanced by the rate of decay of the catalyst to form the product.”

The STAMINA EU Project

Intelligent decision support for pandemic crisis prediction and management within and across European borders

By Ilias Gkotsis, Leonidas Perlepes and Lefteris Voumvourakis ([Satways Ltd](#))



Infectious diseases have the potential to result in serious cross-border public health threats. The pandemic influenza (H1N1) in 2009, the 2011 Escherichia Coli outbreak in Germany, the Ebola virus in 2014, Zika virus in 2016, and the West Nile virus in Southern and Eastern European countries in 2019³ all show that new infections can emerge at any time^{4,5}. On top of that, the COVID-19 outbreak has pinpointed the importance of having the right tools to manage a pandemic situation. This global crisis has not only affected the health of the people but all aspects of society. *Management of this type of crisis remains a serious challenge due to the number of people involved, the different legal, administrative, professional, and political cultures, and the lack of transboundary crisis management infrastructures.* In response to this, 38 organisations⁶ from across the EU (and beyond) have united to deliver a two-year Horizon 2020 innovation project, aiming to contribute to this crucial effort by providing solutions for the preparedness and response phases of the emergency management cycle and facilitating intelligent evidence-based decision support.

³ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/west-nile-virus>

⁴ Boin, A., Ekengren, M. and Rhinard, M. (2013) *The European Union as Crisis Manager: Patterns and Prospects*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁵ Boin, A., Rhinard, M. and Ekengren, M. (2014). *Managing transboundary crises: The emergence of European Union capacity*. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 22(3), pp. 131-142.

⁶ <https://stamina-project.eu/partners/>



The STAMINA toolset

The proposed solution aims at delivering a holistic situational awareness and decision support system that allows users from different levels of command to receive data, analyze them and produce useful reports and action plans.

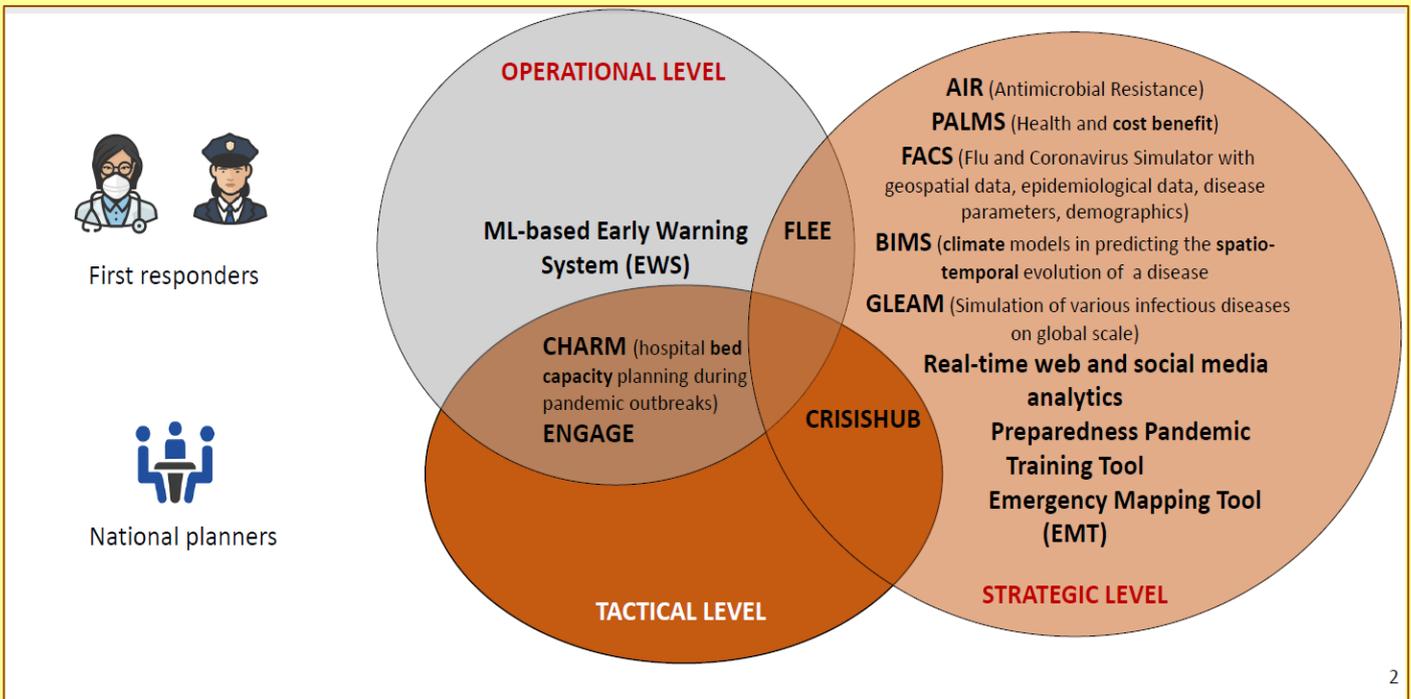


Figure 1 STAMINA multi-level solutions against the pandemic

In more detail, and as presented in the picture above, to assist preparedness, a crisis simulation tool will be developed, defining the roles and responsibilities of key actors, and implementing different training scenarios. Real-time web and social media analytics will help capture societal feelings and reactions, raising awareness and increasing public trust in public health institutions and government authorities. Smart wearable diagnostic devices will be used for first-line screening and monitoring. All information will be fed to a Common Operational Picture (COP) platform, as the main interface for real-time situation assessment and coordinated response of the involved actors. The STAMINA toolset will be accompanied by a set of guidelines on the effective implementation of risk communication principles and best practices in cross-organisational preparedness and response plans.

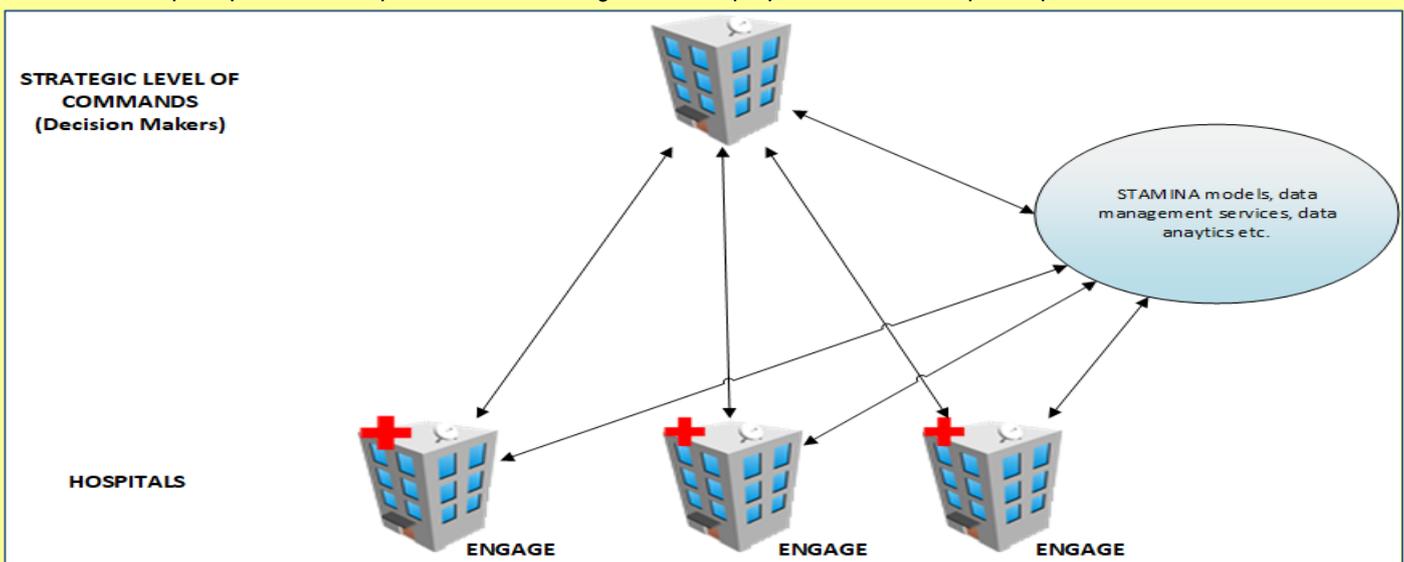


Figure 2 ENGAGE interactions



ENGAGE Tool

One of the tools that are integrated into the Common Operational Picture (COP) platform, is that of ENGAGE developed by Satways Ltd⁷. ENGAGE targets the needs of hospital workers and first responders, and it will provide information in a more geographically narrow aspect. ENGAGE is a software suite that integrates into a single user interface all the functionalities needed by public/private safety agencies to handle their everyday procedures and respond to emergencies.

In the context of the STAMINA project, this component is planned to be deployed in hospitals and emergency medical services (as shown in Figure 2).

Through the User Interface of ENGAGE (depicted in Figure 3, the hospital commanders will be able to share the required information (such as the availability of the hospital in terms of beds, medical services, etc.) and be informed about the evolution of the pandemic situation and to receive the related alert/notifications that are published by the platform.

The screenshot displays the ENGAGE UI for the UNIVERZITETNI KLINIČNI CENTER MARIBOR. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Hospital Information:** Shows the hospital name, address (Slovenia, 2000, Ljubljanska ulica 5, Maribor), and contact number (+386 (0)2 3211000).
- Emergency Department:** Displays 'Air Transport Status' as Normal (Offload: 10m), 'Traffic Status' as Normal, and 'Ambulance Status' as Normal (Offload: 5m).
- Capacity and Census Tables:**

Code	Amount	Code	Amount
Green	5	Green	0
Red	5	Red	0
Yellow	5	Yellow	0
Black	5	Black	0
- Hospital Services:** A list of services with checkboxes for availability and level. Services include Cardiology Clinic, Neurology Clinic, OB/GYN, Psychiatric Clinic, Surgery, Transport Service, Trauma Center, Burn Unit, Dialysis Unit, Emergency Department, Hyperbaric Chamber, Infectious Disease Unit, Neonatology Unit, Ophthalmology Unit, Orthopedic Unit, and Pediatrics Unit.
- Beds Availability:** A table showing the status and availability of various hospital categories.

Category	Status	Available	Baseline	24hr Availability	72hr Availability
Adult ICU	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Pediatric ICU	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Neonatal ICU	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Emergency Department	Vacant/Available	5	10	10	10
Nursery Beds	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Medical / Surgical	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Rehab Long Term Care	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Burn	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Pediatrics	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Adult Psychiatric	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Pediatric Psychiatric	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Negative Flow Isolation	Not Available	0	0	0	0
Other Isolation	Vacant/Available	10	20	15	20
Operating Rooms	Not Available	0	0	0	0
- Hospital Resources:** Shows staffing (Adequate), facility operations (Adequate), clinical operations (Adequate), and equipment (Vaccines - 1000, Masks - 1000, Self tests - 1000, Rapid tests - 0, PCR tests - 100).

Figure 3 ENGAGE UI (►enlarge page for best reading of small letters)

This information is of utmost importance as it indicates the ability of patient care by the health facilities during public health emergencies or mass casualty incidents.

STAMINA benefits

The STAMINA solution will assist national planners, regional crisis management agencies, first responders, and citizens by achieving five key goals:

- Support for pandemic crisis management
- Improvement of diagnostic capabilities
- Increase of trust in governmental and public health institutions
- Increase of cooperation between and within the EU Member States and neighboring third-countries
- Increase harmonisation of national preparedness and response plans

⁷ www.satways.net



STAMINA upcoming events

The use of the STAMINA methods and tools will be demonstrated through 12 national and regional small-scale demonstrators (Austria, Slovenia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, France, Turkey, Greece, Spain, Netherlands, Romania, Tunisia, UK, and Cross-Border). The first phase of development and validation through a series of dry runs has been completed, while until the end of the year the final trials in each country will be implemented. The project's outputs will be presented at the EU Summit event organized by STAMINA during the last phase of the project.

- For more information on the STAMINA project please visit our home page: www.stamina-project.eu
Connect with us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)
Email: info@stamina-project.eu

Pre-exposure to mRNA-LNP inhibits adaptive immune responses and alters innate immune fitness in an inheritable fashion



By Zhen Qin, Aurélie Bouteau, Christopher Herbst, and Botond Z. Igyártó⁸

Source: <https://journals.plos.org/plospathogens/article?id=10.1371/journal.ppat.1010830>

Hundreds of millions of SARS-CoV-2 mRNA-LNP vaccine doses have already been administered to humans. However, we lack a comprehensive understanding of the immune effects of this platform. **The mRNA-LNP-based SARS-CoV-2 vaccine is highly inflammatory, and its synthetic ionizable lipid component responsible for the induction of inflammation has a long *in vivo* half-life.** Since chronic inflammation can lead to immune exhaustion and non-responsiveness, we sought to determine the effects of

pre-exposure to the mRNA-LNP on adaptive immune responses and innate immune fitness. We found that pre-exposure to mRNA-LNPs or LNP alone led to long-term inhibition of the adaptive immune response, which could be overcome using standard adjuvants. On the other hand, we report that after pre-exposure to mRNA-LNPs, the resistance of mice to heterologous infections with influenza virus increased while resistance to *Candida albicans* decreased. The diminished resistance to *Candida albicans*

correlated with a general decrease in blood neutrophil percentages. Interestingly, mice pre-exposed to the mRNA-LNP platform can pass down the acquired immune traits to their offspring, providing better protection against influenza. In summary, the mRNA-LNP vaccine platform induces long-term unexpected immunological changes affecting both adaptive immune responses and heterologous protection against infections. Thus, **our studies highlight the need for more research to determine this platform's true impact on human health.**

	Mice Group 1	Mice Group 2	Mice Group 3
Vaccinations			
First Injection	Salted water (control)	Empty LNP	LNP containing mRNA for human protein
Second Injection	LNP containing mRNA for influenza protein	LNP containing mRNA for influenza protein	LNP containing mRNA for influenza protein
Immune Responses			
Innate immune response	Less defensive against Influenza	More defensive against influenza More susceptible to <i>Candida albicans</i>	More defensive against influenza More susceptible to <i>Candida albicans</i>
Adaptive immune response	Higher T and B cell response compared to Group 2 and 3	Reduced T and B cell response	Reduced T and B cell response

Summary of the injections administered to different groups of mice, according to data by Igyártó et al.

⁸ This is an uncorrected proof.



Author summary

We bring experimental evidence that pre-exposure to mRNA-LNPs or its LNP component affects innate and adaptive immune responses. Pre-exposure to mRNA-LNPs led to long-term inhibition of the adaptive immune responses, which the use of adjuvants could overcome. On the other hand, we report that after pre-exposure to mRNA-LNPs, the resistance of mice to heterologous infections with influenza virus increased, while resistance to *Candida albicans* decreased. We also detected a general neutropenia in the mRNA-LNP exposed mice. Interestingly, mice pre-exposed to mRNA-LNPs can pass down the acquired immune traits to their offspring. In summary, the mRNA-LNP vaccine platform induces long-term immunological changes that can affect both adaptive immune responses and heterologous protection against infections, some of which can be inherited by the offspring. More studies are needed to understand the mechanisms responsible for these effects and determine this platform's impact on human health.

Volunteers could have been infected with viruses in Ukraine's trials – Defense Ministry

Source: <https://tass.com/defense/1502175>



Sep 03 – The Russian Defense Ministry does not rule out that volunteers could have been infected with the virus of Congo-Crimean hemorrhagic fever, hantaviruses and leptospirosis pathogen as part of Ukraine's research program, Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov, chief of the Radiation, Chemical and Biological Defense Forces of the Russian Armed Forces, said on Saturday.

"We do not rule out that the official program of that research is the tip of the iceberg. In practice, volunteers were infected with the virus of Congo-Crimean hemorrhagic fever, hantaviruses and leptospirosis," Kirillov said.

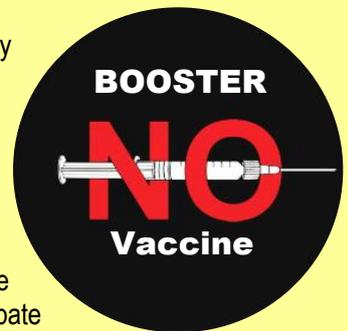
The general explained that the witnesses, who were questioned during the parliamentary investigation conducted by Russia, confirmed the facts of tests on military personnel and socially vulnerable groups of Ukrainian citizens.

New COVID Omicron Boosters About to Arrive, With Some Controversy

Source: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/980055>

Aug 31 – COVID-19 booster vaccines targeting the Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants currently dominating in the United States could be available in the next few days, but their arrival comes with some controversy. .

The FDA [granted emergency approval](#) to the mRNA boosters from Pfizer and Moderna today. Next up are 2 days of meetings of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices Thursday and Friday which could pave the way for an official CDC endorsement of the vaccines before the weekend. The US government [has already purchased](#) over 170 million doses of the two vaccines to be ready for use after all approvals are in place (with an additional order of 4 million doses for children should those be approved at a later date). The expected arrival of the updated vaccines, however, has sparked debate among infectious disease experts and others.



Some have criticized the fact that the new boosters haven't been tested in humans and say they will wait to get the updated booster or skip it altogether.

Others worry that the public will view the new vaccines as rushed, increasing an already-reluctant public's hesitation to get another shot. Still, many experts applaud the speed with which the updated vaccines were developed and say the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines is well established. They say this transition to updating vaccines for COVID-19 is being done much like the US updates its flu vaccine annually, tweaking the formula of an established vaccine platform to combat new viruses or variants expected to be circulating.

The Route to the New Boosters

Earlier this year, vaccine makers submitted data to the FDA on an updated vaccine that targeted BA.1, the previously predominant Omicron variant. But then the FDA asked the companies to update their vaccines to add an Omicron BA.4/5 component, to create a vaccine that is a bivalent booster — meaning it will cover both the original strain of the virus that emerged from China and the newer BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants. This will be the first update to the mRNA vaccines since they became available in December 2020.



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – September 2022

The FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) met with vaccine makers [in late June to review](#) data on Omicron-specific COVID-19 vaccine candidates.

For the new boosters, the FDA did not schedule another meeting of its vaccine advisory panel, according to FDA Commissioner Robert M. Califf, MD. Califf noted on Twitter that "the agency feels confident in the extensive discussion that was held in June."

Evidence on Updated Boosters

At the end of June, Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna [presented the FDA](#) with human data on the BA.1 vaccine. The companies also presented lab or animal data on the BA.4 and BA.5 vaccine candidates.

Both companies showed that the BA.1 vaccines triggered antibody responses to BA.4 and BA.5, but lower than those for BA.1.

The companies also presented data that showed the updated shots' side effects were similar to those of the original vaccine, such as soreness at the injection site and fatigue.

In mice studies, presented to the FDA, Pfizer said its new booster increased the antibody responses to all the Omicron variants, including BA.4 and BA.5.

Results from human clinical trials are coming, but not soon. Moderna just completed enrollment of its BA.4 and BA.5 booster clinical trial, with results expected in the fourth quarter of 2022. Pfizer said it plans to start a trial soon.

Peter Marks, MD, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, told [NPR](#) that the data from the mouse studies suggest the new vaccines may be about 20 times more protective against Omicron than the original shots.

In response to any concerns about safety data in humans from the new vaccine, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, MD, [recently told CNBC](#) that the new shots involve very small changes in the mRNA sequence and that should not impact safety.

Infectious Disease Experts Weigh In

The lack of convincing neutralizing antibody data against BA.4 and BA.5 in people is a problem, said Paul Offit, MD, infectious disease expert and director of the Vaccine Education Center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

"At the very least, what I'd like to see is neutralizing antibody data in people who have gotten this BA.4, BA.5 vaccine as compared to just getting the monovalent vaccine and to see a dramatic increase in neutralizing antibodies, a 4- or 5-fold increase," he says.

Offit also questioned which groups should get the updated vaccine based on benefit and believes the best approach is to target those most at risk of severe COVID-19, such as older adults, those with serious co-existing conditions or the [immunocompromised](#).

"Those are the ones getting hospitalized," he says. He sees the goal of the updated vaccine as preventing serious illness.

Offit, who said he has been vaccinated and boosted, and had a mild COVID-19 infection about 3 months ago, plans to skip this booster.

Eric Topol, MD, executive vice-president of Scripps Research and editor-in-chief of *Medscape* (WebMD's sister site), applauded the FDA's "aggressive and expedient" approach, with a BA.5 vaccine available for review just 2 months after the FDA meeting asking for such a vaccine.

He pointed out that mice data is used every year to update the flu vaccine quadrivalent program. "But there's a concern that it's not so easy to extrapolate mouse to human for SARS-CoV-2, a virus that's quite different than [influenza](#)," he wrote online in his substack [Ground Truths](#).

Another potential concern, Topol and others said, is something called imprinting, also known by the catchy but potentially misleading term "original antigenic sin," with a person's first exposure to a virus having an effect on a later response to similar viruses. The worry is people may "train" their immune system to remember the response to the first infection and be less able to respond to future ones when faced with different variants, such as those included in the new boosters.

For now, he says, "it's an unknown, the data are mixed."

Will the Public Accept It?

Topol has also expressed concern about public trust in the vaccine and the possibility that people will view the new boosters as a rush job. As he also pointed out, just 32% of the population have had any of the original booster shots.

Topol's personal decision? He is about 8 months out from his fourth shot and said he will wait to see more data. He says that is simply his perspective. "Many will be eager to get the new shot. As I said, that's fine."

Infectious disease expert, William Schaffner, MD, professor of preventive medicine at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, isn't as concerned as others about the lack of human data, citing the need to combat the expected winter surge.

"If you need a vaccine to combat what some think will be an increase in [cases in] the winter, you won't have an updated vaccine in time if you wait for a clinical trial," he says.



He, too, likens the tweaking of the COVID-19 vaccine to what's done annually with the flu vaccine.

As for safety, "we know a vast amount about the [vaccine's] safety and effectiveness," Schaffner says. "I think the majority of the public health and vaccinology communities are quite content that we are doing these immune-bridging studies that show [updated vaccines] performed similarly to previous vaccines."

As for safety concerns, he noted that the risk of [myocarditis](#), which occurred in some teens and young adults with the second dose of the vaccine, was lower with the booster dose. A reasonable expectation, he says, would be that the updated booster would also carry a lower risk of that side effect.

"These tweaks [with the updated vaccine] are so small, it won't impact safety," said Katelyn Jetelina, PhD, MPH, an epidemiologist and health policy expert who publishes [Your Local Epidemiologist](#), a newsletter translating science for consumers.

She recognizes the concern about imprinting. However, "we need to be responsive to the needs of our immune system right now, in the midst of [an expected] surge."

Jetelina acknowledges the unknowns, such as how long the updated vaccine could be effective. Because BA.5 is so new, there hasn't been time to analyze the vaccine in people. In her view, "demanding an effective vaccine and clinical data is simply a fantasy against this rapidly changing virus."

As for experts who want to focus just on those at risk of severe disease, Jetelina says any advance that helps cut down the risk of infection is important: "We cannot stop severe disease and death if we don't stop transmission. Even if we don't stop transmission perfectly, even if it's 50%, that still helps a lot." She plans to get the updated booster.

World's First Covid Vaccine You Inhale Is Approved in China

Source: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-05/world-s-first-covid-vaccine-you-inhale-is-approved-in-china#xj4y7vzkg>



Sep 05 – China became the first country to approve a needle-free, inhaled version of a Covid-19 vaccine made by Tianjin-based [CanSino Biologics Inc.](#), pushing the company's shares up as much as 14.5% Monday morning in Hong Kong.

China's National Medical Products Administration approved CanSino's Ad5-nCoV for emergency use as a booster vaccine, the company said in a statement to the [Hong Kong Stock Exchange](#) on Sunday.

The vaccine is a new version of CanSino's one-shot Covid drug, the first in the world to undergo human testing in **March 2020** and which has been used in China, Mexico, Pakistan, Malaysia and Hungary after being rolled out in February 2021. The **inhaled version** can stimulate cellular immunity and induce mucosal immunity to boost protection without intramuscular injection, CanSino said.

Companies are looking into developing inhaled versions of vaccines to stimulate antibodies in nasal and airway tissues to defend against coronavirus. They are needle-free and can be self-administered, broadening their appeal to vaccine-hesitant people and potentially easing pressure on health-care resources.

CanSino's initial one-shot [vaccine](#) was found to **be 66% effective in preventing Covid-19 symptoms and 91% effective against severe disease**, but it trails vaccines from [Sinovac Biotech Ltd.](#) and state-owned [Sinopharm Group Co.](#) in use outside China. Those two companies account for most of the 770 million doses China has sent to the rest of the world.

The vaccine, which uses a modified cold-causing virus to expose the immune system to the coronavirus, is similar to those developed by [AstraZeneca Plc](#) and [Johnson & Johnson](#).



New evidence affirms link between long COVID and chronic fatigue syndrome

Source: <https://newatlas.com/health-wellbeing/long-covid-chronic-fatigue-syndrome-pasc-nature-study/>

Sep 06 – A new study published in *Nature Communications* has added to the growing body of evidence reporting similarities between long COVID and chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS). The research found around half of the long COVID patients studied fit the diagnostic criteria for ME/CFS.

Chronic fatigue syndrome is also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), and often referred to under the umbrella term ME/CFS. Over the last few years researchers have slowly begun to better understand this disease, and one hypothesis to emerge suggests it can be triggered by an acute viral infection.

A number of different pathogens are [suspected to trigger ME/CFS](#), from the Epstein-Barr virus to dengue viruses. And some researchers speculate [up to 75% of ME/CFS](#) cases can be directly traced to a viral infection.

So when patients in 2020 started to experience persistent fatigue-like illness following acute SARS-CoV-2 infections plenty of researchers [began joining the dots](#). Long COVID, now dubbed by many clinicians as PASC (Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection), is a condition with a diverse set of symptoms, but many patients [report features similar to ME/CFS](#), such as brain fog and reduced exercise capacity.

Carmen Scheibenbogen, an ME/CFS researcher at Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, has spent the better part of the last two years investigating the overlap between the two post-viral conditions. In a new study Scheibenbogen and colleagues have confirmed COVID-19 can trigger ME/CFS in some people.

"Providing the scientific evidence to confirm these assumptions, however, is anything but a trivial task," said Scheibenbogen. "This is partly due to the paucity of research into ME/CFS and the fact that there are no universally accepted diagnostic criteria. Thanks to an extremely thorough diagnostic process and a comprehensive comparison with patients who developed ME/CFS following non-COVID-related infections, we have now been able to show that COVID-19 can trigger ME/CFS."

This study is the first published data from an ongoing project tracking post-viral fatigue in COVID-19 patients. The research focused on 42 young participants, all experiencing persistent moderate to severe fatigue and exertion intolerance at least six months after an acute bout with COVID-19.

The majority of the cohort only suffered from a mild initial case of COVID-19. Just three were admitted to hospital during their acute infection, and all participants were unvaccinated.

This PASC cohort was compared to a control group consisting of age- and sex-matched ME/CFS patients known to have developed their disease following a short period of illness from a non-COVID infection.

Around half of the post-COVID cohort fit the diagnostic criteria for ME/CFS. The main distinguishing feature that separated the post-COVID ME/CFS cohort was the duration of exhaustion following exertion or exercise. In ME/CFS patients, and post-COVID patients fitting the diagnostic criteria for ME/CFS, post-exertional malaise lasted well over 24 hours.

Perhaps the most interesting findings in the study were the differences between the post-COVID ME/CFS subjects and the control ME/CFS patients. A measurement of hand grip strength is often used to quantify muscle fatigue in ME/CFS, and similar weaknesses were detected between the COVID and non-COVID ME/CFS patients on this measure. But curiously they correlated with very different inflammatory biomarkers.

"We furthermore found that [post-COVID] individuals with milder exertional intolerance had reduced hand grip strength if they had elevated levels of the cytokine interleukin 8," noted Scheibenbogen. "In the ME/CFS group, however, hand grip strength was correlated with the hormone NT-proBNP, which can be released by muscle cells when oxygen supply is insufficient. This suggests that, in these individuals, muscle weakness may be caused by an impaired blood supply."

So what does all this mean? Unfortunately the frustrating answer is, it's complicated. Maybe more complicated than many researchers previously suspected.

These new findings indicate long COVID, or PASC, is an incredibly heterogeneous chronic disease. In some patients it may manifest in conditions that resemble ME/CFS, but for others long COVID can include a number of novel neurological, vascular or cardiovascular symptoms.

The new findings also imply ME/CFS is potentially a much more diverse disease than suspected. The study does speculate post-viral fatigue could manifest in different ways depending on the pathogen triggering the condition. So maybe Epstein-Barr-triggered ME/CFS is pathologically different to SARS-CoV-2-triggered ME/CFS?

Better understanding the specificity of these kinds of post-viral fatigue syndromes will help researchers develop future treatments.



But Scheibenbogen does stress there are currently few treatments to help patients with these conditions, so trying to avoid viral infections is probably the best course of action at this point in time.

"Our data also provide further evidence that ME/CFS is not a psychosomatic disorder but a severe physical disease which can be measured and diagnosed using objective methods," Scheibenbogen added. "Unfortunately, current treatments for ME/CFS are purely symptomatic in nature. I would therefore urge even young people to protect themselves against SARS-CoV-2 by getting vaccinated and wearing an FFP2 mask."

●► The new study was published in [Nature Communications](#).

Discovery of Bacterial Toxin Could Lead to New Antibiotics

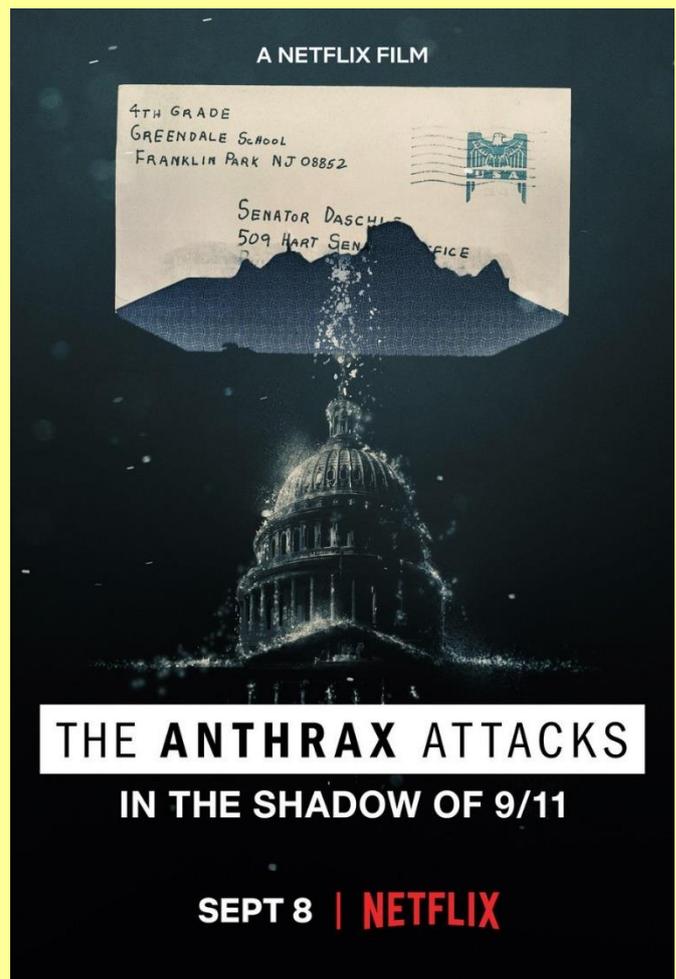
Scientists have discovered a new toxin secreted by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* that kills cells via the modification of RNA. *P. aeruginosa* colonizes diverse environments, including humans, because it can outcompete and kill other bacterial species in a niche. This involves the T6SS system that delivers protein toxins into nearby cells in a contact-dependent manner. Among the most potent of these toxins is RhsP2, which kills bacteria by corrupting key RNA molecules. **+ MORE**

'The Anthrax Attacks' Review: Strange Behavior and an Incriminating Flask

By Ben Kenigsberg

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/08/movies/the-anthrax-attacks-review.html>

Sep 08 – In the weeks following the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, news organizations and two United States senators were sent letters that contained deadly anthrax spores. These bioterrorist attacks killed five people and sickened at least 17 others. In 2010, the Federal Bureau of Investigation [closed the case](#) and [continued to maintain](#) that the perpetrator was Bruce E. Ivins, an Army biodefense expert who killed himself in 2008 as [preparations to indict him](#) were underway. In "[The Anthrax Attacks](#)," the director Dan Krauss (the 2014 documentary "[The Kill Team](#)," which he later [reworked into a dramatized feature](#)) takes viewers through the investigation. While much of the movie plays as a standard documentary — it features interviews with scientists, former F.B.I. agents, victims of the attacks and the sister of a postal employee who died — it makes substantial use of re-enactments. The actor Clark Gregg stars as Dr. Ivins, and a title card says that his words were taken directly from Ivins's emails. As portrayed in the documentary, Dr. Ivins was operating under the investigators' noses. His strange behavior, the timing of his lab activities and his access to an incriminating flask are all held out as evidence against him, although the evidence, the film notes, was also [largely circumstantial](#) and lacked a firm link between Dr. Ivins and the mailings themselves. Still, it is slightly sneaky for the film to set up Dr. Ivins as the obvious suspect by making him the film's center — and by having Gregg play him as an officious, mild-mannered weirdo — only to raise doubts toward the end, in particular pointing to a [2011 report](#) that said the available scientific evidence did not make it "possible to reach a definitive conclusion about the origins of the anthrax." Many documentaries have dealt with real-life ambiguity by making it part of their structure and argument. This one treats it as an afterthought.



Can mosquitoes be used for biological warfare?

Source: <https://health-desk.org/articles/can-mosquitoes-be-used-for-biological-warfare>

Sep 07 – Mosquitoes have been used as biological warfare and have the potential to be used as biological warfare in the future. However, this is somewhat unlikely for a range of logistical, ethical, and legal reasons.

What our experts say

Every year, mosquitoes kill more people than any other creature in the world. Because of 1) mosquitoes' ability to spread deadly, communicable diseases and cover large distances quickly, and 2) the fact that different types of bugs have been weaponized for hundreds of years, it is not surprising that mosquitoes have been used as weapons or suspected of being used as weapons.

One of the most well-known examples of mosquitoes being used as biological weapons occurred in the 20th century during World War II. Nazi researchers studied insects, including mosquitoes, to determine their ability to spread disease. The Nazi forces then went to Italian marshes to purposely collect mosquitoes with malaria and them into the population.

While this is the most well-known case of using mosquitoes as biological warfare, the use or considered use of mosquitoes as weapons is not unique to Germany. For instance, Fort Detrick in Maryland was created during World War II to focus on defending the United States against biological weapons and researching biological weapons. One plan for the site in the late 1950s involved releasing mosquitoes infected with yellow fever virus against an enemy though this never actually happened.

Several militaries, research facilities, universities, governments, and other entities have also explored mosquitoes as potential bioterrorism weapons. However, most researchers now claim that aerosolized viruses are more impactful than mosquitoes despite the fact that they are also more costly.

Advances in technology have also changed the possibilities when it comes to the potential use of mosquitoes as biological warfare. For instance, the ability to genetically modify mosquitoes is a major advance in the field of bioterrorism.

Though mosquitoes can be modified to be even more successful at spreading viruses, there are many challenges associated with this approach to biological warfare:

- Mosquitoes can travel relatively quickly, meaning it would be hard to contain those more dangerous mosquitoes to one targeted area
- Genetic modifications might jump from one species to another
- Translating ideas from the laboratory into real life populations is challenging, meaning it's difficult to know how successful or dangerous the approach would be
- Climate change may alter mosquito behaviors and geographies, adding more uncertainty and challenge to this approach

Many other obstacles must be considered in addition to the ethical issues scientists face. This is particularly the case as the consideration of using mosquitoes at a large scale is not limited to spreading viruses that mosquitoes already carry – it is also likely possible that mosquitoes can be used to spread toxins or other substances that aren't typically carried by mosquitoes.

The use of mosquitoes at scale can also be to benefit populations rather than harm them. Some nations like Brazil, for instance, are working on fighting viral epidemics by using genetically modified mosquitoes. Some researchers have also considered using mosquitoes to improve a population's immune system by adding a genetically modified bacteria that has the ability to activate a person's immune system against diseases like malaria. Mosquitoes have also long been used as methods for controlling disease spread; and releasing sterile male mosquitoes into larger populations has been used for many years to reduce or eradicate insect populations as well as to deliver viruses or pesticides to breeding grounds through mosquitoes to reduce populations.

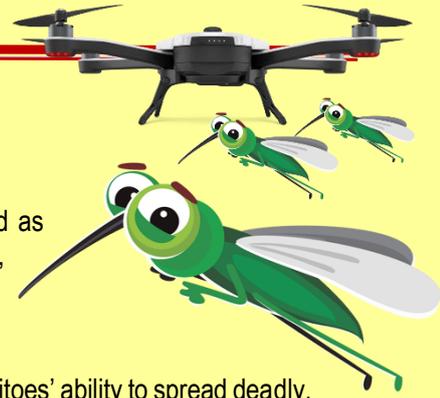
The use of mosquitoes in biological warfare is a violation of The Biological Weapons Convention, which "effectively prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons" which are considered weapons that "disseminate disease-causing organisms or toxins to harm or kill humans, animals or plants."

Context and background

A recent patent utilizing **drones that release mosquitoes infected with a toxin** was circulated around the internet. This prompted many to become alarmed about the use of mosquitoes as a bioterrorism weapon in Ukraine and beyond.

Resources

1. Fighting the World's Deadliest Animal ([United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/about/newsroom/press-releases/20190828-fighting-the-worlds-deadliest-animal.html))



2. The Entomological Institute of the Waffen-SS: evidence for offensive biological warfare research in the third Reich ([Endeavor](#))
3. How Mosquitoes Helped Shape the Course of Human History ([Smithsonian Magazine](#))
4. Six-legged soldiers: using insects as weapons of warfare ([Medical Journal of Armed Forces India](#))
5. Fort Detrick: From Biowarfare To Biodefense ([NPR](#))
6. Mosquito control as a first responder to bioterrorism ([Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory](#))
7. Brazil is fighting its biggest epidemics with weaponized mosquitoes ([Quartz](#))
8. Why the FBI and Pentagon are afraid of this new genetic technology ([STAT](#))
9. Biological Weapons Convention ([United Nations](#))

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Fleas are much better and field-tested! Ask the Japanese (or the Chinese)!

SARS-CoV-2 Enzyme's Crystal Structure Paves Way to New Antivirals

Using an approach known as fusion-assisted crystallization, researchers produced a high-resolution crystal structure of the **enzyme nsp14**, which is essential to the survival of SARS-CoV-2. The enzyme has a crucially important region known as the RNA methyltransferase domain, which has eluded previous attempts by the scientific community to characterize its 3D crystal structure. The team identifies features of the methyltransferase core that are crucial for the development of antivirals. **+ MORE**

Can South Korea Help the World Beat the Next Pandemic?

By Jennifer Bouey

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220909-can-south-korea-help-the-world-beat-the-next-pandemic>

Sep 09 – As nations around the world emerge from the long and devastating COVID-19 pandemic and reflect on the losses and the way forward, nations around the world, including the United States, could look to South Korea's near-perfect response as a model for dealing with future public health crises.

From March 2020 to October 2021, COVID-19 accounted for [one in eight deaths in the United States](#), killed more people than stroke and accidents combined, and was a top five cause of death in every age group 15 years and up. Meanwhile, everyday Americans are confronted with news about outbreaks of viruses old (e.g. Monkeypox, Polio) and new (e.g. Longya). Clearly, the country's pandemic responses could be improved. As the United States considers ways to respond to future health emergencies, consideration of South Korea's experience could prove useful. COVID-19 hit the country early and hard. In February 2020, South Korea had the highest number of COVID-19 cases outside China. The World Health Organization (WHO) had yet to announce a pandemic, global public health experts were debating whether people without severe symptoms could transmit the disease, vaccines were still a concept on paper, and a severe shortage of basic testing kits and personal protective equipment plagued even the most technologically advanced countries. Despite an initial high burden of disease at this early stage of the pandemic due to its proximity and high trade and tourist volume with China, South Korea was able to maintain a low case-fatality rate of 1.2 percent during the first outbreak, compared with 9.3 percent in Italy, 7.8 percent in Iran, 4.3 percent in France, and 9.2 percent in New York City in the first outbreak. More significantly, the ROK flattened the curve without a large-scale and strict lockdown, which could have led to economic paralysis or social despair. In 2020, the nation's gross domestic product contracted by only 1 percent, compared with 5.3 percent in Japan, 3.7 percent in the United States, and 11.2 percent in the United Kingdom.

How did South Korea do it? A new [RAND report](#) on public health and soft power summarizes six features of South Korea's COVID-19 responses, including the development of an early alert system and a centralized pandemic response system, the use of information sharing and communications technology, the creation of a public-private partnership in biomedical products production, and the existence of a large public health workforce for case tracing and isolation and a multiple-track hospital triage system.

For example, the government initiated the first national infectious disease alert on Jan. 3, 2020, 10 days before the novel virus was identified, 20 days before China's national alert, and months before WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11. As one South



Korean scholar noted: “The early initiation of the infectious disease alert system gave the government a few precious weeks to establish the national pandemic command center and release emergency funding to build testing and contact tracing capacity before the first outbreak hit.”

The report also summarizes experts’ consensus on foundations that supported South Korea’s success. One of them was an outcome of the relatively recent MERS pandemic in 2015. At that time, in response to the MERS pandemic, the government overhauled its public health agencies and updated its infectious disease law to maintain funding for the public health workforce and budget. It also passed a law to allow the government to use private credit card data for contact tracing during a pandemic. Most importantly, the South Korean government built these foundations in a democratic system where citizens shared the responsibility to reshape the pandemic strategies through voting.

Will countries learn from South Korea’s model? South Korea is probably better known for its K-Pop, TV shows, and technology than its public health capabilities, so translating its COVID-19 success into soft power gains could be a challenge. For years it has lagged behind its neighbors, such as Japan and China, in building diplomacy through health-assistance programs.

The report found South Korea’s soft power assets from the COVID-19 response span multiple domains, including digital resources and technological advancement; private enterprise resources; education, and labor market resources; cultural resources; engagement activities; and government capacity. If it is to leverage these assets, though, South Korea may need to consider developing a proactive strategy to address areas of potential limitations and risks. These may include cultural and language barriers, suspicion of political and economic motivation, and questions about the assistance’s sustainability.

South Korea’s successful response to COVID-19 may provide a level of hope amid the persistent bad news involving viruses globally and in the United States.

Jennifer Bouey is Tang Chair for China Policy Studies, a senior policy researcher, and an epidemiologist at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation.

BIOWEAPONS DISINFORMATION MONITOR

“We’re not just fighting an epidemic, we’re
fighting an Infodemic”

— Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General,
World Health Organisation



Continuing to Track the Labs that Handle the Most Dangerous Pathogens

Source: <https://schar.gmu.edu/news/2022-09/continuing-track-labs-handle-most-dangerous-pathogens>

Sep 06 – There are now **67 Biosafety Level 4 (BSL-4) laboratories** under construction, in operation, or in the planning phase in the world, a significant increase from May 2021, when the Schar School’s Biodefense Graduate Program Director Gregory Koblentz and Filippa Lentzos of King’s College London began tracking them.

Their team maintains an interactive map—GlobalBioLabs.org—that allows users to learn details of BSL-4 labs, including their home nation’s safety and security policies. The work is crucial: BSL-4 is the maximum level of security for biomedical studies of pathogens, equipped with elaborate safety systems to keep the pathogens contained.





The team also provides informed policy recommendations for strengthening biorisk management nationally and internationally. “This map provides the most comprehensive accounting of where maximum containment laboratories are located around the world,” said Koblenz. “By collating publicly available information in a systemic way, we’ve been able to provide insights into the distribution and capabilities of these labs.”

Only three of 26 countries with these maximum containment labs have national policies to govern “dual-use” biological research and development activities. Dual-use research refers to work that can be used for scientific purposes—or misused for hostile purposes. These activities are significant because of their potential to be reused by other states, or nonstate actors, to cause harm. A new version of the interactive map will go live later in 2022 and includes for the first time details about BSL-3+ labs around the world. These labs are increasingly popular for conducting high-risk research, “but there is little national or international guidance about how these labs should be designed and operated,” Koblenz said.

The updated website will also have a wealth of new information about biosafety, biosecurity, and dual-use research oversight laws in place around the world.

Orphanhood and Caregiver Loss Among Children Based on New Global Excess COVID-19 Death Estimates

By Susan Hillis, PhD; Joel-Pascal Ntwali N’konzi, MSc; William Msemburi, PhD; et al

JAMA Pediatr | September 6, 2022.

Source: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2795650>

The availability of new excess mortality data enables us to update global minimum estimates of COVID-19 orphanhood and caregiver death among children.¹⁻⁴ Consequences for children can be devastating, including institutionalization, abuse, traumatic grief, mental health problems, adolescent pregnancy, poor educational outcomes, and chronic and infectious diseases.^{4,5} Global totals and country comparisons were previously hampered by inconsistencies in COVID-19 testing and incomplete death reporting. The new orphanhood estimates derived here based on excess deaths provide a comprehensive measure of COVID-19’s long-term impact on orphanhood and caregiver loss.



Methods

Using previous methodology for combining age-specific death and fertility rates,⁴ we use Guidelines for Accurate and Transparent Health Estimates Reporting (GATHER) reporting guideline for this epidemiologic modeling study to update COVID-19 estimates of parent and caregiver loss. We computed excess mortality-derived estimates for bereft children in every country, using data from the World Health Organization (WHO), *The Economist*, and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME).^{1-3,6} We replaced COVID-19 deaths in previous logistic models with excess deaths (except when excess deaths were negative) to generate composite deaths for January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2021, and for January 1, 2020, through May 1, 2022 (eMethods in the [Supplement; Table](#)). We used bootstrapping to calculate uncertainty around estimates from fertility and death data. We present regional and national estimates using WHO-based mortality methods.

Results

Using WHO excess mortality (more conservative than findings from IHME and *The Economist*), we estimate that 10 500 000 children lost parents or caregivers ([Table](#)), and 7 500 000 children experienced COVID-19–associated orphanhood through May 1, 2022. Greater numbers affected by orphanhood by primary and/or secondary caregiver loss were found in the Africa (24.3% [95% credible interval [CI], 19.3%-27.6%]) and Southeast Asia (40.6% [95% CI, 35.3%-46.2%]) WHO regions, compared with the Americas (14.0% [95% CI, 12.6%-15.8%]), Eastern Mediterranean (14.6% [95% CI, 12.9%-16.2%]), European (4.7% [95% CI, 4.4%-5.3%]) and Western Pacific (1.8% [95% CI, 1.7%-1.9%]) regions through May 1, 2022 ([Figure A](#)). Similarly, variation in estimates arises at national levels, with India (3 490 000 [95% CI, 2 430 000-4 730 000]), Indonesia (660 000 [95% CI, 390 000-1 020 000]), Egypt (450 000 [95% CI, 360 000-540 000]), Nigeria (430 000 [95% CI, 40 000-900 000]), and Pakistan (410 000 [95% CI, 80 000-770 000]) worst affected through May 1, 2022 ([Figure B](#)). Among the WHO regions most affected, countries with the highest numbers of bereaved children in Southeast Asia included Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Nepal and in Africa included Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. Our updated Orphanhood Calculator⁶ provides these new numbers for every country.

Discussion

COVID-19–associated orphanhood and caregiver death has left an estimated 10.5 million children bereaved of their parents and caregivers. While billions of dollars are invested in preventing COVID-19–associated deaths, little is being done to care for children left behind. However, billions of dollars invested in supporting AIDS-orphaned children showcase successful solutions ready for replication.⁴ Only 2 countries, Peru and the US, have made national commitments to address COVID-19–associated orphanhood. At the 2nd Global COVID-19 Summit (May 12, 2022), President Biden emphasized the urgency of caring for the millions of children orphaned. Urgently needed pandemic responses can combine equitable vaccination with life-changing programs for bereaved children. An important limitation is that modeling estimates cannot measure actual numbers of children affected by caregiver death; future pandemic surveillance should include such children. Given the magnitude and lifelong consequences of orphanhood, integration into every national pandemic response plan of timely care for these children will help mitigate lasting adverse consequences. Evidence highlights 3 essential components: (1) prevent death of caregivers by accelerating vaccines, containment, and treatment; (2) prepare families to provide safe and nurturing alternative care; and (3) protect orphaned children through economic support, violence prevention, parenting support, and ensuring school access. Effective, caring action to protect children from immediate and long-term harms of COVID-19 is an investment in the future and a public health imperative.

9/11 Survivors' Exposure to Toxic Dust and the Chronic Health Conditions That Followed Offer Lessons That Are Still Too Often Unheeded

By Roberto Lucchini

Source: <https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220912-9-11-survivors-exposure-to-toxic-dust-and-the-chronic-health-conditions-that-followed-offer-lessons-that-are-still-to>

Sep 12 – The 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York resulted in the loss of [2,753 people in the Twin Towers and surrounding area](#). After the attack, more than 100,000 responders and recovery workers from every U.S. state – along with [some 400,000 residents](#) and other workers around ground zero – were exposed to a [toxic cloud of dust](#) that fell as a ghostly, thick layer of ash and then hung in the air for more than three months.



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – September 2022

The World Trade Center dust plume, or [WTC dust](#), consisted of a dangerous mixture of cement dust and particles, asbestos and a class of chemicals called [persistent organic pollutants](#). These include [cancer-causing dioxins](#) and [polyaromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs](#), which are byproducts of fuel combustion.

The dust also contained heavy metals that are known [to be poisonous to the human body and brain](#), such as lead – used in the manufacturing of flexible electrical cables – and mercury, which is found in float valves, switches and fluorescent lamps. The dust also contained cadmium, a carcinogen [toxic to the kidneys](#) that is used in the manufacturing of electric batteries and pigments for paints.



[Polychlorinated biphenyls](#), human-made chemicals used in electrical transformers, were also part of the toxic stew. PCBs are [known to be carcinogenic](#), toxic to the nervous system and disruptive to the reproductive system. But they became even more harmful when incinerated at high heat from the jets' fuel combustion and then carried by very fine particles.

[WTC dust](#) was made up of both "large" particulate matter and very small, fine and ultrafine ones. These particularly small particles are known to be [highly toxic](#), especially to the nervous system since they can travel directly through the [nasal cavity to the brain](#). Many first responders and others who were directly exposed to the dust developed a [severe and persistent cough](#) that lasted for a month, on average. They were treated at Mount Sinai Hospital and received care at the Clinic of Occupational Medicine, a well-known center for work-related diseases.

I am a physician specializing in occupational medicine who began working directly with 9/11 survivors in my role as director of the [WTC Health Program Data Center](#) at Mount Sinai beginning in 2012. That program collects data, as well as monitors and oversees the public health of WTC rescue and recovery workers. After eight years in that role, I [moved to Florida International University](#) in Miami, where I am planning to continue working with 9/11 responders who are moving to Florida as they reach retirement age.

From Acute to Chronic Conditions

After the initial "acute" health problems that 9/11 responders faced, they soon began experiencing a wave of chronic diseases that [continue to affect them](#) 20 years later. The persistent cough gave way to [respiratory diseases](#) such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and upper airway diseases such as [chronic rhinosinusitis](#), laryngitis and nasopharyngitis.

The litany of respiratory diseases also put many of them at risk for [gastroesophageal reflux disease](#) (GERD), which occurs at a [higher rate in WTC survivors](#) than in the general



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – September 2022

population. This condition occurs when stomach acids reenter the esophagus, or food pipe, that connects the stomach to the throat. As a consequence of either the airway or the digestive disorders, many of these survivors also [struggle with sleep apnea](#), which requires additional treatments. Further compounding the tragedy, about eight years after the attacks, [cancers began to turn up](#) in 9/11 survivors. These include tumors of the blood and lymphoid tissues such as lymphoma, myeloma and leukemia, which are well known to [affect workers exposed to carcinogens](#) in the workplace. But survivors also suffer from other cancers, including breast, head and neck, prostate, lung and thyroid cancers.

Some have also developed mesothelioma, an aggressive form of cancer related to [exposure to asbestos](#). [Asbestos](#) was used in the early construction of the north tower until public advocacy and broader awareness of its health dangers [brought its use to a halt](#).

And the psychological trauma that 9/11 survivors experienced has left many suffering from persistent mental health challenges. One [study](#) published in 2020 found that of more than 16,000 WTC responders for whom data was collected, nearly half reported a need for mental health care, and 20% of those who were directly affected developed [post-traumatic stress disorder](#).

Many have told me that the contact they had with parts of human bodies or with the deadly scene and the tragic days afterward left a permanent mark on their lives. They are unable to forget the images, and many of them suffer from mood disorders as well as [cognitive impairments and other behavioral issues](#), including substance use disorder.

An Aging Generation of Survivors

Now, 20 years on, these survivors face a new challenge as they age and move toward retirement – a [difficult life transition](#) that can sometimes lead to mental health decline. Prior to retirement, the daily drumbeat of work activity and a steady schedule often helps keep the mind busy. But retirement can sometimes leave a void – one that for 9/11 survivors is too often filled with unwanted memories of the noises, smells, fear and despair of that terrible day and the days that followed. Many survivors have told me they do not want to return to Manhattan and certainly not to the WTC. Aging can also bring with it forgetfulness and other cognitive challenges. But studies show that these natural processes are [accelerated and more severe](#) in 9/11 survivors, similar to the experience of veterans from war zones. This is a concerning trend, but all the more so because a growing body of research, including [our own preliminary study](#), is finding links between [cognitive impairment in 9/11 responders and dementia](#). A recent [Washington Post piece detailed](#) how 9/11 survivors are experiencing these dementia-like conditions in their 50s – far earlier than is typical. The COVID-19 pandemic, too, has taken a toll on those who have already suffered from 9/11. People with [preexisting conditions](#) have been at far higher risk during the pandemic. Not surprisingly, a recent study found a [higher incidence of COVID-19](#) in WTC responders from January through August 2020.

Honoring the 9/11 Survivors

The health risks posed by direct exposure to the acrid dust was underestimated at the time, and poorly understood. Appropriate personal protective equipment, such as P100 half-face respirators, was not available at that time.

But now, over 20 years on, we know much more about the risks – and we have much greater access to protective equipment that can keep responders and recovery workers safe following disasters. Yet, too often, I see that we have not learned and applied these lessons. For instance, in the immediate aftermath of the [condominium collapse](#) near Miami Beach last June, it took days before P100 half-face respirators were fully available and made mandatory for the responders. Other examples around the world are even worse: One year after the [Beirut explosion](#) in August 2020, very little action had been taken to investigate and manage the physical and [mental health consequences](#) among responders and the impacted community.

Applying the lessons learned from 9/11 is a critically important way to honor the victims and the brave men and women who took part in the desperate rescue and recovery efforts back on those terrible days.

[Roberto Lucchini](#) is Professor of Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences, Florida International University.

Interferon at the Center of COVID-19's Cytokine Storm

A new study identifies a mechanism by which SARS-CoV-2 induces the cytokine storm in COVID-19 patient lungs that can lead to lasting tissue damage and poor patient outcomes. Researchers found that plasmacytoid dendritic cells (pDCs) are infected by SARS-CoV-2 and produce interferons that can provoke epigenetic changes in the nearby macrophages in the lungs of patients. This leads to their exacerbated response, inducing the cytokine storm. [+ MORE](#)



According to the World Health Organization, 98% of monkeypox cases outside Africa have involved men who have sex with men, or MSM.

Greece: West Nile virus – 196 cases [Sep 15]; 15 dead; mean age 85 years



Anthrax cases detected in Azerbaijan

Source: <http://outbreaknewstoday.com/anthrax-cases-detected-in-azerbaijan-48581/>

Sep 13 – Wounds characteristic of anthrax were found on the hands and forearms of **six residents** of the Piyadalar village of the Barda region of Azerbaijan, [according to a Vesti report](#).

On the recommendation of a specialist doctor of the infectious diseases department of the Barda Central District Hospital at TƏBİB, these persons were hospitalized in the infectious diseases department of the Central District Hospital. Samples taken from patients for laboratory testing were sent to the Mingachevir Regional Center for the Control of Especially Dangerous Infections of the Ministry of Health. The results of 3 samples were positive.

Persons with positive results of laboratory tests are being treated in the infectious diseases department of the Barda CRH.

The New COVID Subvariant BA.4.6 Is Spreading. Here's What We Know

By Manal Mohammed

Source: <https://www.sciencealert.com/the-new-covid-subvariant-ba-4-6-is-spreading-heres-what-we-know>

Sep 15- **BA.4.6**, a subvariant of the Omicron COVID variant which has been quickly gaining traction [in the US](#), is now confirmed to be spreading [in the UK](#).

The [latest briefing document](#) on COVID variants from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) noted that during the week beginning August 14, BA.4.6 accounted for 3.3 percent of samples in the UK. It has since grown to make up around 9 percent of sequenced cases.

Similarly, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, BA.4.6 now accounts for [more than 9 percent](#) of recent cases across the US. The variant has also been identified in [several other countries](#) around the world.

So what do we know about BA.4.6, and should we be worried? Let's take a look at the information we have so far.

BA.4.6 is a descendant of the BA.4 variant of Omicron. BA.4 was [first detected](#) in January 2022 [in South Africa](#) and has since spread [around the world](#) alongside the [BA.5 variant](#).

It is not entirely clear how BA.4.6 has emerged, but it's possible it could be a [recombinant variant](#). Recombination happens when two different variants of [SARS-CoV-2](#) (the [virus](#) that causes [COVID-19](#)) infect the same person, at the same time.

While BA.4.6 will be similar to BA.4 in many ways, it carries a mutation to the spike protein, a protein on the surface of the virus which allows it to enter our cells.

This mutation, R346T, has been seen [in other variants](#) and is associated with [immune evasion](#), meaning it helps the virus to escape [antibodies](#) acquired from vaccination and prior infection.

Severity, infectiousness, and immune evasion

Fortunately, Omicron infections generally cause less serious illness, and we've seen [fewer deaths](#) with Omicron than with earlier variants. We would expect this to apply to BA.4.6 too. Indeed, there have been no reports yet that this variant is causing more severe symptoms.

But we also know that Omicron subvariants tend to be [more transmissible](#) than previous variants. BA.4.6 appears to be [even better](#) at evading the immune system than BA.5, the



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currently dominant variant. Although this information is based on [a preprint](#) (a study that is yet to be peer-reviewed), other emerging data supports this.

According to [the UKHSA's briefing](#), early estimates suggest BA.4.6 has a 6.55 percent relative fitness advantage over BA.5 in England. This indicates that BA.4.6 replicates more quickly in the early stages of infection and has a higher growth rate than BA.5. The relative fitness advantage of BA.4.6 is [considerably smaller](#) than that of BA.5 over BA.2, which was 45 percent to 55 percent. The University of Oxford [has reported](#) that people who had received three doses of Pfizer's original COVID vaccine produce fewer antibodies in response to BA.4.6 than to BA.4 or BA.5. This is worrying because it suggests that COVID vaccines might be less effective against BA.4.6.

The capacity of BA.4.6 to evade immunity may however be addressed to a degree by the new [bivalent boosters](#), which target Omicron specifically, alongside the original strain of SARS-CoV-2. Time will tell.

Meanwhile, one [preprint study](#) shows that BA.4.6 evades protection from [Evusheld](#), an [antibody](#) therapy designed to protect people who are immunocompromised and [don't respond as well](#) to COVID vaccines.

Vaccination is key

The emergence of BA.4.6 and other new variants is concerning. It shows the virus is still very much with us, and is mutating to find new ways to overcome our immune response from [vaccination](#) and previous infections.

We know people who have had COVID previously can contract the virus [again](#), and this has been particularly true of Omicron. In [some cases](#), subsequent episodes can be worse.

But vaccination continues to offer good protection against severe disease, and is still the best weapon we have to fight COVID. The recent approval of bivalent boosters is good news. Beyond this, developing [multivalent coronavirus vaccines](#) that target multiple variants could provide even more durable protection.

A [recent study](#) showed that a multivalent [coronavirus](#) vaccine administered through the nose elicited a strong immune response against the original strain of SARS-CoV-2, as well as two variants of concern, in mouse models.

Close monitoring of new variants including BA.4.6 is pressing, as they could lead to the next wave of COVID [pandemic](#). For the public, it will pay to stay cautious, and comply with any public health measures in place to prevent the spread of what remains a very contagious virus.

[Manal Mohammed](#) is a Senior Lecturer, Medical Microbiology @ University of Westminster

Mucosal Antibodies in Airways Reduce Risk of Omicron Infection

High mucosal antibodies in the airways were associated with a lower viral replication among those infected with omicron. Participants with SARS-CoV-2 infection prior to vaccination also had significantly higher levels of mucosal airway antibodies after vaccination compared with triple-vaccinated with no prior SARS-CoV-2 infection. This may explain why so-called hybrid immunity, the combination of infection and vaccine, provides stronger protection against infection than vaccines alone. [+ MORE](#)

1323 Athlete Cardiac Arrests, Serious Issues, 900 Dead, After COVID Injection

Source: <https://goodsciencing.com/covid/athletes-suffer-cardiac-arrest-die-after-covid-shot/>

It is definitely not normal for so many mainly young athletes to suffer from cardiac arrests or to die while playing their sport, but this year it is happening. Many of these heart issues and deaths come shortly after they got a COVID vaccine. While it is possible this can happen to people who did not get a COVID vaccine, the sheer numbers clearly point to the only obvious cause.

It wasn't intentional, but at one point there were ominous numbers in the headline. 2 to the 10th power and 666 dead athletes.

The so-called health professionals running the COVID vaccine programs around the world keep repeating that *"the COVID vaccine is a normal vaccine and it is safe and effective."*

In response to their pronouncement, here is a non-exhaustive and continuously growing list of mainly young athletes who had major medical issues in 2021/2022 after receiving one or more COVID vaccines. Initially, many of these were not reported. We know that many people were told not to tell anyone about their adverse reactions and the media was not reporting them. They started happening and ramping up after the first COVID vaccinations. The



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mainstream media still are not reporting most, but sports news cannot ignore the fact that soccer players and other stars collapse in the middle of a game due to a sudden cardiac arrest. Many of those die – more than 50%.



That is partly because this information is being hidden. More people are writing to tell us that in many cases, we didn't mention a person's vaccination status. There is a good reason for that. None of the clubs want to reveal this information. None of their sponsors want to reveal it. The players have been told not to reveal it. Most of their relatives will not mention it. None of the media are asking this question. So what should we do? Stop this now? No, we will collect as much information as we can, while it is still available, because eventually, more information will come out, and we will be here to put it together. Will it mean anything? We don't know. What we do know is that there is a concerted world-wide effort to make this information go away, so that fact alone tells us it must be collected, investigated and saved so other researchers can look at it to see if there are any useful patterns.

We replaced about a dozen occurrences of the word "shot" with "injection" because translation into other languages is improved, on advice from a reader.

We really appreciate the athletes named in this list (or their families) who have confirmed what happened to them so the truth can be known. They care about their fellow athletes, even if the clubs, their sponsors, media, politicians and so-called health professionals do not.

Prior Year Data

The International Olympic Committee in Lausanne, Switzerland, studied documents from international data banks from 1966 to 2004. Those documents indicate 1,101 sudden deaths in athletes under 35 years of age, an average of 29 athletes per year, the sports with the highest incidence being soccer and basketball. ([NIH Document](#)) A [study by Maron](#) on sudden death in US athletes, from 1980 to 2006 in thirty-eight sports identified 1,866 deaths of athletes with cardiac disease, with a prevalence of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. 2005 to 2006 averaged sixty-six (66) deaths per year, with 82% of those occurring during competition or training. Thanks to investigator readers for discovering these reports, and this story in Spanish: [Momento Deportivo](#).

In 2021 and 2022 so far, cardiac disease has not been mentioned. Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy was mentioned twice, but those two reports were listed in the "not vax related" list. "Enlarged heart" was only mentioned three times, but there was no indication this was a long-term or recent issue (possibly due to vaccine injury).

The above shows that in prior years, there were 66 deaths per year, but there have been 87 reported in January 2022, so far.

Growing Report

This story will grow over time, as new information is added. If you have proof of information that we don't already have, or if you have a correction, please send it through our contact

We also note that many posts in Facebook, Instagram, twitter, forums and news stories are being removed. So now we are receiving some messages saying there is no proof of the event or of vaccination status.

Gary Dempsey, professional soccer player played 500 games over 20 years, with no cardiac arrests.

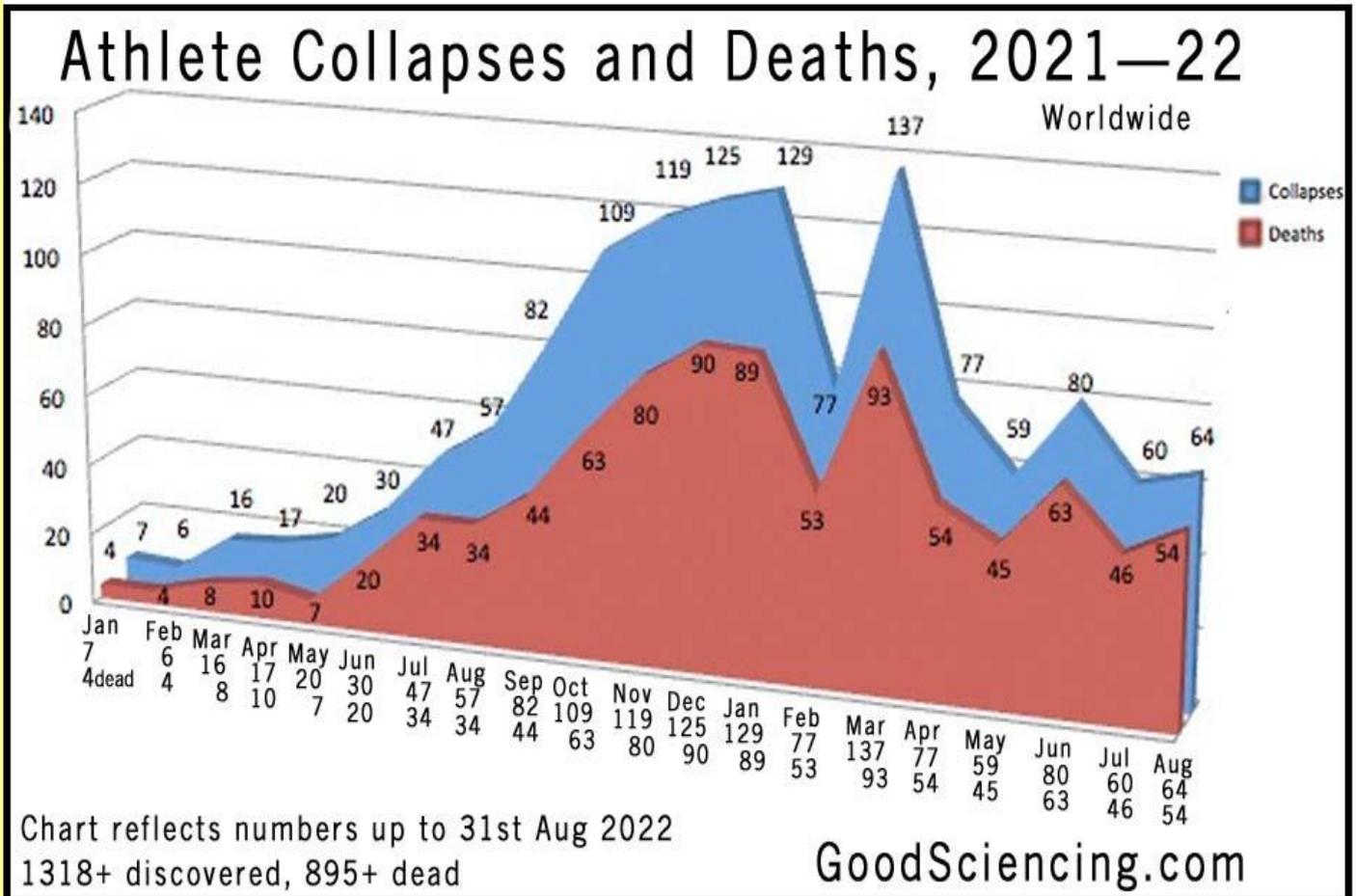


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form, with as much information as possible. Useful information would be the person's name, age, what happened to them, if they had the COVID vaccine(s), date of event or death, link to any news story.

Special thanks to readers who have provided corrections, found errors that we missed, or provided new information we didn't know about. It is now a real team effort and we appreciate it.

For the skeptics who believe this is normal, feel free to repeat the following 18 words, after reading each name in this list.



Athlete collapses and deaths chart from 1st January 2021 to 31st August 2022. Good Sciencing.

Repeat This After Reading Each Line

“The COVID vaccine is a normal vaccine. The COVID vaccine is safe. These injuries and deaths are normal.”

September 2022 – (Note reverse month sort) (Day/Month/Year)

- 04/09/2022 Arkansas, USA **Dead**
Clark Yarbrough (21), Ouachita Baptist University American Footballer and business administration (sport management) student. He previously played football at high school in Arkansas. He died suddenly three days after his last match. [News Story](#) [News Story2](#) [News Story3](#)
- 02/09/2022 Kashmir, India **Dead**
Imtiyaz Ahmad Khan (22), youth Cricket player from Pulwama district of Kashmir collapsed due to a cardiac arrest and died while playing cricket in Anantnag district of Kashmir. He was rushed to hospital but declared DoA. [News Story](#) [News Story2](#)
- 01/09/2022 Scotland **Dead**
Mike Wilson (46), Triathlete and super-fit doctor suffered a cardiac arrest and died while swimming in a loch in Scotland, while training for a triathlon. [News Story](#)

► Read ALL cases of athletes' deaths at the URL source of this article.



Is it possible to manufacture Monkeypox and use it as a biological weapon?

Source: <https://health-desk.org/articles/is-it-possible-to-manufacture-monkeypox-and-use-it-as-a-biological-weapon>



Sep 15 – It's possible that the monkeypox virus could be used in biological warfare. However, there is no evidence to suggest that current outbreaks of monkeypox are biological warfare or from a leak. Analyses of the genetic material we have from monkeypox cases in the current outbreak show that it is tied to an outbreak in West Africa, and is not manufactured.

What our experts say

According to the World Health Organization, "biological and toxin weapons are either microorganisms like virus, bacteria or fungi, or toxic substances produced by living organisms that are produced and released deliberately to cause disease and death in humans, animals or plants."

Monkeypox has the potential to be used as a biological weapon. However, there is no evidence that any past or current outbreaks of monkeypox are due to intentional manufacturing to use in this way.

Analyses of the genetic material we have from the monkeypox cases in this outbreak show that the current outbreak is tied to a naturally-occurring outbreak in West Africa. These findings show that this outbreak is in no way manufactured.

The monkeypox virus appears on a list of "select agents and toxins," which are toxins and biological agents that the U.S. government has determined "have the potential to pose a severe threat to both human and animal health, to plant health, or to animal and plant products."

Some have interpreted this to mean that monkeypox is labeled by the U.S. government as a biological weapon. However, the fact that monkeypox is on this list basically means that researchers need to go through extra careful processes to work with this virus in a lab.

Monkeypox does have the potential to be used in this manner; viruses, including the monkeypox virus, can be cultivated in a lab, and have the potential to be released and spread deliberately. That being said, there is no evidence that this has occurred or may occur.

As of September 14, 2022, there have been 59,606 confirmed cases of monkeypox globally, with 22,773 of those cases reported in the U.S. Prior to 2022, there were typically few to zero outbreaks of monkeypox outside of a few countries primarily in Central and Western Africa.



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In fact, the number of confirmed monkeypox cases in mid-May to mid-August was about 23 times more than all cases recorded from about 1970 to 2018.

This large human-to-human transmission outbreak is likely the result of luck for the monkeypox virus in that the virus has made its way into a part of the global population where people are in very close contact with each other and also travel internationally. In addition, routine vaccinations against smallpox – which can be up to 85% effective at preventing monkeypox – stopped in some countries like the U.S. and the UK in the early 1970s.

Context and background

Claims are being made that the current monkeypox outbreaks are due to intentional biological warfare by governments – especially the U.S. Some of these claims are being made by U.S. citizens about the U.S. government. Other claims are being made by the Russian government.

The Russian defense ministry and a range of media outlets controlled and back by the Russian government have suggested that the current monkeypox outbreak was engineered by U.S. military biological laboratories, and have suggested that some of those laboratories are based in Nigeria. These claims are false. There is no evidence to back up any of these claims and there are legitimate scientific reasons for why there is a current outbreak.

Another claim from the Russian government is that the current monkeypox outbreak is due to a lab leak. There is also no evidence that supports this claim.

Polio is back in the United States. How did that happen?

By Matt Field

Source: <https://thebulletin.org/2022/09/polio-is-back-in-the-united-states-how-did-that-happen>

Sep 16 – The CDC announced this week that the United States was back, baby. Back on the list of countries with circulating polio that is. Low vaccination rates in some places [have allowed](#) the virus to find a toehold in a country that declared the virus eliminated in 1979. And the United States isn't alone among countries that had previously announced "mission accomplished" over polio. The virus has also turned up in [environmental samples](#) in the United Kingdom and in a [human case](#) in Israel.

The CDC made its polio announcement after reporting a case of a paralytic patient in New York along with positive environmental samples. Now that polio, which can permanently disable and even kill people, is back in the news, it's worth asking what exactly is going on.

Polio used to disable tens of thousands of people, frequently children, a year. Credit: National Archives at College Park via Wikimedia Commons.



Where is polio still endemic?

In 1988, fresh off the heels of [eliminating](#) smallpox, the devastating disease that plagued humanity since at least the days of the Egyptian mummies, the World Health Assembly, the WHO's governing body, began a campaign to eliminate polio. Polio was circulating in most of the world's countries then, and in 1988 alone there were an estimated 350,000 cases, [according](#) to the CDC. But governments had the tools to defeat the virus: incredibly effective and cheap vaccines that could offer perhaps a lifetime of protection.



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For years governments around the world notched big gains against wild polio, the long circulating strains of the virus that existed before vaccines. These strains contrast with so-called “[vaccine-derived poliovirus](#)”—weakened vaccine virus in sewage that has sometimes mutated into a virulent form of the disease. Two of the three strains of wild poliovirus have been eliminated, but the campaign never quite crossed the finish line.

In both Pakistan and Afghanistan, wild polio is still considered an endemic disease—though enormous strides have been made in both countries. In the 1990s, [polio disabled](#) some 20,000 children a year in Pakistan. By mid-summer of this year, seven cases of wild poliovirus infection had been reported. In both countries, Taliban groups have at times thwarted vaccinations. Disinformation has also bred distrust of the vaccine drives. Some in Pakistan [fear](#) they are part of a campaign to sterilize Muslim children, and flyers there in 2012 [claimed](#) polio vaccinators were really American spies. But there are signs the fight against polio could be gaining momentum. The Taliban in Afghanistan [agreed](#) to restart vaccinations last fall, signing on to a plan to vaccinate millions of children against the disease.

Where is polio making a comeback?

Outside of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the biggest polio threat comes not from wild-type polioviruses, but from cases derived from the use of oral polio vaccine. In fact, while wild-type polio numbers have declined, the number of vaccine-derived poliovirus cases have increased. In 2020, there were [nearly 1,000](#).

Getting an oral polio vaccine, usually in the form of drops, doesn't give a person polio. The drops [contain](#) a weakened form of one or more strain of the live virus. By [delivering the vaccine to the gut](#)—where the virus lives—the drops are incredibly effective and can even stop people from spreading polio. The downside, which is also kind of a plus, is that the weakened virus [sheds](#) when people poop. While this can help spread the vaccine's protection to others, eventually the weakened virus, as it spreads from unvaccinated person to unvaccinated person, can mutate back into a virulent form. When there are enough unvaccinated targets, the strengthened virus can attack, potentially sparking an outbreak. Conversely, the injectable polio vaccine, the one given in the United States and many developed countries, doesn't contain live virus and can't start an infection chain. But the injection won't stop transmission of the virus; instead it protects the vaccinated against disease.

In July, New York authorities [reported](#) a case of vaccine-derived paralytic polio in the United States, the first such report in a decade. The virus has also been found in wastewater samples in five New York counties; the samples found there were genetically related to samples from London and Jerusalem. These signs all point to hidden transmission of the virus. In Rockland County, where a case of paralysis was reported, polio vaccination rates hover around 60 percent and in some areas are as low as 37 percent, [according](#) to CNN. With no vivid memories of polio epidemics past, some people might not feel the urgency to get vaccinated.

This week, [the CDC announced](#) the United States was now on a list of some 30 countries where vaccine-derived polio is circulating. Of these countries, Nigeria has seen the most explosive growth in cases. After the WHO declared Nigeria free of wild polio in 2020, vaccine-derived cases [began a rapid rise](#) from 18 in 2019 to 415 in 2021. A report by the Independent Monitoring Board of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, the WHO led polio campaign, cites COVID-19 disruptions and increasing instability as hampering the vaccination campaign there.

Across the continent from Nigeria, a girl in Malawi contracted wild poliovirus. Worryingly, a genetic analysis showed that it was related to a sample found in Pakistan in 2019, indicating some level of global spread of wild polio.

What were polio epidemics of the past like?

There's a good chance that many people, at least in the United States and other developed countries, associate polio with [antiquated “iron lung” ventilators](#) and other iconography of the past. After all, the wild-type disease has been [eliminated](#) in the United States since 1979.

But before that, polio outbreaks had devastating effects. In the 1950s, polio disabled about 35,000 people a year in the United States. The virus [seemed to peak](#) in the summer and parents feared letting their kids play outside or in swimming pools. Former President Franklin Roosevelt contracted the disease as a 39-year-old on vacation in 1921, leaving him mostly wheelchair bound for the rest of his life. And Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said he still has trouble on stairs, decades after receiving physical therapy for polio when he was a toddler.

Jonas Salk, a researcher in Pittsburgh, [developed](#) the first polio vaccine in 1955, an injection of dead virus. Within years, polio rates in the United States and elsewhere began to plummet. Manufacturing problems, though, hampered uptake of Salk's vaccine, and other products soon followed, including Albert Sabin's oral vaccine, which contained weakened versions of the three wild poliovirus strains. The oral vaccine became [the main tool](#) in the global fight against polio. Where there were



once thousands of cases of paralytic polio each year in the United States, [in 2020](#) there were none.

Now the World Health Organization has set a target of eliminating polio by 2026. Continuing cases of wild polio in some countries—despite years of effort—show how hard that will be. Positive samples in places [long thought to be done with polio](#) are another [troubling sign](#) of [apathy](#) towards vaccination.

“For those of us that grew up at a time when we saw the adverse outcomes of pertussis and mumps and rubella and polio, it’s a lot easier to convince parents to vaccinate. When you stop seeing bad outcomes, you can easily get complacent and think ‘Why do I want to sully my child’s body with a foreign chemical?’” Yale School of Medicine Professor Howard Forman [told](#) a university outlet. Polio, the devastating disease we never really left in the past, has apparently come roaring back. And the signs of it in New York and elsewhere point to new front in the war against the virus: complacency.

Matt Field is editor, biosecurity at the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Before joining the Bulletin, he covered the White House, Congress, and presidential campaigns as a news producer for Japanese public television. He has also reported for print outlets in the Midwest and on the East Coast. He holds a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University.

Long COVID Was a Preventable Tragedy. Some of Us Saw It Coming

By Brian Vastag

Source: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/980876>

Sep 15 – It should have been the start of new insight into a debilitating illness. In May 2017, I was patient No. 4 in a group of 20 taking part in a deep and intense study at the National Institutes of Health aimed at getting to the root causes of myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome, a disease that causes extreme exhaustion, sleep issues, and pain, among other symptoms.

What the researchers found as they took our blood, harvested our stem cells, ran tests to check our brain function, put us through magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), strapped us to tilt tables, ran tests on our heart and lungs, and more could have helped prepare doctors everywhere for the avalanche of long COVID cases that’s come alongside the pandemic.

Instead, we are all still waiting for answers.

In 2012, I was hit by a sudden fever and dizziness. The fever got better, but over the next 6 months, my health declined, and by December I was almost completely bedbound. The many symptoms were overwhelming: muscle weakness, almost paralyzing fatigue, and brain dysfunction so severe, I had trouble remembering a four-digit PIN for 10 seconds. Electric shock-like sensations ran up and down my legs. At one point, as I tried to work, letters on my computer monitor began swirling around, a terrifying experience that only years later I learned was called oscillopsia. My heart rate soared when I stood, making it difficult to remain upright.

I learned I had post-infectious myalgic encephalomyelitis, also given the unfortunate name chronic fatigue syndrome by the CDC (now commonly known as ME/CFS). The illness ended my [career](#) as a newspaper science and medical reporter and left me 95% bedbound for more than 2 years. As I [read](#) about ME/CFS, I discovered a history of an illness not only neglected, but also denied. It left me in despair.

In 2015, I [wrote](#) to then-NIH director Francis Collins, MD, and asked him to reverse decades of inattention from the National Institutes of Health. To his credit, he did. He moved responsibility for ME/CFS from the small Office of Women's Health to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and [Stroke](#), and asked that institute's head of clinical neurology, neurovirologist [Avindra Nath](#), MD, to design a study exploring the biology of the disorder.

But the coronavirus pandemic [interrupted the study](#), and Nath gave his energy to autopsies and other investigations of COVID-19. While he is devoted and empathetic, the reality is that the NIH's [investment in ME/CFS](#) is tiny. Nath divides his time among many projects. In August, he said he hoped to submit the study's main paper for publication "within a few months."

In the spring of 2020, I and other patient advocates [warned](#) that a wave of disability would follow the novel coronavirus. The National Academy of Medicine [estimates](#) that between 800,000 and 2.5 million Americans had ME/CFS before the pandemic. Now, with billions of people worldwide having been infected by SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, the ranks of people whose lives have been upended by post-viral illness has swelled into [nearly uncountable](#) millions.

Back in July 2020, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci, MD, said that long COVID is "strikingly similar" to ME/CFS.

It was, and is, a preventable tragedy.



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Along with many other patient advocates, I've watched in despair as friend after friend, person after person on social media, describe the symptoms of ME/CFS after COVID-19: "I got mildly sick"; "I thought I was fine – then came overwhelming bouts of fatigue and muscle pain"; "my extremities tingle"; "my vision is blurry"; "I feel like I have a never-ending hangover"; "my brain stopped working"; "I can't make decisions or complete daily tasks"; "I had to stop exercising after short sessions flattened me."

What's more, many doctors deny long COVID exists, just as many have denied ME/CFS exists.

And it is true that some, or maybe even many, people with brain fog and fatigue after a mild case of COVID will recover. This happens after many infections; it's called post-viral fatigue syndrome. But patients and a growing number of doctors now understand that many long COVID patients could and should be diagnosed with ME/CFS, which is lifelong and incurable. Growing evidence shows their [immune systems are haywire](#); their [nervous systems dysfunctional](#). They fit all of the [published criteria](#) for ME, which require 6 months of nonstop symptoms, most notably post-exertional malaise (PEM), the name for getting sicker after doing something, almost anything. [Exercise](#) is not advised for people with PEM, and increasingly, research shows many people who have long COVID also cannot tolerate exercise.

[Several studies show](#) that around [half](#) of all long COVID patients qualify for a diagnosis of ME/CFS. Half of a large number is a large number.

A researcher at the Brookings Institution [estimated](#) in a report published in August that 2 million to 4 million Americans can no longer work due to long COVID. That's up to 2% of the nation's workforce, a tsunami of disability. Many others work reduced hours. By letting a pandemic virus run free, we've created a sicker, less able society. We need better data, but the numbers that we have show that ME/CFS after COVID-19 is a large, and growing, problem. Each infection and re-infection represent a dice roll that a person may become terribly sick and disabled for months, years, a lifetime. Vaccines reduce the risk of long COVID, but it's [not entirely clear how well](#) they do so.

We'll never know if the NIH study I took part in could have helped prevent this pandemic-within-a-pandemic. And until they publish, we won't know if the NIH has identified promising leads for treatments. Nath's team is now using a protocol very similar to the ME/CFS study I took part in to investigate long COVID; they've already brought in seven patients.

There are no FDA-approved medicines for the core features of ME/CFS. And because ME/CFS is rarely taught to medical students, few frontline doctors understand that the best advice to give suspected patients is to [stop, rest, and pace](#) – meaning to slow down when symptoms get worse, to aggressively rest, and to do less than you feel you can.

And so, millions of long COVID patients stumble along, lives diminished, in a nightmare of being horribly sick with little help – a dire theme repeating itself over and over.

Over and over, we hear that long COVID is mysterious. But much of it isn't. It's a continuation of a long history of virally triggered illnesses. Properly identifying conditions related to long COVID removes a lot of the mystery. While patients will be taken aback to be diagnosed with a lifelong disorder, proper diagnosis can also be empowering, connecting patients to a large, active community. It also removes uncertainty and helps them understand what to expect.

One thing that's given me and other ME/CFS patients hope is watching how long COVID patients have [organized](#) and become vocal advocates for better research and care. More and more researchers are finally listening, understanding that not only is there so much human suffering to tackle, but the opportunity to unravel a thorny but fascinating biological and scientific problem. Their findings in long COVID are [replicating](#) earlier [findings](#) in ME/CFS.

Research on post-viral illness, as a category, is moving faster. And we must hope answers and treatments will soon follow.

[Brian Vastag](#) is a former science reporter for *The Washington Post* who has been disabled by myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) since 2012.

Cholera outbreak in Syria – September 2022

Source: <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/ep-2022-000310-syr>

On 10 September, the Syrian Ministry of Health (MoH) declared an outbreak of cholera in Aleppo Governorate following 15 confirmed laboratory cases, including one death. Between 25 August and 10 September, the surveillance data showed that a total of **936 severe acute watery diarrhoea cases** were reported in Syria, including at least eight deaths. Most of the cases were reported from Aleppo (72.2%, 676 cases), Deir-ez-Zor (21.5%, 201 cases), Ar-Raqqa (1.8% 17 cases), Al Hasakeh (4.1%, 38 cases), Hama (0.2%, 2 cases) and Lattakia (0.2%, 2 cases). The number of confirmed cholera cases so far is 20 in Aleppo, four in Lattakia and two in Damascus (people coming from Aleppo). Based on a



rapid assessment conducted by health authorities and partners, the source of infection is believed to be linked to people drinking unsafe water from the Euphrates River and using contaminated water to irrigate crops, resulting in food contamination. ([OCHA, 12 Sep 2022](#))

Face Mask with Aptamer Sensor Can Detect Pathogens after 10 Minutes of Exposure

Source: <https://www.insideprecisionmedicine.com/coronavirus-2/face-mask-with-aptamer-sensor-can-detect-pathogens-after-10-minutes-of-exposure/>



Sep 19 – A team of scientists in China have developed a face mask capable of detecting common respiratory viruses including influenza and coronavirus from air droplets or aerosols after being exposed for 10 minutes. The masks, whose [development](#) was detailed today in the journal *Matter*, can **alert the wearer via their cell phone** if pathogens are detected.

Respiratory pathogens that cause COVID-19 and H1N1 influenza spread through small droplets and aerosols released by infected people when they talk, cough, and sneeze. These virus-containing molecules can remain suspended in the air for a long time.

“Previous research has shown face mask wearing can reduce the risk of spreading and contracting...disease. So, we wanted to create a mask that can detect the presence of virus in the air and alert the wearer,” said Yin Fang, the study’s corresponding author and a material scientist at Shanghai Tongji University.

To do this, the researchers designed a small sensor that can be incorporated into the face mask using aptamers, which are capable of identifying the unique molecules associated with pathogens, such as antibodies. Their design created a multi-channel sensor using three types of aptamer that can identify the surface proteins of SARS-CoV-2, H5N1, and H1N1.

Once the aptamers bind to the target proteins in the air, the ion-gated transistor amplifies the signal and can alert the wearers via their phones. An ion-gated transistor is a novel type of device that is highly sensitive.



To test their prototype, the team enclosed the face mask in a chamber and sprayed it with the viral surface protein containing trace-level liquid and aerosols. Their data showed that the sensor responded to as little as 0.3 microliters of liquid containing viral proteins, which is about 70 to 560 times less than the volume of liquid produced in one sneeze and much less than the volume produced by coughing or talking, Fang said.

While the mask can detect such low levels of proteins, the researchers note that could only currently be used in certain situations. “Our mask would work really well in spaces with poor ventilation, such as elevators or enclosed rooms, where the risk of getting infected is high,” Fang noted.

As work continues on the mask, the team is now turning its attention to making the sensor even more sensitive by optimizing the transistors and the design of the polymers. Such refinement could further shorten the time needed for pathogen detection. The team could also easily modify design of the mask in response to the emergence of new pathogens.

Pandemic Demonstrated Connections Between Humans, Animals, And Environment

By Cat Urbigkit

Source: <https://cowboystatedaily.com/2022/09/20/cat-urbigkit-pandemic-demonstrated-connections-between-humans-animals-and-environment/>

Sep 20 – Twenty-one years ago, one week after terrorists hijacked four commercial jets in the September 11 attacks on America, federal officials also responded to the worst bioterrorism attack on American soil.

Anthrax-laced anonymous letters had been mailed to members of the media and Congress, and contamination from those letters led to the deaths of five Americans as well as illness in 17 others. When federal officials closed the books on the “[Amerithrax](#)” investigation nine years later, it was [two years](#) after the primary suspect in the attack had committed suicide.

Anthrax had been used as a bioweapon, and that attack led Congress to strengthen safeguards for biological select agents and toxins, including anthrax and brucellosis – diseases most commonly associated with animals. Anthrax and brucellosis are also classified as zoonotics, meaning diseases that can spread between animals and people. Six out of every 10 infectious diseases in people are zoonotic.

A few years after the anthrax attack, public health and veterinary officials gathered to discuss the connections between animal health, human health, and environmental health, and [advocated](#) for a collaborative approach to address these health threats, incorporating all three sectors into a “One Health” perspective, and working on a varied scale, from local to global.

Fast-forward to 2017, when a group of scientists with the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Interior convened a meeting in Washington, D.C. to identify zoonotic diseases of greatest national concern as agreed upon by human, animal, and environmental health experts under the One Health approach.

Development of the priority zoonotic list considered these primary factors: pandemic/epidemic potential, severity of disease, economic impact to the United States, potential for introduction or increased transmission, and national security (the potential of the disease to be used for bioterrorism).

That meeting led to creation of a **ranked national priority list** of zoonotics, as follows:

1. **Zoonotic influenza** (influenza A viruses are found in many species, from birds to whales)
2. **Salmonellosis** (a bacterial-caused foodborne disease that affects wildlife and domestic livestock as well as humans)
3. **West Nile virus** (the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease in the US)
4. **Plague** (resulting from the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, often found in wild rodents, with transmission to humans often caused by domestic cats, which are very susceptible to infection)
5. **Emerging coronaviruses** (including severe acute respiratory syndromes such as SARS and MERS)
6. **Rabies** (a nearly universally fatal disease)
7. **Brucellosis** (found in bison and elk in this region, occasionally causing outbreaks in cattle, and is responsible for about 100 human cases per year in the US)
8. **Lyme disease** (the most common vector-borne pathogen in US, caused by ticks)

The priority list was developed in 2017 – several years before the coronavirus pandemic began, but the 2017 list and the One Health approach has remained a cornerstone of infectious disease monitoring since the pandemic began. While much attention has focused on the availability of coronavirus tests and vaccine for the human population, other crucial work was taking place in the animal health and environmental health sectors.



ICI C²BRNE DIARY – September 2022

Environmental health officials began a program to monitor wastewater systems to detect coronavirus. One of the complicating factors with this coronavirus is that a person could remain without symptoms while actively shedding the virus and infecting others, so wastewater-based epidemiology became a method to predict case levels and hospitalizations, and captured data from seasons and waves of cases as the pandemic proceeded.

At the same time, experimental coronavirus vaccines were developed for a variety of wild animal species, with particular attention focused on wild feline species which seem highly susceptible to the virus. Vaccinating wild animals could not only improve outcomes for rare species but could lessen the chance of further virus mutations that could spread back to humans. Multi-species experimental vaccines are undergoing testing in zoos and animal sanctuaries throughout the world.

When mink farms began experiencing a SARS-CoV-2 outbreak (the official name of the new coronavirus), officials with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) began testing wild and domestic animals on and near mink farms in Utah. Their effort found that 72% of the animals sampled harbored at least one coronavirus, including wild mink near the farms, as well as domestic cats, mice, raccoons, and striped skunks. The unexpectedly high seroprevalence rate in these locations indicate they “could be potential hot spots for future trans-species viral spillover and the emergence of new pandemic coronavirus.”

It’s routine for wildlife and veterinary officials to collect nasal swabs and/or blood samples to test animals for antibodies against a variety of viruses, collecting samples from hunter-killed big game animals, animals dead from vehicle strikes, both wild and domestic animals near zoos, and from other wildlife facilities. Those routine disease surveillance efforts added to further documentation of coronavirus in animal populations, putting health officials on notice that with the virus circulating among wild animal populations, and in the environment, eradication efforts would be unlikely to succeed.

As the coronavirus outbreak spread, researchers around the world began testing captive animals to learn which species may be susceptible to the disease. When an APHIS research project found that white-tailed deer were able to shed the virus in captivity, sampling efforts in wild deer were initiated in four midwestern states, revealing that about 40% of the animals sampled tested positive for the virus. Testing spread to deer populations in other states, with reports of 30-40% positivity, and coinciding with peaks in human infections. While it appeared the virus spilled over from humans to white-tailed deer on at least six separate occasions, the deer were also spreading the infection among themselves. Of the 30 states that have been sampling their deer populations, 24 have found positive cases. Earlier this year, a mule deer in Utah tested positive for the virus.

Routine samples taken by veterinarians on domestic animals provided further insights. German researchers used excess lab submission materials drawn by veterinarians during routine diagnostic sampling on cattle to detect coronavirus, suggesting that cattle became infected after contact with infected humans during the peak of the pandemic. SARS-CoV-2 detections in the United States now include a wide variety of wildlife species, from otters and manatees, to beaver and lynx.

This coronavirus pandemic has resulted in a real test of the usefulness of a One Health strategy in addressing a zoonotic disease. While most of the individual pieces to this puzzle have gone under the public’s radar, in my view, the One Health response to a zoonotic-caused global pandemic has confirmed the wisdom of uniting human, animal, and environmental health response.

[Cat Urbigit](#) is an author and rancher who lives on the range in Sublette County, Wyoming. Her column, [Range Writing](#), appears weekly in [Cowboy State Daily](#).

10 years ago

Smallpox - Still a Viable Bioterrorist Threat

By Richard Schoeberl

Source: <https://domprep.com/preparedness/smallpox-still-a-viable-bioterrorist-threat/>

The 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States and, shortly thereafter, the mailing of anthrax spores to several news agencies and the offices of two U.S. Senators became evidence of the need to improve U.S. homeland security in general and the nation’s biosecurity capabilities in particular. Congress and then-President George W. Bush responded to the national outcry by passing the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 – also known as the Bioterrorism Act, which was signed into law on 12 June 2002. That Act, and other legislation since then, has significantly upgraded the federal government’s capability to prevent, prepare for, and respond to future national health emergencies and unforeseen bioterrorism incidents.

The bioterrorist threat itself continues to spawn new federal programs, additional legislation, and even increased funding – approximately \$60 billion since 9/11 – to combat what previously had been considered a relatively unlikely danger. However, despite these efforts,



new intelligence reports and the concerns voiced by congressional commissions about the growing threat of bioterrorism attacks have brought significant attention to the level of security and preparedness needed – but still lacking.

On 12 February 2003, Central Intelligence Agency Director George Tenet said, in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, that “We continue to receive information indicating that al-Qaida still seeks chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons.” More recently, documents recovered from al-Qaida facilities in Afghanistan indicated that al-Qaida still “has a sophisticated biological weapons capability.” Terrorists also continue to acquire bioagents – e.g., various types of bacteria, viruses, fungi, and toxins – all of which are valued by terrorists not only for their psychological impact on the public, but also for their potential to kill thousands of people quickly and easily, their ease of distribution, the difficulties involved in detecting them, and the maturation period of the infectious agents themselves. For numerous reasons, therefore, an authentic bioterrorism threat poses unique challenges for those responsible for preparedness, protection, and – perhaps of the greatest importance – an effective and timely response against such an attack.

Failing Grades From the WMD Commission

Despite the strong efforts already made to upgrade the nation’s counterterrorism capabilities, numerous authorities – including congressional commissions, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and private industry – have identified the need to further improve the nation’s biodefense strategies. The U.S. Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism – formed by Congress in 2004 to evaluate the U.S. government’s readiness for a terror attack – warned the House Committee on Homeland Security in 2010, in fact, that “The threat of bioweapons being used by terrorists or rogue states has continued to worsen.”

The Commission, co-chaired by former U.S. Senators Daniel Robert Graham and James Matthes Talent, also issued a “Report Card” (on 26 January 2010) on the efforts made thus far to address several of its earlier (2008) recommendations. In that report, the Obama administration’s failure to “enhance the nation’s capabilities for rapid response to prevent biological attacks from inflicting mass casualties” received a failing grade (“F” – meaning that no action had been taken on this recommendation). For its inadequate oversight of high-containment laboratories, the administration received an almost failing “D+.”

“We no longer have the luxury of a slow learning curve,” the Commission also warned, as yet another indication that the Obama administration is not addressing urgent threats, including bioterrorism. “Especially troubling,” the Commission said, “is the lack of priority given to the development of medical countermeasures – the vaccines and medicines that would be required to mitigate the consequences of an attack.”

Despite the failing grades and missteps – of Republican as well as Democratic administrations – the U.S. biodefense efforts of the past decade have, if nothing else, led to a greater understanding of both the lack of preparedness and the actual biothreat itself. That understanding has not only spurred the development and placement of new detection technologies, but also expanded the provisions in place for effective countermeasures. Nonetheless, the enactment of additional legislation, some of it still pending, to implement other Commission recommendations is needed to further enhance the nation’s current biosecurity capabilities.

Smallpox Disasters – Still a Threat?

Largely because of a worldwide smallpox vaccination campaign carried out by the World Health Organization (WHO), naturally occurring smallpox has been successfully eliminated. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), the last reported smallpox case occurred in Somalia in 1977, and the virus has not infected anyone within the United States since 1949. Nonetheless, and primarily because of recent security concerns in embattled nations such as Libya and Syria, the use of biological weapons against civilian populations has once more become a real and present danger to the national security of the United States (and, of course, other nations throughout the world).

Currently, samples of the smallpox virus – an airborne virus that is extraordinarily contagious and extremely lethal – are now stored in only two laboratories, one in the United States and one in Russia, which are both closely guarded. Nonetheless, there are also some understandable concerns that a few other nations and/or organizations – including terrorist groups – might also have acquired samples of the virus at one time or another in the recent past. Moreover, even though naturally occurring smallpox seems to have been effectively eradicated, it might still be inexpensively replicated, both technologically and synthetically, and used as a terrorist weapon of choice.

Making smallpox an even more attractive bioweapon is that the maturation period of the virus ranges from 7 to 17 days. A human carrier of the virus thus could travel to numerous countries around the world without exhibiting any warning signs, while possibly spreading what could lead to an international pandemic. Even if the overall likelihood of a bioterror



attack remains relatively low, the historical record shows that *any* use of the smallpox virus as a bioweapon would become a major international concern.

According to the CDC, the most common type of smallpox, *variola major*, had an approximately 30 percent death rate – and millions of other victims suffered major disfigurements. In the 20th century alone, smallpox killed an estimated 300 million people – more than the total number killed in all of the wars fought in all countries throughout the entire world during that century. Also, because there is no specific treatment for smallpox – beyond treating the visible signs and symptoms of the infection – the foremost concern is to stop the spread of the virus before it reaches epidemic proportions. In nations that do not possess the types or quantities of immunization to the virus that would be needed, stopping the spread of disease can be an even greater challenge.

Developing a National Plan

Securing and preparing the United States (and/or any other nation) to cope with the threat posed by bioterrorism requires that several additional actions are needed. The same WMD report that issued less than complimentary grades also recommended five steps the U.S. government itself should take to combat the threat of bioterrorism:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the current domestic programs already in place to secure dangerous pathogens;
- Develop a national strategy for advancing the ability to conduct forensic analyses of bioterror attacks;
- Tighten government oversight of the private-sector as well as government laboratories that deal with dangerous pathogens;
- Promote a culture of security awareness among scientists; and
- Enhance the nation's current rapid-response plans to prevent biological attacks from inflicting mass casualties.

To connect experts and build interoperability, the government should also continue to pursue a national biosurveillance strategy, including but not limited to: (a) sharing laboratory information; (b) investigating and researching the use of such unstructured data as information from the internet and social networks; (c) incorporating biosurveillance information where it is important and reasonable to integrate; and (d) developing and promoting a global disease detection network.

On 31 July 2012, the Obama White House released a National Strategy for Biosurveillance, which stressed that a “well integrated, national biosurveillance enterprise is a national security imperative.” The essential goal of that national initiative is to save lives by guaranteeing that key personnel have the correct information to make judicious decisions during a public health emergency. In addition, the National Strategy also calls for an interdisciplinary approach to biosurveillance in order to combine and integrate the information and knowledge available from areas beyond public health – e.g., law enforcement, the intelligence community, and the private sector.

In August 2007, the U.S. Congress established the National Biosurveillance Integration Center (NBIC) within the Department of Homeland Security to enhance the nation's capability to integrate all U.S. biosurveillance efforts. NBIC's biological common operating picture is a manually updated Google Map application that tracks biological events worldwide. The biosurveillance common operating network supports DHS's Google Map system and also monitors, tracks, and disseminates relevant information through a system called Global Argus – a global early detection and tracking system for biological events – which depends heavily on public information sources such as newspapers and the internet.

The mission of the NBIC further includes the ability to enhance the capabilities of the federal government to: (a) rapidly identify, characterize, localize, and track a biological event of national concern; (b) integrate and analyze data relating to human health, animal, plant, food, water, and environmental domains; (c) disseminate alerts and other relevant biothreat information; and (d) oversee the development and operation of the National Biosurveillance Integration System (NBIS) interagency community.

To briefly summarize, the threat of bioterrorism is real and smallpox is the most viable bioagent that might be used as a WMD. It is conceivable, in fact, that terrorists might reproduce and deploy various infected bioweapons because the educational materials needed are widely accessible throughout various public documents and internet resources. Moreover, although the likelihood of a bioterrorist attack seems to be very small, so too was the possibility that passenger aircraft would be used to fly into buildings and/or that makeshift bombs would be smuggled inside shoes or underwear.

As with any other type of terrorist threat, the U.S. government must find a safe and reasonable equilibrium between being prepared for a possible attack and effectively managing the financial and logistical costs associated with the preparations involved. Building partnerships, especially with other countries, is a critical step in building a higher level of biosecurity.

Richard Schoeberl has more than 17 years of counterintelligence, counterterrorism, and security management experience, most of it developed during his career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, where his duties ranged from service as a field agent to leadership responsibilities in executive positions both at FBI Headquarters and at the U.S. National



Counterterrorism Center. During most of his FBI career he served in the Bureau's Counterterrorism Division, providing oversight to the agency's international counterterrorism effort. He also was assigned numerous collateral duties during his FBI tour – serving, for example, as a Certified Instructor and as a member of the agency's SWAT program. He also has extensive lecture experience worldwide and is currently a terrorism and law-enforcement media contributor to Fox News, Sky News, al-Jazeera Television, and al-Arabiya.

'Is something causing people to die prematurely?'

Source: <https://www.clarkcountytoday.com/news/more-embalmers-report-bizarre-blood-clots-amid-covid-vax-campaign/>

Sep 07 – More **embalmers** report they have seen the emergence of bizarre “fibrous” clots in a substantial portion of their cases since the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines.

In February, as [WND reported](#), a veteran funeral director in Alabama, Richard Hirschman, said he and more than a dozen colleagues in the industry had been noticing the clots.

Now, [the Epoch Times, which has spoken to others who are observing the same phenomena, reports](#) preliminary research suggests the clots are produced by spike proteins in the body. And some believe there could be a relationship with COVID-19 and/or the COVID-19 vaccines.

Hirschman told the Epoch Times that in 20 years of embalming, he “had never seen these white fibrous structures in the blood, nor have others in my field.” He said that regardless of the cause of death, he’s seeing similar substances in the blood post-mortem, which raises the question: “Is something causing people to die prematurely?”

Wallace Hooker, an expert embalmer who lectures

internationally, said he’s one of many seeing the same phenomena. “I have people sending me photos almost every week of what they’re seeing,” Hooker told the Epoch Times.

In June, [a pathologist who heads one of America's leading labs, Dr. Ryan Cole, said he was finding unusually long blood clots, as long as one foot, in the bodies of deceased people who received COVID-19 vaccines.](#)

Cole, who runs Cole Diagnostics in Boise, Idaho, believes the synthetic spike protein in the mRNA vaccines produced by Pfizer and Moderna are “causing inflammation in the lung, the brain, the liver, the kidneys, the heart; it’s causing the same damage that the virus was causing.”

However, he said in an interview with USAWatchdog.com, “in the body, the shots are persisting and making more spike protein than if you had a natural infection.”

Cole, whose laboratory receives tissue samples from morticians across the country, cited a Stanford University study published in the journal Cell that found the vaccine’s spike protein remains in the body for at least eight weeks.

Cole also cited studies by South African physician Resia Pretorius finding the COVID “spike protein alone causes the proteins in our blood to clump.”

“That spike protein is thrombogenic – it causes clots, and it causes a lot of clots,” Cole said.

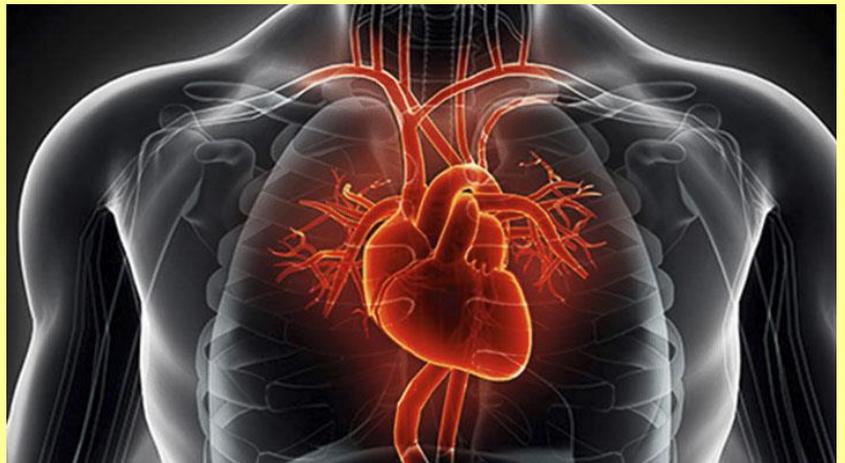
Morticians, he explained in a March interview with anti-COVID-vaccine activist Steve Kirsch, usually “put a dissolving fluid in to break up clots so they can get their embalming fluid in.”

And they were getting back pressure on the system, saying, “What in the world is going on?”

The morticians, Cole said, ended up pulling out “six-inch clots, 12-inch clots, two to three-foot-long clots.”

“Because, you know, from the hip down into the leg, you have a long vein called the saphenous vein. And so they were pulling long clots out of your longer veins. And ... they hadn’t seen anything like this previously.”

Cole told Hunter of [USAWatchdog.com](#) that he’s met other pathologists who are seeing the clots but “can’t say anything” because they would be fired.



"But we have all these large organizations and institutions in cahoots together with a narrative attacking anybody that speaks against their giant money machine while they're harming humanity, and this is the tragedy in all of this," Cole said. "Doctors are seeing it. Pathologists are seeing it.

"Too many people are silent, and silence is compliance. It's time for people to be courageous."

●► Read also: <https://factcheck.afp.com/doc.afp.com.32JG7UE>

Khosta-2: Scientists warn Russian bat virus could infect humans and resist COVID vaccines

Source: <https://www.euronews.com/next/2022/09/22/khosta-2-new-russian-bat-virus-discovered-that-could-infect-humans-and-resist-covid-vaccin>



Sep 22 – When SARS-CoV-2 - the virus behind COVID-19 – surfaced in China and quickly brought the entire world to a standstill, then-President Donald Trump liked to refer to it as "the Chinese virus".

Fast forward two and a half years, and US scientists are warning that a recently discovered virus harboured by Russian horseshoe bats is also capable of infecting humans and evading COVID-19 antibodies and vaccines.

The bat virus, named Khosta-2, is known as a sarbecovirus – the same sub-category of coronaviruses as SARS-CoV-2 – and it displays "troubling traits," according to a new study published in the [journal PLoS Pathogens](#).

A team led by researchers at the Paul G. Allen School for Global Health at Washington State University (WSU) found that Khosta-2 can use its spike proteins to infect human cells very much like SARS-CoV-2 does.

"Our research further demonstrates that sarbecoviruses circulating in wildlife outside of Asia – even in places like western Russia where the Khosta-2 virus was found – also pose a threat to global health and ongoing vaccine campaigns against SARS-CoV-2," Michael Letko, a virologist at WSU and corresponding author of the study, said in a statement.

He said this discovery highlights the need to develop new vaccines that don't only target known variants of SARS-CoV-2, such as Omicron, but that protect against all sarbecoviruses.

'Weird Russian viruses'

Among the hundreds of sarbecoviruses discovered in recent years, most have been found in Asian bats and are not capable of infecting human cells.

The Khosta-1 and Khosta-2 viruses were discovered in bats near Russia's Sochi National Park in 2020, and it initially appeared they were not a threat to humans, according to the study's authors.

"Genetically, these weird Russian viruses looked like some of the others that had been discovered elsewhere around the world, but because they did not look like SARS-CoV-2, no one thought they were really anything to get too excited about," Letko said.

"But when we looked at them more, we were really surprised to find they could infect human cells. That changes a little bit of our understanding of these viruses, where they come from and what regions are concerning".

'Troubling traits'

Letko and his colleagues determined that Khosta-1 posed a low risk to humans, but Khosta-2 was more concerning.

In particular, like SARS-CoV-2, Khosta-2 can use its spike protein to infect cells by attaching to a receptor protein, called angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2), which is found throughout human cells.

The scientists next wanted to find out whether the virus could evade the immunity offered either by previous coronavirus infections or COVID-19 vaccines.

Using serum derived from people vaccinated against COVID-19, the team discovered Khosta-2 was not neutralised by current vaccines.

They also tested serum from people who were infected with the Omicron variant, but there again, the antibodies were ineffective.

Fortunately, the authors write that the new virus lacks some of the genetic features thought to "antagonise" the immune system and contribute to disease in humans – but there is a risk that Khosta-2 could wreak havoc by recombining with a second virus such as SARS-CoV-2.

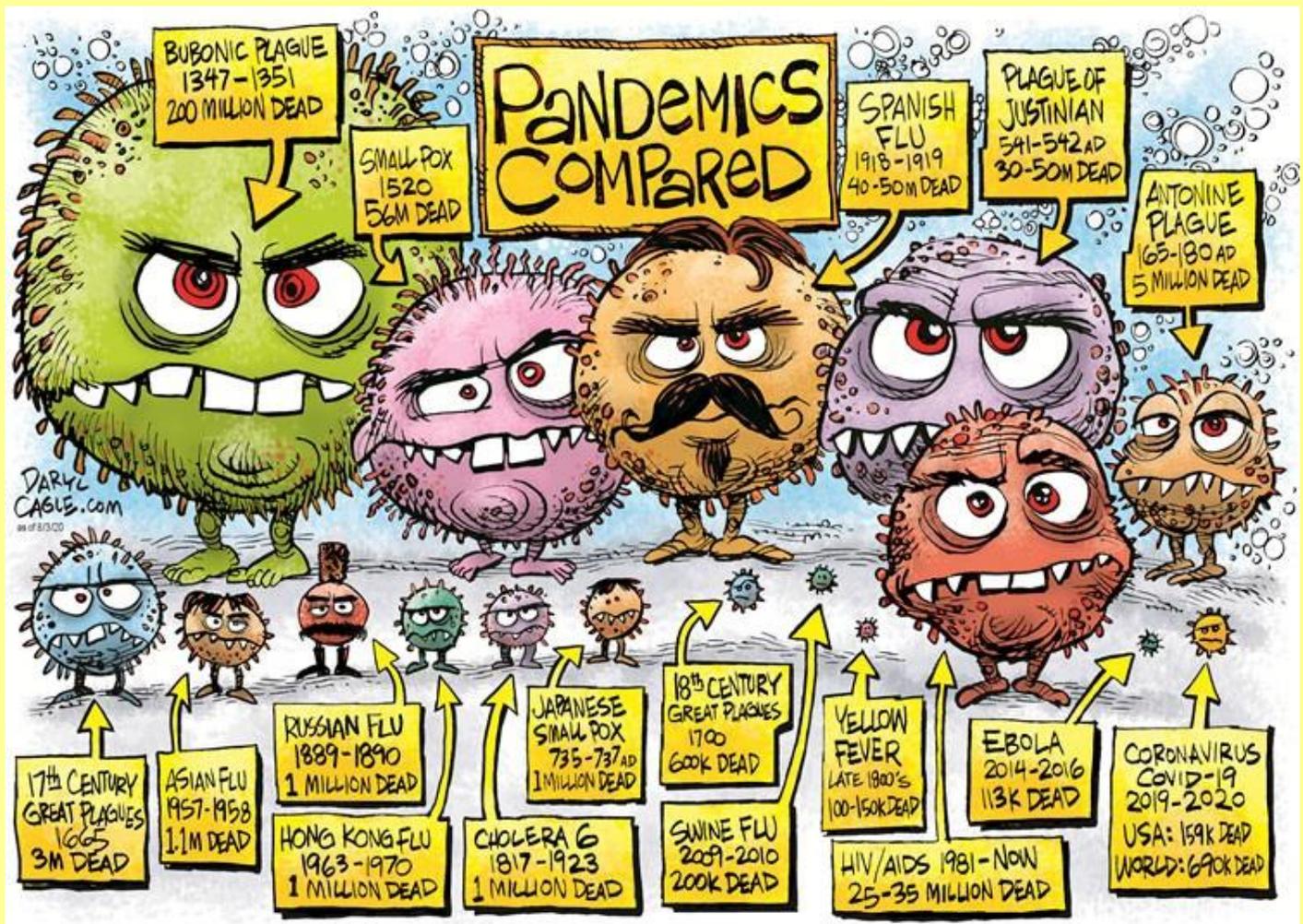


"When you see SARS-2 has this ability to spill back from humans and into wildlife, and then there are other viruses like Khosta-2 waiting in those animals with these properties we really don't want them to have, it sets up this scenario where you keep rolling the dice until they combine to make a potentially riskier virus," Letko said.

Pandemics by numbers (as of September 24, 2022)

	CASES	DEATHS	COUNTRIES & TERRITORIES	MOST AFFECTED COUNTRIES
<u>COVID-19</u>	(602,590,304) 619,681,453	(6,476,481) 6,539,016	228	USA, India, Brazil, France, Germany
<u>MONKEYPOX*</u>	(44,382) 64,703	15**	(104) 114	USA, Spain, UK, Germany

* Outside Africa | ** Outside Africa (Spain 2; India 1; Brazil 2; Peru 2; Ecuador 1; Mexico 1; USA 2; Belgium 1; Cuba 1; Czeck Republic 1; Jamaica 1) – numbers in parenthesis are those of August 2022)



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