

Conference takes up threat of biological and chemical warfare

by Jeffrey Steinberg

In recent years, the threat of a biological or chemical weapons attack against the United States, by terrorist organizations and/or foreign governments, has become a matter of serious national security concern and debate. The 1995 Aum sect attacks against the Japanese subway system, although they fell short of their stated objective of causing thousands of deaths, set off alarm bells in capitals around the world. The 1993 World Trade Center bombing, and the Oklahoma City bombing, coming just weeks after the Aum attacks in Japan, further underscored the “post-Cold War” danger of irregular warfare, using biological and chemical weaponry, as well as the more conventional terrorist arms.

In two recent instances, the FBI and other federal, state, and local agencies responded with a serious show of force, when threats of a biological weapons attack were made. Last year, a several-square-block section of Washington, D.C.’s central business district was sealed off, when a package, purported to contain a biological agent, was found in the mail room at the national headquarters of the B’nai B’rith. In mid-January 1998, in the midst of the Iraq crisis, two men were arrested near Las Vegas, Nevada by a team of FBI agents, when they told an associate that they were in possession of lethal doses of anthrax. Although both incidents proved to be hoaxes, they nevertheless underscored the seriousness with which government agencies are treating the danger of such “poor man’s nuclear weapons.”

The strategic setting

EIR has added a dimension to the strategic debate over the threat of irregular warfare, by detailing, in numerous articles, the role of British intelligence, Israeli intelligence, and certain allied “Bush league” intelligence circles in the United States, in harboring and supporting the vast majority of terrorist organizations operating around the globe today. In particular, in a series of cover-stories, published beginning Oct. 13, 1995, *EIR* provided dossiers on several dozen organizations that had all been spawned out of the 1979-89 Afghanistan War, or were part of an Ibero-America-centered narco-terrorist international.

In his introduction to the Oct. 13, 1995 report, “The New International Terrorism,” Lyndon LaRouche warned: “A new wave of international terrorism is stalking the world. It is led by a horde of mujahideen mercenaries: human flotsam, like

the 1920s ‘rootless’ veterans of World War I, cast upon the world in the wake of the 1980s Afghan war. . . . Once the Soviet forces had retreated from Afghanistan, the Anglo-American-sponsored mujahideen, together with their massive drug- and arms-trafficking apparatus were dumped on the world, a legion of ‘special forces’-trained mercenaries for hire. Today, that legion of mercenaries is a keystone-element within a new international terrorism, which reaches westward across Eurasia, from Japan, coordinated through a nest of terrorist-group command centers in London, into the Americas, from Canada down to the tip of South America.”

Two years after LaRouche wrote these words, the U.S. State Department issued a list of 30 terrorist organizations, banned from any activity inside the United States. The majority of the groups named were spawn of the 1980s Afghansi mujahideen. Twenty-six of the groups currently maintain either international headquarters or substantial financial and other support centers in London. In the wake of the Nov. 17, 1997 massacre of European and Japanese tourists in Luxor, Egypt, by one of the groups named in October 1997 by the State Department, the government of Egypt, along with the governments of other moderate Islamic states, began publicly spotlighting Britain’s role in harboring world terrorism.

Among the U.S. media, only *EIR* has, to date, published reports of the diplomatic attacks against Britain. Yet, some U.S. government agencies are clearly getting the message that London has emerged as the headquarters of the new international terrorism.

In January 1998, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency’s Counter-Terror Center issued a public report, in response to a query by Sen. John Kyl (R-Ariz.), which highlighted London’s role as the base of operations for several nominally Islamic terrorist groups, threatening to take terrorist reprisals against the United States. Osama Bin-Laden, the London- and Afghanistan-based mujahideen financier, who was directly implicated in the World Trade Center bombing, was singled out in the CIA document, and has been a target of State Department warnings as well.

Biological and chemical WMD

It is in the context of this road map of the current global terrorist threat, that the issue of biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction (WMD) must be situated. The danger,

otherwise, is that the actual threat of such WMD attacks can be easily mislocated, and U.S. agencies blind-sided as to the actual point of origin of such attacks.

Thus, for example, in March 1998, the British government issued an alert for Iraqi intelligence operatives attempting to enter Britain, smuggling components of biological weapons. Israeli Likud propagandist Yosef Bodansky, who works in Washington as a research director of a Republican Party Congressional Task Force, had earlier published similar disinformation. The British report was a transparent effort to once again provoke a Persian Gulf crisis. It did not succeed in provoking the Clinton administration into a new showdown with Saddam Hussein. Nevertheless, the incident underscores that there is a significant amount of disinformation on the biological and chemical weapons threat in circulation, at precisely the moment that defense against such attacks is being given serious attention in Washington, particularly at the Pentagon. Biological weapons pose a particularly thorny challenge to national security planners, at every level; and, therefore, competent intelligence is of vital importance.

A window on the debate over how to deal with the threat of biological and chemical WMD, was opened in December 1997, at a three-day conference in Baltimore. The conference was a by-invitation-only affair, but it was not a classified event. Dr. John Grauerholz, a contributor to both *EIR* and *21st Century Science & Technology*, attended the conference, and filed a summary report. *EIR* has received permission to publish Dr. Grauerholz's report, along with excerpts from the keynote address delivered by Don Latham, a member of the Defense Science Board, which recently prepared an in-depth study of the danger of biological and chemical warfare for Secretary of Defense William Cohen.

U.S. biowarfare defense doesn't measure up

by John Grauerholz, M.D.

From Dec. 1-4, 1997, approximately 100 experts in strategy, policy, and operations related to chemical and biological warfare engaged in discussions covering the gamut, from strategic overview to on-the-street responses to deployment of chemical and biological agents by various domestic and foreign enemies. The conference on Urban Protection Against Bioterrorism Threats was jointly sponsored by the Department of Defense, the Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, the FBI Scientific Laboratory, the American Registry of Pathology, the Air Force Academy Institute for National Strategic Studies, and the National Consortium for Genomic Resources Management and Services (GenCon).

The conference provided a unique forum where people from diverse agencies and organizational levels could begin the dialogue necessary to form a policy consensus on effective response to use of biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction by criminals and terrorists. Scientific input to policy and operational determinations is crucial to formulating effective responses to this threat. Interaction of the street-level first-responders with policymakers and strategists is essential to avoid policies and strategies disconnected from operational reality.

The following points emerged from the discussion:

1. Biological warfare is fundamentally different from chemical warfare, especially in deployment against civilian and non-human targets.
2. Current response and procurement programs are inadequate to cope with a large-scale attack with biological agents.
3. Centralized command and coordination are essential to mobilize and utilize our existing and future capabilities, to minimize casualties among victims and first-responders.
4. Potential deployment of chemical and, especially, biological weapons against domestic targets requires fundamental reevaluation of our defense priorities in research and procurement.

Biological and chemical warfare

1. Biological warfare is fundamentally different from chemical warfare, especially in deployment against civilian and non-human targets.

Chemical attacks are relatively unambiguous, though the perpetrators may be obscure. There is usually a device and a scene. People are the primary targets, though some agents can render buildings or dwellings temporarily unusable. A chemical device is relatively restricted in time and space and more susceptible than biological agents to containment by Hazmat (Hazardous Materials) and CBIRF (Chemical and Biological Incident Response Force) teams. Most current response scenarios postulate a defined "incident," and most training deals with response to such an "incident." The first-responders in such a scenario are police, fire and rescue personnel, and, to a lesser extent, emergency physicians. They respond to a specific place, which is a crime/disaster scene, because releasing a toxic chemical and killing and injuring people is a crime. The primary demand on medical infrastructure is acute treatment of survivors.

A biological warfare attack, on the other hand, can be subtle to the point that it is unrecognizable. There may be no device or scene in the classical sense. Animals, plants, and buildings can be targetted as well as people. Microbes can persist in an area in ways that most chemicals cannot. Whereas chemical casualties occur shortly after exposure to an agent, most infectious diseases have incubation periods of days to weeks, and occasionally years, in the case of HIV. There may be no "first-responders" in the classical sense alluded to above. Human victims will more likely present to private