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ODP Terrorism Newsletter - March 18, 2003
Americas

3/18 (MSNBC) A little more than two pounds of anthrax spores spilled into the air over a city the size of New York could be expected to kill more than 120,000 people unless state and federal officials respond much more aggressively than they currently plan to, according to the first comprehensive computer model of such a terrorist act.

3/18 (Washington Post) Osama bin Laden passed through Brazil's border area with Argentina and Paraguay in 1995, a leading weekly magazine reported this weekend, citing Brazilian military intelligence sources.

3/17 (CNN) With military action against Iraq looming, the Bush administration raised the national terrorism threat alert level from "yellow" to "orange" Monday night, the Homeland Security Department announced.

3/17 (USA Today) The three men were legal immigrants, Muslims from Algeria and Morocco whose dingy apartment here was raided six days after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks only because its former occupant was wanted for questioning in the terrorism investigation.

Europe

3/18 (BBC) Four defendants in the trial of Greek guerrilla group November 17 have formally withdrawn confessions which they say was extracted under duress.

3/18 (The Boston Globe) The Supreme Court yesterday outlawed a militant Basque nationalist party accused of terrorism through links with the armed separatist group ETA.

Middle East

3/18 (Middle East Times) The leader of Lebanon's militia Hizbullah addressed hundreds of thousands of Shia followers on the day of Ashura and warned that US troops will face suicide attacks if they strike Iraq.

3/18 (CNN) A gunman Tuesday shot and killed three oil workers – an American, a Canadian and a Yemeni – and then killed himself, according to the U.S. Embassy.

3/18 (Ha'aretz) Israeli intelligence has uncovered most of the details of Iran's involvement in the July 1994 bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires that left some 100 people dead and 250 wounded.

3/18 (Gulf News) A bomb hoax shook the staff and students at the American-British Academy in Muscat as the threat of war against Iraq became intense.

Asia

3/18 (BBC) Eight people have been killed and five people injured after further attacks in the southern Philippines which the military has blamed on Muslim rebels.

3/18 (Straits Times) After relying solely on rhetoric for months, the Mahathir administration yesterday provided the ammunition to back its claim that more than 260 private religious schools here were incubators of militants and terrorists.

ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY
DATE: 3/19/03 ROOM: 3138 EXHIBIT D
SUBMITTED BY: STAN OLSEN

ODP Terrorism Newsletter - March 17, 2003
Americas

3/17 (Washington Post) If U.S. forces invade Iraq, the FBI has plans to mobilize as many as 5,000 agents to guard against terrorist attacks, monitor or arrest suspected militants and interview thousands of Iraqis living in the United States, according to officials familiar with the effort.
www.washingtonpost.com

3/16 (UPI) U.S. intelligence agencies have warned that Hamas, the militant Palestinian group, might attack U.S. citizens and facilities if a war with Iraq begins, according to a report from Time magazine. www.washingtontimes.com

3/16 (MSNBC) The United States is within reach of dismantling the leadership of the al Qaeda terrorist network responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York and the Pentagon, Bush administration officials and U.S. intelligence experts said. www.msnbc.com

3/16 (AP) The University of Idaho seems an unlikely backdrop for international terrorism. Tucked into a small town amid the rolling wheat fields, the campus of about 9,700 students is far removed from regional and national centers of commerce or government. Yet FBI agents on the hunt for potential terrorists are turning their attention to this and other college campuses, many in small-town America, where foreign students for decades have blended into diverse student populations. story.news.yahoo.com

Europe

3/17 (MSNBC) Britain's anti-terrorist police, on high alert against the threat of attack, launched an unprecedented advertising campaign on Monday urging the public to report any suspicions about terror activity. www.msnbc.com

3/17 (Reuters) Britain warned its citizens on Monday of an increased risk of terror attacks in the United Arab Emirates, a day after the United States issued a similar warning for Dubai, the Gulf's tourism hub. www.ds-osac.org

3/17 (Washington Times) Terrorists linked to the al Qaeda network are operating in Bosnia, according to the Croatian member of the country's tripartite presidency. www.washingtontimes.com

3/17 (BBC) Fears of another terrorist attack by al-Qaeda have prompted Nato to begin escorting allied civilian ships through the Strait of Gibraltar at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Middle East

3/16 (The Boston Globe) Mainstream Muslim clerics in the Middle East who had denounced Osama bin Laden are now urging followers to rise up against the United States if it attacks Iraq, in a sign that some Islamic moderates are finding common cause with extremists. www.boston.com/dailyglobe

Asia

3/17 (BBC) At least 11 passengers were killed and 40 others injured when a bomb exploded on a bus in north-east India. www.ds-osac.org

3/17 (BBC) Intelligence officials in Pakistan are continuing to question a suspected leading al-Qaeda member arrested over the weekend. www.ds-osac.org

3/17 (Straits Times) Singapore on Monday launched a joint program to screen US-bound containers and inspect suspicious cargo in order to protect maritime trade from being exploited by terrorists, the US embassy here said. www.ds-osac.org

Africa

3/16 (CNN) Kenya's top security chief said Sunday that Kenya was closing in on suspected al Qaeda operatives in the country. www.cnn.com

Americas

3/6 (CNN) The FBI on Wednesday advised state and local law enforcement agencies that the capture of al Qaeda operations chief Khalid Shaikh Mohammed could spark terrorist attacks already planned.

3/6 (Boston Globe) As the first major airport in the nation to install electronic explosive detection systems for all checked baggage, Logan International Airport earned the praise of politicians and the envy of other airports.

Africa

3/6 (Reuters) Halliburton Co., the world's No. 2 oil field services firm, said on Thursday it has started a probe involving U.S. and Nigerian government officials over theft of a radioactive device used at its Nigerian operations.

Europe

3/6 (BBC) A leading expert on Algerian extremists has blamed the 11 September attacks in New York and Washington on the West's failure to heed the warnings of the 1995 nail bomb attack on the Paris Metro.

3/6 (Guardian) Doctors' leaders warned yesterday that there could be no effective defense against a biological attack by a self-infected terrorist walking through a busy street spreading a disease such as smallpox.

3/6 (CS Monitor) "We must try to find ways of dealing with terrorism in the dangerous world we live in," says Paul Wilkinson, "which do not actually spark off a war that could lead to a set of chain reactions of a truly disastrous nature."

Middle East

3/6 (Ha'aretz) The new political-security cabinet Wednesday night approved a defense establishment request to carry out more operations against the terror structure in the territories, Israel Radio reported. The decision came after a suicide bomber killed 15 people on a Haifa bus earlier in the day.

Asia-Pacific

3/6 (BBC) Authorities in the Philippines have said that a Muslim rebel was among the 21 people killed in a bomb at a southern airport this week.

3/6 (Jakarta Post) The House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly on Thursday to approve two anti-terrorism decrees, which were rushed through in the wake of last October's deadly Bali bombing.

3/6 (BBC) Pakistani officials say reports of Osama bin Laden's presence in Pakistan's border belt with Afghanistan are highly speculative.

3/6 (CNN) Detained al Qaeda chief Khalid Shaikh Mohammed has given conflicting information about Osama bin Laden, CNN has learned.

3/6 (CS Monitor) This week's arrest of Al Qaeda's third-in-command was at once a tremendous coup for Pakistan's oft-maligned government and also a stunning embarrassment.

3/6 (CS Monitor) In the wake of a bomb blast that killed an American missionary and 20 others at an airport in Davao in the southern Philippines Tuesday, confusion reigned as to who was to blame.

Biological Agents Biological agents may be living microcosms that cause disease or biologically produced toxins. Usually odorless and colorless, they can have lengthy incubation periods, leaving exposed individuals without symptoms for hours or even months after exposure. Bioterrorism is directed against humans as well as water and food sources. The United States banned offensive research on biological weapons in 1969, so data on the lethality of various agents are extremely limited.

Botulinum Toxin

What is it? Bacterium that develops only in the absence of oxygen.

How it works: By inhalation. Botulinum neurotoxins generally kill by the relatively slow onset (hours to days) of respiratory failure. The individual may not show signs of disease for 24 to 72 hours. The toxin blocks biochemical action in the nerves that activate the muscles necessary for respiration, causing suffocation.

Lethal amount: One billionth of a gram.

How long can it survive? Relatively short life after it's released.

Symptoms: Dizziness, dry throat, blurred vision.

Treatment: Antitoxins can be injected soon after exposure to a lethal dose of toxin.

Prevention: Gas mask, protective clothing.

Anthrax

What is it? Bacterium with spore-forming rods; likes to live in the soil.

How it works: Humans become infected by coming into contact with spores, either by

touch or inhalation. The spore then produces a toxin that can be fatal. The incubation period for inhalational anthrax is one to six days.

Lethal amount: One billionth of a gram (the size of a speck of dust).

How long can it survive? Tends to degrade rapidly in sunlight; if kept in the right environmental conditions, anthrax can survive for years.

Symptoms: Flu-like symptoms, high fever, fatigue, and cough. Shock and death can occur within 24 to 36 hours of the onset of severe symptoms.

Treatment: Antibiotics, including penicillin.

Prevention: Vaccine.

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Chemical Agents Chemical warfare agents are extremely lethal, manmade poisons that can be weaponized, using mechanisms that disseminate them as liquids or aerosols. Small doses can be lethal. According to FEMA, inhaling 70 to 100 milligrams of Sarin, a nerve agent, is enough to kill 50 percent of the humans who breathe it in its pure form. Chemical agents are most dangerous when disseminated indoors or in confined areas.

VX

What is it? VX, considered one of the most lethal chemical weapons, is a colorless and odorless liquid that turns into a gas on contact with oxygen.

How it works: VX is primarily toxic through the skin, but can also prove fatal when inhaled. VX is fast moving, virtually undetectable, and can spread through air as well as water. In its liquid state, it is roughly the same density as water. It blocks the transmission of impulses along the central nervous system, causing convulsions, respiratory paralysis, and death.

Lethal amount: 10 mg (just a drop).

Symptoms: Increased salivation, coughing, runny nose, headache, and nausea.

Prevention: Gas mask, protective clothing.

Mustard Gas

What is it? Mustard gas is in its pure state a colorless, odorless liquid, but when mixed with other chemicals, it looks brown and has a garlic-like smell.

How it works: Inhaling the vapor causes painful, long-lasting blisters all over the body.

Symptoms: Itchy skin, watery eyes, and burning sensation in lungs. The long-term effects on an individual may include chronic lung impairment, chest pain, and cancer of the

mouth, throat, respiratory tract, and skin. It has been linked to causing leukemia and birth defects.

Prevention: Gas mask.

Sarin

What is it? Sarin is a highly toxic gas that attacks the central nervous system.

How it works: It is chiefly absorbed through the respiratory tract; can be absorbed through the skin at higher environmental temperatures. Depending upon concentration of Sarin, toxicity can occur within minutes.

Lethal amount: 100 mg.

Symptoms: In low levels, it causes severe headaches, increased salivation, and constricts air passages to the lungs. In higher doses, it causes coughing, increased perspiration, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and breathing difficulties. Death can follow, due to suffocation.

Prevention: Gas mask.

Sources: CNN.com; ESDP's "A New National Priority: Enhancing Public Safety and Health Through Domestic Preparedness".