

# Differentiating the Threat of Chemical and Biological Terrorism: Motivations and Constraints<sup>1</sup>

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There is a heightened concern in the United States over the specter of a catastrophic domestic chemical or biological terrorist attack. Billions are being invested in training first responders for what is acknowledged to be a high consequence–low probability event. However, although substantial investment is being devoted to protecting our vulnerable society from such a devastating act, there is very little attention being devoted to who might do it, and why, and, as important, who might not do it, and why not?

A number of factors have contributed to this heightened concern. The World Trade Center bombing in 1993 dented the wall of denial in the United States that “it can’t happen here.” However, if the wall of denial was dented by the World Trade Center bombing, the illusion of invulnerability was surely shattered by the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, which claimed 168 lives in a dramatic act of mass casualty terrorism. In addition, the tragic events of September 11, 2001, represent an act of mass destruction unprecedented in the history of political terrorism. This was mass casualty superterrorism; but this was, it should be emphasized, conventional terrorism.

The Aum Shinrikyo sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995 for the first time focused the international community on the dread prospect of chemical and biological terrorism. As the story emerged, with documentation of the extensive efforts by the leadership of this millennial cult to recruit PhD scientists to develop

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chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, increasing attention was focused on this exotic terrorism as a disaster waiting to happen. As Secretary of Defense William Cohen put it: "It isn't a question of if, but when."

On the agenda of a conference sponsored by the Department of Defense in 1998, major attention was devoted to what might happen, that is, what terrorists could do, with learned presentations by virologists, microbiologists, infectious disease experts, and chemical warfare experts, with no attention being given to the source of and motivations for the threat, that is, which terrorist groups might do it and why. At an American Medical Association conference in April, 2000, on responding to the threat of chemical and biological terrorism, when the author raised the question with the conference planners of the lack of attention on the agenda paid to the magnitude of the threat and to identifying the motivations, incentives, and constraints for terrorist groups to commit such attacks, it was dismissed as not relevant to the question at hand.

In fact, there is a major disconnect between the weapons technology community and the community of academic terrorism experts, with the former being focused on vulnerabilities of our society and what might happen in terms of technological possibilities, and the latter, who study terrorist motivation and decision making, being underwhelmed by the probability of such an event *for most—but not all*—terrorist groups. In the Monterey Institute of International Affairs project report, *Toxic Terror: Assessing Terrorist Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons*, edited by Jonathan Tucker (2000), which consists of a series of detailed case studies following up on reports of chemical or biological terrorism by interviewing primary sources, including alleged perpetrators, most of the cases, on close examination, turned out to have reflected media hype and were not, in fact, bona fide cases of chemical or biological terrorism by organized terrorist groups. There were a number of cases of attempts by emotionally disturbed individuals, which, however, really fell more into the sphere of psychopathology or criminal extortion than political terrorism.

This testimony is in the service of differentiating the threat, focusing on which groups are significantly constrained from committing such extreme acts, and which groups might be less inhibited and indeed might find incentives to commit such acts. Moreover, it seeks to differentiate the spectrum of chemical and biological warfare (CBW) terrorist acts, for a group that assuredly would be constrained from an act of so-called superterrorism using CBW might well find a focused low-level attack advantageous.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>This testimony draws on but expands on analysis presented in *Toxic Terror: Assessing Terrorist Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons* (Tucker, 2000). A preliminary version of these remarks was presented at the annual Non-Proliferation Conference of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in March 2000.

It is useful at this juncture to consider the term “weapons of mass destruction terrorism” usually employed to refer to chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons (CBRN.) It is a semantically confusing term, for conventional weapons, such as the fertilizer bomb used by Timothy McVeigh at the Alfred T. Murah Federal Building in Oklahoma City; the bombs that destroyed the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Saalam, Tanzania; and the hijacked planes that flew into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon; can produce mass destruction. Moreover, the so-called weapons of mass destruction, especially biological and chemical weapons, can be employed with exquisite discrimination to produce low-level casualties, to the point of being employed for assassination of lone individuals.

THE SPECTRUM OF TERRORISM

As reflected in Figure 1, terrorism is not a homogeneous phenomenon. There is a broad spectrum of terrorist groups and organizations, each of which has a different psychology, motivation, and decision-making structure. Indeed, one should not speak of terrorist psychology in the singular, but rather of terrorist psychologies. In the top tier of the graphic, we differentiate political terrorism from criminal and pathological terrorism. Studies of political terrorist psychology (Post, 1990) do not reveal severe psychiatric pathology. Indeed, political terrorist groups do not permit emotionally disturbed individuals to join their groups, for they represent a security risk. Seriously disturbed individuals tend to act alone. In fact, many of the cases in *Toxic Terror: Assessing Terrorist use of Chemical and Biological Weapons* (Tucker, 2000) fall into this category.

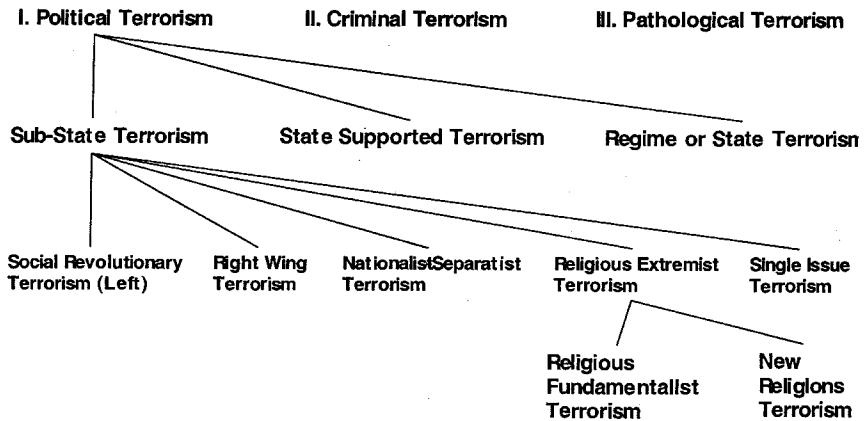


FIGURE 1 Typology of terrorism.

At the middle tier, state terrorism refers to the state turning its resources—police, judiciary, military, secret police, and so forth—against its own citizenry to suppress dissent, as exemplified by the “dirty wars” in Argentina. When Saddam Hussein used nerve gas against his own Kurdish citizens, this was an example of state CBW terrorism. State-supported terrorism is of major concern to the United States. Currently on the list annually distributed by the Department of State are Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, and Cuba. In these situations, when states are acting through terrorist groups, fearing retaliation, the decision making of the state leadership will be a significant constraint on the group acting under their influence or control.

In the lower tier, a diverse group of substate terrorist groups are specified: social-revolutionary terrorism, nationalist-separatist terrorism, right-wing terrorism, religious extremist terrorism, subsuming both religious fundamentalist terrorism and terrorism perpetrated by nontraditional religious groups (such as Aum Shinrikyo), and single issue terrorism.

### THE SPECTRUM OF TERRORIST ACTS

Now, in considering which groups in the spectrum of terrorist groups might be inclined to carry out acts of biological or chemical terrorism, it is important to differentiate the spectrum of such acts as well. In Figure 2, we discriminate five levels—large scale casualties with conventional weapons, sham CBW attacks, low-level casualties (under 20), large-scale casualties (20 to hundreds), and catastrophic or superterrorism, in which thousands of casualties may result. The crucial psychological barrier to cross concerns not the choice of weapon, in my judgment, but rather the willingness to cause mass casualties, and this threshold has been crossed for some groups. Indeed, given the skills and hazards in working with CBW, some groups might well ask the following: Why should we move into this technologically difficult and dangerous area when we can cause mass casualties and mass terror through conventional weapons? This was vividly demonstrated in the attacks of September 11, 2001. Sham attacks are included, for the psychological constraints against CBW attacks are missing for sham attacks, which can have devastating effects, especially psychologically. With the attention being given to training first-responders in how to respond to chemical and biological attacks, insufficient attention is being given to the dilemmas of responding to what will likely be much more frequent: sham attacks such as the rash of anthrax hoaxes in 1998, as exemplified by the sham anthrax attack on the B’nai Bri’th Building in Washington, DC. In this event, although no actual biological weapon was used, the perpetrators called attention to their cause, dramatically paralyzing the city of Washington, with a televised humiliating public decontamination of individuals at the center of the event. This was assuredly a highly successful terrorist act. Could it be that the indiscreet inquiries concerning crop dusting airplanes by the al Qaeda terrorists before

Group Type	Large-scale Conventional	CBW Hoax	Small-scale CBW Use	Large-scale CBW Use	Catastrophic CBW Use (Superterrorism)
Social-Revolutionary	✓*	✓	✓*	X	X
Nationalist-Separatist	✓*	✓	✓*	X	X
Right-Wing	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Right-Wing Community of Belief	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Religious-Fundamentalist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Non-traditional Religious Extremists (closed cults)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- \* Discriminate acts: acts which do not alienate supporters or endanger constituents, usually taking place outside regional base/home territory
- X Significantly constrained against such acts, extremely unlikely
- ✓ Less constrained, and while still unlikely, could rationalize such acts. The check does not indicate likelihood of committing such an act, but refers to motivation only. Thus many right-wing extremists might be highly motivated to commit such an act, but would lack the necessary resource and capability to carry it out.

FIGURE 2 Differentiating motivations and constraints for chemical and biological warfare (CBW) terrorism by group type.

they engaged in their catastrophic mission were designed to be discovered to create further panic within the United States?

Writing in *Disorders and Terrorism: Report of the Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism*, more than 20 years ago, Mengel (1977) distinguished four different means by which terrorists attempt to achieve their goals. He observed that there is a distinct difference between discriminate and random target selection. Whereas discriminate target selection can be used in support of bargaining or to make a political statement, random targeting is associated with the motivation to cause social paralysis, or inflict mass casualties. Groups motivated to cause

mass casualties, in Mengel's (1977) estimation, are characterized by a group's realization of the following:

1. They do not have a position of strength from which bargaining can be successful.
2. The public will no longer respond to state-(propaganda)-related attacks.
3. Popular support has been lost because of the social paralysis caused by previous attacks.

In evaluating the risk among terrorist groups for using CBW weapons, it is useful to employ this distinction in differentiating among terrorist groups. In Figure 2, the asterisk (\*) distinguishes discriminate from indiscriminate acts. Some groups might well consider CBW attacks only in a bounded area, limiting casualties, which would significantly militate against negative reactions from their constituents, both local and international. However, these groups would be significantly constrained against such acts in a region in which the group's constituents might well be adversely affected as a result of physical proximity to the area of attack, and would accordingly adversely affect constituents. These bounded acts are specified as discriminate. Indiscriminate attacks, in contrast, are attacks in which no consideration is given to the selection of specific victims or the impact of the act on internal or external constituents.

The matrix in this graphic evaluates the nature of the act by the terrorist group type, focusing specifically on psychological incentives and constraints. In the remainder of this article, a description of the motivations and decision making of each group type is described, evaluating the degree of risk for the spectrum of mass casualty and CBW acts. That a check mark appears in the summarizing graphic is intended to convey not that the group is at high risk for such acts, but that the balance of incentives and constraints is such that CBW acts could be rationalized as serving the group's goals, with a weakened pattern of disincentives. To say that differently, for the spectrum of terrorist groups, the constraints against use of CBW weapons on a large or catastrophic scale are great, and the likelihood of such acts is quite small. For some groups, those that are designated with a check mark, it is less improbable than for others, as they experience a lesser degree of constraint.

Moreover, this matrix is concerned only with motivations and constraints, and does not consider resource and capability. Weapons experts regularly identify weaponization as a major constraint to mass CBW terrorism. The resources and technological capability to carry out a large-scale attack would, in the judgment of many in the weapons community, require resources and technological skill only found at the state level. It should be remembered that Aum Shinrikyo had gathered a remarkable assemblage of scientific experts, but still were daunted by the dispersal problem. Some of the perpetrators in the matrix, such as individual

right-wing extremists, might be highly motivated to cause mass destruction, with no psychological or moral constraint, but would lack the technological capability and resources to mount more than a small local attack.

### Social Revolutionaries

*Social revolutionary terrorism*, also known as *terrorism of the left*, includes those acts perpetrated by groups seeking to overthrow the capitalist economic and social order. Social revolutionary groups are typified by the European “fighting communist organizations” active throughout the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., the Red Army Faction in Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy). Although social-revolutionary terrorist groups have experienced a significant decline over the last 2 decades, paralleling the collapse of Communism in Europe and the end of the Cold War, social-revolutionary terrorism and insurgency are still underway, as exemplified by the Japanese Red Army (JRA), Sendero Luminoso (the Shining Path), Movement Revolutionaire Tupac Amaru (MRTA) in Peru, several Colombian terrorist groups who are also associated with narco-terrorism, and Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) of Chiapas, Mexico.

These are complex organizations, however, not groups per se. The decision-making locus is outside of the action cells. In these secret organizations, there is a tension between security and communication. This leads to rather more decision-making latitude for the action cells than might be present in a more open organization. Thus, policy guidelines may be laid down, but specific planning concerning the target and the tactics has been delegated to the group. Nevertheless, for a matter so grave as the strategic decision to deploy weapons of mass destruction, the organizational decision makers would certainly be the prime movers.

Insofar as these groups are seeking to influence their society, they would be significantly constrained from indiscriminate acts that cause significant casualties among their own countrymen, or cause negative reactions in their domestic and international audiences. However, discriminate acts against government or symbolic capitalist targets could be rationalized by these groups.

### Nationalists–Separatists

*Nationalist–separatist terrorism*, also known as *ethno-nationalist terrorism*, includes those groups fighting to establish a new political order or state based on ethnic dominance or homogeneity. The Irish Republican Army, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of Sri Lanka, the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) in Spain, and radical Palestinian groups such as the Abu Nidal Organization and the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command

(PFLP–GC), are prominent examples. Nationalist–separatist terrorists are usually attempting to garner international sympathy for their cause and to coerce the dominant group. Thus ETA is attempting to pressure Spain to yield to its demands for an independent Basque state. These causes of the nationalist–separatist terrorist groups and organizations are particularly intractable, for the bitterness and resentment against the dominant ethnic group has been conveyed from generation to generation (Post, 1990). Nationalist–separatist groups operating within their nation are particularly sensitive to the responses of their internal constituency, as well as their international audience. This provides a constraint against acts so violent or extranormal as to offend their constituents, as exemplified by the attack by the Real Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) in Omagh in 1998 in which 29 people, mostly women and children, were killed. The resulting uproar from their Irish constituents was so extreme that the Real PIRA apologized and forswore future violence.

These groups will be significantly constrained from acts that indiscriminately involve mass casualties and will negatively affect the group’s reputation with their constituents and their international audience. However, discriminate acts against their adversary, in areas where their constituents are not present, can be rationalized. Just as the rash of suicide bombings in Tel Aviv and other predominantly Jewish cities in Israel was implemented by absolutist Palestinian groups (some of which were radical Islamists as well) to reverse the peace process, the prospect of tactical CBW weapons in such areas is quite conceivable. Such discriminate attacks could also be implemented in revenge against U.S. targets. However, a CBW attack in Jerusalem, by secular Palestinian terrorists that might affect their own constituents, is considered highly unlikely.

### Religious Extremists

Religious extremist terrorism is characterized by groups seeking to maintain or create a religious social and political order and includes two types of groups and organizations: those adhering to a radical fundamentalist interpretation of mainstream religious doctrines and nontraditional religious groups representing “new religions,” such as Aum Shinrikyo, responsible for the 1995 sarin nerve gas attack on the subway system in Tokyo.

### Religious Fundamentalist Terrorism

In the 1970s and 1980s, most of the acts of terrorism were perpetrated by nationalist–separatist terrorists and social-revolutionary terrorists, who wished to call attention to their cause and accordingly would regularly claim responsibility for their acts. They were seeking to influence the West and the establishment. However, in the past decades, no responsibility is claimed for upwards of 40% of terrorist acts.



We believe this is because of the increasing frequency of terrorist acts by radical religious extremist terrorists. They are not trying to influence the West. Rather, the radical Islamist terrorists are trying to expel the secular modernizing West, and they do not need their name identified in a New York Times headline or in a story on CNN. They are “killing in the name of God” and don’t need official notice; after all, God knows.

Traditional groups include Islamic, Jewish, Christian, and Sikh radical fundamentalist extremists. In contrast to social revolutionary and nationalist–separatist terrorists, for religious fundamentalist extremist groups, the decision-making role of the preeminent leader is of central importance. For these true believers, the radical cleric is seen as the authentic interpreter of God’s word, not only eliminating any ambivalence about killing, but endowing the destruction of the defined enemy with sacred significance.

The radical cleric, whether ayatollah, rabbi, or priest, has used sacred text to justify killing in the name of God. Ayatollah Khomeini employed a radical interpretation of the Quran to provide the ideological foundation for his Islamic revolution, and selected verses to justify terrorist extremity, such as “And slay them where ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out... Such is the reward of those who suppress the faith” (2:190–193). In a radio broadcast of June 5, 1983, Khomeini exhorted his followers: “With humility toward God and relying on the power of Islam, they should cut the cruel hands of the oppressors and world-devouring plunderers, especially the United States, from the region.” To those who died fighting this holy cause, Khomeini assured a higher place in paradise. In inciting his followers during the Iran–Iraq war (1987), he rhetorically asked the following: “Why don’t you recite the sura of killing? Why should you always recite the sura of mercy? Don’t forget that killing is also a form of mercy.” He and his clerical followers regularly found justification for their acts of violence in the Quranic suras calling for the shedding of blood (Robins & Post, 1997).

These organizations are hierarchical in structure; the radical cleric provides interpretation of the religious text justifying violence that is uncritically accepted by his “true believer” followers, so there is no ambivalence concerning use of violence that is religiously commanded. These groups are accordingly particularly dangerous, for they are not constrained by Western reaction, and indeed often wish to expel secular modernizing influences. They have shown a willingness to perpetrate acts of mass casualty terrorism, as exemplified by the bombings of Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, the World Trade Center in the United States, the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the U.S.S. Cole, and the mass casualty terrorism on a scale never before seen in the coordinated attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. Osama bin Laden, responsible for these events, has actively discussed the use of weapons of mass destruction in public interviews.

Although not a religious authority, Osama bin Laden is known for his piety, and has been granted the title emir. Like Khomeini, he regularly cites verses from the Koran to justify his acts of terror and extreme violence, employing many of the same verses earlier cited by Khomeini. Consider this extract from the February 1998 Fatwa, *Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders*, World Islamic Front Statement:

In compliance with God's order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims:

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty God, “and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together,” and “fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God.”

We—with God's help—call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it.

Note it is not Osama bin Laden who is ordering his followers to kill Americans. He is the messenger, relaying the commands of God, which are justified with verses from the Koran.

Although from the theoretical perspective of “pure culture” religious fundamentalist terrorism, there would be no constraint on these groups, in fact, some of the radical Islamist groups, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, responsible for most of the suicide bombings in Israel, do in fact have domestic constituencies that would provide a measure of constraint against indiscriminate mass casualty acts, and against “superterrorism.”

However, as the events of September 11 make clear, for the al Qaeda organization, there is no constraint against mass casualty terrorism. In fact, there is a willingness to take as many casualties as possible, which is the dynamic of the “true believers” of the al Qaeda group under the destructive charismatic leadership of Osama bin Laden. And it is this willingness that places this group at high risk to move into the area of CBW terrorism, for the members have already crossed the threshold of mass casualties using conventional terrorism, demonstrating a willingness to perpetrate superterrorism.

In his prepared statement released after the U.S. and British attack on Taliban military targets on the night of October 7, 2001, bin Laden emphasized the climate of terror in the United States: “America has been filled with fear from North to South, from East to West, thank God.” And he ended his statement by asserting his intent to keep the United States in a continuing state of insecurity: “America and those who live in America won't dream of having security before we have it in Palestine and all infidel armies depart from the land of Muhammad.” At this point in

time, a mass casualty attack with the requisite technological skills and preparation would not be required to produce mass panic in the United States. As this testimony is being prepared, anthrax has been diagnosed in a second employee of the supermarket tabloid publisher, America Media Corporation, in West Palm Beach, Florida, which is only 40 miles from the airstrip where some of the al Qaeda terrorists made inquiries concerning crop dusting equipment. Although the initial indications are that this is a criminal matter, that this could represent a small CBW attack is by no means out of the question, and would fit Osama bin Laden's espoused goals of keeping the United States in the throes of continuing insecurity.

### Nontraditional Religious Extremist Groups

Nontraditional religious extremist groups, such as Aum Shinrikyo, must also be considered. These generally closed cults are in a struggle for survival against a demonized enemy that must be destroyed. Although the majority of millennial apocalyptic cults are waiting for the millennium, some religious belligerents are seeking to force the end, and, in the case of Aum Shinrikyo, to precipitate the final struggle. Charismatic leaders of closed cults, like Shoko Asahara, the leader of Aum Shinrikyo, who see themselves in a God-like role, a self-perception rewarded by the God-like reverence with which they are treated by their followers, can become obsessed with power. Asahara's fascination with high technology led him to recruit nuclear physicists, nuclear engineers, chemists, and microbiologists, simultaneously exploring nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Especially for closed religious cults, the dynamic is one of a charismatic leader who holds total sway over his followers. What he declares is moral and required is moral and required. The followers yield their individual judgment to the leader and become deskilled, acting as if they have no independent critical faculties of their own. No doubt or doubters are permitted in these powerful hermetically-sealed closed organizations. The price for defection in Aum Shinrikyo was death. This too had a high-tech aspect to it, for apprehended defectors were incinerated in an industrial microwave oven, ensuring the conforming loyalty of witnessing members.

Asahara, in mounting weapons of mass destruction programs, was attempting to precipitate the final apocalyptic conflict. At the cusp of the millennium, apocalyptic millennial cults can be expected to proliferate and experience a heightened sense of urgency, which may lead other groups to pursue the path of weapons of mass destruction aggression to precipitate the final struggle. As was demonstrated by Aum Shinrikyo, such groups can justify indiscriminate CBW attacks producing mass casualties, and that same rationale could serve as the justification for "superterrorism." However, Aum Shinrikyo is quite unusual within the spectrum of millennial cults, for most such cults are not religious belligerents seeking to precipitate the apocalypse, as was the case with Aum Shinrikyo, but rather tend to withdraw from society, passively awaiting the "final days."

## Right-Wing Groups

Right-wing terrorism includes those groups seeking to preserve the dominance of a threatened ethnic majority or to return society to an idealized “golden age” in which ethnic relations more clearly favored the dominant majority. These groups generally espouse fascist ideologies, including racist, anti-Semitic, and antigovernment “survivalist” beliefs. These groups in the United States fear the federal government, which they see as contributing to the decline of the majority’s dominance. In their view, the government is dominated by Jews—hence ZOG, the Zionist Occupied Government—and accordingly is illegitimate.

Because of this dehumanization of their enemies, discriminate attacks on target groups, such as Blacks, or, in Europe, on enclaves of foreign workers, are justified by their ideology. Because of their delegitimation and dehumanization of the government, discriminate attacks on government facilities are certainly feasible by such groups, including attacks on the seat of the Federal government, Washington, DC, as represented in *The Turner Diaries* (MacDonald, 1980).

## Right-Wing Community of Belief

Many of the acts described in the case studies developed by the Center for Non-Proliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute for International Studies, the first group of which was published as *Toxic Terror: Assessing Terrorist Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons* (Tucker, 2000), were committed by individuals hewing to a right-wing ideology but not belonging to a formal group or organization per se. The case study by Jessica Stern of Larry Wayne Harris, a former neo-Nazi, is a case in point. Timothy McVeigh is an exemplar of such individuals seeking to cause mass casualty terrorism, using conventional weapons. McVeigh was enthralled by *The Turner Diaries* (MacDonald, 1980), which he sold below cost at gun shows. At the time of his capture, glassined, highlighted pages from this bible of the radical right were found in his car. Individuals in this category are a significant threat for low-level CBW attacks, but, because of resource limitations, probably do not represent a threat of mass casualty CBW terrorism.

The role of the Internet in propagating the ideology of right-wing extremist hatred is of concern, for an isolated individual consumed by hatred can find common cause in the right-wing Web sites, feel he or she is not alone, and be moved along the pathway from thought to action, responding to the extremist ideology of his or her virtual community.

## IMPLICATIONS

Reviewing the spectrum of terrorist groups in terms of motivation, incentives, and constraints, for nearly all groups, the feared catastrophic CBW superterrorism,

against the prospect of which the United States is preparing, would be highly counterproductive. The constraints are particularly severe for large-scale mass casualty terrorism for groups that are concerned with their constituents—social revolutionary and nationalist–separatist terrorists—although discriminate low-level attacks are possible. Right-wing extremists, including individuals who are members of the right-wing virtual community of hatred, because of their tendency to dehumanize their victims and delegitimize the Federal government, represent a distinct danger for low-level discriminate attacks against their demonized targets: Jews, Blacks, and ethnic minorities, as well as Federal buildings. Concerning nontraditional religious extremist groups, should other nontraditional groups resembling Aum Shinrikyo emerge, they would be at great risk, but most millennial cults are not led by religious belligerents, but rather passively await the final days.

Religious fundamentalist terrorist groups, whose members follow the dictates of destructive charismatic religious leaders, are not constrained by their audience on earth, as their acts of violence are given sacred significance. They are more at risk for mass casualty attacks, although to the degree they have a constituency, as does Hamas, they are also constrained. Having demonstrated an unconstrained goal of committing mass casualty destruction, and of maintaining America in a continuing state of insecurity, the al Qaeda group of Osama bin Laden is not constrained and is particularly dangerous. Because of al Qaeda's series of successes, with ever increasing violence and the expanding mission of its grandiose leader, Osama bin Laden, this organization is considered at the highest risk to move into CBW terrorism. Osama bin Laden is innovative and continually seeking to create ever greater terror. Because of the resource and technological constraints, however, small focal attacks are the most likely, rather than CBW superterrorism. This limitation would be removed were the group supported by a state with the necessary technological resources.

Given the severe constraints against catastrophic CBW terrorism for most groups, this argues for continuing to protect against the greatest danger—conventional terrorism—and to devote significantly increased intelligence resources to monitoring much more closely the groups at greatest risk for CBW terrorism: right-wing extremist groups and religious extremist groups, both nontraditional cults similar to Aum Shinrikyo and especially religious fundamentalist terrorist organizations.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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