

## AUM SHINRIKYO

Aum Shinrikyo, a cult founded in 1985 by Shoko Asahara, perpetrated the 1995 sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway that killed 12 people.

Aum Shinrikyo translates roughly as “Supreme Truth.” The cult’s major tenets are drawn from a wide spectrum of religions. Adherents believe that by withdrawing from worldly pleasures and dedicating their thoughts to the contemplation of the “Supreme Truths” as revealed by their guru, Shoko Asahara, they can become enlightened. Some commentators characterize the cult as a type of “fundamentalist” Buddhism. However, Asahara has at times described himself as an incarnation of Shiva, the Hindu god responsible for both destruction and rebirth. Aum Shinrikyo also incorporates a fervent belief in the coming of Armageddon, a term from Christian theology describing an ultimate battle between good and evil in which the known world is destroyed and replaced by a spiritually pure world.

The organization began in 1984 with a single Tokyo storefront offering yoga classes and religious seminars. Claims that believers could attain miraculous psychic powers brought many curious people to the seminars, and the cult soon began to attract a following. In addition to the personal magnetism of Shoko Asahara, the cult’s message – that only by purifying themselves could believers avert the destruction of humanity – appealed to many alienated by the industrialized, secular, and conformist society of Japan. At its peak in the mid-1990s, the cult was estimated to have nine thousand Japanese members and an unknown number of followers worldwide, with approximately one thousand hardcore adherents living at various cult properties and compounds. Teenagers and students made up a considerable portion of the cult’s membership, some of them brilliant graduates of Japan’s top universities, with advanced degrees in medicine, law, and science.

The cult was a very profitable enterprise, charging high fees for initiation and for relics such as snippets of Asahara’s beard and vials of his bathwater. Some initiation rituals involved ingesting Asahara’s blood and taking massive doses of hallucinogenic drugs. Members were encouraged to cut off all ties to their families and donate their life

savings to the cult. Dissenters were treated harshly, sometimes subjected to sleep deprivation and other torture techniques. Some runaways were kidnapped and beaten in order to return them to the fold. In 1989, human rights lawyer Tsutsumi Sakamoto, who had been suing the cult on behalf of members' families, and his wife and infant son were murdered by cultists. (Aum member Kazuaki Okazaki was sentenced to death by hanging after confessing to their murders – as well as that of a potential Aum escapee – in October 1998.)

As membership grew into the thousands, Aum established operations in other countries, including Australia, Sri Lanka, and the United States. Its most successful expansion was to Russia in 1992, where it attracted thousands of followers. In Japan, Aum had ventures in dozens of industries, including noodle shops and low-budget computer stores. These operations earned millions for the cult; one cult leader estimated that its assets were worth \$1.5 billion at the time of the subway attacks.

In 1990 Asahara and several other prominent members ran unsuccessfully for seats in Japan's parliament. Despite years of negative media coverage, numerous lawsuits – which the cult had fiercely contested – and public speculation about Aum's involvement in the Sakamoto family's disappearance, the crushing defeat of all Aum's candidates was an unexpected blow to Asahara. He began to preach that it was the duty of Aum members to hasten the coming of Armageddon, which would destroy the sinful and elevate Aum's true believers onto a higher spiritual plane.

In light of this new goal, he assembled top advisors and instructed them to begin to arm the cult. The scientific expertise of certain cultists, coupled with Aum's connections to the Russian government and underworld, proved invaluable. By mid-1993, Aum had constructed a plant to manufacture automatic weapons and crude but operational chemical and biological weapons facilities, where it was able to produce botulism toxin, anthrax bacteria, sarin gas, and hydrogen cyanide.

The cult began experimenting with its new weapons. It sprayed botulism toxin in central Tokyo in 1993 during the wedding of Crown Prince; no one was harmed. The cult then released anthrax from an industrial sprayer on the roof of one of its facilities in a Tokyo suburb; the strain was non-virulent, and no people were injured. After its biological arsenal failed, the cult turned to chemical weapons. Asahara ordered sarin gas

used in an assassination attempt on a rival cult leader; the attempt backfired, nearly killing one of the potential assassins. Aum then employed the gas in an attack on three judges adjudicating a property dispute Aum was involved in. On the night of June 17, 1994, cult members released the gas in a residential area of the suburb of Matsumoto. Due to a shift in the wind, the judges were only injured slightly; seven innocent bystanders were killed and more than 150 hospitalized following the incident.

Despite continual suspicion, Aum had been able to fend off police action through threats of costly lawsuits and accusations of religious discrimination. But in mid-March 1995, Aum received word that the National Police planned to raid the cult's compound. On March 20, five cult members distributed sarin on five separate subway lines bound for the Kasumagaseki station, Tokyo's busiest; 12 people were killed and thousands injured.

Following the attacks, hundreds of cult members were arrested; Aum orchestrated several more terrorist attacks in response to the arrests. Shoko Asahara and the architects of the subway attack have been put on trial for the murders; several have already been condemned to death, while other lesser figures have been sentenced to prison. The Aum Shinrikyo religion persists, despite numerous crackdowns and the seizure of its assets by the Japanese government. Though its major beliefs remain unchanged, the cult has re-named itself Aleph, or "The Beginning." New leaders disavow the cult's criminal past and insist it does not pose a threat to society, yet continue to regard the jailed Asahara as spiritual leader, and look to his teenage daughter Rika as his successor. In recent years, it has seen its membership rise significantly, and has once again attained financial prosperity.

**See also**

Shoko Asahara

Biological Weapons

Chemical Weapons

Tokyo Subway Sarin Attack

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### **MOUSSAOUI, ZACARIAS**

a.k.a. Shaqil, Abu Kahlid al Sahrawi

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The first person to be indicted in the United States on charges stemming from the September 11, 2001, attacks that destroyed New York City's World Trade Center and part of the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, Zacarias Moussaoui was in prison in Minnesota when the attacks occurred. Moussaoui, a radical Muslim with ties to Al Qaeda, is believed to have been a last-minute recruit who was supposed to fill in for another would-be hijacker. He was jailed about a month before the attacks for overstaying his visa.

Moussaoui was born in 1968 in St. Jean de Luz, France, the son of a Moroccan couple who married when Moussaoui's mother was 14 years old. His parents divorced when he was young, and Moussaoui's mother worked to support her four children, eventually buying a home in Narbonne. Moussaoui's mother raised her sons and daughters to share housework, a practice that was criticized by some of her more conservative relatives.

In the early 1990s, Moussaoui moved to London. There he received a master's degree in economics from Southbank University and fell in with radical Muslims, eventually becoming estranged from his immediate family. Nonetheless he made several visits to France and was outspoken enough about his views to attract the attention of French authorities, who put him under surveillance. Moussaoui traveled to Pakistan and Afghanistan more than once, training at an Al Qaeda camp in 1998. He occasionally attended the same mosque in Brixton, England, as Richard Colvin Reid, who in December 2001 attempted to blow up an airliner by igniting explosives hidden in his shoes.

In the fall of 2000, Moussaoui contacted Airman Flight School in Norman, Oklahoma, inquiring about flight lessons. Around the same time, Ramzi Bin al-Shibh, a member of Al Qaeda living in Germany, abandoned his efforts to get an entrance visa to the United States; these facts led investigators to conclude that Moussaoui was a replacement for Bin al-Shibh.

Moussaoui entered the United States on a student visa in February 2001. From late February to late May 2001, Moussaoui took flight lessons at Airman on small planes. He was reportedly a dreadful pilot, and after being told that he would need more lessons, he quit the school. In August Moussaoui left Norman, moved to Minneapolis, and attended Pan Am International Flight Academy.

His behavior soon attracted attention. He paid a \$6,300 fee in cash, he was extremely evasive, and he adamantly insisted that he be taught to fly a large passenger plane even though he had not mastered flying a small plane. Instructors became suspicious and contacted the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Moussaoui was arrested on August 17, 2001 and held on immigration charges.

In December 2001, Moussaoui was formally charged with six charges of conspiracy related to the September 11 attacks in a federal court in Alexandria, Virginia. In March 2002 the US government announced that it would seek the death penalty for Moussaoui. Although as a French citizen, Moussaoui was eligible to be tried before a special military tribunal empowered to charge foreign terrorists, he was instead indicted in a civilian court.

**See also**

Al Qaeda

Atta, Mohamed

Hijacking

Ladin, Osama bin

Militant Islamic Fundamentalism

September 11 Attacks

U.S. v. Zacarias Moussaoui Indictment

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**STOCKHOLM SYNDROME**

The Stockholm Syndrome is common psychological response that occurs in hostages, as well as other captives, wherein the captive begins to identify closely with the captors and their demands.

The name of the syndrome refers to a botched bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden. In August 1973, two men, Jan Erik Olsson and Daniel Demunyk, held four bank employees of Sveriges Kreditbank in a small bank vault for six days. During the siege, one female captive initiated sexual relations with her captor. Their relationship persisted after the bank robber was tried and convicted.

Stories of this seemingly incongruous bond between captive and captor resurfaced repeatedly in subsequent hostage situations. The most infamous case is that of Patricia Hearst. In 1974, ten weeks after being taken hostage by the Symbionese Liberation Army, Hearst helped her kidnappers rob a California bank and reportedly became a lover of one kidnapper.

During the hostage crises in Iran and Lebanon, the Stockholm Syndrome worked its way into public imagination. The syndrome was cited when the hostages from TWA Flight 847, upon their release, were openly sympathetic to the demands of their kidnappers. Fellow Lebanon hostages believed that Terry Anderson, Terry Waite and Thomas Sutherland all suffered from the syndrome when, upon their release, they claimed they had been treated well by their captors, though they had often been held in solitary confinement and chained up in small and unclean cells. Similar responses were exhibited in 1996 by the hostages held at the Japanese embassy in Peru and by two European women held hostage for 71 days in Costa Rica.

Psychologists who studied the syndrome believe the bond is initially created when a captor threatens a captive's life, deliberates, then chooses to not kill the captive. The captive's relief at the removal of the death threat is transposed into feelings of gratitude towards the captors for giving them life. In nearly all cases, the victim is also unable to escape and is isolated from the outside world. As the Stockholm bank robbery incident proves, it takes only three to four days for this bond to cement, proving that, early on, the victim's need to survive trumps the urge to hate the tormentor.

The survival instinct is at the heart of the Stockholm Syndrome. Victims live in forced dependence and interpret rare and/or small acts of kindness in the midst of horrible conditions as good treatment. They often become hypervigilant to the needs and demands of their captors, making psychological links between the captors' happiness and their own. Indeed, the syndrome is marked not only by a positive bond

between captive and captor, but a negative attitude on behalf of the captive towards authorities who threaten the captor–captive relationship. The negative attitude is especially powerful when hostage is of no use to the captors except as leverage against a third party, as has often been the case with political hostages.

By the 1990s, psychologists expanded their understanding of Stockholm Syndrome from hostages to other groups, including battered women, concentration camp prisoners, cult members, prisoners of war, procured prostitutes, incest victims, and abused children. Over time, however, the term has lost some of its initial significance.

### **See also**

Patty Hearst

Symbionese Liberation Army

Hostage-taking

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## **TALIBAN**

The Taliban is a religious and military movement that seized control of large portions of Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. While the Taliban was initially seen as a stabilizing force in war-torn Afghanistan, the movement's embrace of a radical form of Islam quickly made it a pariah in the international community. The Taliban's hosting of the terrorist



organization Al Qaeda eventually led to its downfall in late 2001, following military strikes by the United States.

### **Coming to Power**

The Taliban emerged in the southern Afghan district of Kandahar in 1994. Two years before, the mujahideen – a loose alliance of Afghan ethnic and religious groups, plus foreigners come to defend Islam – had ousted the Soviet-backed People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) after more than a decade of war. But peace did not follow victory. Mujahideen warlords began fighting over control of Afghanistan. While some areas, such as the western city of Herat, were relatively stable, the Afghan capital of Kabul was attacked ceaselessly for two years as various factions fought for control of the city.

The district of Kandahar was also in chaos. There, the mujahideen warlords acted more like bandits than would-be governors, attacking civilians as well as each other. In the summer of 1994, a former mujahideen fighter named Mohammed Omar decided to rid Afghanistan of the mujahideen warlords and restore unity under Islam.

At the time, Omar was living at a madrassa, or Islamic religious school, in the village of Singesar. Omar – a reclusive man who would not allow himself to be photographed – would eventually become the ultimate leader of the Taliban, given the title Commander of the Faithful. His background, and the religious philosophy of the madrassas, would strongly shape the Taliban’s agenda.

Omar was a member of the Pushtun ethnic group. Roughly half the Pushtuns lived in southern Afghanistan, the other half lived in neighboring Pakistan. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 muddled ethnic lines. Many Afghan Pushtuns fled to Pakistan, where they lived in refugee camps and among Pakistani Pushtuns. Most Pushtuns follow the Sunni sect of Islam, which is the dominant sect in Afghanistan.

The madrassas could also be found on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border. Students at the madrassas received an education that was primarily religious. The madrassas had been greatly influenced by the Deobandi movement, a Sunni religious movement that emphasizes strict observance of religious ritual.

The madrassas of Afghanistan and Pakistan not only supplied the Taliban with a leader, but also with soldiers – most of them Afghan, but many Pakistani. Even the Taliban’s name reflected its roots in the madrassas: the word *Taliban* is a Persian pluralization of the Arab word *Talib*, which means religious student. The Taliban was largely dominated by the Pushtuns, and it was exclusively Sunni, to the detriment of Afghanistan’s Shiite Muslim minority. The Deobandi influence was expressed by the Taliban’s strident emphasis on the observance of religious customs, whether or not that observance was sincere or even voluntary.

Following his decision to restore order to Afghanistan, Omar gathered thirty comrades, took up arms, and attacked a mujahideen bandit. In October 1994, he and his growing group of comrades seized a village and an arms depot. A month later, the Taliban – now with almost three thousand fighters – routed an attack on a Pakistani convoy, then swept into the provincial capital of Kandahar and seized the city.

While supporters of the Taliban tended to credit the group’s remarkable success to divine favor, popular discontent with the mujahideen, and the genius of Omar, critics noted the contribution of other factors. From almost its inception, the Taliban received aid from Pakistan and from mujahideen warlords – including ones the Taliban would later overthrow – who apparently believed that the Taliban would serve to weaken rivals.

As a result, the Taliban were almost always better trained than their foes and had enough money on hand to purchase support from key warlords. Success created more success: Seizing Kandahar gave the Taliban access to heavy weaponry, including airplanes, helicopter, and tanks, once owned by the warlords who held the city. Non-students soon joined – despite the Taliban’s emphasis on Islam and on destroying the mujahideen, its leadership ranks soon included former warlords and PDPA officers.

By 1995, the Taliban had tens of thousands of fighters and the increased support of Pakistan, which was apparently both responding to pressure by its Pushtun population and eager to have influence within Afghanistan. In March, the Taliban tried to take Kabul to the north but were defeated. Turning west, Taliban forces took Herat in September 1995, then returned to Kabul, finally seizing the national capital the following year.

The mujahideen withdrew to the north, eventually forming the Northern Alliance. The Taliban attacked the north repeatedly – in 1997 coming so close to success that Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates recognized it as the government of Afghanistan – but were never able to eradicate the mujahideen, a fact that would come back to haunt the Taliban.

### **Running Afghanistan**

The Taliban's successful conquest of much of Afghanistan was initially greeted with equanimity by the United States. It was hoped that the Taliban would restore stability to the country and close down the terrorist training camps that had been established by radical Muslims in Afghanistan during the war against the Soviets. The Taliban's strict religiosity was initially seen in a positive light as well. Some observers believed that the Taliban would stamp out Afghanistan's thriving opium-poppy industry, and its leadership's hostility toward Shiite-dominated Iran dovetailed neatly with the United State's poor relations with that country.

But the poppy trade for the most part continued. The Taliban's hostility toward Iran went beyond poor relations, leading to the murder of several Iranian diplomats in 1998. The Taliban routinely persecuted and periodically massacred Shiites, especially those of the Hazara ethnic group.

In urban areas where the Taliban's grip on power was especially strong, the Taliban outlawed a variety of activities considered un-Islamic, including music, television, movies, kite-flying, and chess. Men were required to wear long beards; those whose beards were of insufficient length could be jailed until their beards grew out. Such rules were enforced by the religious police, part of the Taliban's Department for the Promotion of Virtue and Suppression of Vice.

The Taliban's treatment of women attracted special condemnation. The Taliban forbade girls from attending school and forbade women from working. Women's bath houses – often used as a source of hot water in wintertime – were closed. Women were forbidden from going out in public without male relatives, and they were forced to wear a burqa, a garment that covered the entire body. Religious police publicly beat women who strayed from such rules.

Foreigners were not exempt from harassment and persecution by the Taliban. Indeed, the Taliban's willingness to target diplomats and aid workers triggered a number of international incidents. Even Pakistan soon found that it had little control over a movement it had helped build.

### **The Taliban and Bin Ladin**

A significant reason for this was that the Taliban had found another source of funds – the wealthy Saudi radical Osama bin Ladin. Bin Ladin, who had helped recruit foreign fighters for the mujahideen during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, returned to Afghanistan in 1996 after the United States forced Sudan to expel him following attacks on U.S. military personnel in Saudi Arabia by his Al Qaeda terrorist network.

While bin Ladin originally entered Afghanistan at the invitation of a mujahideen warlord, he soon made common cause with the Taliban, reportedly helping finance the final takeover of Kabul. Bin Ladin's acceptance by the Taliban seriously strained relations with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but the wealth bin Ladin commanded meant that the Taliban still had access to considerable funds, making support from other nations less crucial.

The drawbacks of such an arrangement became clear in August 1998, when terrorists linked to Al Qaeda bombed United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. In response, the United States launched a missile attack on an Al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan. At the end of 1999, the United States discovered an Al Qaeda plot to attack the country on New Year's Eve; the United States government warned the Taliban that it would pay the price for any Al Qaeda attacks.

But the Taliban continued to support Al Qaeda and other radical Muslim groups. Military training camps in Taliban-controlled territory were used by a variety of terrorists and separatists groups, and bases in Afghanistan were even used to help launch an Islamic military movement in Tajikistan in early 2001.

The beginning of the end came for the Taliban on September 11, 2001, when 19 Al Qaeda operatives hijacked four planes in the United States, crashing two of them into

the Twin Towers of New York City's World Trade Center and one into the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C. The attacks killed more than three thousand people.

Demands by the United States that the Taliban turn over bin Ladin and the leadership of Al Qaeda were denied, with the Taliban insisting that bin Ladin was their guest and not responsible for the attacks. After a period of fruitless negotiations, the United States and Great Britain began bombing Afghanistan in early October, and the United States put a bounty of \$25 million on Omar's head as well as on bin Ladin's. Using Northern Alliance troops on the ground, the US-led assault quickly overwhelmed Taliban forces, taking Kabul in November and Kandahar in December. On December 22, 2001, Hamad Karzai was sworn in as chairman of a US-backed interim government created to replace the Taliban.

### **See also**

Al Qaeda

East Africa Embassy Bombings

Ladin, Osama bin

Militant Islamic Fundamentalism

Mujahideen

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia Bombing

September 11 Attacks

U.S. v Usama bin Laden et. al. Indictment

U.S. v Zacarias Moussaoui Indictment

War on Terrorism

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## **WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

The usual reaction to the suggestion that terrorists might use weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to achieve their purposes is one of great concern if not outright fear. If nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons were used by organized military units, they would inflict large numbers of casualties. If terrorists or sub-national groups gained access to weapons of mass destruction, they would pose a very grave risk to world security.

There is no doubt that terrorists would use such weapons if they had them. Computer files captured from the Al Qaeda group in Afghanistan revealed that it was seeking chemical and biological weapons. The Aum Shinryko cult in Japan prepared and used chemical and biological weapons in attacks on subway systems and other targets in the mid-1990s. The attacks in Japan were relatively ineffective but they demonstrated that a well-funded group could prepare such weapons. What is the probability that other terrorists could obtain weapons of mass destruction and use them effectively?

### **Nuclear Terrorism**

Nuclear weapons pose the largest threat because of their immense destructive power. The technical difficulty and high cost of mounting a nuclear weapons program would be a substantial deterrent to a terrorist group that was not able to obtain the necessary uranium or plutonium from some existing stockpile, or somehow obtain an intact nuclear weapon from a state such as Russia or the United States. Stockpiles of plutonium and uranium, not to mention nuclear weapons themselves, are heavily

protected by nations possessing them, but the very size of these stockpiles and their world-wide distribution are sources of concern.

A deteriorating Russian economy seemed to many to pose a special threat. If Russian facilities were not adequately protected, and scientists and security personnel not paid adequately, it seemed only a matter of time before some group would succeed in obtaining the necessary uranium or plutonium. In response, the international community led by the United States has provided substantial assistance to Russia to strengthen its nuclear materials protective systems. The heightened sensitivity of the world's nuclear establishments following the 2001 attacks on the United States have led to further improvements in nuclear materials and weapon security.

A second form of nuclear terrorism might involve the use of radioactive materials to make radiological weapons or "dirty bombs." A group trying to use such a device would have to obtain radioactive material and combine it with an explosive package to spread the material upon detonation. This capability is surely within the grasp of a well-organized group, but the effects of such a weapon would be far less extensive than those of a nuclear explosion whose energy was derived from the fission of uranium or plutonium. With the extent of the damage depending upon the amount of radioactive substances dispersed and the time it took to decay into relatively harmless material, such a radiological weapon would probably produce disruption requiring evacuation and clean-up rather than mass casualties.

A variation on the radiological bomb would be an attack on a nuclear reactor to release radioactive material. Such an attack could be mounted by crashing a heavy aircraft or other vehicle into a reactor or its spent fuel storage area. Nations possessing nuclear reactors are now attempting to enhance their security to reduce the probability of successful attack on these technically complex systems.

### **Chemical Terrorism**

Chemical weapons are sometimes touted as the "poor man's atomic bomb." Because military units are usually well protected with masks and special clothing, they have been used sparingly since World War I. They would be effective against unprotected civilians if employed by organized military units with the ability to

disperse them widely. That capability involves developing not only the chemical agents themselves, but the necessary dispersal vehicles. Those include aircraft bombs, artillery shells, missiles containing small containers of the chemicals called “bomblets,” or spray tanks fitted on aircraft. Such delivery capabilities are likely to be difficult for a terrorist group to obtain. The Al Qaeda terrorist who inquired about crop-dusters in 2001 was probably interested in them for this purpose.

The most powerful chemical agents, known as nerve gases, are not easy to make. Any group attempting to produce them in significant quantity would need access to well-trained chemists and reasonably sophisticated equipment. While such people exist and much of the equipment is available on the open market, the task would be challenging.

But terrorists may not need to inflict mass casualties to frighten a large population. The Aum Shinryko cult in Japan tried to disperse the nerve gas known as sarin in the Tokyo subway system by placing plastic bags of the toxic substance on subway platforms and then perforating them. Fortunately, that method was not a very effective delivery mechanism; it resulted in 12 deaths and a few thousand sickened people. Nevertheless, the attacks caused massive disruption of the system and frightened millions of subway users. In that sense, the attacks succeeded even though actual casualties were relatively few. Future attacks on similar systems using the same techniques would probably achieve the same results.

Other possible (and probably more destructive) forms of chemical terrorism might involve attacks on urban chemical plants designed to release large quantities of toxic materials that would force evacuation. Attacks on rail cars or trucks carrying toxic materials would do the same thing. These are the most likely forms of chemical attack by terrorist groups.

## **Biological Weapons**

Terrorists considering the use of biological weapons would face many of the same problems associated with chemical weapons. The necessary bacterial or viral agents might be easier to culture and grow, but producing and dispersing quantities large enough to inflict mass casualties would not be simple. The effectiveness of



biological weapons is linked to their ability to frighten a population rather than kill or sicken large numbers of people. The letter-borne anthrax attacks in the United States in 2001 demonstrated how a small amount of material was sufficient to paralyze parts of the mail system and shut down important government facilities.

Anthrax is not an infectious disease that can be spread by contact with sick individual, but more deadly viral diseases such as smallpox can spread rapidly. An uncontained outbreak of smallpox has the capability of killing tens of thousands—perhaps millions—if not stopped quickly. Smallpox would be difficult for terrorists to obtain and dangerous to handle, but governments recognize the threat to vulnerable populations and are increasing the production and stockpiling of vaccines.

Terrorist attacks using biological weapons might not be limited to human populations. Agricultural systems are likely to be very vulnerable. Infectious diseases such as foot and mouth disease can devastate herds and disrupt economies. Governments recognize the threat to agriculture and are hastening to take protective measures.

Governments possess the resources needed to deal with terrorist threats involving weapons of mass destruction. Improved physical security at sensitive facilities, strengthened public health and information systems, a prepared medical community, and a knowledgeable public are all important in order to contain and respond to attacks, denying terrorists their principal objectives.

**See also**

Agricultural terrorism

Biological terrorism

Chemical terrorism

Nuclear terrorism

**See Also**

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