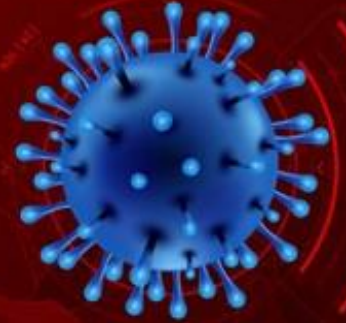


COVID-19 Jihadism and Biological Weapons

Carmelo Galindo

CORONAVIRUS



Islamic Theology of Counter Terrorism

اسلام کے تھیولوجی آف کاؤنٹر ٹیرورزم

The coronavirus (COVID-19) which was initially classified as a local event in China and later as a slightly stronger flu has exploded worldwide, to such an extent that a pandemic has been declared by the WHO. But this event and its subsequent news related to quarantines and sanitary measures ordered around the world have also reached extremist and terrorist groups.

All Right and Left extremism intends to spread mistrust in governments around the world and use it to their advantage. They have responded with multiple messages from both the extreme Right and the extreme Left, as well as jihadist terrorist groups. Some highlights include:

- 1.-A segment of Right-wing extremists has taken "Promoting Panic" as a "speeding-up" of strategy to eradicate minorities, Jews and other perceived racial enemies.
- 2.-The Left anarchists have created a new website "The plague and the fire", whose base of themes and content indicates a clear intention to incite civil unrest and provoke anger at the restrictions established to flatten the coronavirus curve.
- 3.-Several radical Islamist organizations are also responding to the impact of the virus. The Taliban reflect the situation by issuing a statement that the Coronavirus is the result of divine wrath and that the "threat" must be faced with measures in accordance with Islamic teachings, such as praying and consulting the Koran. Furthermore, the Taliban are allowing aid workers to pass through their control areas despite the fact that the Doha Pact that ended the conflict in Afghanistan has been blown up.¹ In turn, jihadist groups connected with Al Qaeda and even Daesh have used their communication channels to send action guidelines to their followers to offer a doctrinal response to the current situation and, on the other hand, indications for the mobility of their assets and not be detected by security forces. For jihadist groups, this pandemic is a punishment against absolute evil, embodied in atheists, apostates and crusaders.²

But without going into whether Covid-19 may have been a "biological weapon" escaped from a treatment laboratory or introduced into China by a third party and with respect to weapons of mass destruction, only Nation-States have in principle had the capacity and resources to develop and maintain weapons of mass destruction (ADM), which according to the Joint Publication of the US Department of Defense. USA It is defined as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons or devices (CBRN) capable of a high order of destruction and / or causing massive casualties. Leaving nuclear and radiological weapons aside, we have chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, which have been classified as "the nuclear weapons of the poor" and therefore can be more accessible by any terrorist group, as it has happened.

This paradigm (only weapons of mass destruction could be developed by states) was the result of thinking about the important capital, infrastructure, and intellectual capacity necessary to develop and maintain a weapons of mass destruction program. However, these barriers to entry have disintegrated in recent decades. An example of this is represented by the 1995 sarin attack on the Tokyo subway. The high and continuous number of terrorist attacks along with the democratization of scientific technology and the proven use of chemical weapons by ³the Islamic State in recent years among other

1 <https://www.laverdad.es/internacional/pacto-doha-revienta-20200329192011-ntrc.html?ref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bing.com%2Fsearch%3Fq%3DTalibanes+y+el+coronavirus>

2 <https://blog.realinstitutoelcano.org/crisis-del-coronavirus-la-pandemia-segun-los-yihadistas/>

3 <https://www.laverdad.es/internacional/pacto-doha-revienta-20200329192011-ntrc.html?ref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bing.com%2Fsearch%3Fq%3DTalibanes+y+el+coronavirus>



groups indicate a new paradigm. From 2014 to 2017, a total of 76 chemical weapons (chlorine and sulfur mustard) attacks occurred in Iraq and Syria. Furthermore, in June 2018, a Tunisian jihadist was arrested in Germany for making ricin. The use and development of ADM worldwide indicates that the terrorist (at the individual level) and organizations will seek to increase their sphere of influence and power through the development and possession of weapons of mass destruction. This opinion has been expressed by Nicholas Rasmussen, former director of the National Center for Counter-Terrorism, in January 2018 when he said: "One of the significant negative consequences of the conflict in Iraq and Syria has been that it has been a gaming laboratory for ISIS and other extremist organizations to participate in efforts to refine their ability to use chemicals, toxins, other materials that would have a chemical or toxic effect on the battlefield, if they are doing so on the battlefield, and [have done] with some effect ... it is reasonable to assume that they would take that knowledge and try to apply it to their terrorism agenda. "

The 2001 anthrax letters sent in the United States and the use of chemical weapons by the Islamic State illustrate the declining threshold for terrorist organizations to use weapons of mass destruction. Between 1996 and 2016, there were 525 ADM incidents (18 nuclear, 107 biological, and 400 chemical) 4 due to the lack of technical knowledge and skill required to create radiological dispersal devices, the authors do not include this type of device. To make a brief historical reminder we will say that already in ancient Greece, in the War between Athens and Sparta sulfur dioxide was used; Other sources indicate that in 1346 the Tatars catapulted infected corpses against the Roman fortifications or at the Battle of Ypres in the I.G.M and the appearance of mustard gas.

The UN with respect to biological weapons defines them as "Complex systems that spread diseases that cause organisms or toxins to harm or kill humans, animals or plants. They generally consist of two parts: an armed agent and a delivery mechanism. " Despite the prohibition of these weapons in 1972 and later in 1993, just reviewing the most current data on their use does not make us think that they would not stop doing so in the future, despite being ratified by more than 180 countries. In a 2014 article in the CTC Sentinel "The biohacker: A threat to National Security" I identify 5 possible strategies for the manipulation of biological pathogens:

"Wolf in Sheepskin", "Trojan Horse" "Spoof", "Fake Left" and "Roid Rage".

As explained in the article: "A" wolf in sheep's clothing "occurs when a biological organism or toxin is modified through genetic engineering so that it can express itself actively but does not present its severity." "Trojan Horse", a biohacker maintains the epitope of a non-threatening agent, but redesigns the active component of the toxin to increase the biological threat without increasing detectability. "Parody" occurs when a benign agent is modified to express distinctive epitopes of a known toxin in order to trigger an unnecessary protective response by health authorities (local, state or federal government), while the delivering party (the biohacker) can remain unencumbered. The "Fake Left" is a means to modify by selection or genetics the method of transmission of an organism (for example, one that is normally passed by fluid to an airborne method).

Such modification facilitates the dispersal of an agent among a target population. The "Roid Rabies" strategy aims to potentiate the effects of a common virus that is truly a deadly virus, such as expressing Ebola virus RNA sequences into the common influenza virus. An infected person would demonstrate flu symptoms, hampering early detection and treatment of Ebola and favoring its deadly results. " Summarizing, and finally, determining the risk associated with a terrorist using an ADM depends on several factors: -technical experience, availability of materials, delivery capacity and political will, just to name a few.

In addition to a conventional terrorist attack, nuclear, biological and chemical weapons have their own associated risk. It would be that great "black swan" and the culmination of the barbarism of any terrorist group. New emerging technologies such as synthetic biology, additive manufacturing, and unmanned aerial systems progress exponentially in the coming years, so it is important to constantly reevaluate their impact on the ability to develop an ADM. While nuclear weapons, for example, will continue to be limited by the need for significant amounts of special nuclear material, existing control over them, barriers to preventing and controlling the development of chemical and biological weapons, and employment are being reduced. It is necessary more than ever and we are observing it with the crisis of the Covid-19 a Medical or Sanitary Intelligence that foresees the previous moment, the attack itself and the moment after the attack.

Hopefully you will learn from these terrible moments that we are going through in which the health services are overwhelmed (both due to lack of means and due to erroneous actions in time and form by national and international authorities) to prevent them from happening again. that without a doubt terrorist groups of any sign and flag are going to try.

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