



Anthrax Attack!

A Case on Bioterrorism

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The Chief Director for Bioterrorism Security in the United States had called an urgent meeting of his key personnel.

"Today the CIA intercepted and translated a tape-recording of a known terrorist group. Please listen to it closely. The survival of the United States may depend on your ability to circumvent terrorist transactions and institute appropriate actions to minimize casualties should an attack occur such as described on this tape."

The videotape portrayed a group of men and women crowded around a table in a poorly lit, non-descript room. Several faces were easily recognizable as key terrorist leaders from around the world. They were planning a biological attack on the United States. Their voices resonated with chilling determination as they unfolded their plan.

"My country is in shambles, our children starving, our towns in ruins. The Americans have degraded us, humiliated us. The time has come for revenge." The man identified as Miguel Haq slammed his fist into the table.

"The plan we have developed is precise, meticulous. Working together, we can execute it," Armed Shaw said. Armed was a young man, well groomed, with blue eyes and a shock of red hair. "The United States may be technologically advanced, but we have something that will bring them to their knees."

"My work during World War II on 'Operation Vegetarian' will be of use in executing this plan," volunteered Helen Shank, an elderly, shrewd looking woman.

"Indeed, your contribution is crucial to the success of our plan," Haq replied as he stroked his graying beard. "Helen helped develop the top secret plan for 'Operation Vegetarian' against Germany when she worked under the British crown. Jacques Franc also provided support for that effort. Jacques is an expert in biological weapons. He has been working as a U.S. military microbiologist and intelligence expert researching covert biological operations. His expertise and commitment to our cause have allowed us to gain the wisdom necessary to further our plan."

"We have chosen anthrax, Bacillus anthracis, to disseminate the destruction. Anthrax is inexpensive, difficult to detect, incredibly stable, and very deadly. Much of the U.S. military has been vaccinated against it, but the vaccine is short lived—and the military is not our target anyway. Our goal is to kill civilians on a massive scale while at the same time

crippling the beef and dairy industry, causing a major disruption of the economy and spreading fear and pandemonium across the United States. Our targets include five domed stadiums in major cities and beef and dairy cattle herds around the country. The military will be helpless against us. At this moment the plan is being coordinated in areas throughout the United States," Haq emphasized.

"The plan has two components. Anthrax will be released simultaneously in five domed football stadiums in November. Specially formulated anthrax-filled aerosol generators have been designed as the base of fans. The fans are small enough to easily fit into the ventilation systems of the stadiums. Each stadium will have numerous strategically placed fans with enough anthrax to kill entire cities. The anthrax aerosol generators are rigged to slowly spew anthrax when the fans are turned on. The fans are battery operated and can be automatically triggered by a control switch from as far away as a half mile. The anthrax will be carried with the normal air current flowing through the ventilation system." Haq's audience was rapt as he continued. "We have several maintenance workers in each targeted stadium. They will begin the strategic placement of the fans in less than two weeks."

Jacques interjected, "By using the air ventilation system we can take advantage of the large fans that circulate cooled and heated air. The ventilation system will disseminate the relatively minute amount of anthrax needed to infect a stadium of 70,000 to 80,000 spectators. The dome will cut down on dilution problems that could occur in open air."

"The plan is sound, but do we have the necessary supply of anthrax?" one of the unidentified terrorists asked Jacques.

"We have the anthrax. Our chosen specimen is a simple prokaryote that was propagated as a Russian biological weapon during the Cold War. The strain we've obtained is highly virulent and resistant to degeneration. I've been working as an American military microbiologist and intelligence expert. I was deployed by the United States to obtain samples of weapon grade anthrax from Renaissance Island—Vozrozhdeniya Island—in the Soviet Union. This mission was to aid in the cleanup of the island, which had become contaminated as the result of years of biological weapon research during the Cold War. Surprisingly this strain of anthrax has remained potent despite being mixed with bleach and buried since 1992. I secured an adequate number of samples," Jacques explained.

"November is flu season. By the time they realize that anthrax is the cause of their unexplained illnesses and fatalities, many of the people exposed will be as good as dead. Antibiotics are only effective before symptoms occur. Anthrax will be disseminated across America from 'sea to shining sea.' No one from any other country will want to visit America for fear of getting the disease. The media will be our unsuspecting ally. They will dutifully report that some spores can survive for over 40 years. When it is discovered where this strain originated from, the Americans will blame the Soviet Union and seek revenge. There will be widespread fear and panic. The United States will be ruined," Armed Shaw added.

"It will tear the country apart. States will hoard antibiotics fearing they could be the next victims. The government will be unable to vaccinate everyone, and won't know who to vaccinate first. People will flee their infected cities only to be treated as pariah in neighboring cities and states. The health, economy, unity, of the United States will be destroyed," said Haq.

"My role in Britain during World War II was to oversee a clandestine operation to develop cakes laced with anthrax for cattle feed. The operation was never executed but I'm sure it would have been more deadly than the bombing of Hiroshima," Helen stated confidently. "We are in the process of preparing specially designed anthrax cakes, which will be deposited while the cows are grazing. Only the largest cattle ranches will be chosen and the operation will span several states."

"I will be assisting in the delivery of the anthrax cakes for the cattle," Peter Smith, an experienced aviator said.

"We knew we could count on you for support. How many pilots have you secured?" Haq asked.

"There are at least a hundred pilots throughout the country willing to participate. We'll have no problem securing planes. The government of the United States has only intensified security with commercial airlines. My pilots don't even need picture ID to fly private planes. We'll have them fitted with false identification, rent the planes, and make the drops. You just tell me when and where," Peter's black eyes narrowed as he spoke. "I detest the United States and all it stands for. "

"The linseed-oil cattle cakes have been prepared and my lab staff has created an adapted version of the World War II pump. This will be used to inject the anthrax into the cakes. I am fairly certain that even vaccinated animals will succumb to this particular strain of anthrax. The cakes will be ready for dispersal well ahead of the deadline." Helen stated. "Peter, have you determined how the cattle-cake drops will be accomplished?"

"I plan on following the basic components of the World War II plan. The cakes will be released from the airplane chutes over high cattle population grazing areas. Based on calculations from historical records, if the planes fly at 300 miles per hour, about 4000 cakes can be delivered to a 60-mile grazing area in approximately 20 minutes per field. With the number of pilots I have now, I figure I can make drops in well over a hundred fields throughout the United States," Peter spoke with a confidence that reflected his determination.

"Soon all the arrangements will be finalized. Then the key elements of the plan will be executed within a few hours on the same day. The cattle cakes will be dropped at the precise time the anthrax aerosol generators are scheduled to release their deadly microscopic weapons," Haq explained. "And then we wait. As the plan unfolds the devastation to the United States will be much greater than that of 9-11."

"A few weeks after this plan is executed we will issue a propaganda statement meant to be intercepted by the FBI telling of a second wave of biological weapons, threatening five additional major cities. There will of course be no other releases, but panic will nonetheless ensue, furthering our ends."

When the tape finished the Chief Director for Bioterrorism Security in the United States faced the men and women assembled at the meeting. Each represented leaders from different aspects of America's arsenal of experts called upon to respond to and avert this potential threat to the U.S.

"I'm sure you all realize the enormity of the task we are faced with. If we are unsuccessful, chaos will ensue throughout America. The death toll could reach enormous counts very quickly. America would be frozen in gridlock—unable to dispose of the dead and incapable of caring for the ill. The situation would create havoc economically and politically. The CIA is working closely with the FBI and Homeland Security to find and apprehend the members of the terrorist group responsible for planning this lethal attack."

"We only have a short time in which to act and avert the threat of a full scale bioterrorism attack on the United States. It is clearly through collaboration and swift action that we will be able to minimize or avert this tragedy. Your mission is to research your areas of expertise and present a team approach to combat this devastating threat to our country."

He handed each of them envelope containing their assignments.

"In one week we will meet again to develop and present a coordinated approach to thwarting or minimizing an anthrax bioterrorism attack."