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THREAT ASESSMENT

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Assessing the Threat

- Assess the Intention
- Assess the Capability
- Assess the Vulnerabilities
- Assess the Security

Now you have your Threat!

(The unique aspect of biological terrorism is that the potential consequences will influence the above.)

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Intention

This should be an accurate assessment on what the intention of a terrorist group may be. Who are they targeting? Why are they targeting them? Have they made any public statements? Has any of this data been corroborated by other intelligence? Have they been known to mount this type of attack before? Have they targeted similar groups before?

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Capability

It is very important to know what the capability of your ‘enemy’ is. Have they just expressed an interest in mounting a particular style of attack, or do they actually have the capability? Do they have sufficient expertise within their members? Can they access relevant materials? Would they know how to build an effective device? Has your intelligence been verified by more than one ‘source?’

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Vulnerability

What is going to be targeted? How many targets do you have? How effectively can you respond to protect those targets? What can you do to reduce vulnerabilities? How can you make it harder for terrorists to procure the required materials or expertise?

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Security

The security of all your vulnerabilities is of paramount importance. What type of security measures can you introduce to reduce those vulnerabilities. Consider the physical protection of premises, the protection of electronic and ‘hard’ data, personnel security (do you know who has access to what?), transport security and the security of materials that could be useful to terrorists.

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Consequences

Consequences should always be considered. If you have an extremist group that is intent on causing embarrassment by throw eggs at a public official, the response would be very different from that required for a potential terrorist plot to use biological weapons.

Possible Indicators of a Future Attack

- Terrorists will need to obtain material
- Terrorists will need financing
- Terrorists will need expertise
- Terrorists will normally test weapons
- Terrorists will research their target

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Availability of Biological Material

- Environment – difficult to culture the right material.
- Kitchen chemistry-simple development such as Ricin and Abrin
- A Laboratory-gain access by stealth rather than breaking in.
- A Culture Collection – would need provable address and reliability?
- Purchase of strands of DNA – requires advanced technology at the moment but what about the future?
- Genetic modification of other substances

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Terrorist Financing

- Common methods of fraud
- Forged documents
- Forged credit cards/cheques etc
- Legitimate (?) business
- Funding from central organisation
- Funding from individual

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Terrorist Expertise

- Internet
- Simple procedures – Ricin/Abrin etc
- Theft of prepared material
- Train a specific person through education system
- Radicalised scientist
- Pressurised scientist

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Testing Weapons

- Previous operations have shown that this is common with explosives
- Small outbreak – does this indicate a bigger one on the way?
- Monitoring of hospitals and local health centres.

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Hostile Reconnaissance

- This is almost always done prior to an attack
- Raise public awareness
- Raise scientific awareness
- Provide a point of contact for reporting
- Encourage reporting

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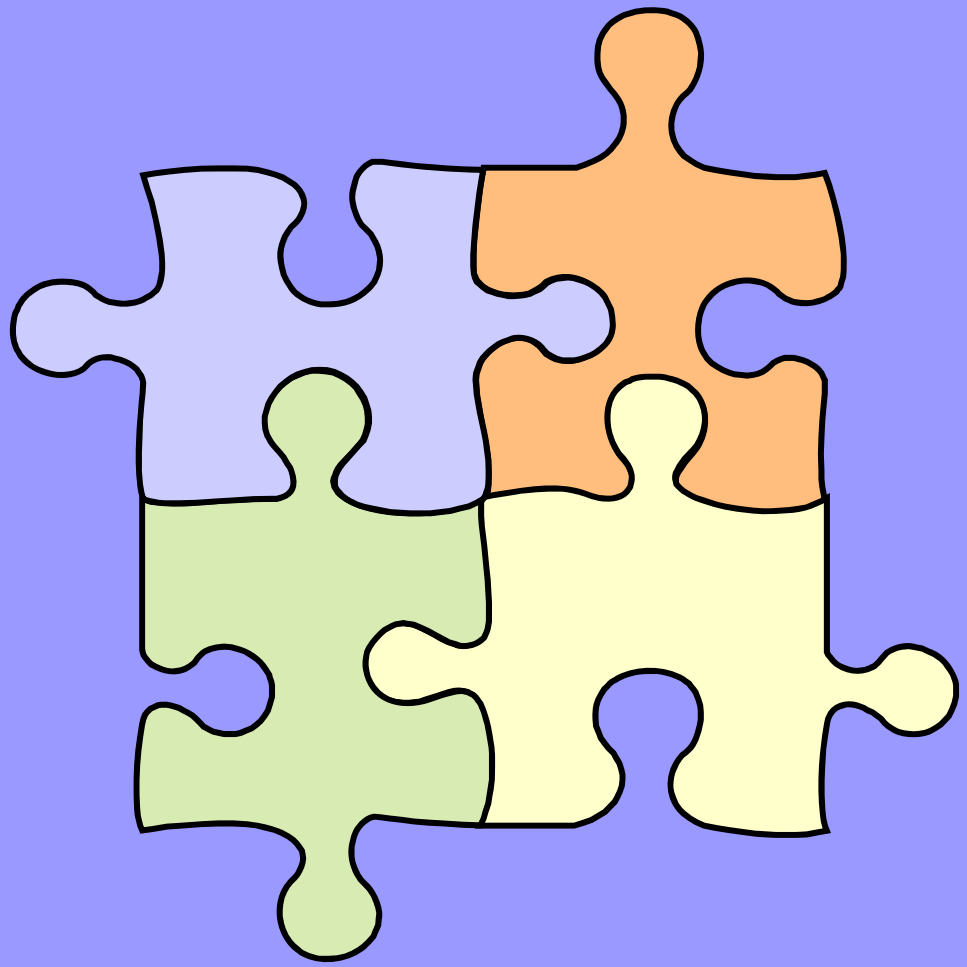
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