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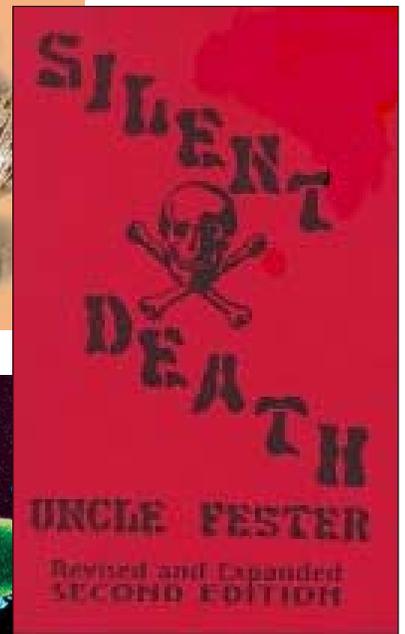
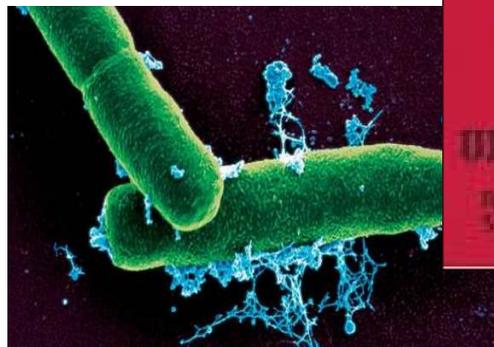
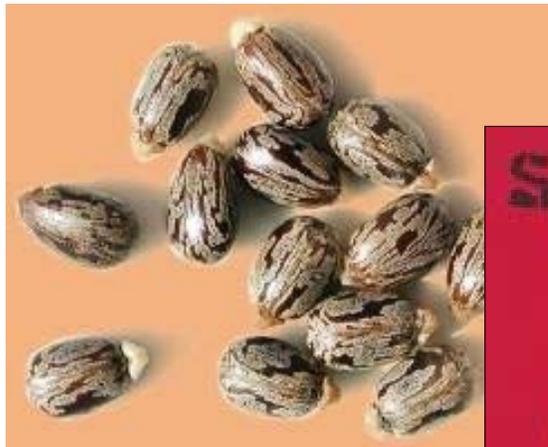


Prepared by  
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**Weapons of Mass  
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**Counterterrorism  
Division**  
**DHS**  
**Office of Intelligence &  
Analysis**

# (U) Domestic Terrorists' Intent and Capability to Use Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Weapons

14 October 2008

UNCLASSIFIED



## *Joint Special Assessment*

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## Joint FBI-DHS Intelligence Assessment



### **(U) Domestic Terrorists' Intent and Capability to Use Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Weapons**

#### **(U) Scope Note**

(U//FOUO) This intelligence assessment addresses the Terrorism (TERR) topic of the National Intelligence Priorities Framework (NIPF) and satisfies intelligence requirements contained in FBI CBRN II.A.2, II.A.7, II.B.1, II.C.2, III.B.1, and III.C.1; FBI DT II.A.1, II.B.6, II.C.1, II.C.2, and III.A.1; and National Implementation Plan (NIP) topics WMD-T 2, 3, and 5.

(U) This assessment discusses the use and attempted use of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) materials by domestic terrorists subsequent to the 2001 anthrax attacks. According to the MIOG Section 266-1(1), "domestic terrorists" are "individual(s) who seek to further political or social goals wholly or in part through activities that involve the use of force or violence and violate federal law." For the purposes of this assessment, the definition excludes foreign-based and "homegrown" terrorists who identify with or are affiliated with an international terrorist ideology or group.

(U) The data set for this product was drawn from FBI investigations, DHS information, and open sources from 1 January 2002 to 1 July 2008.

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**(U//FOUO) Source Summary Statement:** The overall assessments in this product are based primarily on FBI and DHS reporting, including highly reliable FBI human source reporting, and open source information.

**(U) Key Questions**

- (U) Which is a greater CBRN threat, domestic terrorist groups or lone offenders?
- (U) Do domestic terrorist groups or lone offenders have the intent to use CBRN weapon?
- (U) Do domestic terrorist groups or lone offenders have the capability to use CBRN weapon?
- (U) What is the type of CBRN weapon most likely to be used by a domestic terrorist group or lone offender?

**(U) Key Assumptions**

- (U//LES) The FBI has extensive source coverage of domestic terrorist groups, so the absence of information with regard to intentions of these groups to pursue CBRN weapons is an indication of lack of intent.
- (U//LES) Some of the subjects identified in this assessment are presumed to have the intent to conduct a domestic terrorism CBRN attack due to their domestic terrorism connections, but their exact motivations have not been identified.

**(U) Executive Summary**

***(U//LES) Domestic terrorist lone offenders probably pose a greater threat to employ chemical or biological methods within the US Homeland than domestic terrorist groups.*** Lone offenders were responsible for the six known attempts to acquire, produce, or use chemical or biological materials since January 2002. There are no known attempts by groups or lone offenders involving radiological or nuclear devices or materials.

***(U//LES) Most domestic terrorists lack intent to use chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) weapons.*** Most likely domestic terrorists believe they can achieve their goals with traditional weapons and tactics, such as firearms, improvised explosive devices, and improvised incendiary devices.<sup>1</sup> Indicators of intent to use CBRN weapons include individuals procuring laboratory equipment, researching or discussing CBRN materials or weapons, and recruiting scientific experts. There is no evidence that domestic terrorist groups are conducting these activities, and due to the isolated nature of lone offenders, these activities would likely not be observable.

***(U//LES) Domestic terrorists almost certainly lack the capability to construct and use CBRN weapons in mass casualty attacks due to the significant scientific, technical, and logistical hurdles that must be overcome.*** Use of CBRN materials in a crude attack is not technically difficult to accomplish, but the consequences would likely be limited.

***(U//LES) Domestic terrorists who intend to use chemical or biological weapons will likely continue to prefer those that are easily produced or material which is easily obtained, such as ricin or cyanides, although these are not the only possible options.*** Three of the six known cases since 2002 have involved ricin, two were cyanide, and one was sarin. Ricin was the only CBRN material known to have been distributed with harmful intent.

**(U) Introduction**

(U//LES) Domestic terrorist lone offenders are more likely to use a CBRN weapon to attack within the US Homeland than domestic terrorist groups, but most domestic terrorists have no intent or capability to use these types of weapons.<sup>2</sup> Since January 2002, only six confirmed domestic incidents involved the attempted acquisition or production, or successful production, or actual distribution of CBRN material. Half of these involved ricin, probably due to the ease of obtaining the raw materials and the ready availability of instructions on how to manufacture it in extremist literature and on the Internet. In only one incident was a CBRN material actually delivered to a target. All cases are known or believed to be linked to lone offenders with limited capability who operated independently and either ascribed to the ideology of a domestic terrorist movement or specifically targeted government facilities. There are no known attempts by domestic terrorists to acquire, produce, or use radiological or nuclear devices or materials.

**(U) Successful Attempts to Manufacture and Distribute Biological Weapon**

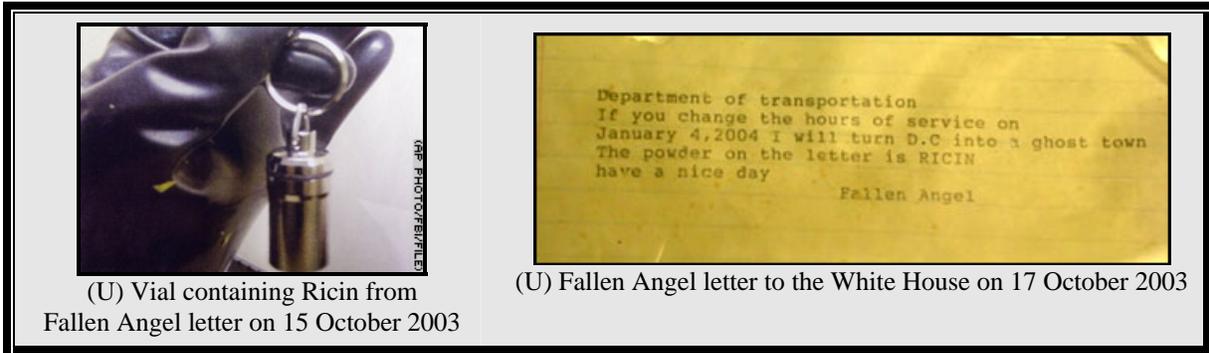
(U//LES) The FBI is aware of only one instance where ricin, a plant-derived toxin, was successfully manufactured and distributed with apparent harmful intent. Specific government entities were targeted, which may suggest a political or social motive, but it is not known whether the perpetrator(s) had any ties to domestic terrorist movements.

- (U//LES) An unknown subject who used the name Fallen Angel dispatched three threatening letters between October 2003 and February 2004. The first envelope, which was unaddressed and contained a vial of ricin, threatened to contaminate the water supply with the toxin if the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) increased the sleeping hours required by commercial truck drivers from eight to ten. The second letter was addressed to the White House and contained a ricin derivative. This letter threatened to turn Washington, DC, into a “ghost town” if the USDOT revised the hours. The final letter, not containing ricin, was received by the FBI’s Washington Field Office and referred to time expiring on a clock.<sup>3,1</sup> The case remains unsolved.

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<sup>i</sup> (U) During this same time period, ricin was discovered on the personal mail sorting machine of former US Senator Bill Frist from the state of Tennessee. Subsequent investigation did not link the ricin to any letters. It is unknown if this event was associated with Fallen Angel. This incident remains unsolved, so it is not clear that it meets the definition of a “domestic terrorist.” However, it serves as a good case study as a potential domestic terrorist attack.

(U) Unclassified



(U) Vial containing Ricin from Fallen Angel letter on 15 October 2003

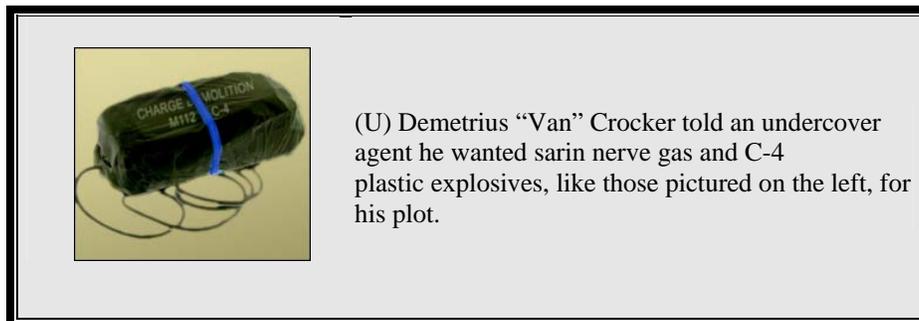
(U) Fallen Angel letter to the White House on 17 October 2003

**(U//LES) Unsuccessful Attempts to Acquire, Manufacture, or Distribute Chemical or Biological Weapon Material**

(U//LES) The FBI is aware of five instances from 1 January 2002 to 1 July 2008 in which individuals attempted to acquire or manufacture CBRN materials but were unsuccessful or were disrupted before they could complete the process:

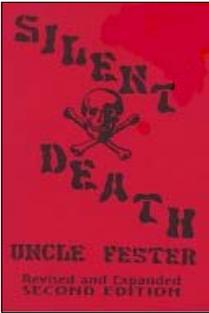
- (U//LES) On 28 November 2006, Demetrius “Van” Crocker was sentenced to 30 years in prison for various violations, including the acquisition of a chemical weapon.<sup>4</sup> Crocker, a self-proclaimed former member of the National Socialist Movement with a history of expressing right wing beliefs similar to those held by white nationalist extremist organizations,<sup>5</sup> sought explosive materials to carry out attacks against government buildings. During the course of an FBI undercover operation, Crocker acquired an inert canister of sarin nerve gas and a block of inert C-4 explosive. According to media reports detailing his trial, Crocker told the FBI undercover agent that his “dream” was to set off a dirty bomb in Washington, DC, while Congress was in session, and he spoke of blowing up federal buildings, including a courthouse.<sup>6</sup> He also said he wanted to learn how to fly a helicopter to spray or bomb African-American neighborhoods in Jackson, Tennessee, with poison gas and spike drugs with poison to kill African-Americans.<sup>7</sup> Crocker denied any current association with white supremacy groups although a search of his residence uncovered white nationalist extremist paraphernalia.

(U) Unclassified



(U) Demetrius “Van” Crocker told an undercover agent he wanted sarin nerve gas and C-4 plastic explosives, like those pictured on the left, for his plot.

- (U) Unclassified



(U//LES) On 2 October 2006, Denys Ray Hughes was sentenced to a term of 87 months in prison for various violations, including the attempt to produce ricin as a weapon. Hughes, an antigovernment survivalist, had operated a clandestine weapons manufacturing operation from his residences in Arizona and Wisconsin. Searches of these residences recovered more than 100 guns, bomb-making materials, and raw ingredients to manufacture ricin.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the searches uncovered a manual titled “Silent Death,” published under the name “Uncle Fester,” which contained a chapter on ricin production.<sup>9</sup>

- (U//LES) In 2004 the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) searched the car and apartment of Michael Alan Crooker, an antigovernment extremist, and found improvised explosive devices, laboratory devices, castor beans, chemicals and equipment appropriate for the processing of castor beans into ricin, what appeared to be ricin and ricin precursors in various stages of development, and rosary peas, which are the precursor to abrin.<sup>ii, 10</sup> This equipment indicated that Crooker was manufacturing ricin and possibly abrin.<sup>11</sup> In 2008 Crooker was indicted with possessing the toxins ricin and abrin in the form of castor beans and rosary peas, respectively.<sup>12</sup> Crooker was also indicted for mailing a threatening letter and threatening to use a WMD due to 2004 letters that threatened a WMD attack on the Springfield, Massachusetts, federal building that were sent to a local newspaper and an Assistant US Attorney.<sup>iii, 13</sup>

(U) Unclassified



(U) Castor Beans

- (U//LES) In May 2004 William Krar and Judith Bruey, antigovernment extremists from Texas, were sentenced to 11 years and nearly five years in prison, respectively.<sup>14</sup> Krar pled guilty to possession of a chemical weapon. This was the first ever charge and conviction for the federal statute making it illegal to develop and transfer chemical weapons. Bruey pled guilty to conspiracy to possess illegal weapons. A search of Krar’s storage lockers revealed weapons, explosives, hydrochloric acid, and 800 grams of sodium cyanide. Although no constructed chemical device was discovered, the investigation confirmed that Krar had discussed the production of a chemical weapon delivery system in detail with one of his associates on several occasions. Krar would produce hydrogen cyanide gas by mixing cyanide salts with hydrochloric acid from the storage locker. He intended to deliver the gas throughout a building using its ventilation system.<sup>15</sup> Law enforcement officials were alerted to Krar and Bruey after a package of fake documents Krar mailed to a militia member in New Jersey was mistakenly delivered to a residence in New York.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>ii</sup> (U//FOUO) Abrin is a toxin more potent than ricin.

<sup>iii</sup> (U) The details contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendant is presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

- (U//LES) In March 2002 Joseph Konopka, a former computer systems administrator with anarchist leanings from Wisconsin, was arrested in a tunnel under the University of Illinois at Chicago. Konopka had appropriated an abandoned Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) storage room, and a search of this area revealed sodium cyanide along with potassium cyanide, mercuric sulfate, and potassium chlorate. When interviewed, Konopka admitted to possessing the sodium cyanide and other chemicals in the CTA passageway and said he knew the cyanide was dangerous to humans. Konopka was eventually found guilty of knowingly possessing a chemical weapon in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention Act. Konopka's conviction was the first under this statute. In March 2003 Konopka was sentenced to 13 years in prison after being convicted of two felonies for hiding cyanide in the Chicago underground tunnel.

**(U) Outlook**

(U//LES) The FBI and DHS judge it is likely that a handful of lone offenders will continue to pursue chemical and biological materials, but most domestic terrorists will continue to have no intent or capability to use CBRN weapons. This judgment is based on the limited number of known domestic CBRN incidents and the historical tactics, techniques, and procedures employed by domestic terrorists. Domestic terrorists who pursue CBRN weapons will likely continue to focus on small-scale scenarios using easily obtainable materials. Mass casualty attacks are almost certainly beyond their capabilities due to the scientific, technical, and logistical hurdles involved. If domestic terrorists intend to use CBRN weapons, observable indicators include procurement of lab equipment, discussions at meetings or on Web sites, recruitment of scientific or

**(U) Other Possibilities**

(U//FOUO) The range of domestic terrorist CBRN interest considered for this assessment extended from the extreme—that domestic terrorists are not and will not produce or pursue any CBRN weapons—to all domestic terrorists are or soon will actively work to acquire or produce CBRN weapons. As there is clear evidence that at least some domestic terrorist lone offenders are interested in and have attempted to make or successfully made CBRN material, and there is a clear lack of evidence of CBRN interest by more than one domestic terrorist group, the extremes of this range were discarded. Lone offenders will almost certainly continue to experiment with chemical and biological materials due to readily accessible information and starter material, while one or more domestic terrorist groups may explore the use of chemical or biological materials to further their political or social goals.

(U//FOUO) While ricin is the most likely biological material to be used by domestic terrorists, cyanide is a likely chemical threat that could also be used. Cyanide is a poison of concern, primarily due to the relative ease with which individuals can obtain and disseminate cyanide via ingestion or easily constructible gas generating devices. The simple mixing of cyanide and acid creates a toxic gas compound, which can result in numerous injuries if used at high concentrations in an enclosed area.

(U//FOUO) Toxic industrial chemicals (TICs) also present a high risk because they are readily available in large quantities, routinely shipped by commercial carriers, and often stored in bulk containers. TICs can be used as improvised chemical weapons, combined to form more toxic chemicals, or used as precursors for chemical agents. Certain TICs, such as chlorine and anhydrous ammonia, can also be further classified as toxic inhalation hazards (TIHs). Even with no scientific expertise, domestic terrorists could produce an improvised chemical device to release a TIH at a fixed site or while in transit. The release of a TIC or TIH in a populated area is capable of generating numerous casualties and deaths, and the toxic effects would be more dangerous if release occurred in an enclosed space.

(U//LES) An additional, though highly unlikely possibility, is the use of radiological material. While there is no evidence that domestic terrorists are researching or plotting a nuclear or radiological attack, a rudimentary radiological dispersion device is within their technical capability.

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engineering experts, or performance of CBRN-related research. There is no reporting of any of these indicators.

(U//LES) Ricin will probably remain the domestic terrorist's CBRN weapon of choice, unless new technologies make it easier to manufacture and distribute others. A successful CBRN attack in the United States would almost certainly have repercussions well beyond the initial victims, by spreading fear in the general population and by likely inspiring "copycat" attacks by other domestic terrorists.

**(U) Intelligence Gaps**

- (U//LES) What groups or lone offenders are interested in CBRN?
- (U//LES) What groups or lone offenders have a current CBRN capability?
- (U//LES) Are known domestic terrorist groups recruiting individuals with scientific backgrounds to manufacture CBRN weapons?
- (U//LES) Are there any domestic groups or lone offenders currently plotting a CBRN attack?

(U) This assessment was prepared by the FBI WMD Strategic Assessment and Threat Forecasting Unit (SATFU), the FBI Domestic Terrorism Analysis Unit (DTAU), and the Department of Homeland Security. Comments and queries may be addressed to the SATFU unit chief at 202-324-6975 and the DTAU unit chief at 202-324-0256.

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**(U) Appendix A**

**(U//FOUO) Potential Indicators for Production of Biological Material**

- (U//FOUO) Persons with degrees in science, specifically microbiology
- (U//FOUO) Larger than usual electric, gas, or water bills
- (U//FOUO) Large or regular purchases of chemicals, such as bleach, Lysol, or hydrogen peroxide
- (U//FOUO) Evidence of animal testing for effectiveness of material
- (U//FOUO) Presence of a fume hood or cabinet with exhaust vent fitted with a filter
- (U//FOUO) Use of masks for respiratory protection
- (U//FOUO) Unexplained animal deaths surrounding a suspicious location
- (U//FOUO) Likely to be done in a basement setting of a dwelling, especially one away from neighbors who could notice unusual signs or become ill from exposure

**(U//FOUO) High Consequence Biological Agents**

(U//LES) This list represents those agents that a terrorist adversary could reasonably acquire, produce, and effectively disseminate as a potential biological weapon and that could be expected to have both public health and economic consequences. Unlike TICs, however, these agents cannot be readily disseminated and require additional processing prior to use as a biological weapon.

1. (U//LES) Bacillus anthracis (causes anthrax)
2. (U//LES) Botulinum toxin (causes toxicosis or botulism)
3. (U//LES) Ricin toxin (causes toxicosis)
4. (U//LES) Salmonella typhi (causes salmonellosis)
5. (U//LES) Escherichia coli: O157:H7 (a bacteria which, when ingested, causes toxicosis)
6. (U//LES) Yersinia pestis (causes plague. The pneumonic form is contagious)
7. (U//LES) Vibrio cholera (causes cholera)
8. (U//LES) Francisella tularensis (causes tularemia)
9. (U//LES) Marburg virus (causes Marburg hemorrhagic fever)
10. (U//LES) Hantavirus (causes Hanta pulmonary syndrome)

(U) It should also be noted that the toxins listed are biologically derived substances and are neither infectious nor contagious but highly pathogenic to humans.

**(U) Appendix B**

**(U//FOUO) Potential Indicators for Terrorist Use of TICs**

(U//FOUO) Potential indicators of attempts to acquire TICs, use TICs as weapons, or produce an improvised dispersal device (IDD) for TICs include:<sup>17</sup>

- (U//FOUO) Interest in or surveillance of specific industrial, transportation, and storage facilities containing TICs, such as chemical plants, railroad cars, chemical tankers, and industrial storage tanks
- (U//FOUO) Inquiries to companies involved in the production, distribution, or sale of TICs or attempts to acquire instructions on the use or handling of TICs
- (U//FOUO) Research into IDDs for hazardous chemicals, including handheld IDDs like spray bottles or IDDs that can be mounted on trucks, trailers, aircrafts, or boats
- (U//FOUO) Reluctance to explain the need for possessing, purchasing, or inquiring about TICs and chemical equipment, especially if the individual appears to lack scientific or technical knowledge or skills
- (U//FOUO) Attempts to conceal activities or identities, such as ordering TIC deliveries to remote locations or using false names when attempting to purchase TICs
- (U//FOUO) Injuries consistent with those sustained in the production, handling, or use of chemicals, such as chemical burns and missing hands or fingers
- (U//FOUO) Noxious or unusual fumes, liquids, or odors coming from a location incongruous with chemical use
- (U//FOUO) Chemical containers or laboratory equipment discarded in dumpsters
- (U//FOUO) Purchase or rental of agricultural chemical sprayers, spraying vehicles, or aircraft or possession of large numbers of atomizers or spray bottles
- (U//FOUO) Presence of chemical fume hoods, exhaust systems, or air-filtration units that are inconsistent with routine building requirements in a facility
- (U//FOUO) Possession of chemical protective garments, masks, or respirators
- (U//FOUO) Interest in obtaining HAZMAT endorsements for commercial drivers' licenses

**(U) Common High-Risk TICs**

(U//FOUO) The following TICs present a high risk because they can be used as improvised chemical weapons, combined to form more toxic chemicals, or used as precursors for chemical warfare agents:

- (U) Ammonia
- (U) Arsine
- (U) Chlorine
- (U) Fluorine
- (U) Hydrogen chloride
- (U) Hydrogen fluoride
- (U) Hydrogen sulfide
- (U) Phosgene
- (U) Cyanide salts, such as potassium and sodium cyanide
- (U) Sulfur dioxide

**(U) Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup> (U//LES) FBI Counterterrorism Division, *A Threat Assessment for Domestic Terrorism, 2005-2006*, 18 September 2007 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>2</sup> (U) Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> (U) FBI Case Information (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>4</sup> (U) FBI Case Information (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>5</sup> (U) *Intelligence Project*, Southern Poverty Law Center, Spring 2007 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>6</sup> (U) *Homegrown Terrorist – Federal prosecutors say a Tennessee farmhand aimed to be the next Timothy McVeigh*, “Memphis Flyer Online,” 21 April 2006, [www.memphisflyer.com/memphis/Content?oid=oid%3A15140](http://www.memphisflyer.com/memphis/Content?oid=oid%3A15140) (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>7</sup> (U) *(AP) Man sentenced to 30 years in prison on terrorism charges*, 29 November 2006, [www.wkrn.com/nashville/news/ap-man-sentenced-to-30-years-in-prison-on-terrorism-charges/62336.htm](http://www.wkrn.com/nashville/news/ap-man-sentenced-to-30-years-in-prison-on-terrorism-charges/62336.htm) (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>8</sup> (U) FBI Case Information (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>9</sup> (U) Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> (U) Department of Justice Counterterrorism Section, 22 June 2006, “Counterterrorism White Paper,” found at <http://trac.syr.edu/tracreports/terrorism/169/include/terrorism.whitepaper.pdf> (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>11</sup> (U) Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> (U) Department of Justice Press Release, 29 January 2008, “Feeding Hills Man Charged with Possessing Toxins for Use as a Weapon and Threats to use Weapons of Mass Destruction.” Found at <http://boston.fbi.gov/dojpressrel/pressrel08/wmd012908.htm> (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>13</sup> (U) Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> (U) Scott Gold, “Hoarder of Arms Gets 11 Years,” *Los Angeles Times*, 5 May 2004 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>15</sup> (U) FBI Case Information (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>16</sup> (U) Kris Axtman, “The terror threat at home, often overlooked,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 29 December 2003; Scott Gold, “Hoarder of Arms Gets 11 Years,” *Los Angeles Times*, 5 May 2004 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>17</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate, *Indicators for Terrorist Use for Toxic Industrial Chemicals*, 22 March 2007 (UNCLASSIFIED).

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