

# **Terrorist Motivations to Employ Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Weapons**

**Robert C. Neumann  
Program Manager**

**Special Operations Forces CBRN Support**

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# CBRN Terrorism

- ◆ “Its not a matter of if, but of when”
  
- ◆ If so, why do most terrorist groups not pursue the acquisition of CBRN?
  - Lack of technical ability
  - Lack of resources (funds, materials)
  - Not motivated to pursue – “what they are doing is good enough”
  - Fear of repercussion from target / public outcry
  
- ◆ But why do some terrorist groups ignore the challenges and attempt to acquire and more importantly employ CBRN weapons

# Terrorism

- ◆ DOD Definition of Terrorism: the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or try to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological. (Source Joint Pub 3-07.2)
- ◆ An act or threat of **violence** against **noncombatants** to intimidate or influence an audience, with **political** change as the **objective**.

# Typology of Terrorism

<b>Ideological Categories</b>	<b>A More Narrow View</b>
Nationalist-separatist	Practical
Social revolutionary	Practical
Religious fundamentalist	Apocalyptic - Practical
Non-traditional religious (closed cults)	Apocalyptic - Practical
Right-wing terrorism	Practical
Lone Wolves Right-Wing Religious Fundamentalist	Practical - Apocalyptic

# Types of Terrorist Groups

◆ Today, terrorist groups can be categorized into two broad groups:

- Practical
- Apocalyptic

Practical terrorist groups use violence as a tactic to achieve their strategic goal.



Apocalyptic terrorist groups use religion as their ideology and typically dismiss all other forms of religion other than their own as false.

# Practical Terrorist Groups

- ◆ Will commit atrocious acts
  - setting off car bombs in public places
  - kidnapping the innocent relations of his chosen enemies
  - committing assassinations
  - conducting suicide attacks
- ◆ May resort to mass casualty attacks if the group is weak and isolated.
- ◆ End states
  - Freedom
  - New society
  - New economic system
  - Autonomy
  - Reassignment of territory
- ◆ May use toxic chemicals or poisons if the circumstances warrant and the effects are focused

**“scale of actions is usually limited, despite the attendant drama”**

# Apocalyptic Terrorist Groups

- ◆ Religiously motivated
  - Islamic
  - Christian
  - Jewish
  - Hindu
  - Others
  
- ◆ Retribution against unbelievers, heretics, and those with lesser commitment
- ◆ Willing to commit spectacular, extremely violent acts
- ◆ Willing to give their life in the attainment of their goals
- ◆ Unconstrained violence
  
- ◆ End states
  - New society
  
- ◆ All methods are open



# Historical Constraints

- ◆ Technically & resource intensive
- ◆ Conventional tactics work
- ◆ Backlash

## Bottom Line

Conventional means have proven effective

# Constraints On Violence

- ◆ Unnecessary to convey a message to target audience
- ◆ Loss of approval and support of the group that the terrorists claimed to represent
- ◆ Backlash from target nation or international community



“Terrorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead”

# Lack of Constraint

## Aum Shinrikiyo

- ◆ Circa 1990-1995
- ◆ Launched a number of attacks using *botulinum* toxin, *Bacillus anthracis*, sarin, VX, and hydrogen cyanide
- ◆ Had near and far term motivations; eliminate threats, proof of prophecy, instigate a war, & survive the apocalypse



## Al Qaeda

- ◆ 1993 – present
- ◆ Attempted to develop / acquire chemical, biological, radiological, & nuclear weapons
- ◆ Biological warfare laboratory was under construction near Tarnak Farms, Afghanistan
- ◆ Worked with poisons & toxins

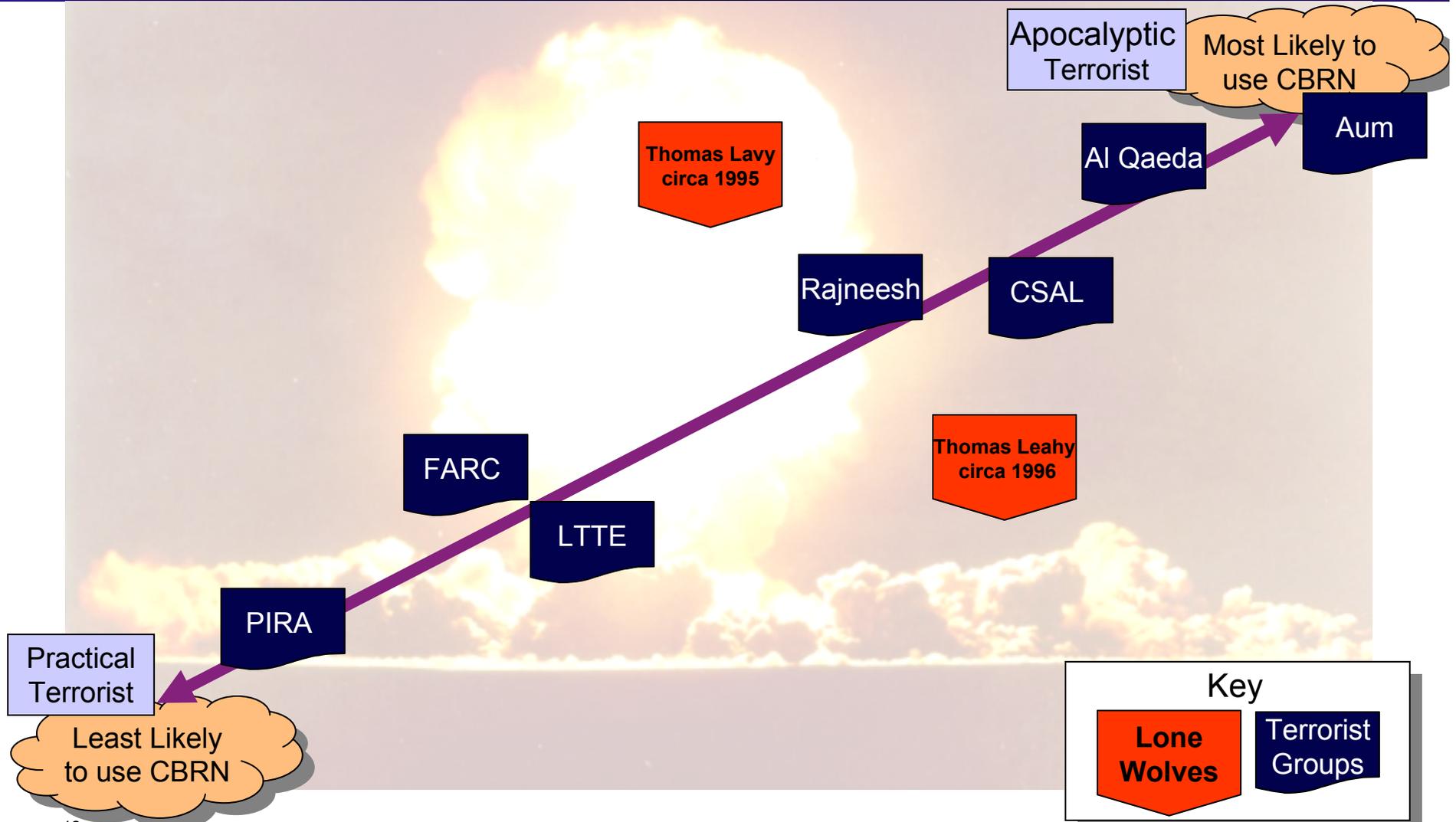


# Performance Violence

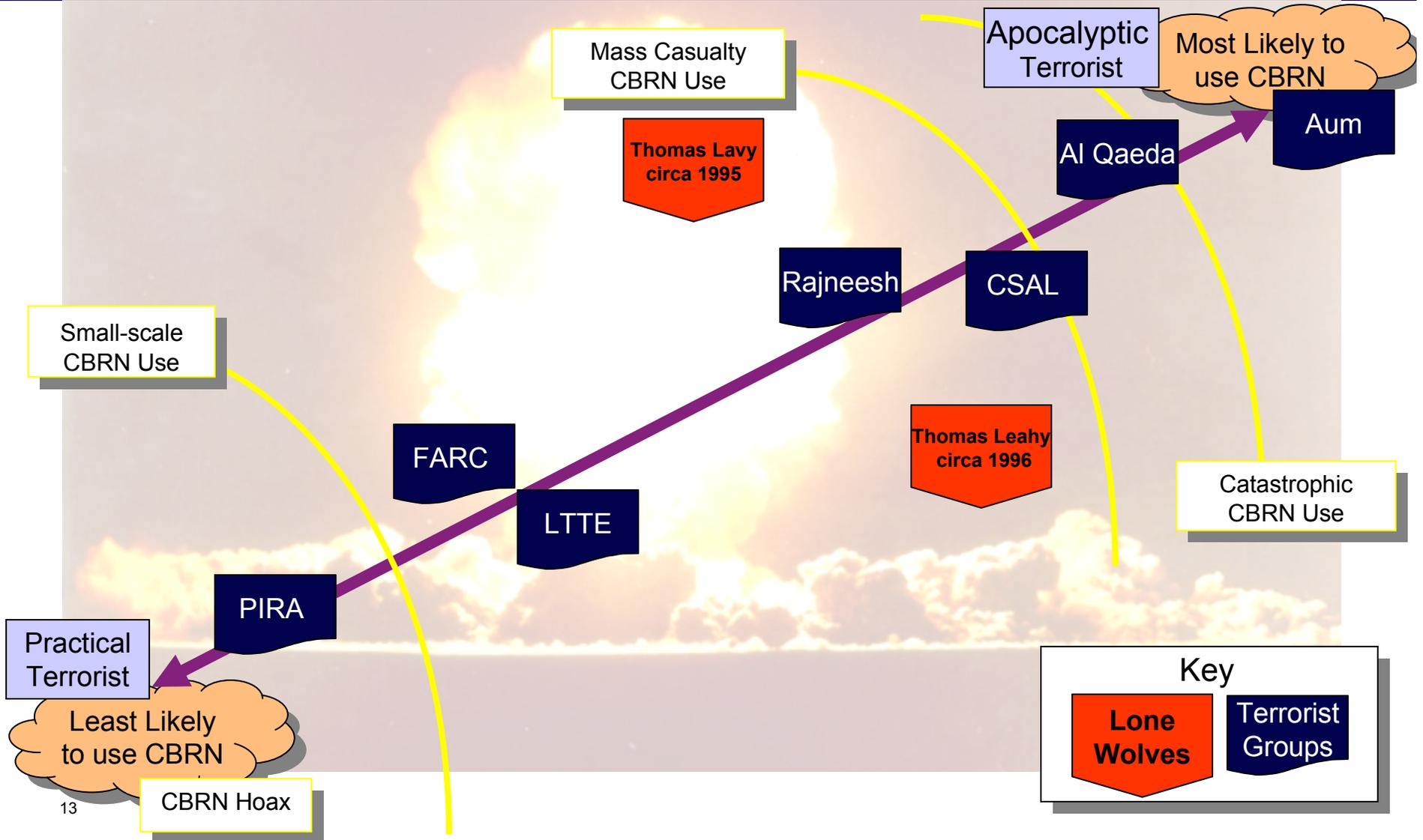
- ◆ Spectacular violent acts with the intent of having the violence witnessed by the greatest number of people with little direct political impact.
- ◆ Killing the few does not suit the purpose of the apocalyptic groups. They are engaged in a cosmic war and the more horrific the act the better.
- ◆ The use of weapons of mass destruction – chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear – are weapons that would achieve them to achieve the desired effects.



# Along the Spectrum of Use



# Along the Spectrum of Use



# Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

## ◆ Cyanide

- Home made hand-grenades, composed of explosives and a cyanide compound inside a plastic container
- Cyanide tipped bullets

## ◆ Parathion

- Added to water tanks supplying drinking water
- FARC declared the water pipeline a "military target"

## ◆ Biological Weapon

- Cylinder bomb charged with 5 kilos of homemade explosive R1, potassium chlorate, aluminum powder, sawdust, scraps of iron and "a mix of clay with human feces"



WMD? Not really

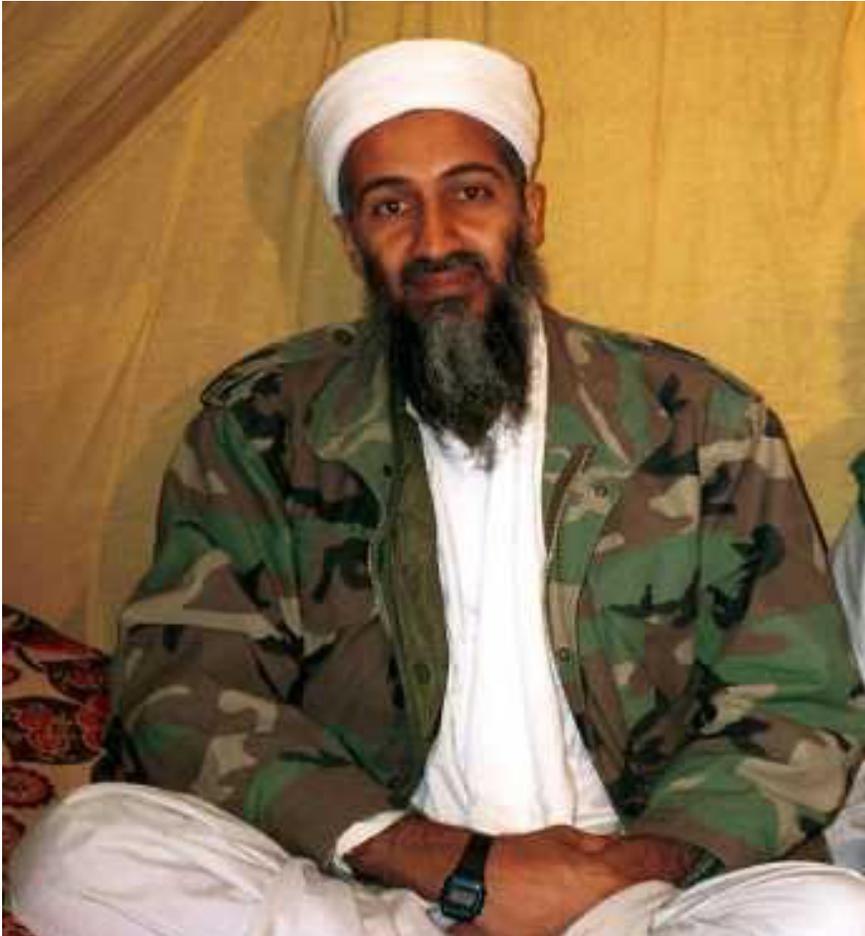
# Rajneesh Religious Sect

- ◆ Biological attack, circa 1984
  - Salmonella bacteria
  - Placed bacteria in eight local restaurants' salad bars
  - 751 affected
  - Two members pleaded guilty to salmonella poisoning charges & received four-year prison term
- ◆ Test run for a planned biological attack
  - Target was the town's water supply before the November election
  - Cult decided to abandon the idea



Religious Cult  
Not Apocalyptic

# Does Al Qaeda Have WMD?



**“It presupposes that I do possess such weapons, and goes on to ask about the way in which we will use them. In answer, I would say that acquiring weapons for the defense of Muslims is a religious duty. To seek to possess the weapons that could counter those of the infidels is a religious duty. If I have indeed acquired these weapons, then this is an obligation I carried out and I thank God for enabling us to do that. And if I seek to acquire these weapons I am carrying out a duty. It would be a sin for Muslims not to try to possess the weapons that would prevent the infidels from inflicting harm on Muslims. But how we could use these weapons if we possess them is up to us.”**

**Usama bin Laden**

# Al Qaeda– Striving for Better Weapons

- ◆ “Encyclopedia of Jihad”, one entire volume is devoted to explaining how to construct CBW
- ◆ Attempted to construct a biological laboratory to develop a biological weapon using *Bacillus anthracis*
- ◆ Repeated attempts by cells and associates to use cyanide compounds & other toxic materials
- ◆ Interest expressed in nuclear and radiological weapons
- ◆ **However, conventional attacks have proven successful**



# Conclusions

- ◆ Most terrorist groups will not employ CBRN weapons
- ◆ Practical terrorist groups will use them on occasion to enhance conventional weapons or for a very specific purpose
- ◆ Practical terrorist groups will not seek massive casualties
- ◆ Apocalyptic terrorist groups will seek CBRN weapons
- ◆ Most apocalyptic terrorist groups will fail to overcome the technical challenges to produce mass casualty devices
- ◆ **An effective CBRN device, in the hands of an apocalyptic terrorist, will be employed in a spectacular manner against a symbolic target to achieve massive casualties**