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| Jihad Report Sep 09, 2017 -Sep 15, 2017  |
| Attacks | 32  |
| Killed | 263  |
| Injured | 254  |
| Suicide Blasts | 8  |
| Countries | 14 |

**Guided Mediation on X-Squared Radio saves Florida $150 Billion**

Last week on X-Squared Radio, we conducted a guided meditation with the express intention of evaporating and stopping the rotating energy of hurricane Irma. What the news media was doing its best to manifest into the storm to usher in the millennium or global warming was tackled at 10:15 PM ET by our listeners, and witnesses reported that within minutes, the storm began to dissipate. Within an hour it was down by 75%, and the storm was gentle Spring shower by 5 AM.

The news media accounting was astonishment and disbelief as they claimed that the storm busting saved Florida at least $150 billion in damages. First, let me say that we could do amazing things to foster world peace with even as little as 1% in compensation for our efforts, but no thank you. We use our talents and conscious intention for the betterment of mankind and require no reward. Keep the money, and give it back to the American taxpayer.

One is pleased to be of service.

**Equifax is the Hack**

The issue at hand is not that fact that hackers took names, birthdays and addresses, Social Security and driver’s license numbers. The real issue at hand is why in why, in God’s name, have three private corporations been allowed to invade and collect the privacy of 143 million Americans in the first place? And to make matters far worse than they already are, why are they allowed to extort hundreds of billions of dollars from working Americans by labelling them with a completely erroneous Slave Score? Not only does this slave score decide whether you have access to capital or not, it can decide your future employment and even your dating status.

What’s a slave score? Well, a score is given to a person who is enslaved to debt and never, and I do mean never, misses a payment to his masters. If you miss a few payments, your slave score goes down. But the worst score is reserved for those who have chosen freedom. Yes, if you are debt free, and choose to always live within your means, with sufficient savings for most rainy days, then you are scored poorest of all. You are a financial outcast and worthless in the world of borrowing. A free man or woman gets the worst slave score of all.

Last week 143 million people woke up to the news that the ultimate hacker and violator of privacy, Equifax, has left them wide open to financial and identity fraud. What they did not know, is that the private profile of every single one of those people is sold to the banks for billions of dollars every month.

One researcher from security firm SecureWorks shared some details about today’s burgeoning marketplace for stolen data with Bloomberg, and the conclusion is clear: It is now easier – and cheaper – for criminals to access and abuse illicit data than ever before. In fact, a high-limit American express card with a high chance of working can be purchased online for less than $20. Criminals can buy files with thousands of low-limit card numbers for pennies on the dollar.

According to Bloomberg, “verified” high-limit credit cards from developed countries like the US, Japan, and South Korea are selling on the dark web for the bitcoin equivalent of about $10 to $20. Luckily for criminals, cards generally aren’t selling any cheaper on the dark web these days, said Alex Tilley, a researcher at Secureworks. Today’s buyers are more likely to get higher-quality cards, ones with sizable limits that can be used fraudulently with ease. It isn’t as hit-or-miss as it used to be, a welcome change for criminals, chilling news for most of us.

Criminals have even set up sophisticated “rating systems” to help value the data. Business cards are preferred, Tilley said, because they don’t have a limit. Those and high-end personal cards—say, a Platinum American Express that has been verified and has an 85 percent rating (judged by the seller to have an 85 percent chance of being successfully used in a fraud)—will go for $15 to $20. A regular Mastercard that doesn’t have a high limit might go for $9.

One underground hacker market inexplicably called Trump’s Dumps is selling full identities of individuals just like you for as little as $10 apiece. They’re called fullz, “dossiers that provide enough financial, geographic and biographical information on a victim to facilitate identity theft or other impersonation-based fraud.” Fullz can help a criminal get past those irritating “secret questions” that sites ask to verify your identity.

Recently, Secureworks’ researchers have seen more offers of bulk pre-verified card details, along with more identifying information about the owners. In some cases, offers even include the cardholder’s mother’s maiden name. Still, they cost just $10 to $12. Below is a fullz offer with a lot of personal identification on a Korean consumer.

In a massive breach like Equifax, hackers can easily walk away with hundreds of millions of dollars in profits from selling the data. Meanwhile, the identity thieves who purchased it can reap their own fortune running their scams.

Congress, the FTC and Equifax customers – enraged by both the company’s reluctance to initially disclose the breach and its carelessness (some would say tight-fistedness) concerning its cybersecurity defenses – have buried the company in lawsuits and official inquiries.

As USA Today revealed yesterday, hackers took advantage of an Equifax security vulnerability two months after an industry group discovered the coding flaw and shared a fix for it, raising questions about why Equifax didn't update its software successfully when the danger became known.

We’re looking forward to hearing the whole story from CEO Rick Smith when he testifies before Congress early next month. Whether Smith manages to hang on to his job remains to be seen - calls for his resignation after a 12-year-long scandal-free tenure are mounting. CNBC's Jim Cramer said last night that Smith "should be fired today."

But perhaps more worrying for Smith and his C-Suite companions are calls from North Dakota Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, who has demanded a criminal investigation into whether the company's executives - several of whom sold stock during the period between when the company first learned about the hack and when it disclosed it to the public - committed securities fraud.

This, as it turns out, is the only way these private corporations can be stopped. The executives at Equifax are focused on one thing; their own profits. They were unacceptably slow to deal with the issue and three senior executives (including the CFO) sold almost $2 million worth of stock, once the breach was discovered, but prior to alerting customers to the security breach.

This is the third time in sixteen months that Equifax has been hacked. It is the umpteenth time there has been a data breach at a company that holds financial and personal information of its customers. Each time millions of people’s data and livelihoods have been put at risk.

‘Have no doubt: This means you will or already have been be hacked. This means your SIM card will be spoofed. This means someone will try to get into your email and online accounts. This means someone will try to open a credit card in your name.’ John Biggs, Tech Crunch.

Equifax is yet another example of incompetence on the part of data-heavy company, with no recourse for customers affected. We have never had recourse with the credit bureaus. They can ruin anyone for any reason they wish, and they are not liable for your losses.

Cyberattacks are continuously evolving into incidents that are relentless and unforgiving. In the last 25 years the sophistication of hackers’ tools has improved.

This recent attack puts the Yahoo breaches of 2014 and 2015 in a rather dim light in comparison to the harm caused by Equifax hackers.

2017 has almost proved to be a coming of age year for hackers. So far this year we have already had the biggest ransomware outbreak that saw data breaches at the NHS, FedEx, Telefonica and Deutsche Bahn.

It is now inevitable that something like this goes on and that we are no longer surprised by it. Why is it happening and what can we do about it?

Governments and banks want everything to be digital from online accounts through to digital money. This not only saves them money but also helps with their knowledge about us and means they can continue to print cash without us paying too much attention. They share our information with one another and use this for their own advantages.

As customers we don’t mind this so much because the majority of the time an interconnected world makes our lives easier. It helps us to travel, it helps us to apply for mortgages, it even helps us to book a hotel room with just one click.

The cost of this easy life is the growing threat of hacking. Our entire lives are available to be seen by those who (if they really want it) can get access to it.

We trust these governments and companies not only with our most personal of information but also that they will protect it.

But this is a trust that is not respected by so many organisations.

When it comes to Equifax, customers did not ask them to eat up and store all of this data about them, just for it then to be sold onto marketing companies. It is not the customers’ fault that this data was not kept secure.

Equifax is just one headline in the last month regarding hacks. TechCrunch warns us about a few more:

*Hacker group Dragonfly has penetrated operational networks of energy companies that control power grids in the US and Europe, which could allow them to disrupt utilities to hundreds of millions of people*

*An indefensible vulnerability in all modern cars could let attackers affect sensors, airbags, and anti-lock brakes.*

*Hackers penetrated voting systems before the 2016 presidential elections, but local officials weren’t warned and the systems haven’t been properly investigated for malware or alterations since.*

*Hackers are fooling mobile carriers into letting them change the phone associated with a phone number, allowing attackers to empty people’s cryptocurrency wallets*

*German voting machines can be hacked to change the vote tallies*

Hackers want this information for three reasons:

1. To show you that they can have it if they want it. For some hackers it can be that the actual hacking is more important than what they can actually do with the data. This motive is becoming increasingly rare.
2. To make money from you or the company. This can either be by using your information to steal from you or claim money on your behalf, or by issuing hefty ransoms in exchange for the data.
3. Cyber warfare. This is unfortunately the case at the forefront of everyone’s minds when we see big hacks such as the Equifax breach. This has huge implications for not only your personal financial security but also for global safety and security.

**Hacking weapons for cyberwar**

Avivah Litan, an analyst at Gartner, told NBC News that the data gathered in these data breaches was not necessarily just going to be used to steal money and identities. Instead, it might end up playing a key role in cyber warfare.

*“Cyberwar is in large part conducted through data mining and cyber-intelligence…Enemy nation states build databases of Americans that they then use to get to their targets, for example a network operator at a power grid, or a defense contractor at a missile defense company.”*

US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin has also recognised how this latest hack is a sign that far worse things could be on the horizon. Speaking to the CNBC Institutional Investor Delivering Alpha Conference in New York Mnuchin said his main concern was “about the global financial system and keeping it safe.”

For those of a more military leaning cyber hacks are very serious indeed. In June the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) released a report entitled ‘Hacking UK Trident: A Growing Threat’. In the report BASIC explained that a successful cyber intrusion could “neutralise operations, lead to loss of life, defeat or perhaps even the catastrophic exchange of nuclear warheads (directly or indirectly).”

**What can be done about it?**

In the short-term we need to be aware that this latest attack may have some very significant lasting effects.

The hackers have access to victims’ credit files, social security numbers, credit card details and even driving license information. This is not something we can just change the data for. Unless the US government decides to issue new social security numbers and 143 million Americans decide to move house and change their birth dates then this data is permanently vulnerable to exploitation.

Access to this information could result in major financial theft through identity fraud and just plain access to information. The Federal trade Commission told customers last week to file their tax returns early “as soon as you have the information, before a scammer can.”

Companies need to seriously up their game when it come to security of client accounts. In the United States it is not uncommon to be able to access account just through the last four digits of your social security number. If this wasn’t easy to find out before, it certainly is now thanks to Equifax.

Each time a data breach of this nature takes place it seems that the most companies merely breathe a sigh of relief that it wasn’t their systems which were hacked. Those who were hacked issue an apology and resolve to strengthen their systems.

Instead companies should be striving to become tech companies where security is at the forefront of their strategies.

In the long-term consumers need to protect themselves notably against financial fraud but also the impact of cyber warfare on the wider world.

**Protect yourself, don’t rely on others**

We used to be told that changing our usernames and passwords on a regular basis was good enough to protect ourselves from security issues.

Now, we have no idea where to start when it comes to information stored online. On a daily basis we partake in a panorama of activities that keep us locked into the interconnected world and our data vulnerable.

Of course one of the biggest areas that we are happy to have automated and made as easy as possible is our money. This is both at the end of money creation and our own personal investments.

As hackers and cyber attackers become more sophisticated we need to be ahead of the game.

All manner of financial, government and infrastructure companies have been hacked. It is likely that many of these small scale attacks have been merely testing of defenses.

Be aware that in the future a concerted attack on the global financial system would likely include attempts at disabling various exchanges (both stock and foreign exchange). Banks would also be a key target, ATMs and wire transfers could be disabled and bank balances, which are merely digital figures, could be erased.

We are all dependent on technology and the digital monetary system. A cyberattack would economically paralyze our system. The primary wealth would longer be primarily digital – cash, stocks and bonds – access to tangible wealth would be vital.

Whilst it would be imprudent to predict cyber warfare that results in the collapse of the financial system we do believe it would be prudent to take necessary precautions and diversify into physical gold and silver bullion.

**Conclusion - buy gold bullion for insurance**

As we explained following the possible US Navy cyber attacks:

*By owning*[*allocated and segregated physical gold*](http://www.goldcore.com/us/our-services/storage-2/)*with GoldCore you are protecting yourself against potential hackers in two ways*

*First: GoldCore works extremely hard to provide the highest level of security for their clients – both online and offline.*

*Second: Gold is a tangible asset. This means it cannot just disappear at the touch of a few buttons, courtesy of a few hackers. Should there be a global cyberattack on the financial system, the primary wealth would no longer be primarily digital (cash, stocks and bonds etc).*

*Gold will not only be important because of its tangible nature but also because of its role as a safe haven in times of geopolitical risks. A cyberattack whether on the U.S. Navy, a civilian ship, an election or across the financial sphere is an attack. It is a weapon being fired by one party on another.*

*These also pose risks to*[*digital gold providers*](http://www.goldcore.com/us/gold-blog/digital-gold-blockchain-now-caveat-emptor/)*who do not allow clients to interact and trade on the phone and are solely reliant for pricing and liquidity from online portals and online trading platforms.*

*Those who have outright legal ownership of*[*physical gold and silver coins and bars*](http://www.goldcore.com/us/our-services/storage-2/)*outside the banking system will weather the cyber storm better than those who do not.*

*The hope is that these risks will not materialize. Hope is never a strategy. We believe it is prudent to be aware of and take appropriate measures – sooner rather than later – to protect your wealth.*

**When Hate Speech Becomes a Hate Crime**

People can eventually be accused of hate crimes when they use hateful speech. Hate crimes laws are a seed that can sprout in new directions. This week, the Congress passed [S. J. Res. 49](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-joint-resolution/49/text?r=95), and President Trump signed it, making it part of the U.S. legal code. Keep in mind, this is a resolution, not a law….yet. It is the Progressives flapping their gums, but remember how resonance is set up. Remember that once the foundation is laid, court precedence will be built upon it, and before long we will have a Department of Hate Speech Enforcement

The resolution rejects “White nationalists, White supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, and other hate groups…” **But why? Because of their ideas? Because of their expression of these ideas? Or because of the color of their skin?**

No government that stands for freedom and free speech, whose charge is to protect rights, should be singling out specific groups by name and by law declaring them as outlaws or threats because of their philosophies. **If they have committed a crime, such as defamation of character or incitement to riot or riot itself, then charge them and try them.** But American government has no legitimate authority to single out some of its citizens in this way. **This, furthermore, is an exceedingly bad precedent. Who’s next?**

**The resolution is too specific, but it’s also dangerously vague.** The term “other hate groups” has no known definition. Suppose that this term is defined by a group like the Southern Poverty Law Center. The SPLC currently names [917 groups](https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map) as hate groups (see [here for a list](https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/active-hate-groups-2016)). Their criteria are not restricted to violent actions. They comprise **SPEECH**. They say “All hate groups have beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics.” **They are very clear about this: “Hate group activities can include criminal acts, marches, rallies, speeches, meetings, leafleting or publishing.”**

This Congressional resolution is a declaration that **certain kinds of groups,** some named but many, many others open to inclusion, **are to be attacked by the U.S. government. It could mean anyone who speaks out against Black Lives Matter, or against Planned Parenthood, or makes an effective case against ANTIFA or OFA or any of the other officially sanctioned gangs that beat people, burn cars, smash windows, throw acid, or block traffic as a wholesome and protected method of suppressing free speech, or voting, or freedom of movement. Yes, if you speak out against any of these types of violent activities, which is what we do here at X-Squared Radio, then you are technically in violation of SJ 49. All you have to do is be labelled as the KKK or a White Supremacist. Wait. Hasn’t Trump been called these names? Yes, he has. So, what do you think happens when a president is in violation of a law like this?**

The law urges “the President and the President’s Cabinet to use all available resources to address the threats posed by those groups. Does that mean the air force? Does that mean drones? Does that mean a mech unit, or the X-37B? Does that mean SWAT breaks down your door and stomps your teeth in because you’re hateful and you resisted arrest? Or worse?

” **The term “threats” in the first paragraph is vague, dangerously vague.** However, the very next paragraph singles out free speech actions when “hundreds of torch-bearing White nationalists, White supremacists, Klansmen, and neo-Nazis chanted racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigrant slogans…” The same sentence joins this with violent actions “…and violently engaged with counter-demonstrators on and around the grounds of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville…”

**This law regards free speech as a threat, linking it to violence, painting them with one brush.** There can be no justice that can stem from such a completely sloppy and inexcusably amateurish legal treatment. This linkage is made clear in paragraph seven with this language: “…communities everywhere are concerned about the growing and open display of hate and violence being perpetrated by those groups…” There is no distinction made here between the “open display of hate” and “violence being perpetrated”. **As I predicted 11 years ago in arguing against hate crime laws, hate speech is being identified with hate crime.**

I am just as uncomfortable with the notion of defining and singling out “hate speech” as some sort of new danger or threat or harmful activity or crime, to be dealt with by government or courts of law as I was 11 years ago with the idea of “hate crime”. **The standard categories of crime are quite enough without adding to them a government laundry list of prejudices and aversions that everyone is not supposed to express or feel, under penalty of government law.**

The Resolution:

Condemning the violence and domestic terrorist attack that took place during events between August 11 and August 12, 2017, in Charlottesville, Virginia, recognizing the first responders who lost their lives while monitoring the events, offering deepest condolences to the families and friends of those individuals who were killed and deepest sympathies and support to those individuals who were injured by the violence, expressing support for the Charlottesville community, rejecting White nationalists, White supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, and other hate groups, and urging the President and the President’s Cabinet to use all available resources to address the threats posed by those groups.

Whereas, on the night of Friday, August 11, 2017, a day before a White nationalist demonstration was scheduled to occur in Charlottesville, Virginia, hundreds of torch-bearing White nationalists, White supremacists, Klansmen, and neo-Nazis chanted racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigrant slogans and violently engaged with counter-demonstrators on and around the grounds of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville;

Whereas, on Saturday, August 12, 2017, ahead of the scheduled start time of the planned march, protestors and counter-demonstrators gathered at Emancipation Park in Charlottesville;

Whereas the extremist demonstration turned violent, culminating in the death of peaceful counter-demonstrator Heather Heyer and injuries to 19 other individuals after a neo-Nazi sympathizer allegedly drove a vehicle into a crowd, an act that resulted in a charge of second degree murder, 3 counts of malicious wounding, and 1 count of hit and run;

Whereas 2 Virginia State Police officers, Lieutenant H. Jay Cullen and Trooper Pilot Berke M.M. Bates, died in a helicopter crash as they patrolled the events occurring below them;

Whereas the Charlottesville community is engaged in a healing process following this horrific and violent display of bigotry; and

Whereas White nationalists, White supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, and other hate groups reportedly are organizing similar events in other cities in the United States and communities everywhere are concerned about the growing and open display of hate and violence being perpetrated by those groups: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That Congress—

(1) condemns the racist violence and domestic terrorist attack that took place between August 11 and August 12, 2017, in Charlottesville, Virginia;

(2) recognizes—

(A) Heather Heyer, who was killed, and 19 other individuals who were injured in the reported domestic terrorist attack; and

(B) several other individuals who were injured in separate attacks while standing up to hate and intolerance;

(3) recognizes the public service and heroism of Virginia State Police officers Lieutenant H. Jay Cullen and Trooper Pilot Berke M.M. Bates, who lost their lives while responding to the events from the air;

(4) offers—

(A) condolences to the families and friends of Heather Heyer, Lieutenant H. Jay Cullen, and Trooper Pilot Berke M.M. Bates; and

(B) sympathy and support to those individuals who are recovering from injuries sustained during the attacks;

(5) expresses support for the Charlottesville community as the community heals following this demonstration of violent bigotry;

(6) rejects White nationalism, White supremacy, and neo-Nazism as hateful expressions of intolerance that are contradictory to the values that define the people of the United States; and

(7) urges—

(A) the President and his administration to—

(i) speak out against hate groups that espouse racism, extremism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and White supremacy; and

(ii) use all resources available to the President and the President’s Cabinet to address the growing prevalence of those hate groups in the United States; and

(B) the Attorney General to work with—

(i) the Secretary of Homeland Security to investigate thoroughly all acts of violence, intimidation, and domestic terrorism by White supremacists, White nationalists, neo-Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan, and associated groups in order to determine if any criminal laws have been violated and to prevent those groups from fomenting and facilitating additional violence; and

(ii) the heads of other Federal agencies to improve the reporting of hate crimes and to emphasize the importance of the collection, and the reporting to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, of hate crime data by State and local agencies.

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| *Speaker of the House of Representatives* |

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| *Vice President of the United States and President of the Senate* |

**Benghazi Detail Still Active**

A new [bombshell joint report](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-pentagon-s-2-2-billion-soviet-arms-pipeline-flooding-syria-09-12-2017) issued by two international weapons monitoring groups Tuesday confirms that the Pentagon continues to ship record breaking amounts of weaponry into Syria and that the Department of Defense is scrubbing its own paper trail. On Tuesday the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) produced conclusive evidence that not only is the Pentagon currently involved in shipping up to $2.2 billion worth of weapons from a shady network of private dealers to allied partners in Syria - mostly old Soviet weaponry - but is actually manipulating paperwork such as end-user certificates, presumably in order to hide US involvement.

The OCCRP and BIRN published [internal US defense procurement files](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-pentagon-s-2-2-billion-soviet-arms-pipeline-flooding-syria-09-12-2017) after an extensive investigation which found that the Pentagon is running a massive weapons trafficking pipeline which originates in the Balkans and Caucuses, and ends in Syria and Iraq. The program is ostensibly part of the US train, equip, and assist campaign for the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF, a coalition of YPG/J and Arab FSA groups operating primarily in Syria's east). The arms transfers are massive and the program looks to continue for years. According to [Foreign Policy's (FP)](http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/09/12/the-pentagon-is-spending-2-billion-running-soviet-era-guns-to-syrian-rebels/) coverage of the report:

The Department of Defense has budgeted $584 million specifically for this Syrian operation for the financial years 2017 and 2018, and has earmarked another $900 million of spending on Soviet-style munitions between now and 2022. The total, $2.2 billion, likely understates the flow of weapons to Syrian rebels in the coming years.

But perhaps more shocking is the following admission that Pentagon suppliers have links with known criminal networks, also from [FP](http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/09/12/the-pentagon-is-spending-2-billion-running-soviet-era-guns-to-syrian-rebels/):

According to the report, many of the weapons suppliers — primarily in Eastern Europe but also in the former Soviet republics, including Kazakhstan, Georgia, and Ukraine — have both links to organized crime throughout Eastern Europe and spotty business records.

The sheer amount of material necessary for the Pentagon program — one ammunition factory announced it planned to hire 1,000 new employees in 2016 to help cope with the demand — has reportedly stretched suppliers to the limit, forcing the Defense Department to relax standards on the materials it’s willing to accept.

It is likely that the organized crime association is the reason why the Pentagon has sought to alter its records. In addition, the sheer volume of weaponry continuing to ship to the Syrian battlefield and [other parts](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/08/saudi-arabia-uae-implicated-arms-transfers-170827115154085.html) of the Middle East means inevitable proliferation among unsavory terror groups - a phenomenon which has already been [exhaustively documented](http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/how-america-armed-terrorists-in-syria/) in connection with the [now reportedly closed CIA program](http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-07-31/trump-saw-disturbing-video-then-he-shut-down-cias-covert-syria-program) to topple the Syrian government. The associations and alliances among some of the Arab former FSA groups the DoD continues to support in the north and east remains fluid, which means means US-supplied weapons will continue to pass among groups with no accountability for where they end up.

One of the authors of the OCCRP/BIRN report, Ivan Angelovski, told Foreign Policy that, “The Pentagon is removing any evidence in their procurement records that weapons are actually going to the Syrian opposition." The report is based on internal US government memos which reveal that weapons shipment destination locations have been scrubbed from original documents.

Falsified and altered Pentagon procurement documents (Click to enlarge):



Is an [EUC (End User Certificate) still an EUC if](https://twitter.com/lawrencemarzouk/status/907945268464766977) it doesn't include an end user?



[Balkan Insight](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-pentagon-s-2-2-billion-soviet-arms-pipeline-flooding-syria-09-12-2017), which is hosting the original investigative report: "Seven US procurement documents were whitewashed to remove reference to 'Syria' after reporters contacted the Pentagon to enquire about whether the exporting countries – Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine and Georgia – had been informed of the destination."

The fact that Foreign Policy, which is the foremost establishment national security publication in the world, would admit that the Pentagon's Syria weapons procurement program is tied to East European organized crime is itself hugely significant. At this point the evidence is simply so overwhelming that even establishment sources like FP - which itself has generally been pro-interventionist on Syria - can't deny it.

FP further reports that the Pentagon program "appears to be turbocharging a shadowy world of Eastern European arms dealers." And adds further that, "the Pentagon is reportedly removing documentary evidence about just who will ultimately be using the weapons, potentially weakening one of the bulwarks of international protocols against illicit arms dealing."



Map/Infographic produced as part of the OCCRP/BIRN report, itself confirmed by Foreign Policy magazine. Notice the map denotes that prior CIA weapons went directly to Idlib province (northwest, section in green) and the Golan border region (south). Both of these areas were and continue to be occupied by al-Qaeda (in Idlib, AQ's Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham). In Idlib specifically, analysts have [confirmed genocidal cleansing of religious minorities](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2016-01-19/assad-has-it-his-way) conducted by AQ "rebels" directly assisted by CIA weapons.

Late last month there was a story of [Bulgarian journalist Dilyana Gaytandzhieva, who was fired from her job](http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-08-28/journalist-interrogated-fired-story-linking-cia-and-syria-weapons-flights) after being interrogated by national intelligence officials for exposing the same Pentagon arms network which is the subject of the latest OCCRP/BIRN investigation. At the time, [Al Jazeera](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/08/saudi-arabia-uae-implicated-arms-transfers-170827115154085.html) was the only major international outlet which covered the story, which confirmed that Bulgarian agents interrogated Gaytandzhieva and "tried to find out her sources." An anonymous source had leaked a large trove of internal government files connected to the arms trafficking to the East European-based [Trud Newspaper](https://trud.bg/350-diplomatic-flights-carry-weapons-for-terrorists/) journalist, which was the basis of her reporting. The newest investigation released Tuesday appears to include some of the same documents, also [confirmed](https://twitter.com/dgaytandzhieva/status/907726829062180865) by Gayandzhieva.

Trump won't be able to clean it up. He signed a no funding terror presidential order, so the same guys rebranded themselves so the funding can continue. Most likely what'll happen is the people surrounding him will downplay it so it can continue.

The other thing not mentioned is the weaponizing of the Balkans. I'm sure a lot of the arms fall off the back of the truck in the region, and will have a destabilizing effect.

**Police Brutality Again in the Headlines**

Protests turned violent for the second night on Saturday after the acquittal of a white former St. Louis police officer in the fatal shooting of a black man, as a small group of demonstrators refused to disperse, breaking windows and throwing objects at police, who moved in with armored vehicles and in riot gear.

The confrontation took place in the Delmar Loop of the St. Louis suburb of University City — known for concert venues, restaurants, shops and bars and including the famous Blueberry Hill where rock legend Chuck Berry played for many years. The area had been the scene of a peaceful march earlier in the evening that ended with organizers calling for people to leave and reconvene Sunday afternoon.

But a small group of protesters refused to go. Hundreds of police in riot gear eventually moved in and ordered them to disperse, saying the protest was unlawful. The demonstrators retreated down a street, breaking windows and throwing objects at police.

Some protesters were seen in handcuffs but the number of arrests was not immediately known.

The sudden eruption of violence had followed a day of peaceful demonstrations at suburban shopping malls and during the march in University City.

Demonstrators shouted slogans such as “black lives matter” and “it is our duty to fight for our freedom” as they marched through West County Center mall in the city of Des Peres, west of St. Louis, to decry the judge’s verdict Friday clearing ex-officer Jason Stockley of first-degree murder in the 2011 shooting of Anthony Lamar Smith. A group also demonstrated at Chesterfield Mall in the suburbs and at a regional food festival.

Organizers took their grievances to the suburbs Saturday to spread the impact of the protests beyond predominantly black neighborhoods to those that are mainly white.

“I don’t think racism is going to change in America until people get uncomfortable,” said Kayla Reed of the St. Louis Action Council, a protest organizer.

Susanna Prins, 27, a white woman from University City, carried a sign reading, “White silence is violence.”

“Not saying or doing anything makes you complicit in the brutalization of our friends and neighbors,” Prins said.

Smith’s death is just one of several high-profile U.S. cases in recent years in which a white officer killed a black suspect, including the 2014 killing of Michael Brown in nearby Ferguson that sparked months of angry and sometimes violent protests.

Federal prosecutors said Saturday they won’t open a new civil rights investigation into the killing, as the NAACP requested. Justice Department spokeswoman Lauren Ehrsam said the department concluded in September not to prosecute, but didn’t announce it then to avoid affecting the state criminal case.

After Stockley was acquitted on Friday, nearly three-dozen people were arrested and 11 police officers were injured including a broken jaw and dislocated shoulder, police said. Five officers were taken to hospitals. Police also said that 10 businesses were damaged, mostly broken windows. Protesters also broke a window and spattered red paint on the home of St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson.

Krewson said she was not home at the time but her family was. She said it was “irritating” to have her house vandalized.

“This story is not about whether I got my windows broken or not. This is about coming together to have a better St. Louis for all of us,” she told a news conference Saturday.

Reed said protesters went to Krewson’s house because she was not in the streets with the people even though she had expressed support on social media.

Stockley was cleared in the fatal shooting Smith, 24, after the suspected drug dealer fled from officers trying to arrest him.

Stockley testified he felt he was in danger because he saw Smith holding a silver revolver when the suspect backed his car toward officers and sped away.

Prosecutors said Stockley planted a gun in Smith’s car after the shooting. The officer’s DNA was on the weapon but Smith’s wasn’t. Dashcam video from Stockley’s cruiser recorded him saying he was “going to kill this (expletive).” Less than a minute later, he shot Smith five times.

Stockley’s lawyer dismissed the comment as “human emotions” during a dangerous pursuit. St. Louis Circuit Judge Timothy Wilson, who said prosecutors didn’t prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Stockley murdered Smith, said the statement could be ambiguous.

Stockley, 36, who left the force in 2013 and moved to Houston, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch after the verdict that he understands how the video looks bad, but insisted he did nothing wrong.

“I know everyone wants someone to blame, but I’m just not the guy,” Stockley said.

And now, for my movie review: Jennifer Lawrence has a new movie out, but I can’t remember the name, and have no plans to see it.

**Tax Cuts for SB Owners**

## Job Creators Network’s nationwide TaxCutsNow bus tour concluded Friday with a massive “15% on the 15th Rally” on the steps of the IRS building in Washington, D.C., where Rep. Bill Johnson (R-Ohio), several small business owners, and economist Stephen Moore spoke.

“We need to re-empower the American people and America’s small businesses,” Johnson said. “If we can get that tax rate down to 15 percent, just imagine how innovation and ingenuity will turn.”

The Atlanta Georgia-based organization crisscrossed the country for a week urging Americans to go to [TaxCutsNow.com](http://taxcutsnow.com/), sign the small business tax cut petition, and watch and share videos by small business advocates explaining why tax cuts are needed for America’s job creators.



Job Creators Network TaxCutsNow bus tour ends with a small business tax reform rally on the steps of the IRS building in Washington, D.C.

Job Creators Network President and CEO Alfredo Ortiz said all taxpaying Americans and small business owners, regardless of their political affiliation, deserve to see their taxes lowered.

“Small businesses are owned by both Republicans and Democrats and they all need a tax break,” Ortiz told Breitbart News. “A bipartisan strategy to pass tax cuts not only makes sense, but will be more politically feasible. All small businesses need tax cuts, not just the ones with similar political ideologies.”

The [TaxCutsNow](http://taxcutsnow.com/) campaign — launched with a nationwide advertising blitz, featuring talk radio and television commercials, and social media ads to encourage tax reform — was designed to put pressure on Congressional lawmakers to pass a tax cut bill by Thanksgiving and make it retroactive to January 2017.



Job Creators Network TaxCutsNow bus tour ends with a small business tax reform rally on the steps of the IRS building in Washington, D.C.

One of Job Creators Network’s new commercials features La Huerta Grill & Market owner Laz Marquez explaining how the current tax code burdens and complicates his life as a small business owner.

Job Creators Network recently surveyed 500 small business owners, data, Ortiz said, proves that “if you want to create an economic revival on Main Street, then give tax dollars back to small businesses and they will make it happen by reinvesting in jobs, wages and infrastructure.”

The new survey, conducted by Roosevelt Opinion Research, shows that small business owners would prefer tax cuts over an Obamacare repeal.

Another 48.6 percent said tax cuts would help them grow their businesses, while 26 percent said congressional Democrats were the biggest obstacle to tax reform.

Steve Forbes, chairman and editor-in-chief of Forbes Media, recently announced his “[full support](http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/09/13/steve-forbes-praises-job-creators-networks-taxcutsnow-campaign/)” for Job Creators Network’s TaxCutsNow campaign.

President Trump has also recently [outlined](http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/09/06/trump-says-tax-plan-will-cut-taxes-for-middle-class-families/) his administration’s vision for what he called “the American plan” earlier this month in front of a large crowd in Bismarck, North Dakota.

“So we’re here today to talk about our plan to create a new age of American prosperity by reducing the crushing tax burden on our companies and on our workers,” Trump told the audience. “The taxes are crazy — the highest-taxed nation in the world. We’re going to turn that around very quickly.”

**The DNC Clown Car**

## Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta likened the Trump White House to a “clown car” in that “you are never sure who is getting out of the door” Thursday night on All in with Chris Hayes, an MSNBC program hosted by a zealous Democrat who just as zealously embraces the look of a Hale-Bopp Heaven’s Gate cultist.

To strange people, people appear strange.

Take Podesta, a UFO aficionado whose truth is out there. He kept a picture of two fork-wielding men cannibalizing another man at a table, entitled “We’re Bringing an Old Friend over for Dinner,” at his office at Hillary Clinton’s Brooklyn campaign headquarters. During that campaign, news hit of Podesta’s invitation to a “spirit cooking” dinner by a performance artist, herself invited by Podesta to Hillary Clinton’s campaign kickoff, who dabbles in the occult. Though a past book and performances under the “spirit cooking” title involved such jaw-droppers as breast-milk-mixed-with-sperm potions and pigs-blood graffiti, Marina Abramovic insists the event she invited the Brothers Podesta to under that name involved no sorcery, spells, or strangeness.

When the campaign Podesta oversaw fell short of its goal, Hillary Clinton, as her campaign chairman spoke in her stead under a glass ceiling on election night, reportedly banged tables, shouted words that perhaps sounded like frock or truck to those in an adjoining room, and [hurled](http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2016/11/15/hillary-clinton-screaming-obscenities-and-throwing-objects-in-election-night-meltdown/) items about with Aroldis Chapmanlike velocity. Nowadays she goes for something called “alternate nostril breathing” to escape stress.

One of Hillary Clinton’s biggest cheerleaders in the sisterhood (members of the sisterhood hate real cheerleaders), Sally Quinn, outed herself as a practitioner of witchcraft in a memoir released this month. Ben Bradlee’s widow and one of Washington’s most famous hostesses insists she put hexes in candlelight rituals on three people who subsequently died. After a psychic provided a bad reading regarding her son, Quinn unleashed her evil wizardry on the unfortunate woman, who soon died, causing the Washington Post writer to swear off hexes for good. She noted, “I vowed once again never to put another hex on anyone.” But she has made that vow before, for instance, after hexing a romantic rival who committed suicide thereafter (write her memoir a one-star review at your own risk). So, if you find yourself staring at Sally Quinn staring at you doing the Samantha Stevens nose-twitch, then with extreme haste obtain the nearest magic mirror or protective decoy puppet to negate the necromancy. Your life could depend on it (You’re welcome).

Why did 62,984,825 Americans cram into Donald Trump’s clown car last November? Because it looked like a safer, better means of transportation than the broomstick ridden by his opponent. Ridiculous beats evil. And to many Americans, leading Democrats strike them not only as evil but alien. When your party’s leading lights wield dark powers of a supernatural sort, or even just favor bizarro, avant-garde art or see extraterrestrials behind every evening cloud, do not count on them wielding power in the White House, Congress, or the Supreme Court. Democrats stand on the outside looking in because Americans connected more with a billionaire than they did with the weirdos and warlocks [casting](http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/09/08/monthly-wizardry-against-the-president-expands/) spells on him in monthly waning-moon rituals.

The party of spirt cooking, alternate nasal breathing, and fatal hexes regards the opposition as passengers in a clown car chauffeured by Donald Trump. This characterization might hit the mark. But even in the aftermath of Steven King’s It, Americans still prefer the clown car to the witches’ coven.

**Little Kim and the US-China Bluffing Game**

The US could impose economic sanctions on China if it does not implement the new sanctions regime against North Korea, the US Treasury Secretary has warned. Steven Mnuchin said the restrictions could involve cutting off Beijing’s access to the US financial system.

*“North Korea economic warfare works,”* Mnuchin said Tuesday at the Delivering Alpha Conference in New York City. *“We sent a message that anybody who wanted to trade with North Korea – we would consider them not trading with us.”*

The Treasury Secretary echoed the words of the US envoy to the UN, Nikki Haley, by calling the fresh round of sanctions against Pyongyang *“historic.”* Mnuchin added *“if China doesn’t follow these sanctions, we will put additional sanctions on them and prevent them from accessing the US and international dollar system.”*

Washington has, so far, been reluctant to impose economic sanctions on China over concerns of possible retaliatory measures from Beijing and the potentially catastrophic consequences for the global economy.

Washington runs a $350 billion annual trade deficit with Beijing. China also holds $1 trillion in US debt, which amounts to 28 percent of US Treasury bills, notes and bonds held by a foreign government.

US lawmakers, however, seemed to be more inclined to exert pressure on Beijing and other countries striking deals with Pyongyang as they demand a *“supercharged”* response to North Korea’s nuclear tests, including imposing sanctions on companies from China and any other country doing business in North Korea.

*“I believe the response from the United States and our allies should be supercharged,”* said Ed Royce, chairman of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee during a hearing Tuesday.

*“We need to use every ounce of leverage… to put maximum pressure on this rogue regime,”* he said, adding that *“time is running out.”* Royce also called on Washington to target major Chinese banks, including the Agricultural Bank of China and the China Merchants Bank for dealing with Pyongyang.

He also said China was apparently reluctant to follow through on the sanctions adopted by the UN Security Council (UNSC) against the North. *“It’s been a long, long time of waiting for China to comply with the sanctions that we pass and, frankly, with the sanctions that the United Nations passed,”* he said.

The committee chair went on to say the US could give Chinese banks and companies *“a choice between doing business with North Korea or the United States.”* He added that the US should also *“go after banks and companies in other countries that do business with North Korea the same way.”*

Committee members also expressed unease over the fact that the sanctions imposed on North Korea have so far been ineffective in preventing Pyongyang from developing its nuclear and missile programs.

*“We’ve been played by the Kims for years,”* Republican Representative Ted Poe said, referring to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his predecessors, as reported by Reuters.

President Donald Trump also downplayed the role of the newly adopted sanctions later Tuesday. *”We think it’s just another very small step, not a big deal. I don’t know if it has any impact,”* he told reporters at the start of a meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Trump also said he already discussed the issue with his State Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. He ominously added that “those sanctions are nothing compared to what ultimately will have to happen” without specifying what he meant by that.

**FEMA Resources: New Ideas are Needed**

The federal government auctioned off disaster-response trailers at fire-sale prices just before Harvey devastated southeast Texas, reducing an already diminished supply of mobile homes ahead of what could become the nation's largest-ever housing mission.

More than 100 2017-model Federal Emergency Management Agency trailers were sold over the two days before the Category 4 hurricane landed in the Gulf Coast, an analysis of government data by The Associated Press found. Harvey was already projected to be a monster storm that would inflict unprecedented damage.

The trailers were designated to be sold through Aug. 28, after floodwaters sent thousands of Texans onto rooftops and into shelters.

About 79,000 homes in the areas affected by the hurricane were flooded with 18 inches or more of water, Michael Byrne, FEMA's federal disaster recovery coordinator for Harvey, told AP.

The auctions — about 300 since the beginning of the year — have left FEMA with a standing fleet of only 1,700 units. The agency has put out bids for another 4,500, but officials could not say when they would be ready to meet needs arising from Harvey, Irma and potentially future storms.

"There's a vast chasm between what they can supply and what is actually needed," said Dr. Irwin Redlener, director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University, adding that he found the trailer auctions an "unfortunate decision."

FEMA officials said that the units sold had all been used to house survivors of last year's floods in Southern Louisiana, who returned them with damages that made them unfit for redeployment.

"The ones you will hear about being auctioned are the used models that we've determined it's not cost-effective to refurbish. We're very rigid and strict about what we'll refurbish and it's got to be something that quite frankly any one of us would be comfortable living in and willing to put our families into," Byrne said.

Yet the 300 trailers sold on the Government Services Agency's online auction since the beginning of the year 2017 were advertised either without problems, or with only minor damage, such as flat tires, buckling trim or missing furniture, GSA records showed. FEMA said trailers also go to the auction block because of leaks, roach infestations and odor left by cigarette smoke.

FEMA officials said the trailers it had recently ordered will cost the agency around $40,000 for a one-bedroom. By contrast, GSA sold a 2017-model trailer Aug. 23 with damage it described as normal wear and tear and low or flat tires for less than $5,000.

FEMA deployed 144,000 trailers after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but started selling off its stock in 2007 when the trailers became symbols of the troubled federal response after lawsuits accused some of those units of being riddled with high levels of cancer-causing formaldehyde.

Sales were halted after tests by the Centers for Disease Control in 2008 showed formaldehyde leaching from the trailers' pressed-wood products. The auctions resumed after a court order was lifted in 2010, and Katrina-era units resurfaced on Native American reservations, in North Dakota's oilfields and in Texas, following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, according to Chemical Heritage Foundation fellow Nicholas Shapiro.

In 2011, FEMA announced that all of its trailers would be built with wood products that met emission standards set by the California Air Resources Board. Units rolled out in 2016 ranged in size from one to three bedrooms and were equipped with smoke detectors, fire sprinklers and central heating and air conditioning, with hookups for washing machines and cable TV.

FEMA has auctioned off trailers during disasters before.

As Superstorm Sandy churned up the Atlantic coast in 2012, dozens of trailers sat idle in a supermarket parking lot in Northeastern Pennsylvania, — about two hours from the New Jersey coast.

The trailers were deployed for a flood the previous year, but many went unused and instead wound up on the government auction block at a fraction of their original cost, landing on the resale market or being refurbished for personal use.

**Sonic Weaponry in Cuba?**

Whatever is harming U.S. diplomats in Havana, it's eluded the doctors, scientists and intelligence analysts scouring for answers. Investigators have chased many theories, including a sonic attack, electromagnetic weapon or flawed spying device.

Each explanation seems to fit parts of what's happened, conflicting with others.

The United States doesn't even know what to call it. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson used the phrase "health attacks." The State Department prefers "incidents."

Either way, suspicion has fallen on Cuba. But investigators also are examining whether a rogue faction of its security services, another country such as Russia, or some combination is to blame, more than a dozen U.S. officials familiar with the investigation told The Associated Press.

Those officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to publicly discuss the investigation. The AP also talked to scientists, physicians, acoustics and weapons experts, and others about the theories being pursued.

Perhaps the biggest mystery is why the symptoms, sounds and sensations vary so dramatically from person to person.

Of the 21 medically confirmed U.S. victims, some have permanent hearing loss or concussions, while others suffered nausea, headaches and ear-ringing. Some are struggling with concentration or common word recall, the AP has reported. Some felt vibrations or heard loud sounds mysteriously audible in only parts of rooms, and others heard nothing.

"These are very nonspecific symptoms. That's why it's difficult to tell what's going on," said Dr. H. Jeffrey Kim, a specialist on ear disorders at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital who isn't involved with the investigation.

To solve the puzzle, investigators are sorting symptoms into categories, such as auditory and neurological, according to individuals briefed on the probe.

There can be a lag before victims discover or report symptoms, some of which are hard to diagnose. So investigators are charting the timeline of reported incidents to identify "clusters" to help solve the when, where and how of the Havana whodunit.

While Cuba has been surprisingly cooperative, even inviting the FBI to fly down to Havana, it's not the same as an investigation with the U.S. government in full control.

"You're on foreign soil," said David Rubincam, a former FBI agent who served in Moscow. "The quality of the information and evidence you collect is limited to what the host government will allow you to see and hear and touch and do."

Especially when you don't even know what you're looking for.

### SONIC DEVICE

The first signs pointed to a sonic attack. But what kind?

Some victims heard things — signs that the sounds were in the audible spectrum. Loud noise can harm hearing, especially high-decibel sounds that can trigger ear-ringing tinnitus, ruptured ear drums, even permanent hearing loss.

But others heard nothing, and still became ill. So investigators considered inaudible sound: infrasound, too low for humans to hear, and ultrasound, too high.

Infrasound often is experienced as vibration, like standing near a subwoofer. Some victims reported feeling vibrations.

And it's not impossible that infrasound could explain some of what diplomats thought they heard.

Though infrasound is usually inaudible, some people can detect it if the waves are powerful enough. For example, individuals living near infrasound-generating wind turbines have described pulsating hums that have left them dizzy, nauseous or with interrupted sleep. Such effects have prompted fierce scientific debate.

The balance problems reported in Havana? Possibly explained by infrasound, which may stimulate cells in the ear's vestibular system that controls balance, scientists say.

But there's little evidence infrasound can cause lasting damage once the sound stops.

And the pinpointed focus of the sound, reported by some? Infrasound waves travel everywhere, making them difficult to aim with precision.

"There's no efficient way to focus infrasound to make it into a usable weapon," said Mario Svirsky, an expert on ear disorders and neuroscience at New York University School of Medicine.

If not infrasound, maybe ultrasound?

At high-intensity, ultrasound can damage human tissue. That's why doctors use it to destroy uterine fibroids and some tumors.

But ultrasound damage requires close contact between the device and the body. "You cannot sense ultrasound from long distances," Svirsky said. No victim said they saw a weird contraption nearby.

None of these sound waves seems to explain the concussions. Usually, those follow a blow to the head or proximity to something like a bomb blast.

"I know of no acoustic effect or device that could produce traumatic brain injury or concussion-like symptoms," said Juergen Altmann, an acoustic weapons expert and physicist at Germany's Technische Universitaet Dortmund.

### ELECTROMAGNETIC WEAPON

It may sound like Star Wars fantasy, but electromagnetic weapons have been around for years. They generally harm electronics, not humans.

The electromagnetic spectrum includes waves like the ones used by your cellphone, microwave and light bulbs.

And they can be easily pinpointed. Think lasers. Such waves can also travel through walls, so an electromagnetic attack could be plausibly concealed from afar.

There's precedent. For more than a decade ending in the 1970s, the former Soviet Union bombarded the U.S. Embassy in Moscow with microwaves. The exact purpose was never clear.

What about the sounds people heard?

Microwave pulses — short, intense blasts — can cause people to "hear" clicking sounds. According to a two-decade-old U.S. Air Force patent, the American military has researched whether those blasts could be manipulated to "beam" voices or other sounds to someone's head.

But when electromagnetic waves cause physical damage, it usually results from body tissue being heated. The diplomats in Cuba haven't been reporting burning sensations.

### SOMETHING ELSE

The stress and anxiety about the disturbing incidents could be complicating the situation. Diplomats may be taking a closer look at mild symptoms they'd otherwise ignored.

After all, once symptoms emerged, the U.S. Embassy encouraged employees to report anything suspicious. Many of these symptoms can be caused by a lot of different things.

At least one other country, France, tested embassy staffers after an employee reported symptoms. The French then ruled out sonic-induced damage, the AP reported .

Not knowing what's causing the crisis in Cuba has made it harder to find the culprit. If there is one at all.

### THE CUBA THEORY

It was only natural that American suspicion started with Cuba.

The attacks happened on Cuban soil. The two countries routinely harassed each other's diplomats over a half-century of enmity. Despite eased tensions over the past couple of years, distrust lingers.

Diplomats reported incidents in their homes and in hotels. Cuban authorities would know who is staying in each.

But what's the motive?

When symptoms emerged last November, Cuba was working feverishly with the U.S. to make progress on everything from internet access to immigration rules before President Barack Obama's term ended. Officials still don't understand why Havana would at the same time perpetrate attacks that could destroy its new relationship with Washington entirely.

Cuban President Raul Castro's reaction deepened investigators' skepticism, according to officials briefed on a rare, face-to-face discussion he had on the matter with America's top envoy in Havana.

Predictably, Castro denied responsibility. But U.S. officials were surprised that Castro seemed genuinely rattled, and that Cuba offered to let the FBI come investigate.

Then, Canadians got ill. Why them?

The warm, long-standing ties between Cuba and Canada made it seem even less logical that Castro's government was the culprit.

### THE ROGUES

If not Castro, could elements of Cuba's vast intelligence apparatus be to blame? Investigators haven't ruled out that possibility, several U.S. officials said.

It's no secret that some within Cuba's government are uneasy about Raul Castro's opening with Washington.

"It's entirely possible that hard-line elements acted," said Michael Parmly, who headed the U.S. mission in Havana until 2008.

But mounting unauthorized attacks, tantamount to aggression against a foreign power, would be a risky act of defiance in a country noted for its strong central control.

Cuba's surveillance of U.S. diplomats in Havana is intense. The government tracks U.S. diplomats' movements and conversations.

So at a minimum, if Americans were being attacked, it's difficult to imagine Cuba's spies being left in the dark.

### THE OUTSIDERS

Who else would dare?

U.S. investigators have focused on a small group of usual suspects: Russia, Iran, North Korea, China, Venezuela.

Russia, in particular, has harassed American diplomats aggressively in recent years.

Moscow even has a plausible motive: driving a wedge between the communist island and "the West" — nations such as the United States and Canada. Russia also has advanced, hard-to-detect weaponry the much of the world lacks and might not even know about.

None of officials interviewed for this story pointed to any evidence, however, linking Russia to the illnesses. The same goes for the other countries.

### SPYING GONE AWRY?

Maybe no one tried to hurt the Americans at all.

Several U.S. officials have emphasized the possibility the culprit merely surveilled the U.S. diplomats using some new, untested technology that caused unintended harm.

You might think eavesdropping devices simply receive signals. But the world of espionage is full of strange tales.

During the Cold War, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow discovered Russia listening to conversations through a wooden plaque that the American ambassador received as a gift. The plaque had a tiny "microphone" and antenna embedded, but no power source, making it hard to detect even when the room was swept for bugs.

The Russians had developed something novel. They remotely beamed electromagnetic waves to activate the device, which then transmitted sound back via radio frequencies.

Yet if the Cubans or anyone else were equally as innovative, it's unclear why the incidents would have continued once the United States and Canada complained.

**Games: A Type and A Shadow of Reality**

WND Exclusive

Unbeknownst to most of the world, the United States and the Soviet Union teetered on the brink of nuclear war in November 1983. Yet it was this close scrape with disaster that ultimately led to the peaceful end of the Cold War, according to one man whose father was there.

John Clauson grew up believing his father was an IBM computer salesman. But when he was in his mid-30s, he finally learned the truth: Wallace Clauson was actually a genius nuclear mathematician who took his orders from the Defense Department. His job was to ensure America’s vast arsenal of nuclear missiles hit their targets.

John Clauson shares the full story of his father’s hidden life in his new book [“Missileman: The Secret Life of Cold War Engineer Wallace Clauson.”](http://superstore.wnd.com/Missileman-The-Secret-Life-of-Cold-War-Engineer-Wallace-Clauson-Hardcover?promocode=MSTORY)

One of the more fascinating tidbits Clauson shares in his book is that the Cold War nearly erupted into a hot nuclear war in 1983 during what was known as the Able Archer 83 exercise.

“In the late ’70s, the Russians were really on a roll,” Clauson recalled during a [recent interview on Freedom Friday with Carl Gallups.](https://carlgallups.blogspot.com/2017/09/freedom-friday-9-8-17-john-clauson.html) “They had invaded Afghanistan and they had become very aggressive with the Eastern bloc countries in lining up what they call SS-20s, their mobile missile launchers with very accurate short-range missiles, and they’re parked all along the Eastern bloc countries, very close to Europe.”

President Jimmy Carter planned to counter these SS-20s by bringing more Pershing and cruise missiles into Germany. The Carter administration was discreet about these plans; however, when Ronald Reagan became president, he boasted about the plan.

“As we know, Ronald Reagan was very aggressive in his attitude and tone towards the Russians,” Clauson said. “He called them the ‘Evil Empire,’ he threatened them with Star Wars. And soon after Ronald Reagan became president, the Russians in May of 1981 expected that Ronald Reagan was going to attack Russia.”

It didn’t help when, in October 1983, Reagan invaded the former British colony of Grenada without notifying British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, all to prevent the tiny island from falling to communists.

It also didn’t help when, that same month, Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam delivered a speech on “superpower relations emphasizing the immediate threat posed by the Soviet Union.”

Against this backdrop, NATO prepared to conduct its annual Able Archer exercise. Able Archer simulated a period of conflict escalation which culminated in a pretend DEFCOM 1 coordinated nuclear attack. The sole purpose of the exercise was to check the communication systems and computer controls which would need to be used in the event of a real nuclear attack.

Wallace Clauson flew to Casteau, Belgium, to take part in the 1983 Able Archer exercise. His job was to coordinate the fake nuclear launch by making sure all “missiles” stayed on track. More importantly, he had to make sure the computer codes used to launch the missiles were not live.

Although the Russians had monitored NATO Able Archer exercises before, the tense geopolitical climate in the fall of 1983 led them to suspect this exercise might be an actual nuclear strike. So they prepared accordingly.

They lined airport runways in the USSR and Eastern Europe with bombers on standby. Their nuclear submarines in the Arctic hid under the ice, ready to launch missiles. They dispersed 75 mobile missiles into the field around the country.

“For three days, the Russians were at DEFCOM 2 (preparation for responding to a nuclear attack),” Clauson said. “They were expecting nuclear war, and we had no idea, and when my father was telling me this, he told me, ‘Johnny, when I found out that they had gone to DEFCOM 2, I thought I could have been vaporized.’ Let me tell you, if your father tells you he was going to be vaporized, you’ll never forget that.”

Of course, when the 10-day exercise ended, the Soviets realized it had been only that – an exercise. But a double agent named Oleg Gordievsky informed CIA director William Casey that Russia had gone into DEFCOM 2 during Able Archer, believing the U.S. was going to launch a real nuclear attack. Casey then passed this information to President Reagan.

When Reagan learned how close the world had come to nuclear war, he began to change his tone, according to Clauson. He abandoned any talk of the Soviet Union as an “Evil Empire” and began to focus on cooperation and the two superpowers’ shared desire for peace.

“[Reagan] goes, ‘Did they really think I was going to nuke them?’ and that’s what ended the Cold War,” Clauson asserted. “Ronald Reagan started back-channeling to the Russians, saying, ‘Listen, I’m not crazy. We’ve got to look for mutual areas where we can agree.’ [Mikhail] Gorbachev surfaces 15 to 17 months later.

“So that’s how the Cold War really ended. It wasn’t that we scared them into spending – obviously they didn’t want to spend like we could, but that’s what really did it, when Ronald Reagan realized they were at DEFCOM 2. It’s the only time the Russians were at DEFCOM 2, and we had no idea. That is very, very dangerous. It would have been terrible for us.”

**Music and the Human Brain**

Those of you who have been out with me singing in bars or clubs know that I always say that singing in a spiritual experience. Well, it turns out that I am right….again. Experiencing sensations like goose bumps or a lump in the throat when listening to music is quite rare and unique.

Matthew Sachs a former undergraduate at Harvard, last year studied individuals who get chills from music to see how this feeling was triggered. The research examined 20 students, 10 of which admitted to experiencing the aforementioned feelings in relation to music and 10 that didn't and took brain scans of all of them all.

He discovered that those that had managed to make the emotional and physical attachment to music actually have different brain structures than those that don't. The research showed that they tended to have a denser volume of fibres that connect their auditory cortex and areas that process emotions, meaning the two can communicate better.

Sachs's findings have been published on [Oxford Academic](https://academic.oup.com/scan/article/11/6/884/2223400/Brain-connectivity-reflects-human-aesthetic) but he is quoted by [*Neuroscience*](http://neurosciencenews.com/music-chills-neuroscience-6167/) as saying:

The idea being that more fibers and increased efficiency between two regions means that you have more efficient processing between them. This means if you do get chills from music you are more likely to have stronger and more intense emotions. Plus these sensations can also be associated with memories linked to a certain song, which cannot be controlled in a laboratory setting.

Although the study was only small in size Sachs is currently conducting further research which will look at the brains activity when listening to songs that register certain reactions. I have observed 6th graders who are exposed to musical instruments for the first time. Flutes, baritones, trumpets, drums, and even stringed instruments are tried until the student finds the one that seems to call to him or her. The struggle at first, making sounds that no one could consider pleasant, but then something amazing happens.

They make a good sound. One note, or a series of notes, or even better, they combine with others making notes to make a chord. I remember all my kids went through music. I love music, and it has filled our house from well before the four of them were born. I play it, sing it, and of course listen to it every single day.

My youngest son came home from 6th grade band class at school one day and said something profound. He said, “We made a sound today in band. It was amazing and so beautiful. It was really cool.”

He had experienced the connection between music and the brain, perhaps even the soul. Now, this is my one child who cannot sing. Well, he cannot and never could match his voice with a note. All my other kids can sing a note an hour after playing for them. Perfect. He could not carry a tune in a 5-gallon bucket. It turned out, he could not play music by ear, either. He couldn’t play a note he heard. That is the only thing that prevented him from getting a degree in music.

But, he could read music, and he could play music with feeling. I rarely missed a performance, until his senior year in High School when I was called away to travel extensively.

I believe that humans who come from certain planes in the universe are musical beings. The ones who play are special. The ones who sing are special, but now it turns out that the ones who are moved by music to tears, joy, or feel the cooling synergy of peace are also special. The dark force know this as well and create their own style to recruit souls to their energy of destruction, oppression, and violence. I encourage you to make sure your homes are filled with the right music and not the wrong music. At least until a level of awareness and maturity comes along that allows the soul to listen to anything, and maintain sovereignty. Know that an attempt is being made to influence you, and then remain above it.

**The NFL Stops Being National**

I was excited about football season starting last week. It is really the only sport I sit down and watch. But in all the years I have been a fan and watched the games, I saw something I have never seen on Thursday night Football. Empty seats. Oh, I don’t mean a row or two. I mean entire sections of the stadium had perhaps 40 people, scattered here and there in their assigned seats.

Week 1 of the NFL season had plenty of important stories worth following, but maybe the most entertaining was the mostly empty stadiums in Los Angeles and Santa Clara. Both the [Los Angeles Rams](http://thebiglead.com/tag/los-angeles-rams/) and [San Francisco 49ers](http://thebiglead.com/tag/san-francisco-49ers/) had sparse crowds for their home openers, and that has not gone unnoticed by the NFL. The reality is that the National Football League has stopped being national.

Oh, it’s broadcast nationally, globally even, but that is not what I mean. It has stopped being national. The nation of America has been sucked out of the presentation, and along with it the American pride in the competition on the most perfect game for TV ever created. The racist protests of special interest groups have infected one billion-dollar franchise after another. There is something nauseating to see million dollar prima-donna athletes refuse to respect the national anthem. We love hearing kids, men, and women go out there with nothing but a mic and sing the national anthem. When you hear someone like Lady Gaga or some great tenor or a famous musical duet really pour their hearts into it, there is a feeling of reverence for America.

But America has enemies. I’m not worried about that. Even Jesus had enemies. We are a good nation with the biggest heart the world has ever known. We love the world, the planet, and the humans and animals that live upon it. And when we see this type of disrespect, privately, if not publically, we shy away from it.

So when the NFL becomes national again, and I don’t mean passing some sort of entertainment rule that all players must stand for the anthem, but the gratitude for living in the most exceptional country in history should be encouraged and expressed. And believe me, earth explorers, we can tell when you’re faking it. It is a sad day in America, when the very country that gave these great athletes the opportunity to become wealthy is hated by those same athletes. I have a word of advice. If you’re not happy here, please leave. Because you’re ruining the game.

**How Armed Are Americans?**

While we don’t know for certain, it’s estimated that there are roughly 300 *million* guns in America. Of course, some say that number is [higher](https://bearingarms.com/jenn-j/2017/06/27/more-than-600-million-firearms-in-america/)…much higher…like upwards of 200 million higher. So who owns all these guns, and where do they live? Injury Prevention, a scholarly journal, decided to find out.

The journal surveyed 4,000 adults across the country to see which states have the highest number of gun owners per capita, also known as the gun ownership rate.

Check to see how your state ranks. You just might be surprised.

**Below the national average of 29.1%**

Delaware: 5.2

Rhode Island: 5.8

New York: 10.3

New Jersey: 11.3

New Hampshire: 14.4

Connecticut: 16.6

Ohio: 19.6

Nebraska: 19.8

California: 20.1

Maryland: 20.7

Massachusetts: 22.6

Maine: 22.6

District of Columbia: 25.9

Illinois: 26.2

Oregon: 26.6

Missouri: 27.1

Pennsylvania: 27.1

Washington: 27.7

North Carolina: 28.7

Michigan: 28.8

Vermont: 28.8

**Above the national average of 29.1%**

Virginia: 29.3

Oklahoma: 31.2

Georgia: 31.6

Utah: 31.9

Kansas: 32.2

Arizona: 32.3

Florida: 32.5

Indiana: 33.8

Iowa: 33.8

Colorado: 34.3

Wisconsin 34.7

South Dakota: 35.0

Texas: 35.7

Minnesota: 36.7

Nevada: 37.5

Tennessee: 39.4

Kentucky: 42.4

Mississippi: 42.8

South Carolina: 44.4

Louisiana: 44.5

Hawaii: 45.1

North Dakota: 47.9

Alabama: 48.9

New Mexico: 49.9

Montana: 52.3

Wyoming: 53.8

West Virginia: 54.2

Idaho: 56.9

Arkansas: 57.9

Alaska: 61.7

While the survey is a few years old (it was first published in 2015), it’s likely the rankings have generally remained the same.

**Weapons at Protests May Not be a Good Idea**

The drums of gun control are beating and beating hard. Every since Charlottesville, where there were a lot of guns but remarkably little shooting, the left has continued to drone on about how the presence of guns at political gatherings is problematic. After all, they argue, only an idiot would want to take a gun to such a thing.

An idiot? Or someone who understands that some people [may be intending to hurt others at such events](http://www.ktvu.com/news/hundreds-arrive-at-uc-berkeley-ahead-of-conservative-speakers-event)?

Alameda County Sheriff’s considered the woman’s sign to be too large. Berkeley Police Department tweeted Roark was arrested for carrying a “banned weapon” and swiftly sent out her booking photo. In fact, the [department tweeted](https://twitter.com/berkeleypolice) five of the nine mug shot photos and the reasons they were arrested.

The other woman, 20-year-old Hannah Benjamin of Fremont, apparently witnessed the arrest of the first woman and allegedly spat on an officer. Police tweeted her booking photo as well and said the arrest was for “battery” of an officer and that she too was carrying a banned weapon.

A third booking photo of a male, Michael Paul Sullivan, 29, of Hayward was tweeted out by Berkeley Police at 9:37 p.m. Police say the arrest was for carrying a banned weapon. He was arrested near Bancroft Way and Telegraph Avenue.

At a briefing late in the evening, UC Berkeley Police Chief Margo Bennett said at that point, there were four to five arrests.

“Banned weapons.”

In other words, they brought things that were expressly forbidden because they could be used as weapons to injure political opponents. Some people don’t want to play by the rules, especially since we know that crowds at this location have assaulted opponents previously. When conservative provocateur Milo Yiannapolous tried to speak at Berkeley earlier this year, the campus erupted in flames.

A short time later, off-campus but still in Berkeley, a free speech rally was actively attacked by Antifa. The rally attendees repelled the assault in what has been called “The Battle of Berkeley” since then.

As a nation, we’re divided by ideology, and there are many who simply don’t see their opponents as human. For example:

Of course, this individual refused to acknowledge that he’d done anything wrong by claiming that pro-gun advocate Dana Loesch wasn’t even human, and that’s kind of the point.

When you find yourself facing opponents who won’t even regard you as human, you have a very real reason to fear for your life. This is not a bad thing in their minds, however. If you’re scared, then you’re less likely to speak against them and they can pretend their part of the conversation is the only part of the conversation.

Conversely, you can stand up and make your voice heard. That means either risking life and limb or wanting to be armed so you can defend not only your right to free speech but also your life. Is it that hard to imagine why someone would want to carry a firearm to a protest?

Let’s also note that despite the prevalence of firearms at Charlottesville, the militia present has been credited with stopping violence.

I’m not saying it’s necessarily a good idea, mind you. That’s a value judgment that I believe relies on the individual to determine what is in their best interests. What I am saying is that it’s not an unreasonable thing for someone to want to do.

What do you think? Are lawfully carried firearms at protests wrong, even if legal?

**Gun Control: The Straight Path to Tyranny**

Tom Knighton

You’d expect a group of attorneys to understand the law. For all the lawyer jokes that fly around, the ones I know are all good, honorable people working at a job that everyone needs at some point, but no one respects. Of course, they’re probably not too thrilled about what the American Bar Association is currently pulling.

It seems that this august group of lawyers has decided that gun rights should be thrown out the window [if someone asks hard enough](https://www.forbes.com/sites/trevorburrus/2017/09/13/the-aba-is-committed-to-due-process-unless-youre-a-gun-owner/#998c4cc27ce2).

It’s common for lawmakers to go after guns when there’s a “crisis.” The governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands [ordered the National Guard](http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/09/05/us-virgin-islands-governor-orders-seizure-citizens-weapons-nra-threatens-to-sue.html) to seize guns before Hurricane Irma hit, and the mayor of New Orleans did something similar before Katrina. More broadly, lawmakers often go after guns in smaller crises, such as domestic violence situations or when there are concerns that a potentially dangerous person might misuse a gun. While that might seem like a good policy in theory, it should concern anyone who cares about due process and protecting constitutional rights. That’s why it was troubling when, at the 2017 American Bar Association annual meeting, the ABA House of Delegates formally adopted [resolution 118B](https://www.americanbar.org/news/reporter_resources/annual-meeting-2017/house-of-delegates-resolutions/118b.html), which urges state governments to put in place “GVRO”s (Gun Violence Restraining Orders). GVROs enable law enforcement to search for and seize a person’s lawfully possessed arms on the theory that they may pose a danger to themselves or others.

The ABA, whose primary purpose is to set academic standards for law schools and propose codes of ethics for lawyers, has never been too fond of the Second Amendment. [As early as 1965](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/committees/gun_violence/policy.html), the ABA favored restrictive gun control. What is surprising about this resolution, though, is the lack of attention paid to the due process rights of gun owners. In its resolution, the ABA explicitly endorses issuing GVROs ex parte, meaning the constitutional rights of the accused could be stripped without the opportunity to defend himself in court.

Ex parte proceedings always pose constitutional concerns, as they deal with the rights of a person who is not before the court. The classic situation is a domestic violence restraining order, which is what most GVROs are based on. Those are more justifiable as ex parteproceedings because they involve a balancing of the rights of the accused and potential victim, and they specifically focus on the protecting an identifiable person. Those orders are issued in certain terms and do not require a physical invasion into the life of the accused.

Only a blind person–either physically or ideologically–could be incapable of seeing the problems with this. After all, how many of us have had people find out we own guns and immediately ask whether we’re going to shoot someone? There are people who are absolutely convinced that the mere presence of a firearm constitutes a threat, and the American Bar Association wants to give them a tool to use to bypass due process and snatch away lawful property?

Yeah, that’s a problem.

The American Bar Association needs to understand that if we allow a due process exemption on this, then that can be used to erode due process for other groups down the road. What about taking the car of someone who simply mentions they’re going out to drink that night? What about taking the computer of someone who will say mean things on the internet?

Once the camel’s nose is under the tent, it’s impossible to keep the camel out. The only question is just how long it’ll take before you have a camel crapping on your sleeping bag.