

Newsbytes

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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

Pandemic Is Wake Up Call To Prepare For Bioterrorism

News Image BY ERIC MANDEL/JNS.ORG APRIL 13, 2020



The hard lessons of the coronavirus pandemic will hopefully motivate the world to work together in the future to mitigate the effects of the next naturally occurring global viral threat. But it should also open our eyes to the potentially greater threat of human-made biological weapons--the deliberate release of a pathogen or biotoxin against humans or animals.

In 2017, the International Committee of the Red Cross asked the question as to how real the threat of biological weapons was. "It's never been easier to develop and use biological weapons It's time to take this

seriously. Governments need to assess the new risks," was the response.

In 2010, the U.S. Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism, chaired by Sens. Jim Talent (R-Mo.) and Bob Graham (D-Fla.), reported that, "Unfortunately, there is no national plan to coordinate federal, state and local efforts following a bioterror attack, and the United States lacks the technical and operational capabilities required for an adequate response."

Since the anthrax scare post-9/11, America has spent billions of dollars on bio-defense, and provided the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases with more than a billion dollars annually for biodefense research.

But it may not be enough.

Today, viruses and microbes can be weaponized using gene-editing CRISPR technology to weaponize everything from smallpox to Ebola to the Spanish flu. In addition, bio-weapons have been produced and stockpiled around the world--how securely, your guess is as good as mine. Some experts think extremists are now more likely in the coming years to use bioterrorism than nuclear weapons.

The current pandemic may have whetted their appetite for biological disaster as a path to anarchy and chaos which could destabilize their target enemies. Whether we are speaking of Iran's revolutionaries hastening the return of the hidden imam, the irrational megalomaniac in North Korea, the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda Salafists, drug cartels in South America, or neo-Nazis in Europe or America, we must think like they do to prevent the next potential threat.

Unlike the coronavirus pandemic that indiscriminately attacks everyone, the next catastrophe could be fashioned to target certain areas and populations.

The West, except for Israel to some extent, is woefully unprepared for biological threats. Fourteen years ago, I visited a newly constructed underground hospital in northern Israel whose air-filtration system was designed with protection from chemical and biological weapons.

Of course, we cannot put everyone underground, but there are many ways Israel continually prepares its citizens and mitigates the potential for future attacks in its small geographic neighborhood surrounded by enemies who can deliver lethal unconventional attacks with crude missiles at a moment's notice, for whom the threat of retaliation is likely the only barrier to the use of nonconventional weapons.

Remember, rogue leaders like Syria's Hafez (and now Bashar) Assad and Iraq's Saddam Hussein weren't ashamed to kill their own people with poison gasses.

What the United States and the West can and should learn is that these attacks are not far-fetched, and we must invest in the resources not only to be defensive, but to stop them at their source like Israel routinely does. An American withdrawal from the Middle East--losing our eyes and ears, and HUMINT (human intelligence)--is a prescription to endanger our homeland in the future.

Wholesale deliberate massacres are plentiful in recent history. As many as 800,000 people were slaughtered in Rwanda by ethnic Hutu extremists in 100 days. Pol Pot killed at least a million-and-a-half of his citizens; and the Nazis on an industrial scale killed 6 million Jews and millions of others.

In Syria, 500,000 of its citizens have been killed, with millions displaced, and the world yawns. Too many people have an indifferent side to suffering, and we mustn't think that there aren't zealots who would rationalize the use of unconventional biological weapons to advance their goals. To understand how far from Western norms a rogue nation could be, just look back at the Iran-Iraq war, when the Ayatollah sent tens of thousands of Iranian children to clear minefields and barbed wire for tanks, giving them keys that they were told were tickets to paradise if they were lucky enough to become martyrs.

Pandemic Surveillance State: Drones That Can Detect Fever Coming Soon



Image BY TYLER DURDEN/ACTIVIST POST APRIL 09, 2020

On Monday, former FDA chief Scott Gottlieb told CNBC that the US must build a "massive surveillance system" to detect where the virus might be spreading next - and maybe one of the best ways to monitor large swaths of the population could be through the use of pandemic drones across major US metropolitan cities.

The COVID-19 outbreak is proving to be the Trojan horse that justifies the ushering in of the surveillance state. We've noted how governments and corporations are quickly deploying big data and spy tools to monitor people during the pandemic.

The war on terror, the war on drugs, the war on illegal immigration, and now the war on COVID-19: all start out as legitimate responses but then are used by politicians to increase the surveillance state and erode any freedoms citizens have left.

What's coming to America in the not-too-distant future is a full-blown surveillance state, that could be on par with China's.

In particular, we want to show readers what could be coming down the pipe: That is, "pandemic drones" outfitted with specialized sensor and computer vision system that can fly around cities and detect if people have elevated body temperatures, respiratory rates, as well as to identify if people are sneezing and coughing (all signs of a COVID-19 carrier)

A US-based drone company called Draganfly is spearheading the effort to build a drone network across public areas to detect infected people. The drone network is called the "global early warning system" that would be able to spot the first signs of a pandemic.

Draganfly was recently selected by Vital Intelligence, a healthcare data services and deep learning company in conjunction with the University of South Australia, to "immediately commercialize" pandemic drones to monitor people in public areas.

"Draganfly is honored to work on such an important project given the current pandemic facing the world with COVID-19. Health and respiratory monitoring will be vital for not only detection, but also utilizing the data to understand health trends.

As we move forward, drones and autonomous technology doing detection will be an important part of ensuring public safety," said Andy Card, Director of Draganfly and former Secretary of Transportation and White House Chief of Staff.

Massive Earthquakes, Volcanoes now Erupting Worldwide

By Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz April 13

"When the storm passes the wicked man is gone, But the righteous is an everlasting foundation." Proverbs 10:25 (The Israel Bible™)

The waves of earthquakes are rocking the center of the U.S. and the sudden awakening of several volcanoes around the world may be a sign of the pre-Messiah shake-up predicted by the prophets. At the same time, several far more mild earthquakes in Israel seem to embody the Biblical concept of God's mercy being aroused by Man's actions.

WAVE OF EARTHQUAKES IN CENTRAL U.S.

The earth seems to be waking up as seismic activity is being reported around the globe. Last month, a 6.5 magnitude earthquake shook Idaho, generating a multitude of avalanches. The quake was the largest in the region since a 6.9 quake hit in 1983. There have been 238 earthquakes in Idaho in the last week according to the U.S. Geological Survey website. Five of those have been substantial in size rating 4.0 to 6.5. Idaho isn't new to experiencing earthquakes.

Two weeks before Idaho felt the earth move, Salt Lake City, Utah, approximately 340 miles away from the Idaho epicenter, was hit by a 5.7 magnitude earthquake. Since that earthquake, there have been 886 smaller earthquakes and aftershocks in the Salt Lake area.

The belly of the country is clearly rumbling as the University of Utah Seismograph Station mapped a total of 980 tremors throughout Idaho, Utah and Wyoming since March 18.

YELLOWSTONE GETS GREENLIGHT DESPITE “PULSATIONS”, OVER 100 EARTHQUAKES

Though the epicenter in Idaho was over 200 miles distant from the Yellowstone caldera, Yellowstone experienced 111 earthquakes in March. The Yellowstone Volcano Observatory released its monthly report on Wednesday, declaring its current alert level “normal” and its aviation color code “green.”

“These earthquakes are caused by tectonic extension of the region and are not related to Yellowstone, nor will they have a significant impact on the Yellowstone system,” the report stated.

This green light was issued despite a large section of the Yellowstone caldera called the Norris Geyser Basin, the hottest, oldest, and most dynamic of Yellowstone’s thermal areas, being discovered as pulsating, inflating and deflating by several inches in erratic bursts. In 2013, the Norris basin rose 5.9 inches for two consecutive years., rising an astonishing five inches in the last 20 years.

Although the probability of an eruption at Yellowstone may (or may not) be small, the results of such an event would be catastrophic in the extreme. Yellowstone Park is seismically active with more than 10,000 thermal features of which more than 500 are geysers. The Yellowstone caldera is listed as the most dangerous supervolcano in existence and as such, is the most monitored volcano in the world. It has erupted three times over the last 2 million years, most recently about 70,000 years ago. Yellowstone has produced three cataclysmic eruptions that scientists know of: at 2.08, 1.3, and 0.631 million years ago.

CONTINENTAL “STRETCHING”

An article in Discover explained the epidemic of earthquakes as being caused by the continent “stretching,” a process described in German as “horst and graben.”

“As North America continues to stretch across the Basin and Range, these faults can generate earthquakes as the valleys continue to drop,” the article explained. “Both of the earthquakes that happened in Nevada and Utah recently were on one of the normal faults that bounded a valley.

VOLCANOES AROUND THE WORLD

But it is not just the central U.S. that is experiencing a seismic awakening. Since January 21, the Reykjanes peninsula in Iceland has experienced more than 8,000 earthquakes and about 10 centimeters of land uplift due to magma intrusions underground. Geologists believe the volcanic systems in the region become active about once every thousand years. The last time this region experienced volcanic activity was 800 years ago. Beginning in the tenth century, the volcanically volatile period lasted for 300 years.

The region is about 30 miles southwest of Reykjavik, Iceland’s capital, but is only nine miles away from Iceland’s international airport. A major eruption could shut down travel for all of Iceland as well as endanger the nearby town of Grindavik as well as the Blue Lagoon, a popular tourist destination. There is also a nearby geothermal powerplant which could be endangered by volcanic activity.

As if that wasn’t enough, the Krakatoa volcano in Indonesia exploded on Friday. Though two relatively small eruptions were recorded, the volcano is a hotspot and cause for concern. In 188, a Krakatoa eruption

had one of the highest death tolls of any volcanic eruption, killing more than 36,000 people. The most recent eruption at the site was in 2018, generating a tsunami and killing 437 people.

Volcanoes are explicitly mentioned by the prophets as playing a role in the end of days, preparing the world by burning away impurities as a crucible is used in metallurgy to purify metal. This process is described in Zechariah.

And I will bring the third part through the fire and will refine them as silver is refined and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on My name and I will answer them; I will say: 'It is My people' and they shall say: 'Hashem is my God.' Zechariah 13:9

END OF DAYS SHAKE AND BAKE, BUT ISRAEL IS DIFFERENT

This type of cataclysmic seismic activity is mentioned specifically by the prophets as an aspect of the End-of-Days process.

But Hashem God is the true God, He is the living God, and the everlasting King; at His wrath the earth trembleth, and the nations are not able to abide His indignation. Jeremiah 10:10

The prophet describes this catastrophic period as a process to purify the inhabitants of the earth for the Messianic period to follow.

“And I will bring the third part through the fire and will refine them as silver is refined and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on My name and I will answer them; I will say: 'It is My people' and they shall say: 'Hashem is my God.’” Zechariah 13:9

On Friday, a 3.6 magnitude earthquake centered in the Arava region shook southern Israel. This came a few days after a 4.3 magnitude earthquake was felt in southern Israel with the epicenter in the Red Sea about 60 miles south of Eilat.

While volcanoes and earthquakes rock the world, it should be remembered that catastrophic end-of-days earthquakes are described by the Biblical prophets in two distinct contexts: inside Israel and outside of Israel. While most of these earthquakes shook seismically active regions it should be noted that Israel, sitting on the Syrian-African rift, has also experienced several tremors in the past year. These quakes have been far more gentle. The holy land has experienced over 30 tremors since the beginning of the year but only one, a mild 3.8 shaker off the coast of Haifa last month, was felt by Israelis.

This is significant as the pre-Messiah war of Gog and Magog is prophesied to be accompanied by earth-changing earthquakes.

On that day, when Gog sets foot on the soil of Yisrael—declares Hashem—My raging anger shall flare up. For I have decreed in My indignation and in My blazing wrath: On that day, a terrible earthquake shall befall the land of Yisrael. The fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that move on the ground, and every human being on earth shall quake before Me. Mountains shall be overthrown, cliffs shall topple, and every wall shall crumble to the ground. Ezekiel 38:18-20

These pre-Messiah quakes are predicted to bring about topographic changes to Israel. Even though Jerusalem is over 3,600 feet higher than the Dead Sea, the mountaintop capital is actually quite close to the sea, making it likely that a major earthquake in the geologically active Jordan Rift would be the source of the earthquake that is prophesied to drastically change the topography of Jerusalem in the end-of-days.

On that day, He will set His feet on the Mount of Olives, near Yerushalayim on the east; and the Mount

of Olives shall split across from east to west, and one part of the Mount shall shift to the north and the other to the south, a huge gorge. Zechariah 14:4

Though these pre-Messiah earthquakes in Israel sound as cataclysmic as those outside of the Holy Land, Jewish tradition teaches that the catastrophes inside of Israel can be mitigated based on the merits the Jews acquire through the performance of Biblical commandments. The concept is referred to as B'Eeta Achishena referred to by the prophet Isaiah.

The smallest shall become a clan; The least, a mighty nation. I Hashem will speed it in due time. Isaiah 60:22

The term is used by rabbis and Jewish theologians to describe the tension between God's greater plan in light of Man's will and actions. This is especially relevant in reference to the Messiah and Man's actions affecting when the Messiah will arrive.

And this in his Easter sermon - from the world's communist gospel-free pope:

The Pope just proposed a 'universal basic wage'

Nathan Schneider

In his Easter address to popular movements of the world, Pope Francis encouraged activists to keep up their efforts and their hope under the pressure of a pandemic. He repeated familiar refrains about the "idolatry of money" and "ecological conversion." But he also allowed himself to offer a single policy proposal that movements might work toward: "This may be the time," he said, "to consider a universal basic wage." This points unmistakably to what is usually known as universal basic income—a regular, substantial cash payment to people just for being alive.

There is some disagreement about the pope's precise meaning, but he does indicate that "this may be the time" for considering a new strategy for economic inclusion. He also mentioned "basic income" in passing last month during a meeting with finance ministers.

Back in 2015, I reported on how the idea was becoming fashionable in Silicon Valley, as well as among activists on the American right and left. Since then one luminary after another has voiced support and Andrew Yang had a surprisingly strong showing in the early days of the Democratic presidential campaign while focusing on basic income almost exclusively. (John W. Miller also wrote about U.B.I. for America.)

Why is the head of the Roman Catholic Church advocating a little-tested, still-radical economic policy like the universal basic income?

Now countries including the United States are normalizing government cash payments to individuals as part of Covid-19 relief efforts. Pope Francis's statement builds on this rapid escalation from a fringe fantasy to global rallying cry. He also mentioned basic income in passing last month during a meeting with finance ministers.

Why is the head of the Roman Catholic Church advocating a little-tested, still-radical economic policy?

It would not be the first time. Modern Catholic social teaching began with Pope Leo XIII's encyclical "Rerum Novarum" in 1891, which sought to address the widening economic inequality of that Gilded Age—one not so unlike ours. Leo sought a response to the conflicts between labor and capital that rejected the absolutist tendencies of each.

Leo affirmed both the right to private property and the rights of organized labor, but he also sought to transform both. The goal for governments, he advised, should be “to induce as many as possible of the people to become owners.” By drastically broadening access to capital, he wanted to reorient the relationship between capital and labor altogether.

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This was not a detailed policy design but a call for experimentation, and it was heard. In Italy, Catholics worked in parallel with communists to create one of the world’s leading economies for cooperative, democratically owned businesses. Achievements from the Mondragon worker cooperatives in Basque country to the North American credit unions are direct descendants of Pope Leo’s call.

Today we still see evidence of this as Catholic entrepreneurs embrace employee ownership, and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development has backed a worker co-op now making protective masks for caregivers. Pope Leo did not invent cooperative business, by any means, but his encouragement created space for others to try it and succeed.

Pope Francis spoke to the need for universal access to work, alongside housing, land and food. But several times, he also emphasized the kinds of work that go unnoticed and unwaged.

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By nudging social policymakers toward basic income, Pope Francis seems to be doing something similar. He is seeding the idea both among political elites and social movements, inviting both to explore it. As in “Rerum Novarum,” he is steering them toward a potentially transformative frame for economic thinking—one that is not zero-sum under current conditions but that alters the terrain altogether, as universal cash payments could do. This could also become a bridge among partisans; basic income has attracted interest from directions as otherwise divergent as Martin Luther King Jr. alongside Richard Nixon, the Cato Institute alongside the Roosevelt Institute.

Despite the enthusiasm for basic income in elite places like Silicon Valley, some of its most revealing test cases have been in what Pope Francis calls the “peripheries”—the parts of our world far from the centers of power, where prophetic voices frequently go unheard. Brazil’s Bolsa Família program has helped lift millions out of poverty with cash payments, for instance, and the Alaska Permanent Fund has cut annual checks to residents since the mid-1970s. Both programs are popular and have withstood the regimes of competing political parties.

What might be most perplexing about a pope embracing basic income is the Catholic Church’s longstanding emphasis on the importance and dignity of work. Paying people whether they work or not could seem like an affront to that ethic.

In the Easter message, Pope Francis spoke to the need for universal access to work, alongside housing, land and food. But several times, he also emphasized the kinds of work that go unnoticed and unwaged. This includes “the people, especially women, who multiply loaves of bread in soup kitchens,” as well as the work of movement activists such as those he was addressing.