

# Bioterrorism

## Are we ready?

By

Rute Domingues

Researcher at the Institute of National Defense & Portuguese Air Force Academy

**Abstract:** In an abbreviated way I intend to give an idea regarding the National /Europeans infrastructures and the contingency plans that actually exists in other to face a possible bioterrorist attack. The international terrorism is, with no doubt about it, a factual external threat to the States security, and it's combat should be a great concern of the states and actions should be taken at the political level, concepts and national defense activities. At the external level, the international cooperation will be as much effective as the numbers of states involved, the areas of activities involved, however this situation could raise some problems related with communications difficulties, absence of common doctrine and procedures, interoperability and other for which an urgent solution is required. At the internal level, a common doctrine should be applied to all agencies involved; practice of the Contingency Plans should be emphasize; cooperation of all entities with the capacity to intervene. Bio-security, Bio-defense and bioterrorism need a greater inclusion, reflection and development within the national society.

**Key words:** Bioterrorism; Contingency Plans, Pandemic; Biological Weapons.

**Introduction:** - Bioterrorism, by definition is the intentional use of biological agents in order to promote economic, social and environmental instability and represents a threat to any society, threatening the security and sovereignty. Historically, biological warfare has been occurred since the Middle Age. However, considering the fact of 11 September in the United States and recently the dead of a former KGB agent, Colonel Alexander Litvinenko, poisoned by polonium 210, it's relevant now to discuss this thematic in order to support the health professional, Public security, Civil and military population, that should be prepared for an early warning of isolated cases, as well as the one that might occurred during epidemics as a result of an intentional attack in which biological agents have been used. Unaware biological weapons have been used, in the contrary of a conventional military attack, the symptoms are not noticeable for days or even months. Thought, epidemics may be started by sickening or even killing a large amount of persons even before the correct diagnose of the disease has been identified, by the health services. A lack of familiarity of the great majority of the professional in relation to some illnesses, might jeopardize the fragile civil emergency plan, and certainly slow down an early diagnosis as well as the implementation of control measures. Nowadays, with the possibility of accessing to all the modern services, resource, technology, like the almost free possibility to travel around the world, may endanger and facilitate the rapid propagation of some diseases to all countries around the globe, even those not involved directly with war targeted for terrorism acts. Consequently is required to have access to a cooperation mechanism reinforced, with other States, other international partnerships. The new forms of terrorism, invisible in their logistics, dogmatic in their objectives and lethal regarding the new form of mediatic influence and technologically advanced that they are assuming currently, they build up another structure of panic that the societies are not used to.

**Why biological weapons?**