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OUTBREAK IN EUROPE BLAMED ON 'SUPER-TOXIC' STRAIN

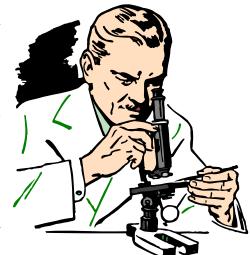
June 2, 2011 The Associated Press reported: "Scientists on Thursday blamed Europe's worst recorded food-poisoning outbreak on a 'super-toxic' strain of E. coli bacteria that may be brand new."

But while suspicion has fallen on raw tomatoes, cucumbers and lettuce as the source of the germ, researchers have been unable to pinpoint the food responsible for the frightening illness, which has killed at least 18 people, sickened more than 1,600 and spread to least 10 European countries. An alarmingly large number of victims — about 500 — have developed kidney complications that can be deadly.

Chinese and German scientists analyzed the DNA of the E. coli bacteria and determined that the outbreak was caused by "an entirely new, super-toxic" strain that contains several antibiotic-resistant genes, according to a statement from the Shenzhen, China-based laboratory BGI. It said the strain appeared to be a combination of two types of E. coli.

"This is a unique strain that has never been isolated from patients before," Hilde Kruse, a food safety expert at the World Health Organization, told The Associated Press. The new strain has "various characteristics that make it more virulent and toxin-producing" than the many E. coli strains people naturally carry in their intestines.

However, Dr. Robert Tauxe, a foodborne-disease expert at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, questioned whether the strain is truly new...said genetic fingerprints may vary from specimen to specimen, but that is not necessarily enough to constitute a new strain."..."



U.S. PENTAGON TO TREAT CYBER-ATTACKS AS 'ACTS OF WAR'

June 1, 2011 BBC News reports: "The US is set to publish plans that will categorise cyber-attacks as acts of war, the Pentagon says.

In future, a US president could consider economic sanctions, cyber-retaliation or a military strike if key US computer systems were attacked, officials have said recently. The planning was given added urgency by a cyber-attack last month on the defence contractor, Lockheed Martin. A new report from the Pentagon is due out in a matter of weeks.

"A response to a cyber-incident or attack on the US would not necessarily be a cyber-response. All appropriate options would be on the table," Pentagon spokesman Col Dave Lapan told reporters on Tuesday. Col Lapan confirmed the Pentagon was drawing up a cyber defence strategy, which would be ready in two to three weeks.

Cyber-attacks from foreign nations that threaten widespread US civilian casualties, like cutting off power supplies or shutting down emergency-responder networks, could be treated as an act of aggression under the new policy.

But the plan does not mention how the US may respond to cyber-attackers, such as terrorists, who are not acting for a nation state. The Pentagon's planning follows an international strategy statement on cyber-security, issued by the White House on 16 May. The US would "respond to hostile acts in cyberspace as we would to any other threat to our country", stated the White House in plain terms.

"We reserve the right to use all necessary means - diplomatic, informational, military, and economic - as appropriate and consistent with applicable international law, in order to defend our nation, our allies, our partners and our interests."

The Wall Street Journal quoted a military official as saying: "If you shut down our power grid, maybe we will put a missile down one of your smokestacks."..."

MP: IRAN READY TO GIVE CRUSHING RESPONSE TO ISRAEL'S AGGRESSION

June 2, 2011 The Fars News Agency reported: "A senior Iranian legislator underlined Tehran's preparedness to give a crushing response to Israel if the latter dares to make an aggressive move against the country. Rapporteur of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Kazzem Jalali said that Israel will never have the ability to launch a military attack on Iran, stressing in case of such a move, it must definitely expect a 'crushing and firm' response by the Islamic Republic."

'The Zionist regime (of Israel) very occasionally makes such unfounded remarks which will have no impact on Iran's approaches and ties,' Jalali reiterated.

Israeli Minister for Strategic Affairs Moshe Ya'alon said on Monday that the world must take joint action to halt Iran's nuclear activities, including a pre-emptive strike, if necessary. The United States and Israel have once again intensified their hostile measures against Iran to push the country to give up its progress in the field of nuclear technology.

Iran has warned it could close the strategic Strait of Hormuz if it became the target of a military attack over its nuclear program. Strait of Hormuz, the entrance to the strategic Persian Gulf waterway, is a major oil shipping route."..."

A recent study by a fellow at Harvard's Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Caitlin Talmadge, warned that Iran could use mines as well as missiles to block the strait, and that "it could take many weeks, even months, to restore the full flow of commerce, and more time still for the oil markets to be convinced that stability had returned."..."

PAKISTANI MUSLIM CLERICS: BAN THE BIBLE

June 01, 2011 cnsnews.com reported: “A group of radical clerics in Pakistan wants the country’s Supreme Court to declare certain passages in the Bible blasphemous – because they depict as flawed certain biblical characters whom Muslims regard as Islamic prophets. If the court fails to do so, they said, then lawyers will submit an application for the Bible to be formally banned in Pakistan.

The campaign, announced by the clerics at a Lahore mosque and reported Tuesday in the Karachi daily The News and the Urdu-language Roznama Islam, is the latest attempt by radicals to use the country’s blasphemy laws to shield Islam from perceived insults.

Citing Florida pastor Terry Jones’ Qur’an-burning act, the leader of the initiative, Abdul Rauf Farooqi, said the campaigners would like to pay back such “blasphemers” by doing the same to the Bible, but would not follow in their footsteps. Instead, he and the other clerics in the campaign want Pakistan’s top court to rule that certain passages in the Bible are blasphemous, since they undermine prophets’ sanctity by portraying them as flawed or immoral.

Farooqi, who is leader of the Islamist organization JUI-S (Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Sami-ul-Haq group), said the “insertions” in the Bible were offensive to Muslims, who hold all prophets in high esteem.”...Muslim teaching holds that Mohammed did not establish a new religion in the 7th century, but was the last in a long line of prophets of Islam stretching back to Adam, and including Moses and Jesus.

Among the biblical figures viewed by Muslims as Islamic prophets are some whom the Bible clearly describes as behaving immorally, such as David, who coveted a man’s wife and so sent him to face certain death on the battle frontlines; and Solomon, who later in life sought out pagan women and their gods.

On the other hand, biblical assertions that Jesus is God, that he died and rose from the dead, and that salvation comes through his name only, are all in conflict with Islamic teachings. They, too, could arguably be seen by Muslims as blasphemous – both towards the Qur’an and, indirectly, towards Mohammed, who Muslims believed received the inerrant revelation from Allah.

Pakistan’s blasphemy laws include a provision (295-C) that carries life imprisonment or the death penalty for defiling the name of Muhammad...”...

SUPREME LEADER: US LOSING ALLIES IN REGION

May 31, 2011 The Fars News Agency reported: “Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on Tuesday reminded Washington’s consecutive failures in the confrontation against the Islamic Revolution that toppled the US-backed Shah in Iran 1979, and said the Iranian Revolution started a move which has now resulted in the collective fall of the US proxies in the region.

‘Thirty years ago, the ‘Great Satan’ (the US) lost just one of its corrupt affiliates, that is the Pahlavi regime, but it is now witnessing an extensive loss of its proxies and puppet regimes,’ Ayatollah Khamenei said, addressing a group of students at Imam Hossein (AS) university here in Tehran today.

The Leader pointed to the growing power of the Islamic Revolution despite three decades of conspiracies and plots, and added, ‘The Great Satan has brought to stage its military, financial, propaganda and political cartels in a bid to defeat the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian nation but the realities of the political scene of Iran and the region demonstrate that the US has been brought to its knees in its confrontation against the Islamic Revolution.’ ...”

IRAN CLERIC: KILLING ISRAELI CHILDREN OK

May 31, 2011 YnetNews.com reported: “A senior Iranian cleric, who is known as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s spiritual mentor, urged followers to continue suicide attacks against Israelis, including children. Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah, considered one of the Islamic Republic’s most radical clerics, issued a religious edict on his website whereby suicide attacks are not only legitimate but are a must for every Muslim, a special paper by the Middle East Media Research Institute shows.

The senior cleric was responding to a question from a follower regarding the difference between ‘martyr’s death’ and ‘suicide.’ The man, who wrote anonymously, noted that ‘some people say that martyrdom operations are considered suicide and that they are haram (forbidden) because they contradict Islam.’

In response, Mesbah expressed his regret that his follower has fallen victim to ‘propaganda of the enemies of Islam.’ He added that the follower was wasting his time instead of focusing on ‘uprooting the Zionist regime.’

‘When protecting Islam, the Muslim people depend on martyrdom operations. It not only is allowed, but even is an obligation,’ Mesbah wrote.

The follower presented another question regarding Islam’s position on harming Israelis, wondering whether Hamas and Jihad actions against Israeli civilians are forbidden. He also asked: ‘How about the Israeli children killed in such attacks?’

The Iranian Ayatollah did not see fit to forbid the killing of children, only noting that Israelis can be harmed unless they openly express their objection to their government’s position. He added that even in such cases, harming civilians is permissible if ‘they are used as human shield and fighting the aggressors depends on attacking those civilians.’ ...”

