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Trends. Allies of Terrorism in the Realm of Biological Warfare?

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Allies of Terrorism in the Realm of Biological Warfare?

In the United States (US), an aphorism--the enemy is us--was applied to the era of the Vietnam War to suggest a noxiousness comprising perceptual, ethical, moral, political, and military complicity in political violence. The same aphorism has been applied to the war on drugs, given that political authorities seek to interdict illicit substances that are craved by their political constituents. As well, the same aphorism can be applied with resonance to some representatives of the US corporate world concerning the contemporary threat from terrorist biological warfare.

A case in point involves corporate lobbyists advocating against US federal legislation that would increase inspections of imported food, mandate prior notification of imported food shipment, require formal registration of food manufacturers and processors with the government, and allow government seizure of food products without a court order. The rationale for the legislation focuses on deterring and countering biological warfare launched through the medium of food.

Corporate lobbyists from the food industry, however, maintain that the government already has "'vast legal authority and numerous enforcement tools' to ensure food safety." They also maintain that the legislation (1) goes "far beyond what (is) needed to deal with bioterrorism"; (2) contains "language (that is) extremely broad, very open-ended and not very specific"; and (3) may allow "access to consumer complaint files and trade secrets."

It would be irresponsible--even if facile--to associate such quotes with intent to support terrorist machinations or with a bordering on the treasonous. In fact, the legislation may well need revision--as much terrorism-related legislation developed soon after the 9/11 terrorist attacks within the US.

Yet, there may be at least two kinds of unwitting allies of terrorism amongst self-perceived patriotic US citizens. There are those who develop and effect legislation and programs that facilitate terrorist behavior--even if the development and effecting are intended to deter and counter terrorism. And there are those whose quest for corporate profits elicit a parsing of legislative language intended to facilitate US security and the corporate bottom line--sometimes a hopeless challenge. These two types may not quite meet the criteria for the Marxism-related aphorism about selling the rope to hang oneself. But the consequences may be the same. (See Cremin, B. (2001). Extortion by product contamination: A recipe for disaster within the food and drink industry. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 44, 1042-1052; Gantt, E. E., & Reber, J. S. (1999). Sociobiological and social constructionist accounts of altruism: A phenomenological critique. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 30, 14-38; Gustafsson, M., Biel, A., & Gaerling, T. (2000). Egoism bias in social dilemmas with resource uncertainty. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 3, 351-365; Pear, R. (April 16, 2002). Food industry's resistance stalls bill to protect food. *The New York Times*, p. A20.) (Keywords: Biological Warfare, Corporate Lobbyists, Terrorism.)