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Director of Central Intelligence

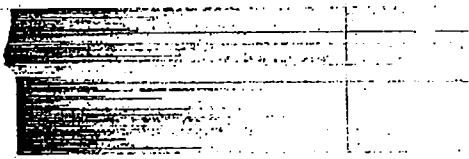


Terrorism Review

May 1995

Counterterrorist Center

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Terrorism Review

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Terrorists will increasingly use computer technology to achieve their objectives.		(b)(3) (b)(6)
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**The Tokyo Gas Attack and Aum
Shinrikyo: An Update** [redacted]

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The Japanese police arrested and charged Aum Shinrikyo cult leader Shoko Asahara on 16 May with the sarin gas attack in Tokyo's subway system on 20 March that killed 12 and injured 5,500. [redacted]

denies responsibility. [redacted]

[redacted] the group's chief chemist has confessed to manufacturing sarin, while two other senior members have admitted they helped organize the subway operation. Arrest warrants for 40 additional members of the group have been issued. The search continues for other hard-core followers who are members of the cult's "Science and Technology Ministry," which police believe is composed mainly of university chemistry, biology, and genetic engineering graduates. [redacted]

• On 30 March the chief of the Japanese National Police Agency, which is leading the investigation into the Tokyo nerve gas attack, was seriously wounded by four gunshots outside his home by an unknown assailant.

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• On 19 April [redacted] a suspicious gas—initially identified as the World War I gas phosgene—was released in a train and at two train stations in Yokohama, injuring about 500. [redacted] this incident may have been caused by maintenance men working on the train air-conditioning system.

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• On 21 April, 25 people in a department store in Yokohama were overcome by fumes [redacted] which may have been pepper gas or a mace like personal self-defense spray.

No one was seriously injured in the latter two incidents. [redacted]

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briefcases designed to emit fumes like a humidifier were found [redacted] at one of the Tokyo subway stations subsequently attacked with sarin [redacted]

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Since the Tokyo gas attack, several other incidents have occurred, which the Japanese press has speculated may be linked to Aum Shinrikyo, but the cult

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- On 5 March [redacted] 11 commuters were treated after noting a "mysterious odor" and seeing white gas fumes at a Yokohama area train station. No chemicals were found.
- [redacted] in June 1994 seven persons died and 200 were reportedly poisoned by sarin in Matsumoto, 125 miles northwest of Tokyo, in what appears to have been a chemical leak from an Aum facility. [redacted]

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Although most early arrests of cult members were for minor civil infractions unrelated to the Tokyo gas attack, the arrest of Asahara is likely to spark more violence from his unpredictable followers. Some Aum Shinrikyo members have admitted that the cult experimented with poison gas. [redacted]

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Japanese authorities believe the Aum Shinrikyo arrests may result in reprisals, according to press reports, to include attacks with lethal chemicals.

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Aum Shinrikyo

Aum Shinrikyo, or Aum Supreme Truth, is a religious cult founded by Shoko Asahara in 1987. It claims to have a membership of 10,000 in Japan and 30,000 in Russia, but its actual size may be considerably less:

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- *Headquartered near Mount Fuji, the cult has 28 other offices in Japan and branches in New York, Bonn, Sri Lanka, and Moscow, and a radio station in Vladivostok.*

The cult's beliefs and practices are an amalgam of Japanese Buddhism, Yoga, and Hinduism. [Redacted] (b)(3) other Buddhists regard the cult as the personal instrument of its 39-year-old founder, rather than as a legitimate sect. Central to the group's teachings are predictions of an apocalyptic war involving Japan and claims of long-term persecution by outside authorities including the Japanese police and the US military. Asahara predicts the end of the world in 1997. [Redacted] (b)(3)

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[Redacted] the group is organized as a nation-state with 24 "ministries," including science and technology, construction, and home affairs.

- *Followers are required to leave their homes, donate their possessions to the group, and lead ascetic lives at training centers where coercive techniques are used to initiate and punish members.*

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- *In 1990, 25 members of the group ran—unsuccessfully—for seats in the Diet. [Redacted]*

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