



**Risk Mitigation Consulting Inc.**

*Intelligence and Analysis Division*

# OPEN SOURCE UPDATE

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## **INTENT**

This open source periodical is designed to provide an overview of relevant, publicly available information on threat and hazard events and analysis of potential impacts to the interests of the United States, both at home and abroad. This product is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of all threat and hazard news and inclusion in this product does not constitute a confirmation of credibility nor precedence by RMC.



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## Threats

### Drill Instructors Punished for Abusive Behavior at MCRD San Diego

#### – Insider Threat

**Excerpt:** One recruit was called a terrorist. Another had his vest stapled to his skin. A third recruit was kicked by a Marine and a drill instructor ordered a fourth trainee to eat a pine cone.

Those are just some of the incidents that led to more than 20 Marines being disciplined at the Corps' West Coast recruit depot since 2017, officials there confirmed. At least two of those Marines are no longer in uniform as the service works to stamp out hazing and abuse at its entry-level training camps. The issue has been a renewed focus since the 2016 death of recruit Raheel Siddiqui at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina.

The Washington Post first reported on the discipline handed down to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego drill instructors. The paper obtained more than 700 pages' worth of investigations into alleged wrongdoing at the recruit depot.

"The incidents in San Diego, which have not been reported previously, include verified allegations of Marines assaulting recruits by kicking, punching and shoving, activity that is explicitly prohibited under the service's regulations, and other more minor incidents," the Post reported.

**Analyst Comment:** Misconduct among drill instructors at U.S. military basic training programs has been an ongoing issue, to include the aforementioned 2016 death of a recruit following mistreatment by drill instructors at MCRD Parris Island (which was ruled to be a suicide). The recent revelations involve the U.S. Marine Corps' other recruit depot on the West Coast, and allegations of misconduct are associated with a number of different drill instructors.

While U.S. military basic training programs are typically difficult both mentally and physically for incoming recruits, instructors are prohibited from engaging in various behaviors, to include using derogatory terms to refer to recruits, conducting embarrassing "hazing" activities or compelling excessive amounts of physical activity (above that which is typical of a basic training program). Punishments for instructors who violate such rules and regulations may include loss of rank, discharge, loss of pay, or even court-martial depending on the severity of a given incident.

Source: <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/10/09/drill-instructors-punished-harming-recruits-making-racist-comments-boot-camp.html>

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### NJ Man Arrested on Terror Charges for Supporting Hezbollah – Terrorism

**Excerpt:** A New Jersey man is accused of being a secret Hezbollah operative in the United States for more than a decade, surveilling potential attack sites in New York City, Boston and Washington, prosecutors said Thursday [19 September].



Alexei Saab, 42, from Morristown, was charged under a nine-count indictment in connection with a range of alleged terror activities. They included providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization (FTO) and receiving military-style training from that group, the Justice Department said.

Saab allegedly surveilled dozens of locations throughout New York City, including the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, the Statue of Liberty, Times Square and United Nations headquarters, prosecutors said.

**Analyst Comment:** Saab was arrested for his connections to Hezbollah, specifically for his activities involving pre-operational surveillance of potential terror targets. His surveillance activities occurred in major U.S. cities, and involved high-profile, symbolic targets. Pre-operational surveillance and target selection is an important part of terrorist plotting, although suspicious behavior associated with such surveillance may provide an opportunity for law enforcement to disrupt such plots.

Hezbollah is a Shia Islamist political party based in Lebanon, although it has a militant wing that has conducted a number of terrorist attacks. Hezbollah also has a number of ties to Iranian entities, and often serves as an Iranian proxy organization. The U.S. and a number of other countries have designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. Hezbollah has been accused of involvement in a number of attacks against U.S. entities, to include the 1983 bombings of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and a barracks building in Beirut housing U.S. forces, the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, as well as training Shia insurgents in Iraq who subsequently targeted U.S. personnel.

Source: <https://www.foxnews.com/us/suspected-hezbollah-spy-targets-new-york-city>

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## China Pursuing Military Applications of Biotechnology – FIE

**Excerpt:** China’s national strategy of military-civil fusion has highlighted biology as a priority. It is hardly surprising that the People’s Republic of China (PRC) is looking to leverage synergies among defense, scientific, and commercial developments in biological interdisciplinary technologies. Chinese military scientists and strategists have consistently emphasized that biotechnology could become a “new strategic commanding heights of the future Revolution in Military Affairs.” Certainly, the PRC is not alone in recognizing the potential of biotechnology on the future battlefield, but the ways in which Chinese research is seeking to integrate developments among industry, academic institutions, and military-oriented programs—including through research collaborations and the procurement of dual-purpose commercial technologies—may prove striking. In particular, China is at the forefront of today’s breakthroughs in CRISPR-Cas, a new technique for gene editing that has demonstrated unique potential and precision despite its current limitations.

**Analyst Comment:** China’s growing interest in biotechnology, particularly the gene editing technique CRISPR has military applications, although China is likely concurrently engaged in espionage activities in order to bolster its biotechnology aspirations. The 2019 Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community (an unclassified assessment published by the



Director of National Intelligence) assesses that “China’s intelligence services will exploit the openness of American society, especially academia and the scientific community, using a variety of means.” These means may include traditional espionage activities (such as the recruitment of assets), technical collection (to include malicious cyber activity), as well as exploiting a variety of academic and corporate avenues to access useful information. Chinese entities may also seek to invest in U.S. biotechnology firms with the intent of collecting trade secrets or establishing market control of sensitive technologies.

Source: <https://jamestown.org/program/chinas-military-biotech-frontier-crispr-military-civil-fusion-and-the-new-revolution-in-military-affairs/>

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## Minnesota Trump Rally Draws Protests – *Civil Disturbance*

**Excerpt:** President Donald Trump’s campaign rally in Minneapolis Thursday drew thousands of both supporters and protesters, outlining the campaign’s 2020 goal: flip Minnesota.

Beginning in the early evening and continuing well after the rally concluded, protesters chanted slogans, brandished signs and voiced their opposition to Trump’s presidency in the area surrounding the rally’s venue at Target Center. Inside, a near-capacity group of supporters in the 19,356-person auditorium eagerly congregated to show their support for the president and hear several members of the Trump Administration speak.

The night resulted in conflict as police used what appeared to be tear gas and mace to clear away protesters after they blocked cars on the street, throwing traffic cones and rocks.

**Analyst Comment:** The civil disturbance activity outside of the rally was mainly between protesters and police present for the event. Around 9:30 p.m., protesters burned a pile of red MAGA hats (merchandise from the Trump campaign) on the ground outside the rally. Around 10 p.m., police appeared to use tear gas on protesters after the protesters blocked cars from leaving the venue and threw objects like rocks and traffic cones at cars. Police proceeded to form a bicycle barricade to allow attendees of the rally to leave the venue. Protesters then threw bottles at the barricade. The police responded by again spraying apparent pepper spray.

As large political rallies begin to increase in frequency prior to the 2020 election, it is highly likely that any of these political events will draw both supporters and protesters. There will also be a police presence at a majority of these events. In some instances, these protestors and supporters may clash, resulting in local civil disturbance activity. Additionally, as was the case at the Minnesota rally, police may clash with the supporters, protesters or both. When increasingly large rallies are hosted in major cities, social media may be a good indication of expected turnout of protest groups, though not a reliable metric.

Source: <https://www.mndaily.com/article/2019/10/n-supporters-protestors-flock-to-minneapolis-for-trump-rally>

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## Drone Drops Contraband into Ohio Prison – *Unmanned Aerial Systems*

**Excerpt:** Officials in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, know one way contraband is getting into the prison. Someone is flying a drone over the facility's walls and dropping packages to the inmates at Euclid annex, officials told WEWS.

The incident was caught on jail surveillance cameras this summer but just recently released to Cleveland-area media, WJW reported.

Inmates can be seen playing a cornhole game in an outdoor recreation area when one inmate looks up, then walks to the center of the fenced-off area a black bag falls to the ground and the man scoops it up, covering it with a shirt. He then walks out of view of the security camera, WEWS reported.

Jail officials said the package held a cellphone and marijuana, and it had been the second time in two days where officials suspected drug smuggling in the jail, WEWS reported. It was thought to be tobacco and a cellphone originally, WJW reported.

**Analyst Comment:** The recent incident in Ohio highlights the potential for drone-based smuggling of contraband into restricted areas. A significant number of similar cases have been documented in recent years as small unmanned aerial systems (also known as drones) have risen in popularity. Commercially available drones are typically small, agile, and relatively quiet, while remaining capable of carrying a small payload. These factors make drones a useful tool for those intent on smuggling contraband into secure facilities such as prisons.

Commercially available drones have also been used by drug trafficking organizations along the U.S.-Mexico border for smuggling operations. Certain commercial drones are designed for industrial uses such as crop-dusting and inspection of construction sites, and can often carry a larger payload, which make them appealing to more sophisticated smugglers.

In addition to the aforementioned cases, drones could potentially be utilized to smuggle small quantities of narcotics onto DoD installations as they are often difficult to detect and may be capable of flying around existing security control points such as entry gates.

Source: <https://www.wsbradio.com/news/national/drone-drops-drugs-cellphone-into-ohio-jail-officials-say/DpPs8fjo0A5KjAVr7RbxPM/>

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## Hazards

### Typhoon Hagibis Hits Japan – *Meteorological Hazards*

**Excerpt:** The toll of death and destruction from a typhoon that tore through central and northern Japan climbed Tuesday [15 October], as the government said it was considering approving a special budget for the disaster response and eventual reconstruction.

Hagibis hit Japan's main island on Saturday [12 October] with strong winds and historic rainfall that caused more than 200 rivers to overflow, leaving thousands of homes flooded, damaged or without power. Rescue crews on Tuesday [15 October] were still searching for those missing, thought to number about 20.

Some 34,000 homes were without power and 110,000 lacked running water. More than 30,000 people were still at shelters as of late Monday [14 October], according to the Cabinet Office's latest tally.

Business appeared nearly back to normal in central Tokyo, and residents in areas where floodwater subsided started cleaning up. Lives, however, remained paralyzed in Nagano, Fukushima and other hard-hit areas that were still inundated.

**Analyst Comment:** According to survivors, water levels rose rapidly to chest height in about an hour and mainly at night, making it hard to escape to higher ground. Historical levels of rain were dropped by Typhoon Hagibis and more than 20 rivers overflowed. In Fukushima levees burst in at least 14 places along the Abukuma River, flooding nearby cities. Impacts to transportation include flooded roads and train tracks, hindering travel in the area. One railroad, located in a flood area, was more than halfway underwater. In addition to historic rainfall and severe flooding, Hagibis caused a number of mudslides, potentially trapping residents.

Fukushima also experienced a unique potential HAZMAT incident. Two temporary storage sites holding bags containing possibly radioactive soil and debris were impacted by the flooding. The content of the bags was removed as part of decontamination efforts from the 2011 meltdown of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant. In Fukushima, 11 bags of this debris and soil were washed away and found downstream. There was no risk to the environment because the waterproof bags were intact, and the 5,000 remaining bags were secure.

Although typhoons are not uncommon in Japan, Hagibis was particularly severe. It is one of the deadliest typhoons to have hit Japan in the past decade, surpassed only by Typhoon Talas in 2011, which caused 82 deaths. As of 15 October, about 133,000 households were without water while 22,000 lacked electricity, potentially worrying in northern areas where temperatures are falling. Recent death toll reports estimate the loss at 74. However, this story is still in progress. The damages caused and overall number of deaths is likely to continue to increase in the coming days.

Source: <https://www.apnews.com/d2c7f2456de346efa2dd3decd57f1932>



## Dengue Cases on Guam – *Biological Hazards*

**Excerpt:** Guam now has 15 confirmed cases of dengue fever — nine locally acquired and six cases of imported dengue infection.

The Department of Public Health and Social Services and other agencies continue efforts to mitigate the spread, according to a Joint Information Center news release issued just before 4 p.m. Saturday.

Public Health is still receiving reports of suspect cases as a result of increased community outreach and timely reporting by Guam health care providers, the release stated.

**Analyst Comment:** Per the CDC, dengue viruses are mosquito-borne viruses that are common in most tropical and subtropical regions of the world. Symptoms can range from mild to severe and even life-threatening, although the most common symptom is fever combined with any of the following: nausea, vomiting, rash, and aches/pains. Vaccines for dengue are available, and prevention is possible by avoiding mosquito bites through precautions such as wearing insect repellent, choosing appropriate clothing, and utilizing countermeasures such as mosquito nets over beds. The recent outbreak of dengue in Guam should be of concern to DoD personnel (and their families) stationed at any of the installations on the island, to include NB Guam, Andersen AFB, and MCA Guam, and appropriate precautions should be taken. As of 2017, there were approximately 7,000 U.S. military personnel on Guam, and thousands of additional Marines are expected to relocate to Guam for Okinawa.

*Source:* <https://www.guampdn.com/story/news/local/2019/10/05/15-dengue-cases-guam-1-more-local-infection-2-new-imported-cases/3878345002/>

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## 7 Killed in WW2-Era Bomber Crash in Connecticut – *Accidental Events*

**Excerpt:** Seven people were killed when a World War II-era plane crashed and caught fire Wednesday morning [02 October] as it was attempting to land at Bradley International Airport near Hartford, Conn., according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

Thirteen people were onboard the plane, Connecticut Commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection James Rovella said at a news conference. Some of the survivors were in critical condition.

The vintage B-17, which was carrying 10 passengers and three crew members, reported trouble just minutes after it took off, according to Connecticut Airport Authority Executive Director Kevin Dillon.

The plane lifted off at 9:45 a.m. ET, and "five minutes into the flight, the aircraft indicated to the tower that they were experiencing some type of problem with the aircraft," Dillon said. Observers on the ground noticed that it was not gaining altitude. It circled and tried to land.





"Unfortunately, upon touchdown, the aircraft obviously lost control, struck what's known as our de-icing facility here," he said. It also hit a maintenance facility.

**Analyst Comment:** The B-17 was owned by a nonprofit organization that provided educational programs regarding aviation history, and was one of five WW2-era planes in the organization's fleet. The plane reportedly crashed just minutes after takeoff, at which point it burst into flames. The plane landed on airport property, and crashed into various buildings including a de-icing and maintenance facility. Seven people were killed in the crash, and others were hospitalized in critical condition. It was not clear when the plane's last safety inspection was conducted, and it is possible that mechanical issues associated with the plane's age contributed to the crash.

Shortly after the crash response, local authorities warned that the chemical PFAS (which is present in firefighting foam) could potentially enter local waterways and result in contamination. Per the EPA, PFAS is "very persistent in the environment and in the human body – meaning they don't break down and they can accumulate over time. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects." Just a few months prior, a spill of firefighting foam at the same airport sent thousands of gallons of PFAS into nearby waterways, resulting in an ongoing health warning against eating fish caught in the river.

Source: <https://www.npr.org/2019/10/02/766403309/wwii-aircraft-crashes-at-connecticut-airport>

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