



CLADE X BACKGROUND: A BRIGHTER DAWN

The Clade-X adversary is a non-state actor called “A Brighter Dawn” (ABD). This fictitious organization was modeled in part on Aum Shinrikyo, the Japanese doomsday cult that developed and used chemical and biological weapons in the 1990s in Japan.

A Brighter Dawn was established in the 1990s in the United States. The group’s stated purpose was to slow and eventually reverse the degradation of the planet that was occurring from overpopulation. ABD’s goal at that time was to help humanity return to an earlier state of being. The group’s activities were uniformly peaceful at that time and included lecture and discussion sessions, grassroots activism, and outreach. By 2010, A Brighter Dawn’s membership had grown substantially in both numbers and geographic diversity. There were members and local chapters in many countries.

At around that time, a split appears to have occurred within A Brighter Dawn. An extreme faction in ABD felt that direct action was needed to achieve the “reset” or “paradigm shift” that would be required to fundamentally alter the balance.

This splinter group consisted of no more than 30 individuals. A charismatic leader assumed leadership, and he worked closely with about 25 other ABD members in the group who had bioscience training, including virologists. Following the schism, the splinter group established a laboratory near Zurich, Switzerland, and masqueraded as a small biotech start-up firm. They set up a sophisticated life science laboratory with commercially available equipment and focused on developing a biological weapon that would have a global impact. ABD’s leadership also seems to have been attracted to the concept of a biblical plague as the corrective to humanity’s excesses. The splinter group’s funding came from members, like-minded private donors, and involvement in illicit activities.

A Brighter Dawn did not register as a threat for law enforcement and intelligence agencies. ABD’s spin-off and subsequent weapons development efforts went unnoticed until they claimed credit on social media for the Clade X attacks. Their purchase of supplies and equipment was not unusual for a biotech company.

ATTACK PLANNING AND EXECUTION

ABD’s R&D team consisted primarily of ideologically aligned scientists, some of whom held advanced degrees. Several PhD-level scientists were responsible for various aspects of the bioweapons program, which included molecular and classical microbiology, aerobiology, and testing and evaluation.



Once the Clade X pathogen had been successfully developed and manufactured, volunteer ABD members, who were willing to risk being infected, traveled the globe with small volumes of liquid agent, which they disseminated using commercially available aerosolizers in crowded public places. The multiple attacks were relatively inefficient in that almost half the attacks failed to infect anyone; in the other attacks, only 50 people on average became clinically ill. But this was sufficient to touch off the Clade X pandemic.