

Homeland Insecurity: Big Lies, Big Disasters, Bird Flu Hoax

by Carol Brouillet, January 25, 2007
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On September 11, 2001 the attacks upon the World Trade Center and the Pentagon stunned Americans. Miraculously, a “surprised” government came up with a list of suspects, an enemy, and a “War on Terrorism” within hours, with no real investigation into the attacks. “The War on Terror” soon became a “War of Terror” against Congress, the American people and the world, as the looming threat of more attacks was used to rush the PATRIOT Act through Congress, launch wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, construct Homeland Security, institutionalize torture, roll back habeas corpus, and to rename dissenters from government and corporate policies as “terrorists.”

The view that the federal government had genuine concern for the health and well-being of Americans in the wake of 9/11 and Katrina was contradicted by its “deadly actions and inactions.” The White House instructed the EPA to lie about the quality of air and water at ground zero, thus permitting the early reopening of Wall Street but costing the health and even the lives of first responders, volunteers, and residents of Manhattan. Before, during, and after Katrina the Department of Homeland Security actually prevented evacuation and rescue efforts, direly needed assistance, and emergency supplies from reaching hurricane victims, causing needless deaths.

The anthrax scare, based on a real threat that targeted members of the media and the Democratic opposition to the PATRIOT Act, received media attention until the anthrax was traced back to U.S. military sources. That was followed by a smallpox scare and the Model Emergency Health Powers Act--legislation that grants the government new powers to quarantine, isolate, and vaccinate targeted communities when declared a medical threat by governors, without genuine medical oversight. New legislation has allowed pharmaceutical companies to test vaccines on the public without being held liable for harmful side effects.

The major purchaser of new vaccines is the military, which has forced experimental vaccines upon soldiers, with dire results. There are many reports that the vaccines have had extremely harmful side effects, up to and including death.

In addition to selling the lies and wars of the current Washington regime, the corporate media are now promoting the Bird Flu Pandemic. However, a critical look at who is benefiting, who is paying the price for the scare, and where the billions are being spent will enable us to gauge whether this is a real or contrived threat and whether the alleged “cure” might not be worse than the disease.

One of the most censored stories of 2003-2004 was that “more than 60 of the nation’s top scientists, including 20 Nobel laureates, leading medical experts, and former federal agency directors, issued a statement on February 18, 2004 accusing the Bush Administration of deliberately distorting scientific results for political ends and calling for regulatory and legislative action to restore scientific integrity to federal policymaking.”(See Project Censored.) The “Bird Flu Hoax” is a prime example of distorting science for political ends.

Bird Flu: A Corporate Bonanza for the Biotech Industry Tamiflu, Vistide and the Pentagon Agenda

Condensed from the article by F. William Engdahl, Global Research, November 6, 2005, at <http://globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=ENG20051106&articleId=1190>

On November 1, 2007 President George W. Bush held a high profile press conference, to announce the Pandemic Influenza Strategic Plan. He began his remarks with the now-obligatory scare-story from 1918: ‘At this moment, there is no pandemic influenza in the United States or the world. But if history is our guide, there is reason to be concerned. In the last century, our country and the world have been hit by three influenza pandemics -- and viruses from birds contributed to all of them. The first, which struck in 1918, killed over half-a-million Americans and more than 20 million people across the globe...’

‘Scientists and doctors cannot tell us where or when the next pandemic will strike, or how severe it will be, but most agree: at some point, we are likely to face another pandemic. And the scientific community is increasingly concerned by a new influenza virus known as H5N1 -- or avian flu...’

Mr. Bush went on to stress, ‘At this point, we do not have evidence that a pandemic is imminent. Most of the people in Southeast Asia who got sick were handling infected birds. And while the avian flu virus has spread from Asia to Europe, there are no reports of infected birds, animals, or people in the United States. Even if the virus does eventually appear on our shores in birds, that does not mean people in our country will be infected. Avian flu is still primarily an animal disease. And as of now, unless people come into direct, sustained contact with infected birds, it is unlikely they will come down with avian flu.’

The President called on Congress to immediately pass a new \$7.1 billion in emergency funding to prepare for that not-imminent, not-pandemic, possible-in-the-future danger. The speech was an exercise in the Administration’s now-famous ‘pre-emptive war,’ this one against Avian Flu.

Prominent among the President's list of emergency measures was a call for Congress to appropriate another \$1 billion explicitly for Tamiflu.

Conflict of interest or insider trading?

The saga of Tamiflu is the tip of an iceberg. The real point of interest is the company who developed Tamiflu, Gilead Sciences. US Secretary of Defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, was Chairman of the Board of Gilead Sciences from 1997 until early 2001 when he became Defense Secretary. Rumsfeld had been on the board of Gilead since 1988, some thirteen years. Rumsfeld, apparently not one to shy away from turning a fast buck, has bagged an eye-popping windfall, as demand for Tamiflu worldwide exploded. On October 6, the Pentagon announced it had stockpiled quantities of Tamiflu for members of the military.

Rumsfeld waited until October 26, 2005 before issuing a press statement that he had 'recused' himself from involvement in any future Pentagon decisions involving Gilead Sciences. By then, of course, the price of Gideon was racing at full gallop as the Pentagon and the Administration had already decided to stockpile millions of doses of Tamiflu.

In March, Britain's Tony Blair ordered the UK Government to buy enough Tamiflu drugs to supply 25% of the 56 million British citizens.

Gilead Sciences is no small-time biotech startup, either. Helped by the propaganda from its friends in Washington and other high places, Gilead has a market capitalization of \$ 22 billion. Its board today includes Bechtel Corporation director and former Secretary of State, George P. Shultz. Shultz turned a neat \$7 million profit selling some Gilead stock.

Bechtel is right up there with Halliburton in grabbing the lion's share of Pentagon sweetheart contracts to rebuild Iraq.

The Gilead model also suggests a parallel to the Halliburton Corporation, whose former CEO is Vice President Dick Cheney. Cheney's company has so far gotten billions worth of US construction contracts in Iraq and elsewhere. Is it just a coincidence that Cheney's closest political friend is Defense Secretary and Avian Flu beneficiary, Donald Rumsfeld?

Vistide, Small Pox, Big Bucks

Rumsfeld is an accomplished hand at getting the government to buy vaccines from companies in which he has a direct financial interest. Recall the scare just following the events of September 11, 2001. One of the terror scenarios discussed widely by the Administration was a possible release of a deadly smallpox attack that would devastate the American population.

In November 2001 the Administration reversed a two decade policy. On the advice of the Pentagon and others in the

Administration, the President ordered that the US' remaining stock of smallpox microbes, stored at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, not be destroyed as the world community had been urging, but be kept until new vaccines were developed. The United States and Russian Governments at the time held the only known smallpox microbe stocks known. The disease had long since been eradicated.

The Administration announced at the time it was backing development of a new vaccine for smallpox that could be given the entire population. The major media, from Judith Miller in the New York Times to more widely read papers, carried horror stories.

The scare around smallpox and what to do was curiously similar then as it is today against Bird Flu pandemics. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld at that time ordered members of the Armed Forces to be inoculated against smallpox, an inoculation with horrendous side-effects. Rumsfeld's smallpox package also included ordering Pentagon stockpiling of a drug named Vistide, supposedly to minimize side-effects of smallpox infection should it occur.

The Bush Administration made repeated attempts to convince the public and above all, the health and medical profession to go with mass inoculation against smallpox. In 2002 the CDC and certain high Administration officials were calling for pre-emptive smallpox inoculation of broad sectors of the population against threat of terrorists unleashing the pox. The Government began stockpiling hundreds of millions of smallpox vaccine doses. It also stockpiled Vistide.

With every official statement by members of the Administration, population panic regarding smallpox threats grew. Fear was driving the debate. Yet the reality was that, contrary to what was being said, smallpox was not a highly contagious disease. As Dr. Kuritsky, MD, director of the National Immunization Program and Early Smallpox Response and Planning at the CDC put it, 'Smallpox has a slow transmission and is not highly contagious.'

Increasingly, experienced US health professionals began going public with the dangers of the side effects from the smallpox immunization itself. These included 'serious brain and heart diseases, autism, abnormal chromosomal changes, diabetes, various cancers and leukemias, plus demyelination of nerve tissue years after vaccination.' Many thought it better to run the risk of a bio-terror attack than take the 'cure.' The Administration mass vaccination campaign for smallpox was a flop. Yet in the meantime millions of doses of Vistide were produced and sold to the US government, to 'ease' the effects of smallpox should such a hypothetical attack materialize. The Pentagon was one of the major purchasers of Vistide at the time.

In his January 2003 State of the Union Address, the President proposed creation of Project BioShield to develop vaccines and drugs against bio-terror attack including anthrax and smallpox.

On July 21, 2004 President Bush signed into law Project BioShield, to provide 'new tools to improve medical countermeasures protecting Americans against a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) attack.' The fiscal year 2004 appropriation for the Department of Homeland Security included \$5.6 billion over 10 years for the purchase of next generation countermeasures against anthrax and smallpox as well as other CBRN agents.

Mr Rumsfeld knew well what he was prescribing for his soldiers. Vistide was also a product of Gilead Sciences, Mr. Rumsfeld's former company. Rumsfeld was the person who signed off on the decision to give US Troops Vistide. That decision was obviously not made out of benevolence, or concern for the health of the troops on the part of the Defense Secretary, who had been personally involved with the side-effects of Vistide at Gilead since the company first developed it in the late 1990's as an AIDS treatment. Vistide had some pretty hefty side effects. According to Dr. Christopher J Hogan, MD, Professor at the Department of Emergency Medicine, Medical College of Virginia, complications of Vistide include renal toxicity, neutropenia, fever, anemia, headache, hair loss, uveitis and/or iritis, and abdominal pain.

Yet, despite the fact of who is making millions on the fears being stirred over smallpox or Avian Flu, it would be a dangerous diversion to think the end of the story is personal or corporate greed. The alarming aspect to this Tamiflu, Vistide and new legal regimes for the 'vaccine industry,' is the fact that it all fits, evidently, into a far larger strategy that the Administration seems to have been developing for some time. During the smallpox scare three years ago, the Administration got Republican Congressmen to insert a paragraph into the Homeland Security bill that would give immunity for liability to drug companies who manufacture smallpox vaccine.

Abolishing the Nuremberg Code on Human Rights in Experimentation

The President, in his November 1 NIH pandemic speech, proposed completely exempting drug makers from being sued for their products. Explicitly he termed it 'liability protection for the makers of life-saving vaccines.' Stripped of its nice-sounding noble rhetoric, it means drug makers can produce and promote whatever they choose to foist on the public, whether it be Vistide, Tamiflu or Thalidomide, and fear no legal consequences.

One need only think for a minute about the consequences of removing the gains of more than a Century of bitter battles to

establish even minimal controls over what drugs can be sold to the public.

During the 1960's in Germany, Dr. Heinrich Mueckter, an infamous Nazi doctor, wanted by the Polish government for hideous experiments using live Typhus on concentration camp inmates, founded a drug company in West Germany where he developed a drug he marketed as a harmless sleeping tablet. His product, Contergan, was advertised as so harmless that it could be sold over-the-counter and one million Germans used it daily to sleep. He specially marketed his drug for 'pregnant mothers' having sleep problems. The results were soon clear in the form of tens of thousands of grotesquely deformed births. The drug he developed contained Thalidomide. At that time, German law left regulation of such drugs to the industry, a kind of self-policing, or to local government.

In 1962, in response to the Thalidomide scandals, Senator Estes Kefauver drafted and got passed the Kefauver-Harris Drug Amendments of 1962, tightening drug safety requirements and requiring pharmaceutical makers, or as George Bush prefers to call it, 'the vaccine industry,' to prove a given drug is effective before it can be sold to the public. Drugs were required to be registered with the US Food and Drug Administration, and the FDA was given 'explicit authority to require compliance with good manufacturing practices.' Safety and purity standards were defined. It also required drug makers explicitly state risks in their products.

In 1948 the member countries of the United Nations adopted the so-called Nuremberg Code following the military trial in Nuremberg Germany in 1946 of 23 Nazi doctors for crimes against humanity and experimentation with drugs and viruses on human subjects. It was recognized as international common law guiding medical research. With the grant of legal immunity from lawsuits for effects of their drugs, pharmaceutical companies would succeed in rolling back not only the Nuremberg Code but also more than a Century of bitterly-fought gains in public safety in the regulation of drug manufacturing and promotion.

In promoting drug industry immunity from legal damage suits, the President claims he is 'breaking down barriers to vaccine production.' In reality he is taking steps to create an environment which not even the Nazi doctors and drug companies during the Third Reich enjoyed—they had to be secretive about their actions. The real question to ask is what could be so important to compel the President of the United States to put his own population at risk in such an unfettered drug environment?

That there exists a virulent viral strain affecting birds especially in parts of Vietnam and China is not the issue at hand here. Rather it is the politicization of such a condition to

introduce a wholly other agenda, one whose ultimate consequences on human life and well-being are potentially far more damaging than any conceived damage from H5N1 or other virus strains

Bird Flu and Chicken Factory Farms: Profit Bonanza for US Agribusiness

A truncated version of the article by F. William Engdahl, November 27, 2005, at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=ENG20051127&articleId=1333>.

Look to the giant 'chicken jails' or chicken factory farms around the world as a more likely source for emerging Bird Flu viruses, not to small peasant chicken farmers, and we might be closer to the truth.

Agribusiness companies stand to reap huge gains in the event that scientists at Cambridge University and elsewhere are able to replace the entire world chicken population with genetically-engineered chicks allegedly resistant to H5N1 virus.

Little-noticed beneficiaries of the current Avian Flu scare, however, are the giant agribusiness chicken producers based in the United States, who claim 'their' chickens are safe. Their sales are booming and all indications are that Avian Flu, paradoxically, has come like a Godsend to their corporate balance sheets. Are they also responsible for breeding unsanitary conditions and exporting the product worldwide causing disease, illness and even deaths?

On October 23, 2005, Dr. Margaret Chan, Representative of the WHO Director-General for Pandemic Influenza, the key person responsible for global oversight of the threat from the H5N1 strain of Bird Flu, told Newsweek magazine, 'the risk to humans in Europe, the risk to human health is very low in Europe.'

Chan came to her senior post at WHO from Hong Kong, where she was responsible for the public health response to the SARS epidemic in 2003-4. She told Newsweek, 'our alert is at Phase III, and that has not changed recently. Phase VI is the highest, when there's a pandemic... We do not want to see complacency, but we also do not want to see people getting alarmed. At this point, avian influenza is a bird disease.' 1

That statement coming from the international public official most directly responsible, gives little ground to justify the mood of panic and the hoarding of dubious medications such as Tamiflu. Who else gains from the current panic over a potential human Avian Flu pandemic?

Factory Chicken Farms

Curiously enough, it is not the huge, unsanitary, overcrowded factory chicken farms of the global agri-giants which are being scrutinized as a possible incubator or source of H5N1 or other diseases. Rather, the target is the small chicken farmers

in especially Asia, with at most perhaps 10 to 20 chickens, who stand to lose big-time in the current Bird Flu hysteria.

The major chicken factories are making a propaganda campaign that, unlike in Asia where chickens are free to roam in the open, that their chickens are 'safer' because they are raised in closed facilities

Over the past three decades, American agriculture has been transformed so as to be almost unrecognizable.

Today, production of food has become a concentrated, vertically integrated multinational business, which they named agribusiness. The criterion is no longer human food safety or quality. It is corporate profit.

The industrialization of chicken-raising and slaughtering in the USA, which is known as 'factory farming' is a process whose inner workings are unknown to most people.

Five giant multinational agribusiness companies dominate the production and processing of chicken meat in the United States, and, as things seem to be going, were the world to be loony enough to adopt genetically modified chickens supposedly resistant to Avian Flu virus, these companies are about to dominate world chicken supply.

Boosting productivity for Tyson and the other chicken giants clearly means one thing: speedup of the production line, further slashing labor costs, and reducing safety measures in their slaughtering and packing plants.

Tough Men and Tender Chickens?

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization released a report in 2004 on the economic impact to date of Avian or Bird Flu.³ It noted that the main impact of the panic which since 2003, has been economic loss, not human deaths. 'The impact of countries banning both Thai and Chinese poultry exports,' the report noted, 'are leading to higher international poultry prices and increasing demand for poultry meat from other major suppliers, such as the United States...'

Increasing Asian demand for imported chicken products from the United States today, however, has a special significance. It means three to four giant factory farm operations are opening a potentially huge new market for chicken products in Asia.

Asia today is home to seven billion chickens, fully 40% of the world total. US chicken giants have literally been drooling at the prospect of breaking into the vast market in Asia, Japan and China for several years. Bird Flu is giving them that chance and more...

See the rest of this article, which indicates agribusiness, not free range chickens, to be the source of disease, at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=ENG20051127&articleId=1333>.