

Home

About Us/Help | Archive | Subscribe | Feedback | Text Edition | MonitorTalk | Search:



CLICK HERE www.heifer.org



Domestic Politics

Economy

Foreign Policy

Justice

Military

Society & Culture

Also see:

Iraq in Transition

Living > Religion & Ethics

Monitor Breakfast

Bacon, eggs, and policy: Fill your plate with excerpts from discussions between reporters and Washington newsmakers.

USA Stories:

for 12/30/2003

Democrats face a hard-to-hit Bush

US ponders overhauling beef rules

A decade later, a tempered vision of NAFTA

The rise of the American megachurch

Finding patches of wilderness in the city

A scholarly soldier steps

USA > Justice

from the December 29, 2003 edition

The terror threat at home, often overlooked

As the media focus on international terror, a Texan pleads guilty to possessing a weapon of mass destruction.

By [Kris Axtman](#) | Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

HOUSTON – It began as a misdelivered envelope and developed into the most extensive domestic terrorism investigation since the Oklahoma City bombing.

Last month, an east Texas man pleaded guilty to possession of a weapon of mass destruction. Inside the home and storage facilities of William Krar, investigators found a sodium-cyanide bomb capable of killing thousands, more than a hundred explosives, half a million rounds of ammunition, dozens of illegal weapons, and a mound of white-supremacist and antigovernment literature.

"Without question, it ranks at the very top of all domestic terrorist arrests in the past 20 years in terms of the lethality of the arsenal," says Daniel Levitas, author of "The Terrorist Next Door: The Militia Movement and the Radical Right."

But outside Tyler, Texas, the case is almost unknown. In the past nine months, there have been two government press releases and a handful of local stories, but no press conference and no coverage in the national newspapers.

Experts say the case highlights the increased cooperation and quicker response by US agencies since Sept. 11. But others say it points up

monitortalk

Vote in the MonitorTalk poll: [Does US media coverage of terrorism show signs of ethnic bias?](#)

[E-mail this story](#)

[Write a letter to the Editor](#)

[Printer-friendly version](#)

[Permission to reprint/republish](#)

SUPPORT THE MONITOR

[Make a donation](#)

MONITOR ARCHIVE



Trying War Crimes: Iraq in Context

With Saddam Hussein in custody, what now?

Essential background in stories from the Monitor's archive.

17 articles - \$4.95

Purchase articles from the [Monitor Archive](#) for as little as 15 cents each.

TREELESS EDITION™

New! [Subscribe](#) to the Treeless Edition!



SUBSCRIBE

[Free sample issue](#)

inside the world of Iraq's potent tribes

XML What is this?

SPECIAL PROJECTS



[Empire Builders](#)



[September 11 One year later](#)



[Defining Terrorism](#)



[Amtrak: All Aboard?](#)



[My Fellow Americans...](#)



[The Heart of a High School](#)

[more projects...](#)

Most-viewed stories:

(for 12/29/03)

12/29/03

[The terror threat at home, often overlooked](#)

12/29/03

[The Internet hasn't reeled in everyone yet](#)

12/29/03

[Quake aid may open door for US and Iran](#)

12/29/03

[US sees tide turn on Iraq insurgents](#)

12/29/03

[Three FBI agents on trying to prevent another 9/11](#)

just how political the terror war is. "There is no value for the Bush administration to highlighting domestic terrorism right now," says Robert Jensen, a journalism professor at the University of Texas in Austin. "But there are significant political benefits to highlighting foreign terrorists, especially when trying to whip up support for war."

Mr. Levitas goes even further: "The government has a severe case of tunnel vision when it comes to domestic terrorism. I have no doubt whatsoever that had Krar and his compatriots been Arab-Americans or linked to some violent Islamic fundamentalist group, we would have heard from John Ashcroft himself."

The case began in the fall of 2002 when a package bound for New Jersey was misdelivered to a New York address. The family inadvertently opened the package and found fake identification badges, including Department of Defense and United Nations IDs. The FBI eventually tracked the package back to Mr. Krar in Noonday, Texas.

The cache of weapons and bombs was found when the FBI served a search warrant in April of this year. Krar and his common-law wife, Judith Bruey, and the receiver of the package, New Jersey Militia member Edward Feltus, were arrested.

All three have pleaded guilty to separate counts and are awaiting sentencing.

Brit Featherston, the assistant US attorney in charge of the case, says it was Krar and Ms. Bruey's connections to white-supremacist groups that prompted further investigation. "Any little town has worse criminals on paper than these two. But because of their background, the red flags were flying all over the place - especially after Sept. 11," says Mr. Featherston, in the eastern district of Texas.

Before Sept. 11, he says, the case most likely would have been worked as a false-ID case and ended there. Instead, dozens of law-enforcement agencies were involved and hundreds of subpoenas were served. "This case was very high priority," says Featherston.

Still, investigators have been unable to answer questions such as: Where was the sodium-cyanide bomb destined? And were the weapons being prepared for a group or sold individually? Featherston says the investigation is ongoing and won't end until these questions are answered.

Experts say the case is important not only because of what it says about increased government cooperation, but also because it shows how serious a threat the country faces from within. "The lesson in the Krar case is that we have to always be concerned about domestic terrorism. It would be a terrible mistake to believe that terrorism always comes from outside," says Mark Potok at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala.

E-mail Headlines

Enter your address to receive news alerts.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

[Programs for teachers and students](#)



[Company Store](#)



[Buy Monitor Photos online!](#)



The fact is, the number of domestic terrorist acts in the past five years far outweighs the number of international acts, says Mark Pitcavage of the fact-finding department at the Anti-Defamation League. "We do have home-grown hate in the United States, people who are just as ill-disposed to the American government as any international terrorist group," he says.

Levitas estimates that there are approximately 25,000 right-wing extremist members and activists and some 250,000 sympathizers. The Southern Poverty Law Center counted 708 hate groups in 2002.

While Mr. Pitcavage was surprised the Krar case did not receive more attention, "It is a fact that a lot of stories involving domestic extremists get undercovered," he says. He points to a case he calls one of "the major terrorist plots of the 1990s" in which militia from around the country converged in central Texas allegedly to attack a military base. They were arrested at a campground near Fort Hood on the morning of July 4, 1997, with a large collection of weapons and explosives. "There was virtually no media coverage of that incident either," says Pitcavage.

Featherston speculates that the Krar case got little attention because the arrests were made just after the war began in Iraq. "Excuse me, a chemical weapon was found in the home state of George Bush," says Levitas. "I'm not saying the Justice Department deliberately decided to downplay the story because they thought it might be embarrassing to the US government if weapons of mass destruction were found in America before they were found in Iraq. But I am saying it was a mistake not to give this higher profile."

For his part, Krar has remained silent. He will most likely be sentenced sometime in February, and could receive up to life in prison. His attorney, Tonda Curry, says the US government has no reason to be afraid of him. "It looks a whole lot worse than it is. He had a lot of things that most people would never have any desire to have, but much of what he had was perfectly legal."

 [E-mail this story](#)

 [Write a letter to the Editor](#)

 [Printer-friendly version](#)

 [Permission to reprint/republish](#)

[back to top](#)



The banner features the 'cé' logo at the top. Below it, the text 'Champs-Elysées AUDIOMAGAZINES' is displayed. The banner is divided into four colored sections: a blue section for 'Perfect your French (click here)' with a picture of the Sacré-Cœur; an orange section for 'Maintain your Spanish (click here)' with a woman's face; a red section for 'Improve your German (click here)' with a church; and a green section for 'Enrich your Italian (click here)' with a hat. At the bottom, a dark blue section says 'SUBSCRIBE TO CHAMPS-ELYSEES AUDIOMAGAZINES' with a 'click here' link.

[Click Here](#)

