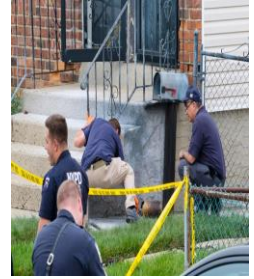




**Queens Bomber, Who Targeted Police, Arrested** – After a months-long investigation, a man was [arrested](#) for a bombing in Springfield Gardens, Queens last summer that left an unintended victim dead. An explosive device, disguised in a cardboard mailing tube, was left on the porch of the Queens home, and when an occupant opened the package, it blew up, causing burns to 80 percent of his body. It was discovered that the bomber picked the wrong address in his plan to kill a police officer in revenge over weapons charges in 2014.



**Assessment:** When police executed the arrest warrant in the suspect's home in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, they [found](#) more bomb-making material, including ball bearings to make an even more lethal device, and evidence that he was continuing his survey of police officers and their residences. The device used last July included a 9-volt battery, a battery case, and clothespin with screws as shrapnel. It was also reported he bought some of the material on Amazon. The porch bomber's residence is about two miles from the home of the Port Authority bomber, who tried to detonate his device in December. The neighborhoods where the attackers reside, as well as the Queens area where the parcel bomb went off, are largely residential and would normally not be the focus of counterterrorism operations. As stated earlier, high-probability targets can be hardened, but bomb assembly can be done anywhere.

**Marines Sickened by White Powder Envelope at Joint Base in Va.** – White powder released from an envelope sent to Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall in Arlington, Va., sickened 11 Marines Tuesday, requiring at least three of those exposed to be hospitalized. Symptoms included nose bleeds, itching and burning. The incident triggered a hazmat response from the Arlington Fire Department and the complete evacuation of the building, and then the entire base. The case is being investigated by the FBI and NCIS.

**Assessment:** Though the substance has yet to be identified, and the above symptoms do not conform to anthrax, investigators will test for it. [According](#) to the CDC, anthrax (inhalation) symptoms can occur from one day to two months, and include fever, shortness of breath, headaches, cough, sore throat, sweats or nausea. Exposures from inhalation can spread the spores much faster than cutaneous exposures. Chest X-rays or CT scans can show if the lungs are comprised (from mediastinal widening or pleural effusion), and bacillus anthracis can be diagnosed with a blood sample, but must be done before the patient receives antibiotics.

**ISIS Down, but Far from Out** – ISIS may have lost its "state," but the Islamist insurgency is still a dangerous threat in many countries, primarily in Africa, the Middle East and the Afghanistan-Pakistan border regions. "Over the next year, we expect that ISIS is likely to focus on regrouping in Iraq and Syria, enhancing its global presence, championing its cause, planning international attacks, and encouraging its members and sympathizers to attack in their home countries," DNI Coats told the Senate last month in connection with the release of the 2018 Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community (covered in [Watchline 02.15.18](#)). Several ISIS-affiliated groups remain active, including Wilayat Sinai in Egypt, groups in Libya (who may be connected to the Manchester arena bombing), Boko Haram and other groups in Nigeria, an AQ splinter group in Somalia, and in Yemen, where intelligence estimates state that ISIS doubled its size there last year. In maritime southeast Asia, the [Maphilindo](#) nations have also seen an increased ISIS presence.

**Assessment:** As proven with the ODNI assessment, the U.S. Department of State this week [added](#) seven ISIS-linked groups (corresponding closely with the countries listed above) to its list of foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs). The threat is more than ISIS global expansion in foreign countries, but self-propelled homegrown violent extremists as yet another American was arrested this week for [providing](#) material support to a terror group. The California man was detained in Tunisia while en route to Libya to join their ISIS affiliate.



**Penn Station Adds Bomb Detector to Security System** – TSA has introduced a machine that scans for suicide vests in Penn Station, which serves more than 600,000 commuters a day, and is known as the busiest transportation hub in the Western Hemisphere. The system, which is still being tested on Amtrak passengers, supports devices called standoff explosive detection units, and was used in 2014 when the Super Bowl was held in Giants Stadium. The technology is also being used in the L.A. subway system. The screening device resembles "white television cameras on tall tripods" but permanent monitors can be mounted in ceilings to free up floor space.

**Assessment:** Commuters, and any uniformed personnel posted near the devices, will be concerned with the devices energy emissions, but the system measures radio frequencies from a person's body and does not use X-rays. Last December, the Port Authority bomber tried to set off his suicide vest in a passageway that connects the bus terminal with Times Square-42<sup>nd</sup> Street station, just one stop north of Penn Station. These remote scanners are desirable as they do not slow the flow of commuters, nor do they depict the human body in a way that would cause privacy concerns.

**Ceremony Marks 25 Years Since WTC Bombing** – A somber ceremony Monday at the September 11 Memorial Plaza commemorated the victims, their families and the survivors of the WTC Bombing on Feb. 26, 1993, which killed six people and injured more than a thousand others. Eight years before 9/11, terrorists detonated a rental van in parking lot below the North Tower, creating a massive, multi-story hole and sending depilating smoke high into the skyscraper. "While overshadowed by 9/11, the 1993 bombing represented a pivotal moment in the history of the World Trade Center, in the history of New York City, and, frankly, our own national reckoning with terrorism in a global age," said the president of the Sept. 11 museum.

**Assessment:** The '93 bombing was al Qaeda's first foray in the West, following Yemen hotel attack in 1992 that targeted U.S. troops. Assaults on U.S. interests continued with the embassy attacks in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and the 2000 USS Cole bombing in Aden harbor, Yemen. The AQ attack cycle concluded with the second WTC attack (among other targets) in 2001. FDNY Fire Marshal Ron Bucca, Sr. not only responded to the WTC bombing, but was one of the first investigators to see the wider al Qaeda threat, using much of the knowledge and training he received as an analyst for the Defense Intelligence Agency, after serving as a Green Beret in during the Vietnam War. FM Bucca, and 342 of his FDNY colleagues, was killed when AQ returned on 9/11. In his honor, Camp Bucca was established near Umm Qasr in Iraq in 2003, which had a detention center than housed many AQ terrorists, as well as some future leaders of ISIS.

**With Tomorrow's AI, More than Your Job Could Be Terminated** – Oracles of technology, whether it be business leaders, academics or science fiction writers have warned of the rise of killer bots for decades, and a recent [report](#) from the EFF, a venture among several U.K. universities and groups, [predicts](#) that tomorrow's artificial intelligence will be superior to humans in many ways, and will even show a certain insensitivity (AI emotions are another conversation). Future virtual life could be weaponized through many means, such as with UAVs or other vehicle platforms, and it could even engineer deadly viruses against humans.



300 Drones Form White Tiger in Sky to Close Olympic Games in PyeongChang

**Assessment:** Though Skynet, the fully automated defense system that caused all that trouble in the *Terminator* series, became self-aware in 1997, there is still time. Safeguards can be built into software (Asimov's [Three Laws](#) of Robotics are a good starting point), but any number of illicit actors will try to exploit vulnerabilities. "That's definitely the type of thing rogue states and terrorists are going to be interested in," a lead researcher said. "[They'll] try to find weaknesses and exploit them for their own purposes." The closing ceremony of the 2018 Winter Olympics showed that over 300 UAVs can already be both automated and synchronized. And AI is already [stealing code](#). Finally, the CEO of Alibaba (China's "Amazon"), said that so-called [soft skills](#) have never been more important.