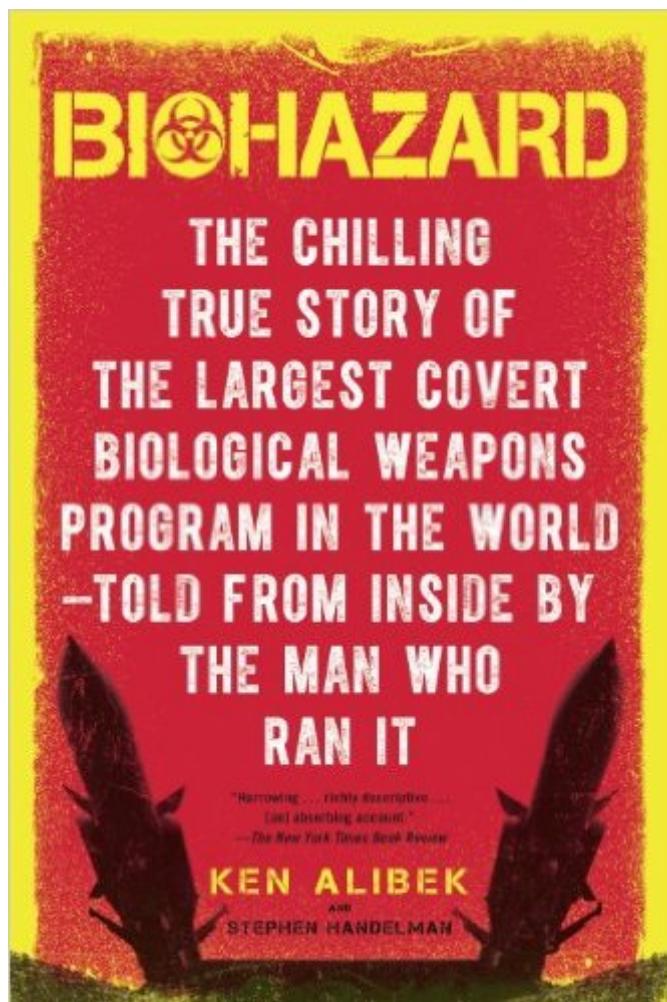


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Biohazard: The Chilling True Story Of The Largest Covert Biological Weapons Program In The World--Told From The Inside By The Man Who Ran It



Synopsis

Imagine a hot zone in which Ebola is being spliced "using the latest techniques of genetic engineering" with smallpox, the most infectious disease known to man. Now imagine that cocktail is meant for you. For fifty years, while the world stood in terror of a nuclear war, Russian scientists hidden in heavily guarded secret cities refined and stockpiled a new kind of weapon of mass destruction "an invisible weapon that would strike in silence and could not be traced. It would leave hundreds of thousands dead in its wake and would continue to spread devastation long after its release. The scientists were bioweaponeers, working to perfect the tools of a biological Armageddon. They called it their Manhattan Project. It was the deadliest and darkest secret of the cold war. What you are about to read has never before been made public. Ken Alibek began his career as a doctor wanting to save lives and ended up running the Soviet biological weapons program "a secret military empire masquerading as a pharmaceutical company. At its peak, the program employed sixty thousand people at over one hundred facilities. Seven reserve mobilization plants were on permanent standby, ready to produce hundreds of tons of plague, anthrax, smallpox, and Venezuelan equine encephalitis, to name only a few of the toxic agents bred in Soviet labs. Almost every government ministry was implicated, including the Academy of Sciences and the KGB. Biohazard is a terrifying, fast-paced account of tests and leaks, accidents and disasters in the labs, KGB threats and assassinations. The book is full of revelations "evidence of biowarfare programs in Cuba and India, actual deployments at Stalingrad and in Afghanistan, experiments with mood-altering agents, a contingency plan to attack major American cities, and the true story behind the mysterious anthrax outbreak in Sverdlovsk. But beyond these is a twisted world of lies and mirrors, and the riveting parable of the greatest perversion of science in history. No one knows the actual capabilities of biological weapons better than Dr. Alibek. Many of the scientists who worked with him have been lured away from low-paying Russian labs to rogue regimes and terrorist groups around the world. In our lifetime, we will most likely see a terrorist attack using biological weapons on an American city. Biohazard tells us "in chilling detail" what to expect and what we can do. Not since Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* has there been such a book "a report from inside the belly of the beast. Praise for Biohazard "Harrowing . . . richly descriptive . . . [an] absorbing account." The New York Times Book Review "Remarkable . . . terrifying revelations . . . [Ken Alibek's] overall message is ignored at great national peril." Newsday "Read and be amazed." An important and fascinating look into a terrifying world of which we were blissfully unaware. "Robin Cook, author of *Contagion* From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

I had read this book a few years back when it first came out. Now that the issue of bioterrorism and biowarfare is a front page issue, I decided to give it another read. Though not as compelling as some books on the dangers of unchecked plagues devastating the world (Richard Preston's The Hot Zone is still one of the scariest books I've ever read--fact or fiction), it focuses specifically on the use of biological agents as weapons. In this respect, it is an eye-opener. Alibek was one of the key leaders and scientists in the Soviet Union's biological weapons. Until he defected in 1992, little was known in this country about the extent of the Soviet program--a program that was supposed to be dismantled by treaty agreement in the early 1970's. Alibek made us aware of how advanced the Soviet program was. And he warns us that Russia still works on advancing their program despite claims to the contrary. Certainly this is a frightening prospect, especially in light of recent events in this country. Though I do not personally consider Russia a threat, it is painfully clear that Russian technology is leaving Russia and falling into the hands of people who are not afraid to use it. One of the things I like most about Alibek's book is that he gives tremendous insight into the Russian mentality. How even he, as a high-level soldier in the Soviet military, was brainwashed into believing

the United States had an extensive bioweapons program. (I am not naive enough to think our program is non-existent despite treaty agreements but it certainly does not compare to the Russian production machine.) Additionally, he points out that in the trying economic times of post-communist Russia, anything and everything is up for sale. I am not easily made paranoid.

If you read one book about biohazards/bioterrorism, make it this book! Dr Alibek does a superb job of presenting the terrifying facts concerning the extent of biological weapons of mass destruction that have been developed and are currently available to anyone looking for such a weapon. If you think stockpiling vaccines, vaccinating the military against specific agents, and/or there is no threat to the US from these weapons, you really need to digest the info provided here by an author "in the know". To make these facts even more frightening, think about this... I'm sure there are some things Dr Alibek could not include in this account as they are considered classified information. As Dr Alibek clearly shows, the R&D didn't stop just because the USSR collapsed. What horrors have been engineered and perfected since his defection in 1992? When one thinks about it, the world was probably safer before the Soviet collapse. At least there were massive safeguards in place to provide ultimate secrecy to this program and to keep the organisms in check in case of accidents. Now, there measures have dissolved with the Soviet state..... who is controlling/maintaining these bioweapons? Dr Alibek makes you think about these very hard questions. It is also very interesting to realize that both Yeltsin and Gorbachev were deeply involved in propagating these weapons under the guise of countermeasures/vaccine development. All this was done with total disregard to the 1972 Bioweapon Treaty signed by the USSR. This certainly gives a new meaning to Perestroika! It is not easy to like or even accept the choices the author made in his life. He is quite frank in how he came to his decisions and the realizes the abhorrent results of his decisions.

As this review is written, in October 2002, it is well to remember that Ken Alibek first brought his revelations of the massive Soviet (and now, Russian Federation) bioweapon production to the public in his book *BIOHAZARD* more than two years ago. His defection to the U.S. occurred almost four years earlier. And yet, as I travel the country to promote my own book --a fiction bioterrorist assault on the U.S. that threatens humanity itself-- I'm dumbfounded to discover that the majority of my audiences have no idea of who Ken is. Worse, they have no conception of the horrors that he, as deputy director of Biopreparat/Vector, the massive organization the Soviet Union created to develop and mass-produce lethal viruses and other bioagents *BY THE METRIC TON*, has visited on today's world. Today we live with the very real threat of a worldwide pandemic of smallpox --a

disease officially eradicated in nature three decades ago-- that could be sparked by any number of rogue nations or their terrorist clients who possess the weaponized form of smallpox that Biopreparat/Vector produced. And because that hideous form of variola virus is likely to have been genetically modified, it is entirely possible that existing smallpox vaccines (such as that being recommended for mass immunization in the U.S., Israel, Australia and elsewhere) simply will not work against it. While I was researching my novel of bioterrorism, Final Epidemic, I met many experts in the field of national security, medicine and government. In private conversations, those who consented to be interviewed all agreed on one point: a staggering volume of bioweapons exist today, and could be released upon mankind at any time by a ruthless ideologue... or a madman.

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