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Dark History: How the US Experimented on Its Own People

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For years, government-related institutes have experimented on their own citizens, mainly minorities, to serve their own interests. Infamous and not entirely disclosed, here are some of the most unethical operations done by the US on its own people and soil.

Several experiments conducted on human test subjects in the United States have been deemed unethical due to their execution without the subjects' knowledge or informed consent. These tests have occurred throughout American history, with some of them still being conducted today.

These experiments encompass a range of activities, such as subjecting humans to chemical and biological weapons, including infections with lethal or incapacitating diseases. They also involve human radiation experiments, the administration of toxic and radioactive substances through injections, surgical experiments, interrogation and torture experiments, tests involving mind-altering substances, and a diverse array of other experimental procedures.

A significant portion of these tests are conducted on children, individuals who are ill, and those with mental disabilities, often disguised as "medical treatment." Moreover, a considerable number of subjects in these studies are impoverished, members of racial minorities, or incarcerated individuals.

Numerous experiments not only violated US laws but were also backed by government agencies or unauthorized factions within them, including the Centers for Disease Control, the United States military, and the Central Intelligence Agency. Additionally, some experiments were funded by private corporations engaged in military endeavors.

Reader, brace yourself as you are about to delve into a trove of ominous files that unveil the reality of the United States' self-interest at play.

Tuskegee Experiment (1932)

The Tuskegee Study, initiated in 1932 and spanning four decades, stands as a prominent example of medical racism and mistreatment in the United States. It is widely regarded as one of the most infamous instances of such abuse in American history.

The US Public Health Service (USPHS) and the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama conducted a profoundly unethical syphilis experiment, where hundreds of economically disadvantaged African American men were exploited as test subjects without their informed consent. The men were lured to take part in the study through enticing offers of complimentary medical examinations, transportation, meals, and burial insurance.

In 1932, the USPHS and Tuskegee Institute initiated the "Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male" under the pretense of observing the symptoms of syphilis. This experiment focused on a sexually transmitted infection that was deemed incurable during that period. However, due to the influence of white supremacist ideology, it was wrongly believed that syphilis had distinct effects on dark-skinned bodies as opposed to white bodies.

In Macon County, Alabama, the study was conducted, wherein 600 Black men aged 25 and above were enrolled as participants. Among them, 399 men were diagnosed with syphilis, while 201 did not have the infection. The researchers informed these men that they were receiving treatment for a condition known as "bad blood," a term encompassing syphilis and other health problems such as anemia and fatigue.

Despite the widespread availability of penicillin as a syphilis treatment starting in 1947, the men in the study were never provided with this option throughout the remaining 25 years of the research. Their race led to them being dehumanized and treated as inferior beings. They were used as mere research subjects, akin to laboratory rats, with their sole purpose being to unveil the long-term consequences of this potentially fatal illness.

Plutonium testing: Who is Ebb Cade? (1945)

Ebb Cade, an African American individual with the codename HP ("Human Product")-12, was the initial recipient of the injection. Cade, a 53-year-old cement mixer employed by a construction company in Oak Ridge, became the subject of the experiment. Following a severe car accident on March 24, 1945, Ebb Cade sustained severe fractures in his arm and leg. Despite his overall good health, contrary to the project's initial requirement for subjects who were "expected to die," Dr. Friedell communicated to Los Alamos that he had identified a suitable candidate for the plutonium experiment.

As per previous animal experiments, the established standard dosage for plutonium was one microgram. However, on April 10, Dr. Joseph Howland administered a plutonium dose of 4.7 micrograms to Cade, following recommendations from Los Alamos. This dosage exceeded the acceptable limit by nearly five times. Meanwhile, Cade endured great discomfort as he awaited to be treated for his broken bones. The scenario of white doctors refraining from providing treatment to an injured and unsuspecting black man, opting instead to carry out covert medical experiments, evokes disturbing parallels with the darkest moments of the infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiments.

Cade had to endure an agonizing wait of twenty-one days after his accident and a full five

days after the injection before his broken bones were finally set. This delay was intentional as the doctors needed to obtain bone scrapings for biopsy. Additionally, fifteen of his perfectly healthy teeth were extracted by the doctors, without providing any explanation to Cade. These teeth were then shipped to Los Alamos for further examination, leaving Cade unaware of the reasons behind the tooth extractions. However, it is highly likely that Ebb Cade became aware that he was being utilized as a government test subject.

Although official documents state that he was “discharged” from the hospital, the reality is that one morning, a nurse discovered he had absconded during the night. Following his escape, Cade resided in Greensboro, North Carolina, until his passing in 1953 due to heart failure. Unfortunately, no autopsy was conducted, and according to Department of Energy (DOE) records, the permission to exhume his body in 1973 was deemed “lost to follow-up.”

With the onset of the Cold War, officials overseeing America’s biological weapons program faced new adversaries and fears. Driven by the determination to prepare for alleged “Soviet attacks,” the United States conducted over 200 domestic tests to evaluate the nation’s susceptibility to biological warfare and identify vulnerabilities at a national level.

Operation Sea Spray (1950)

Serratia marcescens, a bacterium found in soil and water, is notable for its capacity to generate a vivid red pigment. This distinctive characteristic renders this microorganism valuable in experiments, as its visibility allows for easy tracking. Exploiting this trait, the US military conducted a large-scale biowarfare test in 1950, harnessing the vibrant attributes of Serratia marcescens.

Operation Sea-Spray was a covert biological warfare experiment conducted by the US Navy. The objective of the operation was to assess the susceptibility of a city like San Francisco in California to a potential bioweapon attack. As part of the experiment, Serratia marcescens and Bacillus globigii bacteria were sprayed over the San Francisco Bay Area to gather data on the city’s vulnerability.

From September 20 to September 27, 1950, the US Navy initiated the release of the two bacterial strains from a ship located off the coast of San Francisco. It was believed at the time that these bacteria posed no harm to humans. Monitoring equipment installed across 43 locations throughout the city provided data that led the Army to conclude that San Francisco had been exposed to a significant dosage. In fact, the analysis indicated that nearly all of the city’s 800,000 residents were likely to have inhaled a minimum of 5,000 particles of the bacteria. Over the course of the next two decades, the military conducted similar tests in various cities across the United States.

No evidence indicates that the Army had provided any prior notification to health authorities before conducting the widespread bacterial dispersion. In hindsight, doctors contemplated whether the experiment could be linked to heart valve infections that occurred during the same period, as well as the significant infections observed among intravenous drug users in the 1960s and 1970s. The possibility of a connection between these occurrences and the experimental activities raised concerns among medical professionals.

In 1977, the US Senate Subcommittee on Health and Scientific Research conducted a series of hearings during which the US Army revealed the existence of the tests. Army officials acknowledged the occurrence of the outbreak but claimed that any connection to their

experiments was allegedly purely coincidental. They emphasized that no other medical facilities reported similar outbreaks, and the 11 affected individuals all had urinary-tract infections following medical procedures, indicating that the source of the infections likely originated within the hospital.

Operation DEW I & DEW II (1951)

Operation Dew occurred between 1951 and 1952 along the southeast coast of the United States, specifically in the vicinity of Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. This operation comprised two sets of trials known as Dew I and Dew II. The experiments involved releasing 250 pounds (110 kg) of fluorescent particles from a minesweeper stationed off the coast.

Operation Dew I was documented in a US Army report referred to as "Dugway Special Report 162," dated August 1, 1952. The primary objective of Operation Dew was to investigate the behavior of aerosol-released biological agents. It encompassed a series of five distinct trials conducted between March 26, 1952, and April 21, 1952. The objective of these trials was to assess the feasibility of maintaining a substantial aerosol cloud, released offshore, as it drifted over land, thereby achieving extensive area coverage. Zinc cadmium sulfide was employed during the tests, released along a line spanning approximately 100 to 150 nautical miles (190 to 280 km) located 5 to 10 nautical miles (10 to 20 km) off the coasts of Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, clearly putting their own citizens at risk of contamination.

> A report published by the University of #California San Francisco shows that dermatologists performed unethical experiments on prisoners, without the consent of the #UCSF committee to conduct such experiments on humans. pic.twitter.com/DwdcqcqUa6
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> — Al Mayadeen English (@MayadeenEnglish) January 2, 2023

Two of the trials disseminated clouds of zinc cadmium sulfide, covering expansive areas within all three states. The impact of these tests extended over an estimated 60,000 square miles (150,000 km²) in the populated coastal region of the southeastern United States. The releases during Operation Dew I were executed from the USS Tercel, a Navy minesweeper.

Dew II comprised the release of fluorescent particles and Lycopodium spores from an aircraft. A 1953 Army report documented the details of Dew II; however, the report remained classified until a 1997 report by the US National Research Council, which focused on the US Army's zinc cadmium sulfide dispersion program from the 1950s.

Project MKULTRA (1953)

Project MKULTRA was the clandestine designation for a secret research program conducted by the CIA, aimed at exploring mind control and chemical interrogation techniques. Administered by the Office of Scientific Intelligence, this covert initiative commenced in the early 1950s and persisted until at least the late 1960s. Notably, it allegedly involved the utilization of American citizens as unknowing participants in various experiments. According to the available evidence, Project MKULTRA involved covertly employing a diverse range of

drugs and various techniques to clandestinely manipulate individuals' mental states and modify brain functioning. The program aimed to explore the effects of these interventions on the human mind and behavior.

Project MKULTRA gained significant public attention in 1975 through the efforts of the US Congress, particularly the investigations conducted by the Church Committee and the Rockefeller Commission, which was a presidential commission. However, the investigative processes faced obstacles due to CIA Director Richard Helms' directive in 1973 to destroy all MKULTRA files. Consequently, the Church Committee and Rockefeller Commission relied heavily on sworn testimonies from individuals directly involved in the project and the limited number of documents that managed to survive Helms' destruction order.

While the CIA maintains that the MKULTRA experiment was discontinued, Victor Marchetti, a former CIA veteran with 14 years of experience, revealed in several interviews that the CIA regularly carries out disinformation campaigns and that mind control research persisted within the organization. In a 1977 interview, Marchetti explicitly referred to the CIA's assertion of MKULTRA's abandonment as a "cover story." His statements shed doubt on the official claims regarding the termination of the program and suggest ongoing activities related to mind control research within the CIA.

On the Senate floor in 1977, Senator Ted Kennedy said that: The Deputy Director of the CIA revealed that over thirty universities and institutions were involved in an "extensive testing and experimentations" program which included covert drug tests on unwitting citizens "at all social levels, high and low, native Americans and foreign." Several of these tests involved the administration of LSD to "unwitting subjects in social situations." At least one death, that of Dr. Frank Oslon, resulted from these activities. The Agency itself acknowledged that these tests made little scientific sense. The agents doing the monitoring were not qualified scientific observers.

To this day most specific information regarding Project MKULTRA remains highly classified.

Operation Big Itch (1954)

In September 1954, Operation Big Itch was conducted at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah. This series of tests aimed to assess the coverage patterns and survivability of the tropical rat flea (Xenopsylla cheopis) for potential use as a disease vector in biological warfare. It is important to note that the fleas employed in these trials were not carrying or infected with any biological agent. The primary focus was on studying the behavior and characteristics of the fleas themselves rather than their disease-carrying potential.

Two types of munitions, the E14 bomb, and the E23 bomb were utilized to disperse the fleas. These munitions could be assembled into cluster bombs known as the E86 cluster bomb and the E77 bomb, respectively. Upon reaching altitudes of 2,000 or 1,000 feet (600 or 300 meters), the cluster bombs would release their individual bomblets via parachute, thereby disseminating the fleas as potential disease vectors. The aim of this method was to study the spread and behavior of fleas in a controlled environment.

The E14 munition was specifically designed to accommodate 100,000 fleas, while the E23 munition had a larger capacity of 200,000 fleas. However, during the initial tests of Operation Big Itch, the E23 munitions encountered significant malfunctions, leading to unintended flea release inside the aircraft. Consequently, the fleas bit the pilot, the

bombardier, and an observer. In light of these incidents, the subsequent Big Itch tests proceeded solely with the smaller E14 munitions. Guinea pigs were employed as test subjects and strategically positioned within a circular grid measuring 660 yards (600 meters) in diameter.

The Big Itch tests yielded positive results, demonstrating that the fleas were capable of withstanding the impact of being dropped from an airplane and promptly seeking hosts. The weapon showcased its ability to cover a target area equivalent to that of a battalion, effectively disrupting operations for a duration of approximately one day. The time limit was primarily determined by the fleas' activity, as the air-dropped fleas remained active for approximately 24 hours before their effectiveness diminished.

Operation Big Buzz (1955)

In June 1955, an experiment known as Operation Big Buzz was conducted in Savannah, Georgia. Additionally, a subsequent iteration of the experiment took place in Avon Park, Florida in 1956, under the name Operation Drop Kick.

During Operation Big Buzz, extensive tests were conducted by releasing more than 300,000 mosquitoes from airplanes and on the ground. The objective was to assess the feasibility of using these mosquitoes, specifically the yellow fever mosquito species known as Aedes aegypti, as a means of dispersing biological warfare agents.

Another objective was to ascertain the survival capability of the mosquitoes throughout the dispersion process and their ability to seek blood meals from the ground. The tests aimed to determine if the mosquitoes could effectively adapt to the environment after being released and exhibit their characteristic behavior of seeking blood meals. In total, the experiment involved the breeding of one million female mosquitoes for testing purposes. Among them, 330,000 uninfected mosquitoes were dispersed into the population through aircraft releases and via the utilization of E14 bombs, allowing them to be released on the ground.

The remaining portion of the mosquitoes was utilized to confirm their susceptibility to yellow fever infection, assess the viability of storing them, and evaluate the process of loading them into potential weapons. The objective was to ascertain the feasibility of using these infected mosquitoes as a means to produce yellow fever and investigate the practicality of their storage and deployment for military purposes. The conducted mosquito release tests revealed that these insects were capable of traveling distances of up to 2,000 feet from the location where they were initially deployed.

Upon entering populated areas, the mosquitoes immediately embarked on an active quest for blood meals, with humans and guinea pigs being their preferred hosts of choice. Within a span of just one day, a significant number of mosquitoes managed to infiltrate the homes of residents and successfully fed on them, providing conclusive evidence that they could be dispersed through multiple means.

While there is no definitive confirmation, there is a widespread belief that the mosquitoes used in the experiment may have been infected with yellow fever.

Additionally, there are suspicions that the Army deployed disguised personnel posing as health workers to observe and document the spread of the disease. Given the government's extensive track record of utilizing Black communities as testing sites for diseases and

infections, it is understandable that Black citizens harbor skepticism and doubt regarding the intentions and potential risks associated with such experiments.

Willowbrook hepatitis experiment (1956)

Established in 1947 with a capacity to accommodate 4,000 residents, the Willowbrook school became overwhelmed as its population exceeded 6,000 individuals for many years. Within its walls, disease, and neglect pervaded, leading to numerous fatalities resulting from untreated illnesses and instances of abuse. In 1965, during an unplanned visit to Willowbrook, Robert F. Kennedy, then a Senator from New York, was shocked by what he witnessed. Testifying before Congress, he expressed his dismay, stating that those confined within the institution had no access to civil liberties and likening Willowbrook to a deplorable "snake pit."

Utilizing the dire circumstances prevailing at Willowbrook, Dr. Krugman and Dr. Giles capitalized on the institution's conditions to recruit new families for their hepatitis experiments. Despite the well-documented horrors experienced at Willowbrook, it remained one of the few available options for children with severe disabilities, resulting in a lengthy waitlist. Dr. Krugman presented certain parents, including Nina Galen, with an enticing offer: the opportunity to bypass the waiting period and have their children placed in the newer, more hygienic research wards with increased staffing, on the condition that they participate in the experiments. "I felt coerced," McCourt reveals, "as if I were being denied assistance unless I accepted this [opportunity]."

Even though some use this as an excuse to argue with the experiment, it is crucial to mention that a parent's consent does not legalize or humanize the tests on those children. In addition, Krugman assured parents that since hepatitis was already widespread within the confines of Willowbrook, their children might as well have the opportunity to receive a vaccine. McCourt vividly recalls being informed that her daughter could receive an "antidote" to hepatitis if she participated in the experiment. When she questioned why the hepatitis studies couldn't be conducted on primates instead, she was informed that utilizing animals would be deemed "too costly."

Despite being aware of the ethical concerns surrounding infecting mentally disabled children with a potentially lethal disease, Dr. Krugman believed that the potential benefits outweighed the risks. In a 1958 paper published in the New England Journal of Medicine, he acknowledged that the decision to administer the hepatitis virus to patients at Willowbrook was not taken lightly. He pointed out that the strain of hepatitis present at Willowbrook was relatively mild, many of the children were likely to contract the disease anyway, and the knowledge gained from the experiment would benefit other residents of Willowbrook. Dr. Krugman also stressed that the study had received approval from the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene and the Armed Forces Epidemiological Board of the Surgeon General's Office.

Some of Dr. Krugman's trials built on previous research that giving children antibodies from patients who had recovered from hepatitis could prevent new infections. The experiments also involved infecting healthy children with the virus through the chocolate milk concoction. The doctors eventually learned how much it took for the children to show symptoms of hepatitis, allowed them to recover, and then gave them the virus all over again. These experiments were done to test if someone who had recovered from hepatitis would remain immune or if they could be reinfected again.

Operation LAC (1957)

Operation LAC, also known as Large Area Coverage, was a secret military operation conducted by the United States Army Chemical Corps. Its objective was to release microscopic zinc cadmium sulfide (ZnCdS) particles over extensive areas of the United States and Canada. The purpose of this operation was to study the dispersal patterns and geographic range of chemical and biological weapons. That said, a researcher has claimed that the experiments were carried out on the residents of St. Louis, Missouri, for an extended period, unethically subjecting them to exposure to radioactive compounds.

According to Professor Lisa Martino-Taylor, a sociologist at St. Louis Community College, although it was acknowledged that the government released "harmless" zinc cadmium sulfide particles over the general population in St. Louis, she alleges that a radioactive additive was also included in the compound. With extensive documentation and photographic evidence, Professor Lisa Martino-Taylor has reportedly gathered detailed descriptions of the spraying operations that exposed the clueless public, particularly in low-income and minority communities, to radioactive particles. '

During her research, Professor Lisa Martino-Taylor discovered photographs depicting the distribution of the particles during two periods: 1953-1954 and 1963-1965.

In Corpus Christi, the chemical was distributed through aerial dispersion from airplanes, effectively covering large areas of the city. In St. Louis, the Army utilized buildings, including schools and public housing projects, as well as mobile units mounted on station wagons, to deploy the chemical using sprayers.

Local politicians were allegedly kept in the dark about the true nature of the testing, despite its significant scope. More importantly, the residents of St. Louis were misled, being informed that the Army was conducting smoke screen tests aimed at safeguarding cities from potential "Russian attacks."

Martino-Taylor reportedly discovered that the Pruitt-Igoe public housing complex in St. Louis was subjected to the highest concentration of spraying. This complex, which housed approximately 10,000 low-income residents, became a focal point of the experiments. She also revealed that a staggering 70 percent of the residents were children under the age of 12, highlighting the vulnerability of the population affected by the testing.

Operation 112 (1960)

Between 1962 and 1973, the Deseret Test Center, operated by the Department of Defense in Fort Douglas, Utah, undertook a series of tests known as Project 112 and Project SHAD. These tests focused on assessing the vulnerability of biological and chemical warfare capabilities. The experiments included various land-based and sea-based trials conducted at multiple locations.

Around 6,000 US servicemembers, predominantly from the Navy and Army, but also including some from the Marine Corps and Air Force, were engaged in conducting chemical tests aimed at defending against biological and chemical weapons threats. The majority of these participants were involved in Project SHAD.

Project 112 was carried out during John F. Kennedy's presidency, and it received

authorization from Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara as part of a comprehensive evaluation of the US military. Reports indicate that funding and personnel were provided by every branch of the armed services as well as the CIA. Additionally, Canada and the United Kingdom were involved in certain activities under Project 112.

The primary focus of Project 112 was the exploration of aerosol-based methods for distributing biological and chemical agents capable of inducing "controlled temporary incapacitation" (CTI). The testing program encompassed extensive operations conducted at "extracontinental test sites" located in the Central and South Pacific as well as Alaska.

More than 50 trials were carried out as part of Project 112, involving various substances. Among them, at least 18 tests used simulants of biological agents (BG), while at least 14 tests involved chemical agents such as sarin, VX, tear gas, and other stimulants. These trials took place at different locations, including Porton Down in the UK, Ralston in Canada, and at least 13 US warships, collectively referred to as Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD). The coordination of the project was managed from the Deseret Test Center in Utah. However, as of 2015, publicly available information regarding the project remains incomplete.

Project SHAD, a component of the broader Project 112, was carried out in the 1960s with the aim of identifying the vulnerabilities of US warships to chemical or biological warfare agents. The tests conducted under Project SHAD were focused on developing response procedures to effectively counter such attacks while ensuring the maintenance of the ships' war-fighting capabilities.

The classified information related to SHAD was not completely cataloged or located in one facility.

Bio agents in NYC subway (1966)

A team of scientists from the US Army ventured into the New York City subway's Seventh and Eighth Avenue lines on June 6, 1966. Among them, some were equipped with air sampling machines stored in boxes and attached to belts, while others carried light bulbs.

The light bulbs contained approximately 175 grams of Bacillus subtilis bacteria, previously referred to as Bacillus globigii, with approximately 87 trillion organisms in each bulb. The objective was to break these bulbs and employ the sampling machines to observe the dispersion of the bacteria throughout the subway tunnels and trains.

These experiments, involving the use of bacteria to simulate biological weapons, were carried out on unsuspecting civilians without their knowledge or consent. This action directly contravenes the Nuremberg Code, which explicitly mandates that research participants must provide voluntary and informed consent.

Although the individuals responsible for conducting these experiments believed that the bacterial species they utilized were innocuous, subsequent revelations have shown that they can indeed lead to health issues. He says, "During peak hours, these bacteria were dropped," adding that "If you can get trillions of bacteria into a light bulb and throw it on the track as a train pulls into a station, they'll get pulled through the air as the train leaves."

According to the report, army scientists determined that it took approximately four to 13 minutes for train passengers to come into contact with the bacteria. Just five minutes after the bacteria was released at 23rd Street Station, their presence was detected at every

station between 14th Street and 59th Street. Between June 6 and June 10, their calculations estimated that over a million individuals had been exposed to the bacteria.

The germ warfare testing program came to light through a news report in the early 1970s, followed by subsequent requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. Scientists who had participated in the program were summoned to testify before Congress. The report concluded that test results revealed that a large number of the working population in New York City were exposed to the disease if one or more pathogenic agents were disseminated in several subway lines during rush hour.

Measles Vaccine experiment (1989)

In 1996, federal health officials disclosed that a government-sponsored study conducted in 1989 on nearly 1,500 minority infants in Los Angeles involved two measles vaccines. However, the study failed to inform the parents that one of the vaccines being administered was experimental. This revelation came to light during a major US measles epidemic at the time.

In 1989, a measles vaccine trial was initiated by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and Kaiser Permanente, a healthcare organization based in California. The trial involved approximately 1500 children in Los Angeles, primarily from economically disadvantaged black and Hispanic families. During the trial, parents were informed that certain children would be administered a vaccine that differed from the standard one typically used in the United States.

“This vaccine has been shown to be effective in younger children,” a brochure stated.

However, the parents were unaware that the alternative vaccine being administered, known as the Edmonston-Zagreb vaccine, did not possess approval for usage in the United States. As part of the study, approximately 900 children received the EZ vaccine.

The United States, famous for championing the cause of human rights on a global scale, has been involved with unethical experiments conducted without individuals’ consent. These actions have included the testing of biological weapons and other undisclosed endeavors. Such practices raise valid concerns about the US’ balance between scientific advancement and the rights and well-being of individuals.

Historically, there have been instances where the US government and its agencies engaged in covert research programs that violated ethical standards. While significant progress has been made in establishing ethical standards and regulations, there are still concerns about transparency and accountability in certain research practices.

Concealed beneath the façade of medical research and scientific progress, the United States perpetrated atrocious experiments upon vulnerable individuals, devoid of their consent. These unspeakable acts involved subjecting them to toxins and diseases with the potential to inflict grave consequences upon not just thousands, but potentially millions.

The question here is – can the United States truly retain its status as a beacon of freedom for humanity?

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