

Why Is the CIA Putting Bombs on Virginia School Buses?

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Last Wednesday, March 30, police officials and the Loudoun County Fire Marshal placed Briar Woods High School in northern Virginia on lockdown and conducted bomb sweeps after a “putty-like” substance was found inside the engine of one of the school buses during routine maintenance. The substance was later identified as C-4 and had been used by CIA agents to conduct bomb detection training exercises on the school grounds March 21-24, during spring break.

A press statement by the intelligence agency on the incident said: “CIA K-9 units regularly participate in training with K-9 units from federal, state and local law enforcement agencies in the Washington Metropolitan Area. Last week, a CIA K-9 unit conducted a routine training exercise with law enforcement [in which] explosive training material was inadvertently left by the CIA K-9 unit in one of the buses used in the exercise.”

According to NBC Washington, the explosive was located in “a small, black package” next to the engine and had been inside the bus as it made eight separate runs Monday and Tuesday with at least 26 special needs children. Loudoun County school officials said that parents of the children placed in harm’s way had been personally contacted about the incident. In addition to Briar Woods High School, children from Rock Ridge High School, Pinebrook Elementary School and Buffalo Trail Elementary School rode on the bus while the explosive was affixed to the engine.

The explosive was detected Wednesday during a routine maintenance inspection.

The CIA announced that the joint program would be suspended until the agency had “taken immediate steps to strengthen inventory and control procedures in its K-9 program.” The CIA-sponsored K-9 program has existed in the Washington, D.C. region since 2010 and according to comments made by the Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office to the *Washington Post*, the incident had been the second time this year that the CIA had used the Loudoun high school for exercises.

“One of the things that we try to do with all canines is expose them to as many different environments and surfaces as we can, so then when the real call comes in, they will already be familiar with that particular environment,” Deputy Fire Marshal Jerry Swain said of the training program’s purpose. “The animals being familiar with the environment they’re going to work in makes them less apprehensive,” he continued, “they’ll be more focused.”

Located just outside of the US capital, Loudoun County is home to numerous federal contractors and government workers. According to the US Census Bureau, Loudoun is the

wealthiest county in the United States, with a median household income level exceeding \$115,000 yearly.

Seeking to assuage public concern over the lapse, public officials sought to present the incident as more of an embarrassment than a danger. Referring to the deadly C-4 explosive, Loudon County spokesperson Wayde Byard said, "When it is in a benign state, which means it has no blasting cap or electronic triggering devices on it, it is a safe substance."

"It's not something that if you picked it up off the street you could blow up," Byard said, adding "obviously we're concerned. The CIA really expressed its deep concern and regret today, and it was sincere." Press reports suggested that C-4 can only be detonated by high heat and a shock wave caused by a blasting cap detonator. While these reports suggest that such conditions could not be created through the heat and motion of a bus engine, that seems far from certain.

While the incident certainly indicates incompetence and lack of regard for public safety, nothing that the CIA says about the events should be taken at face value. An exercise that trains dogs to sniff out explosives also gives CIA personnel experience in planting them. How was it possible that the CIA personnel did not properly inventory the explosives used during a training exercise, none of which were detonated? Where else are explosives being planted by US government operatives in the name of "counter-terrorism" training?

There is a long history of the CIA staging provocations overseas, including the planting of explosive devices, timed to affect political events such as elections or legislative votes, or even provide a pretext for the declaration of martial law and the staging of military coups. There is every reason to be concerned that similar operations are being prepared for within the United States itself, as the social and political situation in America becomes more tense and the working class begins to emerge as an independent political force.

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