

moved the date for this cataclysmic event up to 1995.<sup>5</sup> It appears that Aum may have decided to speed things up by instigating the predicted war between Japan and the United States in 1995. The new timetable for Armageddon appears to have coincided with public statements by Asahara that he and his people were already the victims of gas attacks by Japanese and U.S. military aircraft. In a public sermon delivered by Asahara at his Tokyo headquarters on April 27, 1994, for example, he claimed,

With the poison gas attacks that have continued since 1988, we are sprayed by helicopters and other aircraft wherever we go. . . . The use of poison gases such as sarin were clearly indicated. The hour of my death has been foretold. The gas phenomenon has already happened. Perhaps the nuclear bomb will come next.<sup>6</sup>

The date of this speech is significant, since it predated by two months the June 27, 1994, Aum Shinrikyo sarin-gas attack in Matsumoto, Japan. The attack left seven dead and hospitalized 500 others and was soon followed by the even more lethal sarin attack in Tokyo in March 1995 that killed 12 and injured 5,000 others.

## **The End of Aum Shinrikyo**

How did Aum Shinrikyo end as a terrorist organization? Following the Tokyo subway attack, Japan effectively adopted a policing strategy that included the collection and analysis of intelligence, arrest of key leaders, and adoption of a range of legal measures that crippled the organization. The result was the end of Aum Shinrikyo as a terrorist organization, though the organization continued to operate as a non-violent cult.

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (1995).

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