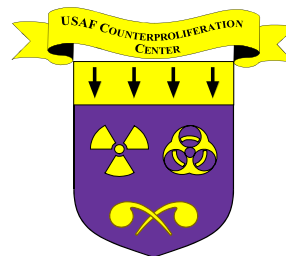


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Published Saturday, Oct. 6, 2001, in the San Jose Mercury News

Bio-terrorism poses relatively small risk

EXPERTS SAY BIGGEST THREATS ARE CONVENTIONAL

BY SETH BORENSTEIN

Mercury News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON -- When it comes to worrying about biological and chemical terrorism, most experts offer the same advice to average Americans that they would offer to the country's new homeland security czar.

Pause. Take a deep breath. Calm down.

While no one knows where bio-terrorism will rank in the future, it's ranked far below dog bites as a killer in recent years. Terrorism involving hijackings or conventional explosives is more likely. And since 1995, all forms of terrorism -- including the Sept. 11 attack -- have killed fewer than 10,000 people worldwide.

By way of comparison, terrorism kills fewer people than railroad accidents. And a single case of anthrax in Florida may have a jittery nation on edge, but shark attacks are far more dangerous, statistically speaking, than biological or chemical toxins wielded by terrorist groups.

Nonetheless, the Bush administration, outside experts and the public consider the United States highly vulnerable to terrorists.

"We are a nation of multiple soft targets," said Randy Capps, a retired FBI counterintelligence awareness director.

"The reality is we have many, many more targets than we'll ever have people to defend them."

The White House on Friday repeated its warning that further terrorist attempts are likely if the United State retaliates for the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. White House press secretary Ari Fleischer said that President Bush has warned from the beginning that "this is going to be a different type of war" and that "the American people have to prepare for casualties in this war."

A General Accounting Office official testified at a congressional hearing Friday that despite some recent improvements, the federal response to the public health and medical consequences of bio-terrorism continues to be "fragmented."

To cope, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge, who takes over homeland security duties on Monday, should set national priorities based on the likeliest mode of attack, many analysts believe. And that's more likely to involve conventional explosives than biological or chemical agents, agree most of the 13 experts in terrorism, emergency management and weapons of mass destruction interviewed this week by the Mercury News Washington bureau.

"I'm more concerned about somebody trying to blow something up," said former Federal Emergency Management Agency Director James Lee Witt.

Many Bush administration officials -- and many media reports -- have said otherwise, warning of possible biological and chemical attacks involving anthrax, smallpox, plague or chemical toxins like mustard gas, sarin and VX. But planning for a mass attack that uses them is not very helpful, analysts said.

"Those are kind of unlikely scenarios that we can waste a lot of time and resources worrying about," said former Assistant Deputy Defense Secretary William Hoehn, now a professor of international relations at Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

Biochemical attacks "tend to be more Hollywood scenarios. . . . I see it as a threat. I don't see it as an immediate threat," Vincent Cannistraro, former chief of counterterrorism operations for the CIA, told the House International Relations Committee on Wednesday.

The numbers: Between 1980 and 1999, the State Department logged 9,925 terrorist acts. Only 16 were chemical or biological attacks that injured five or more people, according to reports by the Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, and the Henry L. Stimson Center, a Washington think tank. The most deadly assault -- a 1995 Tokyo subway chemical attack using sarin gas -- killed 13 people.

"Conventional terrorism was far more prevalent, far more harmful, and far more deadly than chemical or biological terrorism," Amy Smithson, the Stimson Center's chemical and biological weapons specialist, wrote last year in a comprehensive study.

"If the past is any predictor of the future, terrorist incidents involving chemical and biological substances will continue to be small in scale and far less harmful than conventional terrorist attacks," Smithson concluded. Chemical and biological attacks aimed against large groups are technically difficult because the toxins are generally hard to obtain, work with and disperse, explained John Parachini, a terrorism analyst at the Rand Institute in Arlington, Va.

The well-funded Japanese cult that engineered the 1995 subway attack, he said, had failed to mix biological and chemical agents correctly in several prior attempts.

"We should be pretty scared about what they are willing to do," Parachini said of potential bio-terrorists. "There is the potential, and we have to take some insurance against it, but if you assign some probabilities to it, it's a lower probability" than conventional explosives, he said.

Several experts also were critical of federal disaster planning that in the past has emphasized the worst-case scenario, typically a smallpox epidemic, rather than more likely attacks.

The probability of a smallpox terrorist attack "is slim to none," because supplies of the virus are tightly controlled, said Jonathan Ban, co-author of a July 2001 report on the threat of bio-terrorism commissioned by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

The worst-case scenario is still worth planning for, said former National Security Council staffer Chris Chyba, co-director of Stanford's Center for International Security and Cooperation.

"Attempted mass casualty attacks are no longer in the realm of the fantastic," Chyba said. And there's a side benefit, he added: Better planning, response and surveillance of hypothetical biological attacks will help the country deal better with real run-of-the-mill disease outbreaks.

So what should a prudent person do?

Ditch the gas masks, antibiotics and alarm, experts agreed. Consider the terrorist threat to be something like a hurricane or blizzard and stock up on a three-day supply of food and water, recommended Georgia Tech's Hoehn.

"If you want to increase your and your family's safety, check the tread on your tires and put on your seat belts because that's going to save more lives," said Gary Ackerman, a research associate at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies.

For more information, check out the following Web sites:

The U.S. State Department's 2000 report on terrorism around the world: www.state.gov/s/ct/2000/pgrtrpt/2000

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention bio-terrorism page: www.cdc.gov/programs/bio.htm

The Center for Nonproliferation Studies' chemical and biological warfare resource page:

<http://cns.miis.edu/research/cbw/index.htm>

Amy Smithson's 2000 report for the Stimson Center, "Ataxia: The Chemical and Biological Threat and the U.S. Response": www.stimson.org/cwc/ataxia.htm

Chris Chyba's 1998 Rockefeller Fund report, "Biological Terrorism, Emerging Diseases and National Security":

www.culpeper.org/Chyba

Bioterrorism.pdf

The Sunshine Project: www.sunshine-project.org

The Chemical and Biological Arms Institute: www.cbaci.org

<http://www0.mercurycenter.com/premium/nation/docs/homeland06.htm>

Vaccinations against bioterror attacks?

October 7, 2001 Posted: 3:23 PM EDT (1923 GMT)

By Daniel Q. Haney
AP Medical Editor

(AP) -- Bioterrorists? Germ attacks? If the threat is real, why not roll up our sleeves and get vaccinated?

Vaccine experts say the question has come up often since September 11, and though certainly a reasonable one, many doubt population-wide shots will be a practical defense anytime soon against the deliberate release of deadly microbes.

The possible health hazards of mass vaccination could easily outweigh the benefits, they say, especially considering that no one really knows the likelihood of such a catastrophe. But beyond that are significant problems: No vaccines are available for civilian use except smallpox shots, which are in extremely short supply until at least next year; and the government's sole supplier of anthrax vaccine has failed to meet federal drug standards and isn't currently producing the vaccine.

But even if immunizing the entire U.S. population against terrorist bugs is unlikely, creating new and better vaccines is widely viewed as a key part of defense against bioterrorism.

For some potential terrorist weapons, such as smallpox and Ebola virus, there are no treatments at all. Anthrax and other bacteria can be treated with antibiotics, but in the case of anthrax, at least, treatment must begin rapidly. On Friday, a Florida man died of anthrax three days after being hospitalized, despite treatment with antibiotics. So vaccines that prevent infection entirely could be far more effective in the face of a large outbreak.

Even before the attacks on New York and Washington, developing vaccines against the A-list of bioterrorist weapons was high on the research agenda at the National Institutes of Health and the Defense Department.

In the works are vaccines against virtually every potential bioterrorist germ. Some might be given ahead of time to soldiers, hospital workers and police, but most would probably be held for distribution after an attack to stop further spread.

Scientists are seeking vaccines that could be produced rapidly and, once given, build up protection much more quickly than the standard shots now available.

Researchers who consult with government agencies speak of a new urgency there. "We suddenly realize, my God, we've got to deal with this," says Dr. Myron Levine, director of the University of Maryland's Center for Vaccine Development.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said last week the government hopes to have 40 million fresh doses of smallpox vaccine by next summer, well ahead of the original deadline of 2004. Acambis, a British firm, will speed up its 20-year, \$343 million program to replenish the U.S. supply. About 15 million doses of the old vaccine remain from the 1970s.

Smallpox was eradicated in 1977, and routine vaccinations ceased in 1980. However, the Russians produced tons of smallpox for their bioweapons program in the 1980s, and some experts fear some of it may have escaped, perhaps to other countries that make biological weapons.

About half of Americans alive today were vaccinated against smallpox, but the protection wears off. Dr. D.A. Henderson, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies, estimates that only 10 percent to 20 percent of them still have immunity against smallpox.

Acambis' new vaccine will be grown in cell cultures and will be much purer than the original version, derived from the pus of infected cows. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention plans to store it at guarded warehouses around the country, to be shipped off quickly after an attack to keep the highly contagious and untreatable virus from spreading.

The plan: Quarantine areas where smallpox is seen, then vaccinate everyone who lives around them. Nine million doses of vaccine would be needed to contain an outbreak that begins with just 100 infected people.

The logistics are daunting, especially if people are infected in several cities. In 1947, it took a week to vaccinate 6 million people in New York City in response to an outbreak of eight cases.

So why not inoculate everyone as soon as a vaccine is available?

"It has to be re-examined. I am certainly beginning to think that may be a reasonable approach," says Dr. Ronald Atlas of the University of Louisville, president-elect of the American Society for Microbiology.

However, many specialists are dubious, including Henderson, who headed the global smallpox eradication campaign. Two years ago, he led a committee of government and academic specialists who rejected the idea, and that conclusion still stands.

"The answer is definitely no," says Henderson.

The main reason is the vaccine's safety. When smallpox was a true health hazard, those risks were small in comparison. But the equation changes when the threat cannot be measured. Experts contend that even a few hundred deaths or serious complications that are vaccine-related would be considered unacceptable.

About 3 in every 1 million people vaccinated would get encephalitis that may lead to death or permanent neurological damage, experts estimate. Another 250 would get a smallpox-like rash caused by vaccinia, the usually harmless virus used for the vaccine. The rash could be fatal if not treated.

People with weakened immune systems -- cancer and transplant patients, those taking high-dose steroids and people with AIDS -- could be especially susceptible. Even if left unvaccinated, they might catch vaccinia from those who are vaccinated.

Recently, British researchers announced they had deciphered the genetic blueprint of plague bacteria. The discovery could offer new hints for vaccine design. The current vaccine protects against the bubonic form of plague but not the inhaled variety, which is feared as a terrorist weapon.

Plague and other bacterial hazards, such as anthrax, can be treated with antibiotics. But medicines often must start soon after exposure, even before symptoms start, to be effective. Since there probably would be no warning of a germ attack and early symptoms could be mistaken for the flu, treatment might start too late for many. Nevertheless, some people have stocked up on prescription antibiotics, such as Cipro and doxycycline.

The current anthrax vaccine is reserved for the military, and experts seem unanimous that it is too cumbersome for civilian use. It requires six shots over 18 months, then yearly boosters. Add to that the fact that the vaccine's only U.S. maker, Bioport Corp., has not produced a vaccine since 1998 because of failing to meet Food and Drug Administration standards, the New York Times reported.

Several labs are doing government-financed research to find a better anthrax vaccine, which would eliminate the need for speedy antibiotics. One of them, Vaxin in Birmingham, Alabama, is working on a genetically engineered version that could be given with a skin patch.

While it might be aimed initially at soldiers or health workers, "vaccinating the entire population is not all that farfetched," says Kent Van Kampen, the company's president. But that vaccine is not expected to be available for three to five years.

If it or another new anthrax vaccine works out, the thinking about large-scale vaccination could change.

"If we had a great vaccine in enough quantity with no side effects and we felt the threat was large and imminent, that would be a reasonable question for public health discussion," said Johns Hopkins' Dr. Luciana Borio. "We do not have that."

Medical Editor Daniel Q. Haney is a special correspondent for The Associated Press.

<http://www.cnn.com/2001/HEALTH/10/07/bioterror.vaccines.ap/index.html>

Doomsday Talk

By Amy Smithson

Sunday, October 7, 2001; Page B07

If Americans are to regain peace of mind about their everyday lives, the government must broach with more clarity the all too frightening subjects of chemical and biological terrorism. Already reeling from the events of Sept. 11, the country has been bombarded by the media with warnings that terrorists will turn next to poison gas or germ weapons.

The subject of unconventional terrorism is easy prey for commentators and individuals all too readily labeled "expert," even those with a somewhat tenuous grasp of the topic or financial interests at play. The public and far too many policymakers do not understand the substantial technical hurdles associated with making and dispersing chemical and biological agents so that massive casualties result. That's why people usually believe the worst of what they hear.

A case in point is the dust-up about crop-dusters. Press reports implied that these instruments of America's agricultural prowess were just a snap away from raining chemical or biological warfare agents on hapless citizens. Practically everyone has been scared stiff.

In fact, a pilot with limited experience, such as those who flew the ill-fated aircraft on Sept. 11, would need lengthy instruction just to avoid crashing a loaded crop-duster on takeoff. Because the close-knit aerial spraying community tends to clam up when strangers get nosy, Mohamed Atta was not even allowed to peer into the cockpit of one of those planes.

True, crop-dusters spray chemicals, but wind currents will disperse and carry away a toxic hazard. People can gain a great deal of protection just by going inside if they see a crop-duster overhead. Moreover, the sprayers on crop-dusters are not geared to dispense biological agents in the droplet size needed to make people fall ill.

The federal government needs to calm apprehensions about this and other myths circulating about chemical and biological terrorism, such as the misperceptions about how easily a city's water supply could be poisoned. All of the doomsday talk has made many feel that chemical or biological attacks are inevitable when that is far from the case. Another terrorist gang, the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo, illustrates how even a group flush with cash and technical capabilities could not overcome some of the more arcane aspects of chemical and biological warfare. Aum unleashed the nerve agent sarin in Tokyo's subway on March 20, 1995. A dozen persons were killed and 54 seriously injured, but practically all of those usually reported as casualties resulted from the panic the attack caused. Understandably frightened, thousands of others fled to hospitals, although they incurred little if any physical harm. Despite years of effort, Aum's corps of roughly 100 scientists and technicians could not make its \$10 million state-of-the-art production facility churn out the huge quantities of sarin needed to kill thousands. Many press reports have credited Aum with successfully dispersing anthrax and botulinum toxin. In actuality the cult's biowarfare program was a total flop. Americans should know that they are much likelier to be struck by lightning than to fall victim to a chemical or bioterrorist attack.

Thus far Bush administration statements about chemical and biological terrorism have erred on the side of being brief and ominous, which has exacerbated the palpable fear pervading the nation. Accordingly, there has been a run on gas masks. Buyers are probably unaware that masks will do them little good if users are not properly fitted and instructed in their use. Some citizens also are stockpiling antibiotics, an unwise practice that could backfire. Should people jump to the conclusion that a case of the sniffles indicates an exposure to anthrax, they are likely to self-medicate, hampering the ability of doctors to help them in a time of true medical need.

Americans do not expect their government to give them absolute guarantees that nothing bad will happen in the future. Sept. 11 shattered that illusion. Rather, they deserve to hear straight talk about difficult subjects and the steps their government is taking to address problems. Along those lines, President Bush did well to tell people that they should strive to return to business as usual. To bring people back to the skies, Washington moved quickly to institute new airline safety procedures.

Now a similarly high-profile, sustained federal push must be made to make Americans understand that chemical and biological calamity does not automatically await them in their homes, at parks, in their places of work and at sporting and entertainment venues. The sooner that facts replace spin, the better off the country will be.

The writer directs the Chemical and Biological Weapons Project at the Henry L. Stimson Center. She is the principal author of "Ataxia: The Chemical and Biological Terrorism Threat and the U.S. Response."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A14437-2001Oct5.html>

ATCC Says Organisms Are Secure

By Chris L. Jenkins

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday, October 7, 2001; Page PW01

The media calls to American Type Culture Collection started almost immediately after the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon: Was the world's largest distributor of microorganisms safe? Did it expect a terrorist threat? Was it concerned about security?

Those were issues that the company, although concerned about the recent attacks, had worked out long ago.

"We've always had strict security measures here," said Raymond H. Cypess, president and chief executive of ATCC, a nonprofit repository for cell lines, microorganisms and other biological materials. "Being worried about security is not new to us."

Nonetheless, ATCC -- which stores in its vaults supplies of anthrax and bubonic plague bacteria, among others, at its offices in Innovation@Prince William -- has indeed stepped up security measures in the wake of last month's terrorist attacks. Although Cypess would not give specifics, he said ATCC has expanded its monitoring of the company's grounds, including the parking lot, and made several changes to procedures around the building near George Mason University's campus south of Manassas.

Cypess is also quick to point out that stealing a deadly bacteria would take more than just breaking into the company's building. Many bacteria are kept at extreme temperatures and aren't stored in a way that allows for them

to be readily identified. The supply of anthrax, for instance, is kept in a vault at minus-280 degrees Fahrenheit and is not in a form that is easily transferable into a state that could be used to harm the populace. It would take a high degree of scientific knowledge to pull off a conversion of the samples, Cypess said.

"We're really more worried about vandalism," Cypess said. "I think most people think that we're a secure facility."

In addition, the company has stopped shipping anthrax and other specially monitored items since 1997, thus cutting down the probability of pathogens getting into the wrong hands. Officials pointed out that ATCC is monitored by eight federal agencies -- including the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of State -- and that rigorous screening of its practices continues.

ATCC's presence historically has been of concern to several county and state officials who worry that the company's supplies would be a magnet for terrorists. As the company was relocating from Bethesda in 1998, Del. Robert G. Marshall (R-District 13) raised concerns about federal regulations that governed ATCC's functioning. In 1997, Sheriff E. Lee Stoffregen III (D) wanted to investigate the company to see whether it was secure enough to handle a terrorist attack. At the time, both officials pointed out that Iraq had received anthrax from ATCC in the early 1980s with U.S. government approval.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17758-2001Oct6.html>

Experts Say Keep Chemical-Weapon Fears in Context

Sunday, October 7, 2001

GANNETT NEWS SERVICE

With crop-dusters, Cipro and gas masks now part of the American lexicon, more than a few unnerved people are taking steps on their own to protect themselves from possible chemical or biological attacks by terrorists.

But panic and near-useless self-protection measures aren't the way to cope in these changed times, say former defense and intelligence experts who have turned to careers in bioterrorism preparation. The trick for the average person, they say, is to understand how to put the natural fear of such a terrible -- but small -- possibility into context.

Cold War Revisited: In a way, it is like living through the Cold War again. Either the Soviets were going to drop nuclear bombs on us or they weren't. There was no predicting. The average person could do little to protect himself, yet life went on as normally as possible.

"For the general public, if you were not concerned about [biological weapons] on the 10th of September, don't be concerned today. The threat hasn't changed. Don't panic," said Randall Larsen, director of the ANSER Institute for Homeland Security, which designed the scary Dark Winter game for national security experts who wanted to practice handling a biological attack. "It's not something people should be staying awake over."

Unless, he said, you're a government official charged with preparing a community to deal with terrorism's after-effects.

Larsen has briefed officials from Vice President Dick Cheney on down about the flaws the Dark Winter exercise exposed in the nation's response to an attack with smallpox -- not enough vaccine, no way to quarantine the infected, collapse of interstate commerce, thousands dead. Smallpox and plague are the only two biological agents that can spread person to person.

"If we're prepared for an attack of that magnitude, then we're really prepared for what we really expect," he said.

A Worrying Game: That government officials must think about this kind of thing shouldn't necessarily worry Americans to the point of panic -- a point easier to reach these days, what with media stories on weapons of mass destruction and Attorney General John Ashcroft's vague warnings about further possible attacks.

Ashcroft made another one Tuesday, saying "additional terrorist attacks are possible. . . . We should be very much aware of these risks."

Preparing for chemical or biological attack "is like paying an insurance premium on your brand new car. You hope [an accident] never happens," said Christopher Davis, a former British intelligence officer who now works in the private sector to develop disease surveillance tools.

The mixed message -- don't worry, but someone needs to worry -- is what is sending many Americans to the drugstore to stockpile Cipro, an antibiotic, in case of anthrax or to the surplus store for gas masks.

Revelations that one of the Sept. 11 hijackers had tried to gain access to a crop-duster, possibly to spread biological

or chemical weapons, may have been news to many Americans, but experts have known of the possibilities for years.

"We're becoming aware of something that was already there," said Davis, who debriefed a top Soviet bioweapons developer, Ken Alibek, after Alibek's defection in 1992. "We've moved to a new state of awareness that we're not invulnerable."

Feeling Vulnerable: The need to decrease the feeling of vulnerability is what is sending people to surplus stores and pharmacies.

John Eldredge, who analyzes nuclear, biological and chemical weapons possibilities for Jane's Information Group, sponsor of a conference this week on weapons of mass destruction, sees that as a waste of time.

"But it's difficult to say that in public," he said. "It makes them feel better."

Government officials believe preparations are needed on a broad scale against chemical or biological attack. That's because of reports that Osama bin Laden's network, al-Qaida, blamed in the Sept. 11 attacks, has pursued chemical weapons. And after the Japanese Aum Shinryko cult tried but failed with biological weapons in the mid-1990s, they turned to chemical weapons to attack the Tokyo subway.

"I don't worry about a [lone] Timothy McVeigh making a bioweapon," Larsen said. "But with the support of a nation-state, it's possible."

Experts also believe that while terrorists have an interest in unconventional weapons, they haven't learned to make them a reality. Conventional, explosive terrorism still remains most likely.

Indiana Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., sees the terrorist threat of a biological or chemical weapons attack as small because such attacks are difficult. It's hard to mix chemicals exactly right, at the right temperature and disburse them to have a big impact.

That said, Lugar told reporters, there's "the feeling that the unimaginable might happen -- that there may be people somewhere in a terrorist organization who have been working on this . . . to a degree of expertise well beyond what we could anticipate."

http://www.strib.com/10072001/nation_w/138325.htm

Our New Security Framework

By Sam Nunn

Monday, October 8, 2001; Page A23

Yesterday's military strike in Afghanistan is the most dramatic and visible decision President Bush has made so far in the campaign to protect the world from terror. But it will not be the only one.

When an enemy strikes suddenly and catastrophically, decisions and actions that would normally take five to 10 years are made in a few months. We have an imperative now to integrate this accelerated fight against terrorism into a new security framework that addresses the full range of dangers we face. This strategy must contain both short-term urgent initiatives and longer-term strategic thinking. To do so, we must understand what changed on Sept. 11, and what did not change.

What changed was not our vulnerability to terrorism but our understanding of it. To most Americans, the attack was unthinkable. Now our nation knows better. The terrorists' capacity for killing is limited only by the power of their weapons. We lost our sense of invulnerability, but we also lost our sense of complacency.

What did not change is this: The most significant, clear and present danger we face is the threat posed by nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. The question is not whether we must prepare for terrorism or for attacks with weapons of mass destruction. These two threats are not separate but interrelated and reinforcing, and if joined together, become our worst nightmare.

For a half-century, the people of the United States and much of the world have lived under threat from nuclear weapons. Many believe the end of the Cold War was the end of that threat. It was not. The danger of a conventional war with the former Soviet Union escalating into a nuclear holocaust has almost disappeared, but other threats have multiplied and grown more complex and dangerous. The specter of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction is a clear case of this.

As these new threats have multiplied, both the United States and Russia have continued to invest large resources in nuclear strategies left over from the Cold War days: maintenance of strategic forces with thousands of nuclear

warheads ready for immediate launch. In today's world it no longer makes sense for either nation to stake its security so disproportionately on its ability to promptly launch a nuclear attack with thousands of warheads. These nuclear postures are not relevant in stopping proliferation; they compress decision time for each president to a matter of a very few minutes; they make an accident or misjudgment more likely, particularly with Russia's diminished weapons survivability and decreased warning; and they multiply the consequences of a mistake by either Russia or the United States. We must think anew.

The threats we faced during the Cold War -- a Soviet nuclear strike or an invasion of Europe -- were made more dangerous by Soviet strength. The new threats -- false warnings, accidental launches, the risk of weapons, materials and know-how falling into the wrong hands -- are made more dangerous by Russia's weakness. We addressed the Cold War's threats by confrontation with Moscow. There can be no realistic comprehensive plan to defend America against weapons of mass destruction that does not depend on cooperation with Moscow.

As the nation has begun to realize, we now face great danger from the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Osama bin Laden has said acquiring weapons of mass destruction is a religious duty. And so we find ourselves, at the dawn of the new century, in a new arms race: Terrorists are racing to get weapons of mass destruction; we ought to be racing to stop them.

We also must come to an agreement on missile defense -- a debate that has been set aside since the terrorist attacks, but not because it has been resolved. The proliferation of missile technology poses the danger that a rogue state could develop the capability to launch a missile with a weapon of mass destruction at a U.S. city. From my perspective, this threat is not an immediate danger, but it cannot be dismissed because it is more distant or because it would -- for the attacking nation -- amount to national suicide. I believe, however, that protecting our deployed military forces is a much more urgent threat, and mobile theater defense should be our priority focus.

Over the longer run, to the extent we can develop the means to shield ourselves from attack through a limited missile defense, we should do so -- so long as it does not leave us more vulnerable to threats that are more likely, more immediate and more potentially devastating. We must understand that threat reduction, diplomacy, cooperation, military power and intelligence are our first lines of defense against the spread of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. National missile defense is our last line of defense. We have to guard against overinvesting in our last line of defense and underinvesting in all the others.

Nuclear force posture, nonproliferation, missile defense and the fight against terrorism each address separate elements of the threat from weapons of mass destruction. But they must be integrated into a comprehensive defense. In setting priorities, we must start with an objective, comprehensive intelligence estimate that assesses each major risk, ranks every major threat and helps us devise a broad strategy that confronts the full range of significant dangers in a way that defends against one without making us more vulnerable to another.

Presidents Bush and Vladimir Putin will be meeting soon in Texas. They could use the occasion to commit each nation to a course of action ensuring that our nuclear weapons and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons materials are safe, secure and accounted for with reciprocal monitoring. Making sure that weapons of mass destruction and materials don't fall into the hands of rogue nations and terrorists is either a priority or an afterthought. If it's an afterthought, after what? What comes before it? If it is a priority, is that reflected in our effort and investment? Are our friends in Asia and Europe doing their share? If not, why not?

I also suggest that the two presidents issue an order directing their military leaders, in joint consultation and collaboration, to devise operational changes in the nuclear forces of both nations that would reduce toward zero the risk of accidental launch or miscalculation and provide increased launch decision time for each president. Such an order should emphasize that it is the intention of the United States and Russia to stand down their nuclear forces to the maximum extent practical consistent with their security interests.

Finally, when Russia was developing biological weapons, it also was developing vaccines and other pharmaceuticals. When it was devising dissemination mechanisms, it also was working on detectors and protective devices. At this moment, the United States and Russia could combine their biodefense knowledge and scientific expertise and apply these considerable joint resources to defensive and peaceful biological purposes. The two presidents could promote a research endeavor that could motivate other nations to join.

If the United States and Russia begin working together as partners in fighting terror and the threat from weapons of mass destruction, and if they encourage others to join, the world will be a different place for our children and grandchildren. We face major challenges, but a historic opportunity. We must seize it now.

The writer, a former Democratic senator from Georgia, is co-chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative. This article is adapted from a speech at The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A23176-2001Oct7.html>

Feds suspect foul play in anthrax cases

By Stacey Singer
Sun-Sentinel
Published October 9, 2001

Federal officials suspect foul play rather than an environmental source is the cause of two Florida anthrax cases that left one man dead and hundreds of co-workers undergoing medical tests.

The FBI has sealed off the Boca Raton offices of American Media Inc., where both men worked. Overnight, a continuous stream of unmarked cars entered the adjoining parking lot. There agents who had been inside the newspaper building peeled off layers of blue and purple gloves and washed their hands with water from a fire truck. How the bacterium got into the newspaper's office remained unknown. But federal investigators have eliminated the obvious environmental sources of anthrax, said Barbara Reynolds, a spokeswoman for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

In Washington, Florida Sen. Bob Graham met with CDC Director Jeffrey Koplan. "I asked Dr. Koplan what would be the likelihood that such a disease could have occurred without human intervention. His words were, 'Nil to none,'" Graham said.

And Attorney General John Ashcroft said the case could become "a clear criminal investigation."

"We don't have enough information to know whether this could be related to terrorism or not," he said during a news conference in Washington

The Palm Beach County Health Department examined 743 people connected to the building on Monday and expected an additional 100 people on Tuesday, said Alina Alonso, the department's director of clinical services. Dr. Landis Crockett, director of disease control for the Florida Department of Health, said it was unusual to have two anthrax cases in such close proximity. He said human intervention may be responsible for the infections.

"The chances are one in a billion to have two anthrax cases," he said. "There then would be another explanation, and that would be that foul play would be suspected."

Today, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said the federal government is continuing to investigate the anthrax cases.

"It's not unusual at times like this for false alarms to go off," he said. "Nevertheless, it will be the continuing, ongoing position of the federal government to investigate, to make all means available, to be helpful."

Anthrax cannot be spread from person to person, but all 300 people who work in the AMI building -- and anyone who spent more than an hour inside since Aug. 1 -- were advised to visit health officials.

Testing continued today in Delray Beach. Those who have been at AMI can call a state emergency line at 800-342-3557 for information.

Late Sunday night, the FBI sealed the Boca Raton offices where the National Enquirer, the Star, the Weekly World News and the Sun are published, at American Media Inc. on Broken Sound Boulevard.

After Robert Stevens, 63, died on Friday, anthrax bacteria was found in the nose of a Sun mailroom employee identified by co-workers as Ernesto Blanco, 73. Another positive sample was discovered on Stevens' keyboard. Blanco has not been diagnosed with the disease. Blanco was tested for anthrax because he happened to be in a hospital for what co-workers said was an unrelated heart problem.

He was in stable condition at a Miami-area hospital, authorities said.

A third American Media employee, librarian Martha Moffett, originally tested negative for anthrax, but was called back Monday to undergo a second test for the disease.

Elsewhere, a Virginia doctor downplayed what had been described as a possible anthrax case there with connections to the Florida cases.

"I just want to allay everybody's anxiety about this case because it just doesn't seem to fit the criteria," Dr. Thomas Ryan of Prince William Hospital in Manassas, Va., said during a news conference early Tuesday.

On Monday, the hospital had contacted Virginia's health department with a possible anthrax diagnosis, "one of several possible diagnoses" for the victim, whose name was not released, M. Boyd Marcus, Gov. Jim Gilmore's chief of staff, said earlier. The state government was told that the Virginia patient had either worked for or been a contractor for the company where Stevens and Blanco worked, Marcus said.

But Ryan said doctors at the hospital now do not believe the patient has anthrax. Lab tests performed on the patient

have been negative thus far, he said.

Only 18 cases of inhalation anthrax were reported in the United States during the 20th century, the most recent in 1976 in California.

Newspaper intern questioned

One lead pointed to a student intern at AMI. Bob Nichols, a spokesman for Florida Atlantic University, said university police had talked to the student who had left a note as a joke when he left the company. Newsweek magazine reported the FBI was interested in interviewing the student. But Nichols said the student was just "a prankster."

"To everything that we can determine, it's completely benign and innocuous," Nichols said of the student's goodbye note.

Newsweek also reported on its Web site Monday that the American Media office received a "weird love letter to Jennifer Lopez" a week before the Sept. 11 attacks. Inside was what was described as a "soapy, powdery substance" and a Star of David charm. The letter was handled by both Stevens and Blanco, according to unidentified workers cited by Newsweek.

The FBI declined comment on the letter.

Bennet Bolton, a senior reporter for The National Enquirer, told The Associated Press about a "cryptic" e-mail sent to the staff in late August or early September by an intern.

"It was rather neutral and then he said, 'I left you a surprise for you to remember me by. Ha ha, just kidding,'" Bolton said.

Officials at the university said today that the intern was a student at the university and had no involvement in the anthrax incident.

Nichols, meanwhile, said the student was an intern from July through August, one of 12 FAU students who received \$2,500 company-sponsored scholarships.

The student was interviewed by the FBI on Monday and cleared.

"He's a victim as much as anyone else in this is," Nichols said. "He's shaken up that he should be getting this much attention."

Nichols said FAU is trying to contact the dozen students who interned at the newspaper to find out when they were last in the building, and offer medical tests to any student who wants one.

"If any of them were in the affected building, or any of them want to be tested, we will take care of it here at school," Nichols said.

AMI Chairman David Pecker said the FBI and CDC teams had collected samples from his office on Friday, and called him late Sunday with the troubling results. He mobilized his managers to order all employees in for an immediate test and antibiotics.

"We've been working with the health department most of the night, getting them a list of all our employees who were in our building, all the people who come to visit us," Pecker said. "Obviously our first concern is our people."

Flaring tempers

A cloud of anxiety hovered over the employees as they huddled on Monday behind yellow crime-scene tape at the Delray Beach health department office, waiting their turns. On Friday, they had been assured that Stevens' illness posed no risk to them. A staff meeting was held in a room not far from his empty desk. Then on Sunday night, for some, close to midnight, the phones began ringing with the warning to arrive by 9 a.m.

As the crowd swelled to the hundreds the next morning, tempers flared.

Clark Blacker hissed at a group of TV reporters who asked him how he felt as he joined the line.

"How can you ask people that?" he said. "These people are scared. My wife is scared. She worked 50 feet from this man, and nobody has talked to her or told her anything for 12 hours."

"I think everyone's numb right now," said freelance writer Kim Morgan, 44, of Lake Clark Shores, clutching a 15-day supply of amoxicillin. Women who might be pregnant were given amoxicillin while most others received the antibiotic Cipro.

Holiday delays

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention flew 100 cases of the antibiotics and test equipment to West Palm Beach late Sunday.

Swabs were used to collect samples from peoples' noses and swiped across small dishes of blood agar. The tests will go to a state lab in Miami, where investigators will watch for the growth of anthrax spores, said Dr. Alina Alonso, director of clinical services for the Palm Beach County Health Department.

"It should take about a week," she said. "A nasal swab can pick up things that have been there for quite a while." All of the anthrax samples collected from the AMI building and two workers have been of the exact same strain, a North American variety that is sensitive to antibiotics, said Dr. Jean Malecki, health department chief. Strains developed by the Soviets for use as a weapon are resistant to penicillin, experts said. The day's testing started amid a chaotic atmosphere. The health department planners "didn't take into account" the fact that Monday was Columbus Day, when all county facilities were closed, Alonso admitted. As a result, doors to the health annex in Delray Beach were locked as the testing was to begin, and no keys could be found. Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office deputies blocked access to the building all the way to the street and herded AMI employees and their families into a line that lacked shade or shelter. By 10 a.m., people were complaining of heat exhaustion, which prompted the sheriff to call in the American Red Cross with relief supplies. But still, the doors to a waiting area remained locked, and stayed that way until past noon. At one point, the sheriff was asked to break down the door to allow people inside to the shade. He refused. Alonso defended the health department's planning. "From our perspective, we thought we did it the best we could," he said. "Anytime you take in 600 people it's going to be difficult to get set up." Despite the disruption, Pecker vowed to continue publishing. The company's servers can be accessed from its satellite offices, such as an accounting wing in Delray Beach, he said.

'A huge issue'

"We're going to continue the operations of our company on a weekly basis from our other locations," he said. "And I'm just hoping that everyone of our employees comes back negative."

Speaking to reporters in Tallahassee, Gov. Jeb Bush called the detection of spores in a second worker "a huge issue," but urged calm.

"War was declared on us, and there has been speculation about the means by which that war will be carried out. This may be one of those, it may not. It's too early to tell," Bush said.

"I want to make sure people listen carefully to what's being said," the governor added. "Be cautious, understand this is a serious issue, but not make decisions in their lives that will hurt them in the long run."

Sun-Sentinel staff writers Linda Kleindienst, Rafael Lorente, Jennifer Peltz, Marian Dozier, Kathy Bushouse, Leon Fooksman and Nancy McVicar and the Associated Press contributed to this report.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/sns-anthrax-ss.story?coll=chi%2Dnews%2Dhed>

Defense Daily
October 9, 2001
Pg. 1

Name Change

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is proposing changing BMDO to the Missile Defense Agency, according industry and government sources. A draft memo has been circulating around the Army's Space and Missile Defense Command and contractors in Huntsville, Ala., sources say. No official decision has been made, according to sources who say shifting BMDO to an agency may give its leadership more leeway when it comes to funding and managing programs than in the past.

Aviation Week & Space Technology
October 8, 2001
Pg. 23

Washington Outlook

Edited by James R. Asker
Iraqi Resurgence

Iraq's biological weapons program, including anthrax, now presents the greatest regional threat. It includes experiments in "agricultural warfare," such as wheat smut, national security analysts warn. If Baghdad's military resurgence continues unchecked, it could touch off a nuclear, chemical and biological arms race between Iraq and Iran, possibly embroiling other countries in the Persian Gulf area. Iraq today is self-sufficient in biological weaponry, is suspected of holding at least 157 aerial bombs and 25 missile warheads filled with germ agents and retains spraying equipment to deliver them by helicopter. Baghdad currently possesses a workable nuclear weapon design and has everything it needs to build one except the fissile material. As to chemical agents, Iraq may retain small stocks, including the highly destructive nerve agent VX.

New York Times
October 8, 2001

Entire Nation On High Alert As Security Is Stepped Up

By Robert Pear with Judith Miller

WASHINGTON, Oct. 7 — Federal, state and local law enforcement officials, fearing reprisals for the air strikes in Afghanistan, immediately tightened security and increased patrols today at airports, train stations, sports stadiums and public buildings across the country.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation told all law enforcement agencies that they should be at their highest state of alert — "the highest level of vigilance," ready to respond to any act of terrorism or violence.

Officials said that there was no specific intelligence information about whether or when Osama bin Laden's network, Al Qaeda, might strike but that the actions were prudent.

As American warplanes began bombing Taliban strongholds in Afghanistan, immigration officials intensified their scrutiny of foreigners entering the United States. The Energy Department stepped up security at the nation's nuclear plants. Passengers at Pennsylvania Station in New York and Union Station in Washington were advised that they could no longer buy tickets on board trains in the Northeast corridor, and that they would have to show photo identification before buying tickets.

The Coast Guard said it was conducting the largest port defense operation since World War II, establishing special security zones in ports, on waterways and along the nation's coastline. Cruise ships were barred from New York Harbor. Ships that usually call there were sent to Hampton Roads, Va., or to Boston.

Near Detroit, a spokeswoman for Metro Airport said the Federal Aviation Administration notified officials at 2 p.m. that they should put additional security in place.

Soon after the first air strikes on Afghanistan, Americans began to see evidence of the additional precautions. Officials said other steps were taken behind the scenes.

In New York, motorists entering tunnels into Manhattan were asked to open their car trunks for searches. Police officials said they were enhancing patrols at bridges and tunnels, courthouses, police stations and other government buildings around the city.

Airport officials tightened security in Chicago, in Kansas City, Mo., and in Florida.

At the F. E. Warren Air Force Base outside Cheyenne, Wyo., where 200 nuclear missiles in Nebraska, Wyoming and Colorado are controlled, Col. Tom Shearer, the base commander, ordered an increase in security to Force Protection Charlie, which means intelligence indicates a terrorist action is imminent.

The emergency measures and precautions put in place today grew out of three weeks of planning, begun soon after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11.

The staff of the National Security Council, anticipating military operations in Afghanistan, has coordinated a largely secret effort to increase protections at the nation's transportation hubs, nuclear power plants, drinking water supplies and other potentially vulnerable sites. Administration officials told Congress last week that some kind of terrorist retaliation against the United States was likely to follow any allied military action against the Taliban.

The effort to protect installations in this country was supervised by two working groups. One, dealing with law enforcement preparations, is led by Larry D. Thompson, the deputy attorney general. The other, responsible for dealing with the consequences of any reprisals, is headed by Michael Brown, the general counsel of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Federal officials said Mr. Thompson, Mr. Brown and members of their working groups had spent the last three weeks telephoning governors, mayors and other state and local officials. Bush administration officials also met

secretly with managers of the nation's water systems, nuclear power plants, truck companies, railroads and other critical installations. They discussed ways to tighten security and what to do if deterrence failed.

The Environmental Protection Agency took steps to safeguard the nation's drinking water supplies. The agency is working with 168,000 public water systems nationwide, providing advice on how to improve security and monitor the water to ensure that it has not been contaminated.

Cmdr. James B. McPherson, a spokesman for the Coast Guard, said, "we're at a heightened state of alert at every one of our major ports, over 300 ports," and along 88,000 miles of coastline.

"We have 24-hour armed surveillance at major ports," he said. "It may be cutters, it may be small boats, it may be a truck on the pier with armed guards."

The Coast Guard has established 72 security zones, including one around the United Nations, one around the Statue of Liberty and some around nuclear power plants.

At the Energy Department, Jeanne Lopatto, a spokeswoman, said, "We have gone to a heightened level of security at all sites." The department is the custodian of tons of radioactive waste left over from bomb making and substantial amounts of material useful for building nuclear bombs.

After the Sept. 11 attacks, the Energy Department suspended all shipments of nuclear fuel and radioactive waste, but the shipments resumed a few days ago. Ms. Lopatto said she did not know if they would be suspended again.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said the United States was attacking suspected terrorist strongholds because it could never increase security enough to prevent every act of terrorism in this country.

"You cannot defend at every place, at every time, against every conceivable, imaginable — even unimaginable — terrorist attack," Mr. Rumsfeld said.

Officials at the Department of Health and Human Services said they had taken steps to protect public health resources like stockpiles of drugs and vaccines. One official said the agency had placed additional security at the Boston offices of Acambis, the designated producer of smallpox vaccine for civilians, and at the Pennsylvania storage facility for stockpiles of smallpox vaccine.

Michigan officials have asked the National Guard to help protect BioPort, the plant in Lansing that is attempting to make anthrax vaccine for the nation's more than 2.2 million men and women in uniform.

In addition, officials said, extra guards have been assigned to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, the national repository of the smallpox virus, and at the eight pharmaceutical stockpiles scattered throughout the country.

Washington Post

October 8, 2001

Pg. 3

At Home And Abroad, Security Is Stepped Up ***Fears Of Terrorist Retaliation After Airstrikes Prompt Tighter Coast Guard, Airport Rules***

By Eric Pianin and Bradley Graham, Washington Post Staff Writers

The United States yesterday stepped up security measures at home and abroad, and intelligence agencies went on high alert against the threat of renewed terrorist attacks as President Bush launched airstrikes against targets in Afghanistan.

With the country already in the midst of the largest mobilization in history to protect against terrorism, the FBI requested that all law enforcement agencies operate at "the highest level of vigilance" and that they assess whether additional local security measures were warranted "in light of the military operations and the current threat level." Airports across the country added additional police and National Guard in terminals, while the Coast Guard expanded its already sizable ports and waterway security operations. For the first time in history, the Pentagon gave the Federal Aviation Administration advance warning of its imminent military action, to allow the agency to prepare for possible retaliation.

The State Department issued a "worldwide caution" to U.S. travelers, noting that the U.S. and British military action "may result in strong anti-American sentiment and retaliatory actions against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world by terrorists." Although the State Department has issued travelers' advisories before in times of

international crisis, yesterday's strongly worded announcement, ordering Americans out of Afghanistan, implied that travel in other parts of the world could be highly risky.

U.S. intelligence officials have told members of Congress there is a high probability that terrorists associated with Osama bin Laden will try to launch another major attack on U.S. targets here or abroad.

In a nationally televised speech announcing the attacks, Bush sought to reassure Americans that "our government is taking strong precautions" against future terrorist attacks and that "all law enforcement and intelligence agencies are working aggressively around America, around the world and around the clock."

Former Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge takes over today as director of the newly created White House Office of Homeland Security and will be responsible for coordinating the anti-terrorism activities of nearly 50 federal agencies and departments and the work of state governments.

Federal, state and local officials who have been on a crisis footing since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon said yesterday that they have taken unprecedented steps to guard against fresh terrorist attacks and that there are limits to what can be done.

"You cannot defend at every place, at every time, against every conceivable, imaginable -- even unimaginable -- terrorist attack," Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said at a Pentagon news conference.

The Pentagon chief also remarked that given the months of preparation that had preceded previous terrorist strikes in the United States, it would be a "misunderstanding" to assume that future attacks are in retaliation for the airstrikes.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency planned to increase its state of readiness for responding to potential disasters to near crisis level after downgrading it in recent days.

The Coast Guard, which already had embarked on its largest ports and waterways security operation since World II, yesterday reported undertaking some additional steps, including escorting all U.S. Navy vessels in American waters. It also established "security zones" around 21 more coastal locations considered potential targets. The measures brought to 72 the number of such zones, which include the Statue of Liberty, refineries in Newark and a Navy base in Groton, Conn.

Since Sept. 11, heavily armed Coast Guard crews have been checking all vessels in New York harbor, boarding cruise ships in Miami and Honolulu and searching "high interest" ships in other ports. In all, Coast Guard crews have boarded more than 2,150 ships in the past month. Yesterday, ports in New Orleans and Hampton Roads, Va., were added to the list of places where cruise ships would be searched.

Commercial airports throughout the country remained open and operating relatively smoothly under tough new FAA security rules. The FAA said that it had made no significant changes in operational policies after receiving warning of the strikes, but that security was tightened at control towers and FAA command centers. A senior Air Force commander also reported no increase in the number of combat air patrols over U.S. cities, saying that F-15 and F-16 fighter jets were still flying continuously over Washington and New York and randomly over about a dozen other metropolitan areas.

However, Detroit Metro Airport spokeswoman Barbara Hogan told the Associated Press that the FAA notified officials at 2 p.m. to put additional security in place. The security will be "behind the scenes" and not noticed by passengers, she said.

At Kansas City International Airport, officials doubled Saturday's number of police officers and other security, spokeswoman Erica Hupp said. As authorities have done since the attacks, each vehicle entering parking garages has been searched, she said.

In New York, Gov. George E. Pataki (R) declared a heightened state of alert, deploying additional National Guard troops, state police and corrections officers across the city and state. Officers and soldiers guarded reservoirs, dams, airports and some utilities, office buildings and bridges and tunnels.

"We've been operating at a very high state of alert but we are now stretched to the fullest," said Melissa Carlson, a spokeswoman for Pataki.

New York City officials, too, deployed extra officers to guard "sensitive areas," which they declined to identify. But tunnels and bridges remained open, and subways and buses ran as usual. And Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani (R) dismissed a New York Post front page claim that the city would go into a "LOCKDOWN" when the United States attacked Afghanistan.

"The city is not being locked down," Giuliani said. "Life goes on as normal in New York. Yes, we have heightened security; we've had that for some time. It has been increased as a result of the action that's being taken in Afghanistan."

News of the attack came on a weekend when New Yorkers and what appeared to be a growing number of tourists had taken to city streets with renewed vigor. Many restaurants in southern Manhattan, from Greenwich Village to Soho and Little Italy appeared close to full, and people crowded the sidewalks Saturday evening.

In a dozen interviews, all supported the American strike against Afghanistan, even as they worried about the consequences for those who live in the city. "Of course we have to retaliate," said Robin Cederthal, of Westchester, who had spent the night with her husband in Manhattan. "And of course I'm worried. The terrorists are living among us. I expect them to retaliate."

A spokesman for Illinois Gov. George Ryan (R) said that National Guard and law enforcement officials remained on alert, as they have been since Sept. 11. The same was true in South Dakota, where all state law enforcement officials were on alert, getting broadcast updates on the half-hour to remind them to stay ready.

Police in Miami and Charlotte said today they are on alert, but have not called in extra officers because of the bombing of Afghanistan. "We haven't had any activity, no threats or anything," said Capt. Tammy Williams of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg police. "We're looking at some changes of on-the-street parking, but we have not stepped up to the status we were at on Sept. 11 and for a few days after that."

Staff writers Guy Gugliotta, Robert E. Pierre, Michael Powell and Sue Anne Pressley contributed to this report.

Time

October 15, 2001

Pg. 78

A Toothless Tiger?

Bureaucratic barriers could thwart Tom Ridge's chance to be an effective antiterror czar

By Douglas Waller, Washington

Tom Ridge has the most important job in America: to make sure that the horror of Sept. 11 never happens again. Now, in addition to the former Pennsylvania Governor, George W. Bush wants retired General Wayne Downing, a dashing commando, to join his new team as a top counterterrorism aide. But in the three weeks since Bush tapped Ridge to head his new Office of Homeland Security, the unified front against terrorism has started to develop some cracks.

Last Tuesday the White House circulated an Executive Order outlining Ridge's powers. Senior Administration sources tell TIME the draft order will not give Ridge direct control over the counterterrorism budgets in other agencies, which could be key to shaping the antiterror bureaucracy. Moreover, Pentagon sources say Downing, word of whose likely appointment was leaked by Bush aides more than a week ago, has had second thoughts about taking the job because the powers he expected to be granted have been trimmed. The new office, says a senior Administration aide, "is being set up for failure."

If the air strikes against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon taught us anything, it is that terrorism knows no boundaries. The hijackers were indoctrinated and trained in the Middle East and Southwest Asia, plotted their operation in Europe and Asia, and carried it out in the U.S. Bill Clinton recognized this "transnational" fact of life in 1998, when he named Richard Clarke, a National Security Council aide, as his counterterrorism czar to supervise the battle both at home and abroad. Clarke was hamstrung because he had no control over other agencies' budgets. But he made a strong case for having one person oversee the attack on terrorism and knock heads in the bureaucracy. It looks as if Ridge won't have much more authority than Clarke did. Ridge, like Clarke, won't be able to force agencies to spend more on homeland defense. The draft Executive Order circulated last week says the agencies will "retain" that control. Ridge will be able only to coordinate activities and coax other agencies into spending money on his cause. And instead of one person overseeing the fight against terrorism at home and abroad, there will now be two. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice was willing to let Ridge run the war in the U.S. against terrorists. But she insisted that control of the overseas battle remain at the National Security Council, with Downing as its head.

A can-do general, Downing led U.S. special forces in the 1989 invasion of Panama, then Delta Force commandos who hunted for Iraqi Scud missiles during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. But he became disenchanted with the appointment last week after discovering he probably would not get the \$10 million budget or the staff of 30 he thought he had been promised. Senior White House aides believe they can talk him into taking the job. The State Department sent a stinging memo to the White House last week on the plan to keep domestic and foreign counterterrorism efforts divided and complained that it was "startling" that Secretary of State Colin Powell doesn't

get a seat on Ridge's Homeland Security council. "Doing it piecemeal like this sets us back 10 years," says a State Department official.

Ridge says he'll have "all the resources I need." White House aides insist he'll be able to shape budgets behind the scenes because he has Bush's ear. "He knows the President well," says one. "He has the most important new portfolio in town. The notion that he wouldn't have power strikes me as quizzical."

In Washington the perception of power certainly is as important as what is written in an Executive Order. How Ridge manipulates that image with other departments will determine his heft. "He's got to say, 'This is what the President wants,' with a cold steely eye, which Tom Ridge is good at," says Senator Pat Roberts, a G.O.P. member of the Intelligence Committee. But the bureaucracy has seen coordinators come and go, and it's very deft at staring them down.

With reporting by John F. Dickerson/Washington

Chicago Tribune

October 5, 2001

Mock Terrorists Breached Security At Weapons Plants

By Stephen J. Hedges and Jeff Zeleny, Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON -- America's 10 nuclear weapons research and production facilities are vulnerable to terrorist attack and have failed about half of recent security drills, a non-government watchdog group has found.

U.S. Army and Navy commando teams penetrated the plants and obtained nuclear material during exercises designed to test security, according to the Project on Government Oversight report, being released Friday.

In a drill in October 2000 at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, "the mock terrorists gained control of sensitive nuclear material which, if detonated, would have endangered significant parts of New Mexico, Colorado and downwind areas," the report says.

In an earlier test at the same lab, an Army Special Forces team used a household garden cart to haul away enough weapons-grade uranium to build several nuclear weapons.

In another test at the Rocky Flats site near Denver, Navy SEALs cut a hole in a chain link fence as they escaped with enough plutonium for several nuclear bombs. They were discovered only as they left the facility.

Government security rules require the nuclear facilities to defend themselves against the theft of nuclear materials by terrorists or through sabotage.

A spokeswoman at the National Nuclear Security Administration, a branch of the Energy Department, declined Thursday to comment on the report.

The report is based on information provided by 12 whistle-blowers, according to Danielle Brian, the non-government watchdog group's director, as well as declassified Energy Department material that describes the security exercises.

The repeated security breaches are cause for serious concern, Brian said, because Energy Department employees were warned before each security exercise but still failed to stop would-be terrorists in more than half of the drills.

"These are tests where the security forces are necessarily dumbed-down so that they know the tests are coming," Brian said. "They are very restrictive tests [but] they're still losing half of the time.

"No one thought it really mattered, until two weeks ago," Brian added.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on New York and the Pentagon have raised alarms about security concerns, from local community responses to chemical and biological weapons to the security at nuclear power plants.

Nine of the weapons facilities are within 100 miles of cities with more than 75,000 people. Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory is near the San Francisco metropolitan area, which has more than 7 million people. The Rocky Flats site is near Denver, home to 2.6 million people.

Eight of the 10 weapons plants contained a total of 33.5 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium. Experts say it takes only a few pounds of plutonium to craft a nuclear bomb.

The study has drawn the attention of the House Reform Committee, which has launched its own review of security measure at the nuclear weapons plants.

Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.), chairman of a national security subcommittee in the House, declined to discuss the report. But he issued a statement indicating he was "deeply troubled" that the nuclear facilities failed security tests even though they had been alerted in advance.

"We want to know what DOE is doing to resolve this deficiency, both in the short term and in the long term," Shays' statement said.

Security tests at the nuclear weapons facilities are simulated on computers and run as drills between an invading terrorist force and the plant's security team. Participants strap on devices similar to those from a laser tag game. When someone is "killed" by an opposing force, they must lie down and end their participation in the exercise.

New York Times

October 9, 2001

Pg. 1

A New Federal Office Opens

By Elizabeth Becker and Elaine Sciolino

WASHINGTON, Oct. 8 — Tom Ridge was sworn in today as the first director of homeland security, a position the country's leaders never felt was needed before Sept. 11 and a job experts fear will be nearly impossible.

President Bush assembled his entire cabinet to welcome Mr. Ridge to their midst but without an agency to call his own. He is charged with coordinating their efforts to gather intelligence to prevent an attack, to protect the borders and the critical systems inside the country and to respond immediately if terrorists strike again.

Mr. Bush also tried to calm a country put on full alert on Sunday after American and British forces began strikes against Afghanistan.

"I know that many Americans at this time have fears," the president said. But in outlining the huge scope of the Homeland Security Office, he promised that Mr. Ridge would have "the full attention and complete support of the very highest levels of our government."

Creating the new office is one of Mr. Bush's most important responses to the Sept. 11 attacks. He named as its head Mr. Ridge, a close political ally and trusted friend who was until last week the governor of Pennsylvania. With the title of homeland security adviser, Mr. Ridge is supposed to have powers to match those of Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser.

In perhaps the most visible illustration of the president's vision for Mr. Ridge, the homeland security council will include the vice president, the attorney general, the secretaries of defense, treasury, transportation and health and human services and the heads of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. Ridge moved into the West Wing today, to an office next to the Roosevelt Room on the same corridor as the Oval Office, and was given a \$25 million start-up budget.

But already turf wars have broken out behind the scenes in the executive branch, and Congress is debating how to give Mr. Ridge enough power to ensure he is not defeated in daily government battles.

Structurally, the position is without parallel, since it involves coordinating 46 agencies with a small staff scattered throughout the government and no clear budget authority. There are predictions that it will become a bureaucratic nightmare for a man who is not a bureaucratic black belt. Mr. Ridge has no experience in the executive branch, in counterterrorism or in intelligence.

Legislators question how, as only a coordinator empowered by his proximity to the president rather than actual legal authority, Mr. Ridge will be able to tell the secretary of defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, to alter his defense budget or order George J. Tenet, the director of central intelligence, to rearrange his priorities.

Mr. Ridge tried to address those concerns today at his swearing-in ceremony. "We must be task-oriented," he told his fellow cabinet members. "The only turf we should be worried about protecting is the turf we stand on."

Mr. Ridge also answered critics and naysayers who for the last two weeks have declared his new position dead on arrival.

"The task before us is difficult, but not impossible," Mr. Ridge said.

Representative Jane Harman, Democrat of California, is a co-sponsor of legislation to put into law both the Homeland Security Office and new budget authority for Mr. Ridge.

"I feel Mr. Ridge has the critical job in the U.S. government now, aside from the president's," Ms. Harman said. "In the long term, he needs the power to do more."

For his part, Mr. Ridge agreed that his job was immense and compared it to three extraordinary national efforts: building the transcontinental railroad, winning World War II and putting a man on the moon.

But Mr. Ridge will be sharing nearly every one of his responsibilities with another department or agency led by politicians with authority far greater than his. An example of the confused lines of command are the two other new administration positions created for the homeland security command.

The White House will officially announce on Tuesday the appointments of Gen. Wayne A. Downing, a four-star Army general who is retired, as the new counterterrorism deputy at the National Security Council and Richard A. Clarke as director of cybersecurity. Both men will work under the direction of Ms. Rice but also report to Mr. Ridge, White House officials said.

The intelligence world, which stretches from the Defense Department through the F.B.I., C.I.A. and at least two other agencies, professes some confusion. The C.I.A. began sending packets of classified information to Mr. Ridge, in care of the White House, to prepare him before he took office. But the packets were sent back because Mr. Ridge had yet to take up his post.

"The lines of authority have not been sorted out," one senior intelligence official said. "I'm not even sure what homeland defense means."

It will be up to Mr. Ridge to carve out his role. The preferred model is Robert E. Rubin, who through the force of his personality, reputation and stature made the National Economic Council a powerhouse in 1993 under President Bill Clinton and then became treasury secretary.

Despite the president's promise that Mr. Ridge would be as powerful as Ms. Rice, there are other, less attractive models of how his position could be undermined.

Several advisory panels have argued that only a secretary of a department of homeland security could avoid the fate of drug czars and other special advisers who felt they never had the necessary authority to accomplish their tasks.

In his swearing-in ceremony today, Mr. Ridge played down questions of power and said his biggest problem was filling in the gaps of the work of millions of Americans "working every day to ensure our security."

"The job of the office of homeland security will be to identify those gaps and work to close them," he said. "The size and scope of this challenge are immense."

Washington Post

October 9, 2001

Pg. 1

Second Anthrax Case Found In Fla.

Victim's Co-Worker Infected; FBI Launches Massive Probe As Va. Monitors A Third Man

By Rick Weiss, Washington Post Staff Writer

A co-worker of a Florida man who died on Friday from a rare form of anthrax has tested positive for infection with the anthrax bacterium, a discovery that has triggered a massive FBI investigation into how the two highly unusual events could have occurred in such close proximity.

By yesterday evening the Lantana, Fla., building where the men worked was swarming with federal investigators – some in protective white "moon suits" – and was surrounded by a variety of large and in some cases unmarked vehicles, including a black bus with blacked-out windows, red and blue lights and a raft of high-tech equipment on the roof.

In Virginia, officials said last night that they were monitoring a possible case of anthrax in a Northern Virginia man whose job may have brought him into contact with the company where the other two men worked.

State and local officials said the Prince William County man entered the emergency room of Prince William Hospital in Manassas yesterday complaining of flu-like symptoms. Medical personnel on the scene responded quickly by performing tests to determine whether he had anthrax, meningitis or another disease, officials said. Officials of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were also on the scene and monitored the preliminary investigation. A germ culture from the man was transported last night by a State Police trooper from Prince William County to a state government laboratory in Richmond, officials said.

"The state government was notified and we are following our established procedures," said M. Boyd Marcus Jr., chief of staff for Virginia Gov. James S. Gilmore III (R). "We cannot confirm at this point whether he has developed anthrax or not."

Attorney General John D. Ashcroft said yesterday the FBI, the CDC and the Florida Health Department are vigorously investigating the Florida cases – the first two in the United States in 25 years. The disease is not contagious, so it could not have been spread from the first man to the second.

"We take this very seriously," Ashcroft said at a midday news briefing, noting that public health officials were dispensing antibiotics to hundreds of the victims' co-workers on the off chance that some may have been exposed to the deadly bacteria. But for now, he said, "we don't have enough information to know whether this could be related to terrorism or not."

Despite that uncertainty, the investigation – which has been underway since the first man was diagnosed last week – took a clear turn in style and tone yesterday, looking less and less like a standard public health inquiry and more like a criminal investigation.

The building where the two Florida men worked is the headquarters for American Media Inc., which publishes several supermarket tabloids, including the *Globe* and the *Sun*. The papers are known for colorful and often provocative stories, and in recent weeks have published a number of pieces that were harshly critical of Osama bin Laden.

The building was sealed by the FBI and surrounded by police tape. Inside, agents inspected desks and CDC scientists swabbed surfaces to see how far the deadly bacteria may have spread in the building.

By mapping the locations of contamination "hot spots" in the building, investigators hope to determine how the bacterial spores entered the structure. Among the options that would be under consideration, according to experts not involved in the investigation, would be intake ducts of the building's ventilation system and the area for incoming mail. A worker whose company holds a maintenance contract for the building's ventilation system said yesterday that the structure has several air intakes and that filters in the system are not designed to keep out something as small as a bacterial spore.

Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.) was told by CDC Director Jeffrey P. Koplan that "human intervention" was required for the anthrax bacteria to spread to the building, a Graham spokesman said. Graham said there is no evidence that the bacteria have spread beyond the building.

Officials with the CDC and the Florida Health Department said one test had already revealed the presence of anthrax on the keyboard of the computer used by Bob Stevens, 63, the *Sun* photo editor who died Friday.

The business is not far from the area that once was home to several of the suspected hijackers involved in the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington. Although there is no evidence that the hijackers had access to anthrax spores, they are known to have expressed interest in flying crop-duster planes.

A pharmacist in the neighborhood where the suspected hijackers had lived said yesterday that officials from the Food and Drug Administration and FBI had questioned him last week and again yesterday about a prescription for an anti-anthrax drug that he filled during the summer for a man he believes may have been one of the hijackers. But FBI officials said late yesterday they have largely discounted the pharmacist's story and do not believe that any of the hijackers received antibiotics there.

More than 400 people who had worked in or visited the tan, three-story building in recent weeks were contacted Sunday night and Monday and instructed to report to the health department in Delray Beach. Many stood in line in the rain yesterday morning, waiting to have their nostrils swabbed to test for evidence of anthrax exposure. All were given antibiotics that can prevent the disease from blossoming. Employees were also asked by FBI agents to sign consent forms allowing the agency to inspect their work stations.

More than 700 showed up and received drugs, a Palm Beach County spokeswoman said, suggesting that many nervous neighbors worked their way into the process. "A big part of this is to allay fear," she said. "If they want it, we're not going to turn people down."

The newest victim, identified by news sources as Ernesto Blanco, 73, a mail room worker, was hospitalized last week. Preliminary tests completed Friday had concluded that he did not have anthrax, but follow-up tests over the weekend revealed anthrax bacteria living in his nasal passages.

Doctors said yesterday it was not clear why Blanco had not developed full-blown anthrax despite the exposure. One possibility is that he was exposed to a very low dose and his immune system was beating the infection. Another possibility is that the microscopic clumps of bacterial spores that were apparently floating in the air were of a size slightly too large to be transported deep into his lungs, where the microbes typically germinate and start to cause disease.

Although Blanco was ill last week with an apparent respiratory infection, he lacked classic signs of full-blown anthrax, health officials said. Those officials would not discuss details of the man's case, but doctors said two signs that they look for to definitively diagnose anthrax are swollen lymph nodes in the chest, visible on an X-ray, and purple-staining rod-shaped bacteria in the blood (and, in late stages of the disease, in the spinal fluid).

CDC spokeswoman Barbara Reynolds said it may never be clear whether Blanco would have gone on to develop full-blown anthrax, because the antibiotics he was taking will prevent that.

It remained unclear yesterday whether all of the many other patients that CDC investigators have been screening in hospitals in the Boca Raton area had proven to be free of anthrax. On Friday, an official close to the investigation had said that a third person – an employee who worked in the AMI building but not for the Sun – was in a Miami area hospital and was being investigated as a possible anthrax case. That person was not mentioned in yesterday's briefings.

In Prince William County, Jared Florance, the county's health director, said last night that his agency was "investigating" what disease the man may have contracted. The man's name was not released.

"What we're doing is dotting our i's and crossing our t's to make sure we don't miss something," Florance said.

"We're doing extra tests. With everything going on, we're being extremely cautious."

Donna Ballou, a Prince William Hospital spokeswoman, said last night that the hospital had been handling no anthrax cases.

Gilmore was alerted earlier in the evening to the possible case, which state officials emphasized was still in the earliest stages of investigation.

State officials said they had received unconfirmed reports from the Prince William area that the local man had been associated with American Media Inc., either as an employee or as a contractor. Officials said they were certain that the man had not been in Florida recently.

The anthrax bacterium lives in soil and can infect cattle, goats and sheep. In the past it has caused human disease in hide handlers and wool sorters, but in those cases, it has typically caused a version that affects the skin and is relatively benign. By contrast, inhaled anthrax kills four out of five of its victims. Symptoms can strike from a few days to two months after exposure, and antibiotics are relatively useless once those flu-like symptoms arise.

One encouraging detail was confirmed by officials yesterday: The anthrax bacteria found in the two men is fully susceptible to treatment with penicillin. Some strains of the bacteria developed by the Soviet Union decades ago were selected or designed to withstand penicillin, requiring treatment with more potent drugs such as ciprofloxacin. "Wild-type" strains from soil and most of the strains developed by Iraq for biological weapons are susceptible to penicillin.

Scientists hope that with time they will be able to conduct DNA "fingerprinting" studies on the microbes and compare the fingerprints to those from other strains collected from around the world, to help trace the origins of the Florida bugs. CDC investigators did exactly that two years ago after West Nile virus arrived in North America for the first time. They were able to show that the virus almost certainly came over accidentally from Israel or a nearby Middle Eastern country in a single event – probably inside an imported infected bird.

AMI employees and other building workers who arrived at the health department in Delray Beach to have their noses swabbed also were asked to fill out a four-page questionnaire asking them where in the building they worked, what they did and how their health has been.

Doctors warned that with flu season coming, people should try not to get overwrought about the onset of flu-like symptoms, even though those are precisely the symptoms that can indicate an anthrax infection. But that's easier said than done, some said.

"I'm a little nervous. Crazy thoughts run through your head," said Amy Silverman, who works for a photo production company on the building's second floor. "I've been feeling sick. It feels like the flu, and it probably is. But it's scary. I'm going to my doctor tomorrow."

Federal officials stressed that they had no evidence that the infections were due to a terrorist attack. But a number of outside experts said that – given how rare inhalation anthrax is – the only plausible explanation was a deliberate release.

Little is known about bin Laden's capacity for waging biological warfare, but that possibility has loomed increasingly large in recent years.

Some federal officials have wondered whether chemical or biological weapons might have been a subject of discussion when Mohamed Atta, one of the Sept. 11 hijackers, met last year with an Iraqi intelligence official in Prague. Iraq is known to have worked on the development of such weapons.

Ahmed Ressay, an Algerian convicted in the failed millennium bombings plot, testified that he learned how to feed poison gas through the air vents of an office building at a bin Laden training camp in Afghanistan.

Special correspondent Catharine Skipp and staff writers Sue Schmidt, John Mintz, Ceci Connolly, Dan Eggen, Lisa Rein and Peter Slevin contributed to this report.

New York Times
October 9, 2001

Natural Cause Appears Unlikely In 2 Anthrax Cases

By Nicholas Wade

With the discovery that a second person in Florida has breathed anthrax spores, experts on the disease are finding it hard to come up with a plausible natural explanation. Though they think such an explanation may still emerge, they are leaning toward the possibility that the spores were deliberately spread.

Anthrax occurs from time to time in animals but is rare in humans, at least in the United States. People who handle hides or carcasses of infected animals occasionally catch the disease through the skin, in a form known as cutaneous anthrax.

Inhalation anthrax, contracted by breathing spores of the bacterium, is even rarer. Only 18 cases have been reported in the United States in the last century, and all are believed to have originated from special environments where airborne anthrax spores are common — bone meal plants or wool sorting factories, for instance, or laboratories studying the organism.

Neither Robert Stevens, who died of inhalation anthrax last week, nor Ernesto Blanco, a co-worker who has now been found to have anthrax spores in his nasal passage, is yet known to have visited any such place. Nor is the American Media building in Boca Raton, Fla., where both of them worked, known to have ever been home to such activities.

Spores of the anthrax bacterium can last for years in the soil and are often breathed in by grazing animals, which can then contract the disease. But another odd feature of the Florida cases is that anthrax is not at present endemic in the United States east of the Mississippi.

One case of inhalation anthrax in a Florida office building would be surprising enough; two are even harder to explain. "It's a mind-stretching coincidence that doesn't fit the pattern of any known natural outbreak," said Dr. Matthew S. Meselson, an expert on biological warfare at Harvard University.

Dr. David Walker, an anthrax expert at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, said he had "a hard time making this into a natural exposure," though he added that "no one should jump to any conclusions" until a lot more evidence was gathered.

Dr. Martin Hugh-Jones, an anthrax expert at Louisiana State University, said that in those rare cases where inhalation anthrax existed, it occurred in wool and hair mills and among renderers or people handling hides. "That's why this is so odd," he said. "It's a Joe Blow working in an office."

Several experts have speculated about possible natural routes of transmission in the Florida cases: perhaps a dead infected animal was trapped in the American Media building's air ducts, or Mr. Stevens might have brought an infected leather item into the building and then sniffed and shaken it.

But inhalation anthrax is not known to have spread in those ways in the past.

Nor do experts believe that inhalation anthrax might have occurred sporadically in Florida but gone undetected by being dismissed as pneumonia. "Somebody might not figure out right away that it was anthrax, but I doubt they would call it pneumonia," said Dr. Glenn Songer, a veterinary anthrax expert at the University of Arizona. "When you take into account the pathology and other signs, there is just nothing else like it."

Florida health officials said one sample from the American Media building, taken from Mr. Stevens's keyboard, had tested positive for anthrax. Dr. Walker said the keyboard sample could not have come from Mr. Stevens, because infected people do not breathe out spores. They carry the bacterium in their blood, but the bacterium does not form spores, its infectious form, until after the patient's death.

Because spores are not exhaled, anthrax is not spread from person to person. So experts believe that Mr. Stevens and Mr. Blanco must have been infected independently from the same source.

Several experts on anthrax who have considered the possibility of deliberate spread believe that it would be difficult though not impossible for an amateur to concoct a lethal preparation of anthrax, and that spreading it efficiently would be more difficult still.

Provided a source of anthrax can be found, the bacillus can be brewed up in kitchen conditions and made to form spores. The spores are highly dangerous if breathed in, but simple precautions will protect the brewer.

On the other hand, the Aum Shinrikyo sect in Japan, with many resources available to it, tried hard to make an infectious anthrax preparation and failed.

William C. Patrick 3rd, a maker of germ weapons for the United States before President Richard M. Nixon renounced them in 1969, said the Florida incident appeared to be crude bioterrorism. "It looks like a poor grade of product," he said, "and poor disseminating efficiency."

Agreement came from Richard Spertzel, former chief of United Nations biological inspection teams in Iraq. "The one thing that's reasonably certain," Dr. Spertzel said, "is that the Florida case is intentional."

Inside The Army

October 8, 2001

Pg. 1

Science Board Chief: Ridge Must Have 'Coordinating Authority' In DOD

The chairman of the Defense Science Board told Congress last week that Gov. Thomas Ridge (R-PA), recently given responsibility for homeland security, should have broad "coordinating authority" within the Defense Department or risks being ineffective.

Ridge is preparing to assume a newly created cabinet-level position coordinating homeland security efforts following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center. President Bush announced the appointment during a speech to both houses of Congress on Sept. 20; Ridge is set to step into the role this week. DSB Chairman William Schneider testified Oct. 3 before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence's terrorism and homeland defense subcommittee. In response to questions from Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA), the subcommittee's ranking member, and Rep. Richard Burr (R-NC), about what powers Ridge needs to be able to fulfill his role, Schneider advocated giving Ridge a great deal of coordinating authority over some DOD functions.

"We studied the problems of the fact that there are 46 agencies involved with terrorism [that have] some form of counterterrorism responsibilities," said Schneider, "but no instrumentality to be able to make them work effectively together. The coordination function is crucial."

Burr prefaced his question to Schneider by acknowledging that no one knows what shape the new office will take.

"That's why it is extremely important for those who we perceive to be extremely knowledgeable on the issues to tell us, should [Ridge's authority] extend within DOD, should he have the ability to coordinate those functions which deal with prevention and response?" asked Burr.

Schneider told Burr that Ridge should not only be given authority, but be given access down through the command structure.

"We need to reach down to the elements within the department that have the specific expertise that's related to each of these responses to terrorist activities," said Schneider. "I would expect, and certainly recommend, that the coordinating authority reach down to those subordinate layers of the department of defense, not merely the leadership levels."

A retired general officer told Inside the Army he agreed with Schneider's statements.

"I think if you were to review the role and the authority of the drug czar, you would probably find out that he had a lot of responsibility and very little authority," said the official. Ridge "ought to have all the responsibility and all the authority," he added.

The official suggested that Vice President Cheney or Secretary of State Colin Powell should determine what powers Ridge would need, then have the president put them in place quickly and definitively through an executive order.

"Otherwise he's just doomed to failure," he said. "They are all men and women of good heart," he said of top DOD officials, "but this is a rice bowl town, and people are more defensive of their rice bowls than they are of this country."

Schneider told ITA that if sufficient coordination was not achieved and the right agencies were not involved in the correct areas, Ridge's effectiveness will be in question.

"You need to get the services involved when they have specific expertise, like the Army has strong capability in chem-bio and detection systems and so forth," said Schneider. "The interagency structure [should] penetrate well down into the operating levels of the executive departments so that the coordination can be worked between agencies where it really needs to be done. Rather than reserving all the coordination for being done at a very high level, where there is a tendency for the coordination process to be relatively slow."

-- *David McGlinchey*

Chicago Tribune
October 5, 2001

Guard Provides Calming Presence

140 members hit checkpoints at O'Hare, Midway

By Aamer Madhani, Tribune staff reporter

With their camouflage fatigues, black berets and 9 mm pistols, the Illinois National Guard presented a palpable presence Thursday at O'Hare International and Midway Airports, as more than 200 of them were deployed to augment local security at 12 airfields around the state.

Guard members from several military police units kept watch over passenger screening at security checkpoints. Their presence is intended to reassure travelers and airport employees following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, said Lt. Col. Anthony Nevius, Guard battalion commander.

"We're here to back up the airport security that is already in place," Nevius said. "We are also here to tell the public it's safe to travel."

The Guard has been deployed for a six-month tour of duty, with its members assigned to airports close to home, when possible. O'Hare will have 122 Guard members and Midway 18, Nevius said. Members will work in eight-hour shifts around the clock.

As Nevius spoke about 100 feet from a security checkpoint at the United Airlines terminal at O'Hare, Guard members monitored passengers filing through metal detectors as their carry-on baggage was screened. Many airport workers and passengers paused to thank the Guard members for being there.

"Their appearance with their guns and uniforms is definitely a presence," said Juan Miranda, 24, of Franklin Park, an aircraft maintenance worker. "I think a terrorist might think twice before doing something with them here."

Some passengers Thursday said they are regaining their confidence in flying, and the Guard at the airport helps them feel a little safer.

"It's nice to see them here," said Louise Mirs, 75, who was headed to Boston and Cape Cod for a vacation. "I think they are aware of what to look for, and they will help us passengers feel more comfortable to start traveling again." Donna Bernstein, 42, owner of an Alexandria, Va.-based marketing firm, wasn't as sure about the stationing of Guard troops at O'Hare. After arriving from Baltimore/Washington International Airport on Thursday morning, she wondered if the deployment was worthwhile.

"I feel if they are astute and paying attention to what they are doing, they can provide the passengers with comfort," Bernstein said. "But if they are going to be standing around and chatting, I'm not sure what the point is."

In a related development, the 9th District of the U.S. Coast Guard responsible for patrolling the Great Lakes said Thursday it has activated 111 reservists, including 23 in Illinois and three from Chicago, to handle stepped-up security patrols.

An all-reserve crew now operates the Coast Guard Station in Wilmette. A local Coast Guard Auxiliary unit is providing volunteers to help patrol waterways and to stand watch. The active duty crew normally stationed in Wilmette has been moved to Calumet Harbor.

In Downstate Canton, about 160 Army reservists were called up from the 733rd Maintenance Battalion and deployed to Ft. Bragg, N.C., on Wednesday.

Tribune staff reporter David Mendell contributed to this report.

Business Week
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Washington Outlook

Can Tom Ridge Take On The Terrorists? It's Up To Bush

As the first-ever Director of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge is responsible for protecting America from terrorist attack. But on Oct. 8, as Ridge takes leave of the Pennsylvania governor's mansion for new West Wing digs, it's the political land mines he'll need to avoid.

Ridge already is being called the antiterrorism czar, a label that implies political impotence. After all, Washington's landscape is littered with failed czars--inflation czars, cancer czars, drug czars, education czars. Despite President Bush's promise that his antiterrorism chief will have Cabinet-level status and undefined control over 46 agencies and \$11 billion in counterterrorism spending, the betting is that the czar won't get far unless he can give orders and control purse strings.

That's typical Washington pessimism. Ridge's success will depend not on money or legal authority, but on President Bush. It will be up to the Prez to give his longtime friend a call-anytime invite to the Oval Office. Bush will need to herald Ridge's policy recommendations with prime-time pomp to establish the czar's place in the political constellation. And Bush must make an example of anyone who tries to undercut Ridge. "You've got to empower Ridge in a way we've not seen before," says professor William Martel of the Naval War College in Newport, R.I. "You've got to make clear that this person is first among equals."

IDEA MAN. With a staff of 100 borrowed from key bureaus such as Health & Human Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Ridge must open lines of communication between rivals. He'll need to evaluate technology to close gaps in the nation's defenses. And he must serve as a clearinghouse for ideas, such as issuing national I.D. cards or stockpiling smallpox vaccines.

Congress supports Ridge, but some members fear he'll fail without heavy artillery. They want to replace Ridge's bully pulpit with a Cabinet agency. "Ridge should have at least as much power as he had as governor of Pennsylvania, but I don't think he will," says Senator Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.), chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee. Lieberman and Representative William "Mac" Thornberry (R-Tex.) want to shift billions of antiterrorism dollars from agencies such as the Coast Guard and Customs to a centralized bureau. "Ridge will be able to get things done for a while," Thornberry reasons. "But one of these days, some bureaucrat is going to say: 'What if I don't do what you say?'"

Still, giving Ridge more firepower would lead to months of bureaucratic and political upheaval when Washington needs it least. Ridge already has many of the tools he needs, including experience as a governor, congressman, and Vietnam vet. Daniel P. Moynihan, an erstwhile social policy czar, proved that a desk and a typewriter in the Johnson and Nixon White Houses could be powerful tools in battles such as the war against poverty.

Ridge's Oct. 8 arrival also has the benefit of symbolic timing: He takes up his duties almost a month after the September 11 attacks. That is not to say that when the flag waving stops and America settles into a long, low-key war, passions for battling terrorism won't cool and Ridge won't be left to fight lonely skirmishes with agency heads unwilling to give up money or turf.

So it is imperative for Ridge to establish early on that when it comes to matters of domestic security, he speaks for the President. Congress should give the czar a chance while he has momentum and goodwill. Then, if Bush-style Homeland Security fails, lawmakers might want to dust off their plans for another Greek Revival temple of Big Government.

By Lorraine Woellert

Washington Post

October 9, 2001

Pg. 19

From Russia, Lessons On Anthrax

1979 Case, Others Indicate Complexities of Masterminding a Bacterial Release

By Shankar Vedantam, Washington Post Staff Writer

In April 1979, hundreds of residents of the Russian city of Sverdlovsk fell ill with flu-like symptoms. About 66 died. Thirteen years later, Matthew Meselson, a Harvard biologist, tracked down where the victims had worked, plotted the locations on a map and discovered that he could draw a straight line connecting all of them.

Upwind of the line was a Soviet facility that was making anthrax -- a favored bacterial bioweapon. Eventually, Meselson found villages 30 miles from the facility -- but still on the straight line -- that reported dead animals.

As U.S. officials grapple with the reasons that one Florida man died last week of anthrax and another has tested positive for the infection, the Russian case indicates the enormous complexity involved with masterminding, investigating and predicting the course of an anthrax release -- either deliberate or accidental.

An extraordinary array of factors influence whether anthrax will be deadly. Those factors range from the scientific sophistication of the people handling the anthrax to pure chance.

In the Sverdlovsk case, Meselson calculated that as much as a gram of anthrax -- about a trillion spores -- may have been accidentally released from the bioweapons facility. A steady wind happened to blow the spores in a single direction. A shifting wind pattern could have spread the spores more widely across the city of 1.2 million people. Paradoxically, fewer people might have fallen sick and died.

That is because inhaling small numbers of anthrax spores is unlikely to cause infection and disease. When anthrax infects people through cuts in the skin and only a few spores enter the body, humans readily fight off the infection. Scientists believe it could take thousands of inhaled spores to cause someone to fall sick. From 1990 to 1993, when the Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan deliberately released anthrax spores four times, no one died. Those terrorists may have failed because they dispersed their anthrax too widely, or because they did not mix the anthrax properly.

"The bottom line is the Russians knew how to weaponize anthrax spores and these cults didn't," said Philip Hanna, a professor of microbiology and immunology at the University of Michigan and an anthrax expert. "The spores have to be weaponized, to get it to the right consistency. It takes some specialized knowledge."

Several countries are believed to be studying anthrax and may have stockpiles. Hanna said Iraq, Iran, North Korea and Russia all probably had anthrax and that some had developed strains of the bacteria resistant to treatment with conventional antibiotics and penicillin.

The strain in Florida appears to be susceptible to treatment. Doctors say that if anthrax is spotted early, or if its release is suspected in a terror attack, prophylactic treatment with antibiotics can prevent death.

The reason the illness has traditionally been so deadly is that its symptoms are mistaken for the flu and patients often do not seek specialized treatment until it is too late.

Anthrax spores, invisible to the naked eye, are essentially sheaths of armor around the bacteria that cause the disease. When the spore finds itself in a comfortable medium such as the lungs, the bacteria begin to multiply. Infected patients complain of headaches, fever, vomiting, chills and stomach or chest pains. The anthrax bacteria eventually find their way to the bloodstream. Concentrations can rise to 100 million bacteria per drop of blood. The bacteria release a toxin that sends the body confusing cellular messages.

"The cells that clot are told, 'clot more,' and some [other cells] are told, 'bleed more,' so you get a hemorrhage," said Trish Perl, an associate professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University. "You get messages that increase or drop your white cell count. You get messages that control blood pressure saying, 'dilate blood vessels.'"

The immediate cause of death is often a steep drop in blood pressure. Treating patients with antibiotics is ineffective at this stage, because the medicines will not affect the toxin.

Meselson said Soviet doctors tried to treat some of the Sverdlovsk victims for both the bacteria and the toxin. "They gave them huge amounts of penicillin, tetracycline and anthrax antiserum, probably from horses," he said.

Can people protect themselves from anthrax? Doctors recommend against the casual use of antibiotics, which carries risks of its own. Cases are unlikely to go ignored now because doctors are alert to the possible meanings of flu-like symptoms.

The public will not likely benefit by wearing masks, experts said.

"I don't think it makes sense for people to wear masks," Tara O'Toole, deputy director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies, said about public concerns after the Florida reports. "If this was a deliberate release, it was into the building. The risk even to people in the building is quite low. Only two people are sick."

"The problem with masks is stuff gets in around the edges unless they are carefully fit and tested," she said. "This has to be a public health response. This is something the government has to take care of. People would love to have individual actions, but this is a situation in which we have to depend on government."

One concern, however, is that anthrax spores are long lived. They have been known to have an incubation period as long as two months.

In nature, anthrax is enormously resistant to destruction. During World War II, Britain tested anthrax-laden explosives at Gruinard Island off Scotland. The spores were still viable four decades later, when Britain undertook a massive decontamination program.

"They ended up pouring formaldehyde over the island mixed with sea water," Hanna said. "They killed everything on the island."

Washington Post

October 9, 2001

Pg. 18

Reassurance On Anthrax

Florida Response Shows Readiness, Officials Say

By Ceci Connolly, Washington Post Staff Writer

Within hours of learning Sunday night that a second individual had been infected with anthrax bacteria, federal officials dipped into their pharmaceutical stockpile and flew 100 cases of antibiotics to Florida.

The overnight shipment, orchestrated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was part of a swift and far-reaching response to a disease outbreak that has some on edge over the prospect of bioterrorism.

Rather than causing alarm, the events in Florida should reassure the public, according to Bush administration officials. The response shows that authorities can handle any medical crisis, including biological or chemical attack, they say.

"People should be encouraged by what's happening down in Florida," said Kevin Keane, a spokesman for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Florida is another example of how we would respond in these incidents."

Outside medical experts praised the CDC for its speedy response and stressed that carrying out a large-scale intentional release of a harmful biological agent remains exceedingly difficult.

But they said it would be a mistake to conclude that the United States is ready for a severe flu epidemic, let alone a biological attack. Budget cuts in the medical industry, a lack of training, poor communications systems and disbelief that bioterrorism could strike in the United States has produced a fragmented system for detecting and responding to a biological assault, according to a recent report by the General Accounting Office.

"We are underprepared," said Ken Alibek, a former Soviet scientist and president of Advanced Biosystems, a company with laboratories at George Mason University in Manassas that is developing anthrax treatments for the federal government. "Most doctors and nurses have never seen such cases. They have no idea how to diagnose these infections."

America has a knack for rising to the occasion, said Frank Cilluffo, senior policy analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington policy research institute. Another challenge will come when the immediate crisis subsides, he added.

"You have to recognize we are at a heightened state of alert throughout the country," he said. "We want to make sure we can sustain that capability over the long haul and not have a lull in terms of our readiness."

The weakest link, according to most analysts, are hospitals where business concerns often override emergency planning, staff training and identifying the capacity to treat a sudden surge in patients.

"This is an overwhelming concept to begin to tackle," said Susan McLaughlin, a safety consultant who works with dozens of hospitals. "The level of preparedness really varies across the board."

Until recently, many cities and states had little understanding of biological warfare. Many lumped biological and chemical attacks together, which meant that they rushed out to buy biohazard suits for police and firefighters, said Margaret Hamburg, vice president for biological programs at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a charitable foundation dedicated to disarmament.

"But they are not going to be the first responders to a biological attack," she said. "Medical and public health professionals will be at the forefront of a biological attack."

Even those who complain that fear of bioterrorism has been exaggerated say America's health care system is ill-prepared to handle a major disaster.

"Our public health system has been the object of neglect for decades," said Amy Smithson, who directs the Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Project at the Henry L. Stimson Center, a Washington think tank. "We need to begin planning regionally for a disease outbreak. Hospitals have a difficult time handling a regular influenza outbreak."

She also warned that most U.S. laboratories are "behind the curve" when it comes to identifying a suspicious disease.

Smithson, citing the technical difficulties in dispersing large quantities of a deadly biological agent, said terrorists are more likely to use biological weapons as "tools of assassination, not mass-casualty instruments."

But Tara O'Toole, deputy director of the Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies at Johns Hopkins University, said the technical hurdles are hardly reason for complacency.

On Capitol Hill meanwhile, lawmakers are rushing to boost the government's bioterrorism programs. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), who leads a health subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said he is inclined to endorse a \$1.4 billion emergency increase in bioterrorism spending, if not spend more. As he put it: "This is a scary deal."

Q & A:

What To Do About Bioterrorism

Here are answers to common questions about the risks of a bioterrorism attack and what Washington area residents should do in response to the threat. The advice is based on interviews with medical experts and public officials.

Q: How nervous should I be about terrorists dispersing biological weapons in our area?

A: Because we're in the nation's capital and terrorists have already targeted the area once, it would be foolish to think we're immune from a bioterrorist attack. But Christopher Wuerker, an emergency physician and chairman of emergency management at Washington Hospital Center, thinks Washington area residents should keep their fears in check.

Cultivating bioagents and using them as weapons is extremely difficult, he and other experts say. It is technically challenging to put the bioagent into exactly the right form to do harm, and many of the most threatening pathogens or toxins must be handled carefully to retain their potency.

"A lot of folks are going overboard," Wuerker said. "There's no question it is a potential threat and it has to be dealt with. But I talk to my friends and family, and there is a terrible sense of fear that this unseen monster is going to attack them."

Should I stock up on bottled water in case terrorists taint the public supply?

It's not a bad idea to have bottled water on hand in case of an interruption in service, a blizzard or a tornado. But officials say intentional contamination of the water supply would be difficult and highly unlikely.

Water is chlorinated and tested constantly before being pumped into people's homes, and it moves in such massive quantities that a bioagent probably would be diluted, said Lynn Frank, chief of public health services in Montgomery County.

Are there vaccinations I can get to help me fight infections caused by a biological attack?

There are vaccines to prevent anthrax and smallpox – two of the most likely bioagents – but there are problems with both. Anthrax vaccine is available only to the military, and some experts question its effectiveness.

Smallpox immunization was routine until the early 1970s, when the disease was eradicated. The vaccine's effects lasted only about five years. Limited supplies are available, but not enough to routinely vaccinate everyone.

"Rather than mass-vaccinate, if we find cases, we should vaccinate everyone around them," said Peter Hotez, chairman of the department of microbiology and tropical medicine at George Washington University.

What about antibiotics? Should I ask my doctor to write a prescription for an all-purpose drug so I can keep a supply at home rather than rely on federal stockpiles being rushed here in an emergency?

Experts say that's a bad idea. "Some people say it doesn't do any harm to stock up on this prescription, but it does," said Susan Allan, health director of Arlington County. "There is a finite amount of antibiotics in the system now, and we might have a legitimate need for them that isn't terrorism."

Others say it can weaken the public health. "If everyone starts taking it randomly, then you develop this whole resistant strain of organism," Frank said. "People would get sick from things they wouldn't normally get sick from."

Would a gas mask do any good?

It might help if you've been fitted for a gas mask so it is airtight – not something you can do at an army surplus store – and if you wear it 24 hours a day.

The variables in a bioterrorism incident – the kind of attack, location, wind conditions – are so great that public health officials say it would be a waste to try to defend against them with a mask. Besides, officials might not learn a biological attack had occurred until 36 hours afterward.

"The chances of being in an area of a release are minuscule," Frank said. "I don't think the general public would know [the appropriate type of filter] that they would want to have in the mask. In a biological attack, organisms could be aerosolized in air handling systems. Would you sit at your desk with a mask?"

If an attack occurs during the school day, should parents pick up their children?

Do not rush to your child's school. The best place for children might very well be the school itself, where they will remain under supervision and be protected from hazards outside, officials said.

"In many cases, keeping kids in school is the safest thing to do instead of putting them on roads and streets and fighting traffic," said Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan. That also could keep roads clear for essential emergency traffic instead of cars.

Ed Clarke, director of safety and security for the Montgomery schools, said public safety officials would evaluate the circumstances and then use radio broadcasts or parent telephone trees to communicate with families. They ask that parents not jam telephone lines at schools or flock to the campuses.

– *Avram Goldstein*

New York Times

October 9, 2001

U.S. Acts To Make Vaccines And Drugs Against Smallpox

By William J. Broad

Among biological weapons, smallpox is in a class by itself.

Even as a team of investigators descends on Florida in response to a death from anthrax, it is smallpox that has many experts losing sleep.

Ancient and vicious, the virus killed more people over the ages than any other infectious disease, up to 500 million in the 20th century alone. Unlike anthrax, it is highly contagious, able to spread like fire through a dry forest. And unlike anthrax, which must be prepared to very strict specifications to do its lethal work, striking the initial spark with smallpox requires no special tricks or knowledge. In theory, anyone who could obtain the virus could ignite a global epidemic.

Experts say the chances of terrorists' laying hands on a stock of the virus are very low, so low that some do not even list smallpox on their roster of terrorist threats. But given the potential consequences of an outbreak, the government is taking a number of steps to counter an attack with the virus.

It has quietly embarked on new studies to see if existing stocks of old smallpox vaccine — an estimated 7 million to 15 million doses — can be diluted to stretch the stockpile. It also just announced plans to speed up production of a new vaccine, to make 40 million doses available next year. The ultimate goal is to have enough vaccine for all Americans. Meanwhile, researchers are looking into new antiviral drugs to fight the disease in unvaccinated people. Eradicated two decades ago, smallpox no longer exists in nature or human populations, unlike most pathogens that can be used as weapons. Officially, only the United States and Russia have stocks of the virus, under tight security. But federal experts suspect that clandestine supplies of the virus exist and are taking no chances.

"When you see two wonderful cities with buildings going down, that heightens the urgency," Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, said. "This is simply the prudent thing to do, to be prepared for anything."

In a nod to the smallpox threat, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson has named Dr. Donald A. Henderson, the man who led the global effort to eradicate smallpox, as chairman of his new bioterrorism advisory panel. Dr. Henderson, dean emeritus of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, in recent years has called for rebuilding global stockpiles of smallpox vaccine as a hedge against biological attacks.

The risk, Dr. Henderson said in an interview, "is small but it's not zero, and the result can be catastrophic." He added that he found the dilution studies heartening. Now, he said, health officials have "some of this in hand to make the vaccine supply go considerably farther."

Smallpox is a disease of high fevers, deep rashes, bloody sores and oozing pustules that extend from head to foot. It spreads from person to person in the air, and people exposed to it show symptoms in about two weeks. Roughly one in three victims die. Once people begin experiencing symptoms, they can spread the virus to others. Death occurs from blood loss, cardiovascular collapse and secondary infections.

Most Americans are considered vulnerable. The United States stopped routine vaccinations of civilians against smallpox in 1972, nearly a decade ahead of much of the world. People born since then are unprotected. For vaccinated people, the degree of security is unclear because scientists never systematically measured the length of immunity. Protection drops with time, but how much is unknown.

Today, family doctors have no access to the existing vaccine stockpile, which the government keeps for emergencies. Its size is inexact because the number of doses depends partly on the skill of the vaccinators, who don't give a shot but instead must lightly puncture the skin. The government says it would not reinstitute routine immunization even if supplies were unlimited because of the vaccine's occasional side effects.

Before the advent of vaccination, the best protection was catching and surviving the disease in childhood, which gave lifetime immunity. During the Revolutionary War, British soldiers often had immunity and rebellious Americans often did not.

Elizabeth Anne Fenn, a historian at George Washington University, in a new book, "Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775- 82," shows how George Washington was deeply suspicious of British smallpox attacks as the disease ravaged his troops.

A British officer, she noted, recommended that arrows dipped in smallpox matter be shot at American rebels to "disband these stubborn, ignorant, enthusiastic savages."

Vaccination, invented in 1796, let doctors infect patients with a kindred but usually benign virus (cowpox at first, vaccinia later) that gave smallpox immunity. In countries with good medical care, the disease slowly ebbed, making its occasional returns all the more frightening.

One occurred in 1947, when an American businessman was admitted to Bellevue Hospital with what doctors thought was an extremely bad case of chickenpox.

"We had no idea," recalled Florence Berger Adler, who as a 22-year- old student nurse cared for the man on his admittance. "He was critically ill. The whites of his eyes were bright red and he was disoriented. All he did was moan."

As it turned out, the man had picked up smallpox on a trip to Mexico; before doctors realized what was happening, he had infected at least a dozen New Yorkers. In the ensuing panic, health authorities vaccinated (or revaccinated) six million people, including the student nurse. The vaccine works unusually fast, saving a person even three or four days after the start of viral infection.

Eventually, a global campaign of vaccination cornered the virus, and public health authorities in 1980 declared it extinct in humans, its only natural reservoir. All samples of the virus were to be destroyed or sent to central repositories. But eradication leaders had no powers of inspection. They had only diplomatic assurances when, one by one, nations said the virus was gone.

After the cold war, evidence mounted that smallpox endured beyond the two official repositories. Russian defectors told how Moscow had built secret factories to annually make up to 100 tons of the virus for weapons. As the Soviet empire collapsed, Western experts feared that stolen germs might fall into unfriendly hands.

By 1998, a secret United States intelligence report concluded that Iraq, North Korea and Russia were probably concealing the smallpox virus for possible military use.

That same year, Dr. Henderson, the eradication pioneer, began calling for new vaccine production to deal with a deliberate release of the virus. "Its potential for devastation today is far greater than at any previous time," he and 14 other smallpox experts wrote in the June 9, 1999, issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. "In a now highly susceptible, mobile population, smallpox would be able to spread widely and rapidly throughout this country and the world."

While drawing up plans for a new smallpox vaccine, Washington quietly investigated if the nation's existing supply of up to 15 million doses could be diluted to one-hundredth of its original strength in an emergency.

The research began in early 2000 at Saint Louis University. Three groups of 20 volunteers got either undiluted vaccine, tenfold dilutions or hundredfold dilutions. Scientists judged the effect on the basis of blood studies and looking at vaccinated arms for characteristic boils and scabs.

Dr. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said last week that the success rate of highly diluted vaccine was found to be "very low," but that the tenfold dilution was about 70 percent effective.

In response to the Sept. 11 attacks, he added, his institute is now embarking on a new round of dilution studies with a total of 650 volunteers. The studies are to be done at Saint Louis University, the University of Rochester, the University of Maryland and the Baylor College of Medicine. The new dilutions will be tenfold and fivefold, a level the researchers expect to be highly effective.

Dr. Caroline Hall, a professor of pediatrics and infectious diseases at the University of Rochester medical school, said the vaccinations were to begin fairly soon, with the results known by December, so health authorities would understand the options "if we need to have more vaccine in a hurry."

Fivefold dilution would expand the potential 15 million doses to 75 million doses, or about a quarter of the nation's population.

Though it was once used globally, the old vaccine is considered barely acceptable for human use today because its manufacturing method — infecting calves with the kindred virus and gathering up the resulting pus — inevitably produced microbial contamination. The new vaccine is to be grown in human cells suspended in large tanks known as bioreactors, and will be purer. Even so, thousands of human volunteers will be needed to test its safety and efficacy.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta placed a \$343 million order for 40 million doses of new vaccine last fall, with a delivery date of 2004. Jonathan B. Tucker, author of "Scourge," a book about smallpox, said the order's size was based on a federal computer simulation of how much vaccine would be needed if the smallpox virus appeared in an American city and spread beyond.

The contractor is Acambis, a British company. Its American subsidiary, based in Cambridge, Mass., is to make the vaccine. The scientific chief of the American team is Thomas P. Monath, a top virologist and recently chairman of a high-level group that advised the Central Intelligence Agency on ways to counter the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

In an interview, a production official who spoke on the condition of anonymity said the speedup of first deliveries from 2004 to 2002 would be done by "working harder and longer," and by securing new cooperation from drug regulators. The 40 million doses will be ready before clinical trials are complete, he said, and if needed the vaccine can be made available under rules for "investigational new drugs" which allow drugs to be used before trials are complete.

The contract calls for regular vaccine deliveries through 2020. Rather than discarding expired lots, the C.D.C. plans to store them indefinitely since the vaccine seems to retain its potency almost indefinitely. Over two decades, Acambis is to make a total of 168 million doses.

In theory, scientists say, the new vaccine may also be found suitable for dilution, making perhaps as many as 200 million doses available as soon as next year if needed.

The federal plan is to stockpile the vaccine at secret locations for national emergencies, rather than dispensing it for routine vaccinations. Some experts are now questioning that policy.

An argument against routine administration is that the vaccine is not without medical risk. Historically, it produced adverse reactions in roughly 1 in 13,000 vaccinated people, the complications ranging from severe rashes to encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain. Roughly one in one million people died.

Today, experts say, the danger may be higher because more people are surviving with immune systems weakened by conditions like leukemia, lymphoma and infection with the virus that causes AIDS. Pregnant women and people with eczema are also considered vulnerable.

To develop protections beyond the vaccine, dozens of scientists around the country are now investigating new antiviral drugs that, if perfected, could treat groups at special risk of vaccine complications and perhaps even save disease victims.

"People here in the labs, after Sept. 11, are working with a sense of urgency," said Dr. Mark Buller, a virologist at Saint Louis University, who directs a team investigating smallpox treatments. "There's nothing absolute now. There's no such thing as absolute safety."

Although the virus would be simple to disseminate (the government in 1965 did a clandestine test at an airport in which sprayers spread mock germs), many experts say no nation possessing the virus would give it to a terrorist because of the danger of starting a global epidemic that would kill indiscriminately.

"Societies that harbor terrorists might be at greater risk than we are," said a top federal adviser on biological terrorism, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Dr. Tucker, an expert on biological and chemical weapons at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, has argued that even Saddam Hussein, whom he calls "ruthless but not reckless," would be highly unlikely to hand over the virus to terrorists if he had it.

Still, some medical professionals question that logic and are pressing for routine vaccinations. The student nurse of 1947, Mrs. Adler, now 77 and living in Altamonte Springs, Fla., said American health authorities should vaccinate as soon as possible coast to coast.

"With the terrorists," she said, "who knows what they'll do next?"

New York Times
October 9, 2001

New Ideas In The War On Bioterrorism

By Andrew Pollack

An oily mixture resembling salad dressing that can blow up anthrax bacteria. A toxin detector made of a slice of living rat brain on an electronic chip. A drug that would kill all bacteria and another that would boost a person's immune system to withstand any pathogen.

These are all ideas, some far off and some surprisingly close at hand, that are being pursued in what could become the nation's newest medical battle — the war against bioterrorism.

Since Sept. 11, the government has been stepping up efforts to improve the nation's ability to respond to a germ attack. Much of the focus has been on improving the public health system's ability to spot an outbreak, quarantine the infected and deliver medicines. Another focus has been to accelerate production of vaccines for anthrax and smallpox.

But experts say it is also necessary to develop much better technology to detect, diagnose and treat biological agents. That is partly because there are dozens of pathogens that might conceivably be used in an attack, including some unnatural ones made by genetic engineering, and it would be impractical to develop vaccines for all of them. A Pentagon advisory panel estimated it would cost up to \$3.2 billion to develop just eight vaccines. So new approaches beyond vaccines are needed that can address a wide range of possible agents.

"How do we deal not only with the known and anticipated threats like anthrax, but also the ones we haven't thought of?" said Dr. Stephen S. Morse, director of the Center for Public Health Preparedness at Columbia University and formerly manager of a Defense Department germ defense research program. He said the approach of making vaccines for individual pathogens "is needed, it has value, but it's not sufficient for where we want to be in the future."

Dr. Andrea Branch, an associate professor at Mount Sinai School of Medicine who has advised the Pentagon on responding to germ warfare, said public health measures might prevent an infection from spreading, but new medicines are needed to treat those already infected.

Even before Sept. 11, dozens of biotechnology companies and academic laboratories were working on projects financed by the Pentagon or other government agencies to develop new bio-defense techniques. Now, some of those doing such work say they being urged to speed up the pace, but also not to talk about their work so much.

The new battle will be fought with the tools of biotechnology, genomics and immunology. The genomes of microbes can now be sequenced in a matter of weeks, giving new insights into their structure. In the last two weeks one group of scientists at Harvard Medical School reported finding a gene variation that makes mice resistant to anthrax, and another group said it had designed a molecule that protected rats against normally lethal doses of anthrax toxin. Indeed, unlike some other areas of defense-related research, bio-defense work will have numerous civilian spinoffs, since doctors must respond to new pathogens that arise naturally, like H.I.V. and West Nile virus.

"The war's been on for as long as people have been on this earth," said Dr. David A. Relman, associate professor of medicine at Stanford. "It didn't start on Sept. 11."

Dr. Relman is working on ways to identify the pathogens in a biological attack. "These are products that are going to be used by every clinician in the world," he said, "whereas detectors for sarin nerve gas are not going to be used by your routine public health function."

Spurring much of the research has been the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or Darpa, the Pentagon's central research organization. The agency spent \$166.8 million on biological defense research in the fiscal year that ended last month. The work is mainly aimed at protecting soldiers, though the same techniques could help civilians. Other parts of the Defense Department have their own research programs, as do other agencies. The National Institutes of Health spent about \$49.7 million on research for bio-defense last fiscal year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \$46.6 million and the Department of Energy, which runs national laboratories, \$39.6 million, according to a report issued last month by the General Accounting Office. All those figures seem likely to grow in response to the Sept. 11 attacks.

Darpa prides itself on doing long- range, highly innovative research that often fails but can have a huge impact if it succeeds. It was Darpa research that eventually led to development of the Internet and stealth aircraft. An agency spokeswoman said no interviews on bioterrorism were being given. But outsiders and the agency's own Web site paint a picture of a wide range of projects, some fairly bizarre.

"There are times I say, 'There's no way this is going to work,' " said Dr. Carol Shoshkes Reiss, a professor of biology at New York University who advises Darpa. But some of the programs have made good progress, she said. Among the most unusual projects is one at the University of Montana to train bees to sniff out chemical or biological agents. Dr. Michel Baudry, a professor of biological sciences at the University of Southern California, is trying to build a sensor by putting a slice of rat brain on top of an electronic chip that can sense the brain tissue's reaction when exposed to a harmful substance. This is the high-tech equivalent of the canary in the coal mine.

The Department of Energy has also been working on biological and chemical agent sensors that might monitor the air in public places. A major challenge is to avoid false alarms, which would cause needless evacuations, disruptions and panic. A monitor that continuously sniffs the air for biological agents might take 100 million measurements a year, and even one or two false alarms might be unacceptable, the Energy Department says.

But sensing an infectious agent or toxin is just the first step. There must also be ways to determine if people are infected and to identify the pathogen involved — and to do it quickly. Many germs produce symptoms similar to the flu, making it hard to tell there has been an attack. Moreover, in some cases, by the time the symptoms appear, the infection has spread and those infected are beyond treatment.

Cepheid, a biotechnology company in Sunnyvale, Calif., hopes to supply the Army with prototypes of a device that can do a genetic test for a pathogen in 30 minutes, compared with the hours or days it now takes.

But some bugs do not immediately go into the blood or other bodily fluids that can be easily sampled.

"In the body the bugs have to amplify to a certain level before you can detect them," said Dr. C. Richard Lyons, an associate professor of medicine at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center in Albuquerque. "It may be too late at that point."

Dr. Lyons said a quicker approach might be to analyze an infected person's response to the pathogen rather than try to isolate the bug itself. The levels of various proteins in the blood, which could be measured in minutes, might be different for different types of pathogens, he said.

Dr. Relman at Stanford hopes to identify which genes in human cells are turned on or off in response to exposure to different agents. "We do know that gene expression patterns change very quickly in response to an infection," he said.

Other projects aim at preventing infections or treating them once they occur. Dr. James R. Baker Jr. at the University of Michigan has developed what he and colleagues jokingly refer to as a salad dressing that can kill many types of microbes, including hardy anthrax spores. They say the disinfectant concoction, made of microscopic droplets of soybean oil suspended in water, is safe enough to apply to the skin or to equipment, to spray into the nose to stave off infection and even drink in small quantities.

Dr. Baker explained that when some regular salad dressings are shaken, bubbles of oil get dispersed in the water. Those bubbles contain energy from the shaking, which is stored as surface tension. This energy is released when the oil droplets coalesce again.

Dr. Baker's disinfectant has extremely tiny bubbles, about 200 billionths of a meter across, which have extremely high energy but are prevented from coalescing by detergent. "But a bacterium is like a big oil droplet and they coalesce with it and blow it up," he said.

Ted Annis, chief executive of NanoBio, a company set up to sell the product, said it could be ready to use in six months if the company can get \$5 million to complete its testing.

Isis Pharmaceuticals in Carlsbad, Calif., is trying to develop drugs that can kill virtually all bacteria. "There are molecular common denominators of life, and if we find them and make drugs that bind to them, then it won't matter what bug is used and how it's been modified," said Dr. David J. Ecker, a vice president in charge of the project.

Dr. Ecker said the company had found stretches of RNA, a key molecule of life, that are common to all bacteria and to a wide variety of viruses as well. But he said the Defense Department would not let him discuss how close the company is to finding drugs that could disable this RNA. Another effort is to improve the human immune system to help a person withstand all pathogens.

Dr. Arthur M. Krieg, a medical professor at the University of Iowa and chief scientific officer at Coley Pharmaceutical Group in Wellesley, Mass., believes that certain DNA sequences common in bacteria but not in people are recognized by the human immune system as a sign of infection. So giving these DNA segments as a drug might put the immune system on high alert.

Of course, biotechnology can be used not only for defense but for offense. Terrorists might try to use genetic engineering to make pathogens resistant to common antibiotics or vaccines or even to create entirely new pathogens. So new defenses might always be needed.

"The image I have in my mind was who was going to develop the bomb first, Germany or the United States," said Dr. Branch of Mount Sinai. "Now there is a different kind of race."

New York Times

October 6, 2001

Military's Sole Supplier Of Anthrax Vaccine Still Can't Make It

By Stephen Kinzer

LANSING, Mich., Oct. 5 — With concern growing over the possibility of biological weapons being used against Americans, anthrax vaccine should be pouring out the door of the only laboratory in the United States licensed to make it.

But although the laboratory is working frantically to meet government standards so it can begin producing the vaccine, it has failed to do so. As a result, the government program aimed at vaccinating all American soldiers against anthrax is at a standstill.

On Monday, National Guard sentries arrived to guard the plant, which is owned by BioPort Corporation, but the sole supplier of anthrax vaccine to the military has not produced a single dose since 1998, when it bought the plant from the state.

Problems have plagued BioPort from the beginning. It failed Food and Drug Administration inspections in 1999 and 2000; inspectors cited problems including poor documentation and improper procedures in the room where the vaccine was packaged. Corporate managers hope to begin producing anthrax this year, but that depends on the outcome of a third F.D.A. inspection, which has not yet been scheduled.

At a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee last year, Senator Tim Hutchinson, Republican of Arkansas, called BioPort's record "an unmitigated disaster." Mr. Hutchinson said its failures were "costing the American taxpayer millions and millions of dollars and jeopardizing the safety of our troops who we're not able to provide that anthrax vaccination."

Others say that problems are not all the fault of the laboratory, which started life as the Michigan Biologic Products Institute before it was bought by BioPort.

"There's a lot of criticism of BioPort," said Tara O'Toole, deputy director of the Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies at Johns Hopkins University, "but to be fair, there's also a lot of talk that the Defense Department significantly underfunded the whole effort and didn't give it the priority it deserved."

"In retrospect," Ms. O'Toole said, "the whole notion of turning this over to a new contractor instead of an established pharmaceutical company looks questionable."

Plant officials say that since the terror attacks last month on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, their 220 employees have been working with new fervor.

"Our commitment has deepened measurably," said Kim Brennen Root, a BioPort spokeswoman. "People are getting up every morning thinking: 'I know what my job is. I know what I have to do and I have a very clear purpose.'"

The only other plant that produces anthrax vaccine, Ms. Root said, is in Britain.

Many experts believe that if terrorists were to launch an attack using biological agents, anthrax would be among their most likely choices. Although anthrax is said to be difficult to produce and spread in large doses, an enemy that managed to do so could inflict considerable damage. A 1993 government study found that spraying just 220 pounds of aerosol anthrax over Washington could kill up to three million people.

The Soviet Union was known to have experimented with military uses of anthrax, as have about 10 other countries, including North Korea and Iraq. Some reports say that Osama bin Laden, whom Bush administration officials describe as head of the world's principal terror network, has also taken an interest in chemical and biological warfare.

"It's a good bio-terror weapon and even better for biological warfare, and it's lying on the ground in places like Afghanistan" said William Dietrich, an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School who is researching the anthrax bacterium. "If you have a collection of soldiers you want to kill without infecting your own population or soldiers," Professor Dietrich said, "anthrax has good properties with regard to that. If you can produce it and disperse it on a battlefield, you can kill a lot of people very quickly. It's a very terrible, high-fatality kind of illness that we don't have enough tools in our arsenal to stop."

In the Persian Gulf war, when what is now the BioPort plant was still run by the State of Michigan, thousands of American soldiers were given an anthrax vaccine made here. Some later charged that it contributed to the mysterious illnesses, sometimes referred to as gulf war syndrome, that afflicted some veterans of the conflict. In recent years, more than 400 soldiers have been disciplined for refusing to take the anthrax vaccine, and others have complained of adverse reactions. Supporters of the vaccination program, however, say no credible evidence has been produced to show that it causes serious side effects.

The vaccine BioPort wants to produce involves six shots over 18 months. Critics have called this approach impractical and unreliable, urging BioPort researchers to concentrate on developing a new one.

"They've got a pretty profound problem," said Lawrence Halloran, staff director of the House Subcommittee on National Security, which investigated BioPort after it fell behind in its efforts to provide the vaccine to the military.

"They can't demonstrate within any range of certainty that their vaccine is scientifically valuable."

Even if the company passes its next Food and Drug Administration inspection and is allowed to resume production, the first several million doses will be assigned for military use.

In recent days more than 1,200 people, including many doctors, have called BioPort asking to buy anthrax vaccine. They are transferred to a recording that says, "All the stockpile that currently exists is owned by the Department of Defense. At this time there is no opportunity for any commercial sales." The government has said it has no plans to vaccinate civilians.

The Defense Department is BioPort's only customer, and it has invested \$126 million in the Lansing plant over the last decade. Military commanders say they want to immunize all 2.4 million active and reserve troops against anthrax but have so far managed to begin immunizing only about 500,000, mostly those in the Persian Gulf. There is no figure on the number who have received the full course of vaccination.

Michigan began producing anthrax vaccine in 1970, selling it to small numbers of animal handlers, mill workers and others who might be exposed to the disease. After the gulf war, demand grew.

In 1998, the state sold the plant to BioPort, a newly formed company whose most prominent board member is Adm. William J. Crowe Jr., a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former ambassador to Britain.

Some Lansing residents opposed the plant's privatization in 1998 and have been sharply critical of it since.

"They have never met their responsibilities," said Lingg Brewer, a former state legislator from Lansing. "They bought the company at a fire-sale price with the help of political connections, and since then they have not been able to make any vaccine that meets F.D.A. standards. They're doing a lot of chest-thumping about protecting the nation's interest, but they're actually unwitting allies of our enemies because of their incompetence and their greed."

Robert Kramer, president of BioPort, who has been at odds with Mr. Brewer for years, rejected his charges.

"Mr. Brewer has made the same claims over and over again, and they have all been discounted by courts, by Congress and by appropriate state and federal agencies," Mr. Kramer said. "I find it unconscionable that at a time when our country is uniting around our military and the national assets that serve it, he will continue to make his irresponsible and unsubstantiated allegations. He is doing a disservice to the 220 employees of BioPort and, more importantly, to his country."

Concerns about BioPort are especially acute as officials in Washington begin reassessing the country's readiness to fend off biological attacks. One group of senators has introduced a bill calling for \$1.4 billion to improve defenses against this form of terrorism.

The National Guard soldiers took up positions at BioPort on Monday and quickly installed a series of low concrete barriers near the front gate and began unrolling barbed-wire fencing. But until then the plant was separated from public streets by no more than a chain-link fence that a child could climb over.

"It's a joke," said a woman working at a state office building across the street. "We're nervous. Anything could happen."