Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense
Overview

• Genesis

• Foundation & Framework

• Panel Composition & Process

• The Biodefense Landscape

• Focus of Study & Recommendations

• Impact so Far
Genesis: 2008 WMD Commission Assessment

“Only a thin wall of terrorist ignorance and inexperience now protects us.”

• “The Commission believes that unless the world community acts decisively and with great urgency, it is more likely than not that a weapon of mass destruction will be used in a terrorist attack somewhere in the world by the end of 2013.

• The Commission further believes that terrorists are more likely to be able to obtain and use a biological weapon than a nuclear weapon. The Commission believes that the U.S. government needs to move more aggressively to limit the proliferation of biological weapons and reduce the prospect of a bioterror attack.”
Perspectives on the Risk of BioTerrorism
Prophetic Words for the Father of Modern Biology:

Today one man can make war. A lucky bio buffoon could kill 400,000 people.

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Nobel Laureate
The Challenge of Catastrophic Bioterrorism

Past Experience: 2001 Anthrax Attacks

- Number that received antibiotic treatment: 30,000
- Number of illnesses: 22
- Number of deaths: 5
- Decontamination: 3 Buildings
- Direct Economic Cost: >$1 B

Current Concern: Aerosol Release

- Number that will need antibiotic treatment: 1.9-3.4 M
- Number of illnesses: ~450,000
- Number of deaths: ~380,000
- Decontamination: City wide
- Projected Economic Cost: >$1.8 T

1 gm via letters

1-2 kg via cropduster
Biological weapons in the possession of hostile states or terrorists pose unique and grave threats to the safety and security of the United States and our allies.

- Could cause catastrophic numbers of acute casualties, long-term disease and disability, psychological trauma, and mass panic
- Disrupt critical sectors of our economy and the day-to-day lives of Americans
- Create cascading international effects by disrupting and damaging international trade relationships
- Advances in biotechnology and life sciences -- including the spread of expertise to create modified or novel organisms-- present the prospect of new toxins, live agents, and bioregulators
Framework for National Strategy for Biodefense:

- **THREAT AWARENESS**
  - BW related intelligence
  - Assessments
  - Anticipation of future threats

- **PREVENTION AND PROTECTION**
  - Proactive prevention
  - Critical infrastructure protection

- **SURVEILLANCE AND DETECTION**
  - Attack warning
  - Attribution

- **RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**
  - Response planning
  - Mass casualty care
  - Risk communication
  - Medical counter-measure development
  - Decontamination
Co-Chairs: Former Governor Tom Ridge & Former Senator Joe Lieberman
Panelists: Donna Shalala, Tom Daschle, Kenneth Weinstein, Jim Greenwood
Adjunct Members/Advisors

• Yonah Alexander PhD
• William Karesh DVM
• Rachel Levinson MA
• I Lewis Libby JD
• Gerald Parker DVM
• George Poste DVM
• Tevi Troy PhD
Remarks as delivered by
The Honorable James R. Clapper
Director of National Intelligence
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence – IC’s Worldwide Threat Assessment
Opening Statement
Tuesday Feb 9, 2016
2:30 p.m.
“As I said last year, unpredictable instability has become the “new normal,” and this trend will continue for the foreseeable future. Violent extremists are operationally active in about 40 countries. Seven countries are experiencing a collapse of central government authority, and 14 others face regime-threatening, or violent, instability or both. Another 59 countries face a significant risk of instability through 2016.

The record level of migrants, more than one million arriving in Europe, is likely to grow further this year. Migration and displacement will strain countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. There are now some 60 million people who are considered displaced globally.

Extreme weather, climate change, environmental degradation, rising demand for food and water, poor policy decisions and inadequate infrastructure will magnify this instability. Infectious diseases and vulnerabilities in the global supply chain for medical countermeasures will continue to pose threats. For example, the Zika virus, first detected in the Western Hemisphere in 2014, has reached the US and is projected to cause up to four million cases in this hemisphere.”
The United States is not prepared to deal with a biological weapon attack, according to a new bipartisan Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense presented to Congress Wednesday.

“Simply put, the nation does not afford the biological threat the same level of attention as it does other threats,” the report says. It then adds, that the United States lacks a centralized leader for biodefense, as well as a strategic plan and budget.
Synopsis

- Released October 2015
- Report targeted at Congress
- Set the agenda for Biodefense in 2016 Presidential campaign
- 33 Recommendations with 98 specific action items
- Overarching issue Human-Animal Health: “One Health”

Principle governmental issues:
- Leadership,
- Coordination &
- Money

Principle substantive areas:
- Surveillance, detection & diagnosis
- Medical Countermeasures
- Hospital & medical preparedness & response
Impact to Date

- 7 Congressional Hearings
- 4 Congressional bills
- Congressional Staff seminars
- Outreach to Presidential Campaigns