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Subject: Another article
Date: Thu, 23 Sep 1999 12:54:40 -0400

Source: World Tribune
<http://www.worldtribune.com/index-two-text.html>
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Commission: 'Americans will die on American soil' from high tech terror
SPECIAL TO WORLD TRIBUNE.COM
Thursday, September 23, 1999

WASHINGTON-The United States is increasingly vulnerable to high-technology terrorism, particularly a biological weapons attack, that could result in massive casualties, a presidential commission says. The Commission on National Security, sponsored by President Bill Clinton and Congress, released a 143-page report on Tuesday that presented a dire forecast of the prospect of terrorism in the United States. The commission was composed of 25 former defense officials who served under U.S. administrations. "For many years to come, Americans will become increasingly less secure," the report said. "America will become increasingly vulnerable to hostile attack on our homeland, and our military superiority will not entirely protect us. Americans will likely die on American soil, possibly in large numbers. Threats to American security will be more diffuse, harder to anticipate and more difficult to neutralize than ever before." The key threat is terrorist use of biological weapons. The report says terrorists are acquiring biological weapons and other technological tools for attacks. "The most serious threat to our security may consist of unannounced attacks on American cities by sub-national groups using genetically engineered pathogens," the report said. "In the hands of despots, the new science could become a tool of genocide on an unprecedented scale." The report says terrorists have greater access to technology and can launch cyber attacks that disrupt air traffic control systems and create hundreds of air collisions and accidents. Commission members said the report reflects intelligence reports and follows similar studies by the Pentagon and Congress. "This report is hardly apocalyptic," former Senator Warren Rudman said. "I have all the facts." The report follows similar studies released by the Pentagon in 1997 and Congress last assessing the post-Cold War threat of terrorism to the United States. U.S. President Bill Clinton agreed. "The possibility that terrorists will threaten us with weapons of mass destruction cannot be met with complacency," he said at the United Nations in New York. Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov called for international cooperation to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to terrorists. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said Russia would support a UN conference or a special session of the General Assembly in 2000 on ways of combatting terrorism. "Militant nationalism, separatism, terrorism and extremism regardless of their forms, have no borders," he said. "Nobody is safe."

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