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Credible Threat Announcement From Secretary Ridge July 8, 2004

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said "credible" information indicated that Al Qaeda wants to stage a "large-scale attack" in the United States.

A complete transcript of Ridge's remarks as provided by the Department of Homeland Security:

Good morning. You have heard me and other senior administration officials – the National Security Adviser, Director of the FBI and the Attorney General – discuss with the American people the increased risk of a terrorist attack this summer. I wanted to take this opportunity to update Americans on both the status of that threat, as well as the efforts of law enforcement and homeland security professionals across the country, under the President's leadership, to increase security.

Since September 11, 2001, we have had intelligence that Al-Qaeda intends to launch more attacks against the homeland. Credible reporting now indicates that al Qaeda is moving forward with its plans to carry out a large-scale attack in the United States in an effort to disrupt our democratic process. Based on the attack in Madrid and recent interdictions in England, Jordan and Italy, we know that they have the capability to succeed and hold the mistaken belief that their attacks will have an impact on America's resolve. We lack precise knowledge about time, place and method of attack but, along with the CIA, FBI and other agencies, we are actively working to gain that knowledge.

A few weeks ago, I led a classified briefing on the threat for our Nation's governors in an effort to keep them apprised as we continue through this period of heightened risk. Last night, I spoke with state homeland security advisers, law enforcement leaders, and first responders.

While we are not raising the color-coded threat level today, we are constantly reviewing threat reporting and strengthening the nation's security. We have permanent protections in place today that did not exist a year ago. These protections make it harder for terrorists to attack us.

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As of today, we now have full nationwide connectivity to the Homeland Security Operations Center – a 24 hour a day, 7 days-a-week, nerve center for homeland security information and incident management -- and all 50 states through our Homeland Security Information Network...a goal we've reached five months ahead of schedule.

For the first time ever, this national operations center allows us to receive information in real time, and turn that information into actions that protect the homeland. It helps us to work even more closely with all our Federal partners, sharing law enforcement and state and local intelligence information about terrorists as never before.

The most advanced technologies – including the newly created, internet based Homeland Security Information Network – allow us to maintain up to the minute information...to map that information against our critical infrastructure and known threats...and then share it instantly with the White House, all 50 states, more than 50 major urban areas, and thousands of state and local agencies.

And the reverse is true as well – information flows into the Homeland Security Operations Center from our partners throughout the country. Many of them are physically represented in the operations center, including seats for 35 government agencies and local representatives such as the New York and Los Angeles police departments.

This is unprecedented communication and cooperation at the national, state, and local levels. This new ability to receive and distribute critical information allows us to make better decisions, more quickly, and take action that will deter, detect, and defuse terrorist attacks.

For instance, we will begin a new pilot program that utilizes technology to track high-risk trucks on our Nation's highways in all 50 states. And our "Operation Respond" will provide homeland security and law enforcement officials with the ability to quickly identify and track locations of rail shipments across the country.

We have also begun to deploy hundreds of hand-held radiological detectors – just the size of an

average pager – for use by law enforcement officers to help, for example, in locating and preventing the use of so-called "dirty bombs". Hundreds more are on their way so that these important resources can be used around the country later this year.

And we will be monitoring – via web-enabled perimeter cameras – chemical facilities of greatest concern. The cameras will link to our Homeland Security Operations Center – they provide one piece of the real-time data I spoke about earlier – and more are due to come online by the end of the year.

In the coming months, the Nation will host high profile events, including those associated with our democratic traditions. We are working very closely with state and local officials in New York and Boston to ensure the security of the Democratic and Republican national conventions. I have designated these events National Special Security Events, making the United States Secret Service the lead agency for identifying and implementing protective efforts in these locations. I will soon travel to those sites myself to review the security measures being implemented.

In two weeks we will meet with the security officials from the professional and collegiate sports associations to determine how to increase security for upcoming large sports events as well. We live in serious times, and this is sobering information about those who wish to do us harm. But every day we strengthen the security of our country, and as a nation we are committed to the absolute protection of our citizens.

Efforts each of you make to be vigilant – such as reporting suspicious items or activities to authorities – do make a difference. Every citizen using their common sense and eyes and ears can support our national effort to stop the terrorists.

Thank you for your continued resolve in the face of the ongoing threat of terrorism. We must continue to work together – to ensure that the freedom we just celebrated continues as the hallmark of this great nation.

Thank you.

Addressing the Possibilities of Nuclear Terrorism in America (One Writer's Thoughts...)

A new book written by a former FBI consultant claims that Al-Qaeda not only has obtained nuclear devices, but also likely has them in the U.S. and will detonate them in the near future. These chilling allegations appear in "Osama's Revenge: The Next 9/11: What the Media and the Government Haven't Told You," by Paul L. Williams (Prometheus Books).

Williams claims that Al-Qaeda has been planning a spectacular nuclear attack using six or seven suitcase nuclear bombs that would be detonated simultaneously in U.S. cities.

"They want the most bang for the buck, and that is nuclear," Williams said.

"I expect such an attack would come between now and the end of 2005," the author said.

In addition to writing several books on terrorism, Williams, an investigative journalist, has worked as an FBI consultant.

Williams' contention is not far from what U.S. intelligence believes, a source close to Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge has told NewsMax. The source said Ridge claimed that U.S. intelligence believes terrorists already have smuggled into the U.S. actual atomic devices, as opposed to so-called "dirty nukes" that simply are conventional bombs that help spread radiation.

The Bush administration has warned for years that terrorists pose a nuclear threat to America.

"It is not a question of if... it is a question of when," so claims the author of a controversial new book "Osama's Revenge: The Next 9/11: What the Media and the Government Haven't Told You," (Prometheus Books).

Williams says his "intelligence" concludes the most likely means of attack would come in the form of a so-called "suitcase (size) tactical nuclear bomb."

"The chatter that everyone is referring to is coming from the nest in Pakistan, a virulent nest in Iran, the chatter is all about nukes being here....the best bang for the buck is nuclear, they (Al-Qaeda) know that."

Such bombs are estimated to have an explosive strength of approximately "10 kilotons" and could weigh less than 35 pounds.

"With today's technology and the Internet, an experienced person could easily assemble such a bomb in his home garage," Williams explained.

A bomb of that strength could easily level Manhattan and spread lethal radiation throughout the NYC-Metro area says the author. "It (the nuke) could render Manhattan unlivable for 1,000 years," he estimated.

According to Williams, several of the "suitcase nukes" are already inside the U.S. Some may have been smuggled in overland from Canada or Mexico, or shipped from overseas via container ships, he explained.

Another, more ominous method, was a throwback to the Cold War era. Williams, quoting Russian military officials, says Moscow secretly slipped into the continental U.S. several suitcase nukes to be activated in case of the breakout of hostilities with Washington.

Today, Williams says many of those "sleepers" nukes remain in place because some in the Kremlin still believe a conflict with the U.S. is possible.

The author insists that Al-Qaeda has "thousands" of sympathizers and numerous sleeper cells in the United States ready to carry out new attacks when given the OK.

Among the cities Williams says are vulnerable include: New York, Chicago, Washington, Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Dallas, Valdes, Alaska (oil pipelines-shipping) and Rappahoneck County, VA.

Why a small county in rural Virginia? Williams says it is the home of the underground command center the White House would move to in the event of war.

The author refers to recent comments made by Vice-President Dick Cheney as verification the nuclear threat from Osama Bin Laden is real. He also points out that Al-Qaeda and Bin Laden have publicly proclaimed their goal is to kill "4 million Americans."

Why 4 Million?

Williams claims that Bin Laden estimates that U.S. policy in the Mid-East and in Eastern Europe have resulted in the deaths of 4 million followers of Islam.

He blasts the U.S. mass media for not reporting the "problem," saying that, "With the exception of Fox News, the problem has received little or no attention, despite comments from the Vice-President of the United States. Maybe they just don't understand what it is going on."

Williams says such nukes made it onto the black market after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) and during the following decade when Pakistan

(with the assistance of China and North Korea) exploded its first atomic bombs.

Flush with cash from his secret Afghan/Pakistan poppy/heroin operations, Osama Bin Laden had the funds not only to buy such weapons, but the technicians and scientists needed to maintain and transport them as well.

Williams says his intelligence estimates that Bin Laden could actually possess "10 or more" of the suitcase nukes.

Recent reports from the Central Intelligence Agency could not confirm that such nukes may have been stolen, but could not discount the possibility.

Last month, the U.S. Dept. of Energy secretly removed a stash of highly radioactive materials from Iraq citing "security concerns." Washington would not disclose where in the U.S. the atomic materials were moved to, but did insist they were now in a highly secured location.

[The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policies of The American Civil Defense Association or viewpoints held by TACDA or any of its officers.]

Increased Smuggling of Radioactive Materials Could Indicate a Growing Risk of a Dirty Bomb Attack

The risk of somebody somewhere triggering a radioactive "dirty bomb" is growing, evidence gathered by the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency suggests.

The IAEA's records, which it has released to New Scientist, show a dramatic rise in the level of smuggling of radiological materials, defined as radioactive sources that could be used in dirty bombs but not nuclear bombs.

In 1996 there were just eight of these incidents but last year there were 51. Most cases are believed to have occurred in Russia and elsewhere in Europe. Smugglers target the radioactive materials used in factories, hospitals and research laboratories, which

are not guarded as securely as those used by the nuclear industry.

Since 1993, there have been 300 confirmed cases of illicit trafficking in radiological materials, 215 of them in the past five years. And the IAEA warns that the real level of smuggling may well be significantly larger, citing reports of a further 344 instances over the past 11 years which have not been confirmed by any of the 75 states that monitor illicit trafficking.

A dirty bomb is designed to spread radioactive material over a large area by combining radioactive material with a conventional explosive. It does not involve a nuclear explosion and would be unlikely to result in many immediate deaths, but it could

provoke widespread panic and render buildings in the affected area unusable.

A terrorist attack using a dirty bomb is "a nightmare waiting to happen", says Frank Barnaby, a nuclear consultant who used to work at the UK's atomic weapons plant in Aldermaston in Berkshire. "I'm amazed that it hasn't happened already."

Preventing nuclear materials from falling into the wrong hands is a huge problem. Over the past 50 years, millions of radiation sources have been used around the world for industrial, medical and research purposes. Most of them are only weakly radioactive.

But according to the IAEA there are more than 10,000 sources designed for radiotherapy, each containing 1000 pellets of cobalt-60. Each pellet emits 100 gigabecquerels of radioactivity, enough to put somebody over their annual safety limit in two minutes.

There are also tens of thousands of large radiation sources used by industry as gauges, sterilizers and metal irradiators. The IAEA has expressed particular concern about the security of hundreds of thermo-generators made in Russia and the U.S., in which the heat produced by radioactive decay drives a generator to provide power in remote areas. Just one of them can contain as much strontium-90 as was released by the notorious Chernobyl accident in 1986.

The IAEA's smuggling figures do not include radiation sources that have simply gone missing. An average of one a day is reported to the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission as lost, stolen or abandoned.

The IAEA says there are still 1000 radioactive sources unaccounted for in Iraq. And of 25 sources

stolen from the Krakatau steel company in Indonesia in October 2000, only three have been recovered.

In Tbilisi, Georgia, a taxi driver, Tedo Makeria, stopped by police in May 2003 was found to be carrying lead-lined boxes containing strontium-90 and caesium-137. And in Belarus customs officials have seized 26 radioactive cargoes between 1996 and 2003, six of them from Russia.

The only two known incidents that could be classed as radiological terrorism have occurred in Russia. In 1995 Chechen rebels buried a caesium-137 source in Izmailovsky Park in Moscow, and in 1998 a container of radioactive materials attached to a mine was found by a railway line near Argun in Chechnya.

One brighter spot is that there has been a fall in smuggling incidents involving plutonium and uranium, which could be used to make nuclear bombs. In 1992, 44 such incidents were recorded. By last year the figure had fallen to three, possibly because the nuclear industry has become more vigilant. The increase in the number of confirmed incidents of theft and smuggling of radioactive material might be due, at least in part, to better monitoring. Nevertheless, powerful voices continue to warn of the threat of a dirty bomb attack.

In 2003, Eliza Manningham-Buller, director-general of the UK's counter-intelligence agency MI5, said a crude attack against a major western city was "only a matter of time".

Source:

<http://www.newscientist.com/news/news.jsp?id=ns99995061>

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The front panel push button has the following selectable functions: Change display priority (dose / dose rate), switch ON/OFF, chirp ON/OFF, reset integrated dose, change alarm thresholds and activate battery test.

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