

For Immediate Release
Office of Press Secretary
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BioDefense Fact Sheet

Fact Sheet: President Bush Signs Biodefense for the 21st Century

"Bioterrorism is a real threat to our country. It's a threat to every nation that loves freedom. Terrorist groups seek biological weapons; we know some rogue states already have them.... It's important that we confront these real threats to our country and prepare for future emergencies."

President George W. Bush

June 12, 2002

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

President Bush has made strengthening the nation's defenses against biological weapons a critical national priority from the outset of the administration -- investing over \$10 billion since 2001. While significant progress has been made to protect America, President Bush instructed Federal departments and agencies to review their efforts and find new and better ways to secure America from bioattacks.

The result of this review is *Biodefense for the 21st Century*, a presidential directive that provides a comprehensive framework for our nation's biodefense. Biodefense for the 21st Century builds on past accomplishments, specifies roles and responsibilities, and integrates the programs and efforts of various communities -- national security, medical, public health, intelligence, diplomatic, agricultural and law enforcement -- into a sustained and focused national effort against biological weapons threats.

BIODEFENSE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Biodefense for the 21st Century outlines the essential pillars of our biodefense program and provides specific directives to further strengthen the significant gains put in place during the past three years.

- **Threat Awareness**, which includes biological weapons-related intelligence, vulnerability assessments, and anticipation of future threats. New initiatives will improve our ability to collect, analyze, and disseminate intelligence on biological weapons and their potential users.
- **Prevention and Protection**, which includes interdiction and critical infrastructure protection. New initiatives will improve our ability to detect, interdict, and seize weapons technologies and materials to disrupt the proliferation trade, and to pursue proliferators through strengthened law enforcement cooperation, including through such mechanisms as Interpol.

- **Surveillance and Detection**, which includes attack warning and attribution. New initiatives will further strengthen the biosurveillance capabilities being put in place in fiscal year 2005.
- **Response and Recovery**, which includes response planning, mass casualty care, risk communication, medical countermeasures, and decontamination. New initiatives will strengthen our ability to provide mass casualty care and to decontaminate the site of an attack.

BACKGROUND

Among the many efforts and programs already launched to confront the biological weapons danger, the administration has:

- mobilized our unrivaled biomedical research infrastructure to develop vastly improved medical countermeasures, including a new anthrax vaccine and a promising new vaccine against Ebola virus;
- strengthened our ability to detect and manage a bioterrorist event through vastly improved environmental detection, human health surveillance, and laboratory capabilities;
- adapted our public health infrastructure at all levels to detect and respond rapidly and effectively to bioterrorism, not just naturally-occurring disease;
- improved the capacity of food, agriculture, and water sectors to prevent and mitigate bioterror attacks, and requested over \$500 million in the fiscal year 2005 budget (an increase of \$370 million) to defend our agriculture and food system;
- built capabilities to strengthen intelligence and law enforcement efforts to reduce the risk of bioterror attacks;
- strengthened military capabilities through such means as improved biodetection capabilities and immunized over 600,000 soldiers and support personnel against smallpox;
- expanded international relationships to prepare, prevent, and respond to possible bioterrorism;
- established BioWatch, a program that monitors the air over major cities for biological releases and requested \$118 million in fiscal year 2005 to support and expand BioWatch, including developing improved monitors;
- secured \$5.6 billion over ten years under the proposed BioShield program, a comprehensive effort to develop and make available modern, effective drugs and vaccines to protect against attack by biological, chemical, radiological or nuclear weapons;
- provided over \$4.4 billion since 2001 to state and local health systems to bolster their ability to respond to bioterrorism and major public health crises, with an additional \$1.33 billion requested in the President's fiscal year 2005 budget;
- assured there is sufficient smallpox vaccine in the Strategic National Stockpile for all citizens and significantly increased stocks of antibiotics for use against anthrax exposure;
- increased funding for the Strategic National Stockpile, a medical countermeasure stockpile, from \$51 million in fiscal year 2001 to \$400 million in the fiscal year 2005 request; and
- launched the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) in May 2003 to stem the trafficking of WMD, including biological weapons and related materials.

Many new programs have been launched to assure the development of vastly improved capabilities over the mid- and long-term. For example:

- Biodefense medical research and development at the National Institutes of Health has been funded at over \$1.5 billion per year since fiscal year 2003, 30 times the investment in fiscal year 2001; and
- The new National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasure Center at the Department of Homeland Security is applying cutting-edge science to the study of biological agents and providing a world-class forensics center.

The across-the-board improvements to the nation's biodefense capabilities have vastly increased day-to-day security for all Americans, not only against threats posed by terrorists, but for medical response in the wake of natural catastrophes and in response to naturally-occurring biological hazards such as SARS.

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