



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

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Gilmore Panel Calls For National Laboratory to Combat Bioterrorism

Richmond -- Governor Jim Gilmore today released the advance executive summary of the third report of the Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction. Among several recommendations, the panel called for the creation of a national facility for the research, development and production of vaccines to combat biological terrorism.

“Biological weapons are no longer a potential threat, but a real threat to the safety and security of the United States,” said Governor Gilmore. “A national laboratory for the development and production of vaccines is vital for our nation to build up its defenses and respond to a massive biological attack.”

Governor Gilmore also praised the actions taken by the federal government to strengthen national preparedness. “The President and Congress are continuing to demonstrate decisive leadership in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks,” said Governor Gilmore. “President Bush has already taken the first and most crucial step for preparing our nation for potential terrorist attacks. The establishment of the Office of Homeland Security reflects a key recommendation of this panel.”

The panel approved the preliminary recommendations for its third report in late August. In response to terrorist attacks, the panel convened an emergency session on September 24 to expedite the delivery of its recommendations and the summary.

Congress established the bipartisan panel in 1999 to evaluate the nation’s preparedness for acts of terrorism. The summary released today provides recommendations that build on recommendations outlined in the 1999 and 2000 annual reports to the President and Congress. The third report will be submitted in its entirety in December.

The panel’s first and second reports and the advanced executive summary for the third report is available at <http://www.rand.org/nsrd/terrpanel> .

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*Statement by the Honorable James S. Gilmore, III
Chairman, Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities
For Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction*

It is my pleasure to present the advance executive summary for the third report of the Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction. Congress established this bipartisan panel in 1999 to evaluate our nation's preparedness for acts of terrorism, and it has been my honor to serve as its chairman. This summary provides recommendations that build on recommendations outlined in our 1999 and 2000 annual reports to the President and Congress. We will present our third report in its entirety in December.

It is important to emphasize that the panel approved the preliminary recommendations of this report in late August. In response to the terrorist attacks, we convened an emergency session on September 24 to expedite the delivery of these recommendations and this summary. We wanted to ensure that the President, the Congress, and the American people had the full expertise and insight of the members of this panel at a time when it was and remains most urgently needed.

The President and Congress are continuing to demonstrate decisive leadership in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks. President Bush has already taken the first and most crucial step for preparing our nation for potential terrorist attacks. The establishment of the Office of Homeland Security reflects a key recommendation of this panel -- that a White House level office is critical for the development and coordination of a national preparedness strategy between federal, state and local authorities.

The President has also taken action on two additional fronts that are critical to our national preparedness and have been the focus of a number of the recommendations of this panel. The Bush Administration has mobilized our health community by advancing the production of vaccines and essential medicines needed to combat biological terrorism. President Bush has also announced several steps to enhance our border security, which is crucial to restricting the movement of terrorists and their weapons into our country.

As this panel noted in its first report, a terrorist's greatest strength is the ability to choose when and where and how to attack. We must therefore prepare for potential terrorist attacks on all conceivable fronts and constantly work to improve our response capabilities.

The panel offers several recommendations in the areas of health and medical capabilities, immigration and border control, military, cyber-security and state and local capabilities. In particular, we recommend the creation of a national facility for the research, development and production of vaccines to combat biological terrorism.

We offer these recommendations as a continuation of our nearly three years of work. We have continuously provided the President and Congress information concerning our work since the September 11 attacks. Today we provide these in the context of a formal advance executive summary.

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