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## In WMD Report, U.S. Gets a C

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Seven years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the federal government has made only limited progress toward preventing a catastrophic nuclear, biological or chemical attack on U.S. soil and combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction abroad, according to a report card to be issued tomorrow by 22 former U.S. officials.

The bipartisan Partnership for a Secure America gave the United States an overall grade of C. The government received in total three D's, eight C's and seven B's in areas such as sustaining support of foreign scientists and governments, integrating programs to prevent nuclear terrorism and strengthening multilateral law enforcement efforts.

The group urged the next president to appoint a cabinet-level White House coordinator with the authority to direct counterproliferation plans, programs and funding "from day one." The panel was co-chaired by Lee H. Hamilton (D), former congressman and vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission, and Warren Rudman (R), former senator and co-chairman of a 2001 blue-ribbon commission on terrorism.

"The threat of a new major terrorist attack on the United States is still very real," Hamilton, Rudman and former New Jersey governor Thomas H. Kean (R), chairman of the 9/11 Commission, wrote in the report's introduction. A nuclear, chemical or biological weapon in the hands of terrorists was "the single greatest threat to our nation," they said, and concluded, "We are still dangerously vulnerable."

The report marks the latest effort by former leaders of the commission and other national security experts to re-focus efforts to counter weapons-of-mass-destruction threats after years of bureaucratic drift. In a similar report card issued in 2005, the Sept. 11 panel's successor gave U.S. counterproliferation efforts a D.

The partnership's advisory board includes several 9/11 Commission members; national security advisers to Presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton; and former senior lawmakers and officials whose service stretches back to the Kennedy administration.

The report comes as the Democratic-controlled Congress has established a panel to expand U.S. and international programs designed to counter use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists.

Former Clinton State Department official Wendy R. Sherman, a member of the congressional panel, called the partnership's report a "helpful and useful tool."

"Our report will deepen both the assessment of the threat today and what we can do about it," Sherman said. The group is scheduled to issue its report by November.

The partnership's report card makes three main recommendations: The government should appoint a White House adviser with power to make funding decisions for counterproliferation programs, coordinate all such government programs under a strategic plan and strengthen international cooperation.

"We can no longer afford to hope that our patchwork of programs and initiatives will naturally cohere into an effective whole," according to the report, a copy of which was provided to The Washington Post. "The United States cannot be safe working alone."

The government earned its highest marks for interdicting nuclear weapons and materials abroad, destroying half the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile and restricting access to bioterrorism agents in former Soviet states.

But the group said there has been little progress integrating piecemeal nuclear terrorism programs or sustaining long-term support from foreign governments. It sharply criticized disengagement from multilateral efforts such as the Biological Weapons Convention.

"Globalization, privatization, rapid transportation, instant communications" are spreading proliferation capabilities to developing states and private entities around the world, said Brian D. Finlay, co-director of the Cooperative Nonproliferation Program at the Henry L. Stimson Center, a Washington think tank.

Finlay noted how the focus of U.S. counterproliferation experts has expanded beyond advanced industrial states to countries such as Pakistan, Malaysia and Burma, and even tiny states that permit foreign-owned ships to fly their flags, such as Barbados. "You look at the ability of some of these countries . . . to prevent proliferation, and it's nonexistent," he said.

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