



Mel Gibson's New Look, New Home & New Passion

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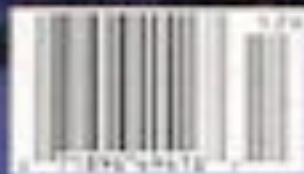
December 2008

RUSH LIMBAUGH • CELL PHONE PROBLEMS • GOP • RISING STARS • VALERIE PLAME

Avoiding Nuclear D-Day

The threat is real, but a special NewsMax investigation finds that America is better prepared than many believe.

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Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and President George W. Bush

Online Shopping Gift Guide

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By Kenneth R. Timmerman

Early on the morning of Oct. 11, 2001, exactly one month after the al-Qaida terrorist attacks on America, CIA Director George Tenet brought sobering news to the White House. In the President's Daily Brief was an alarming item from an intelligence source code-named Despotico. The report alleged that terrorists had smuggled a 10-kiloton nuclear warhead into the Port of New York, hidden inside a cargo container.

Wrong, Tenet said. Despotico's reporting was consistent with separate intelligence the CIA had received from a Soviet agent who believed a 20-kiloton device was missing from his nuclear arsenal.

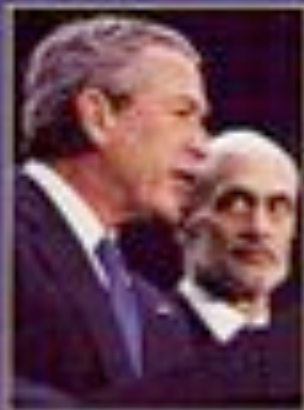
In Port Elizabeth, N.J., U.S. Customs Chief Inspector Robert McCabe was watching the unfolding chaos when the World Trade Center came into view when he received the alert from the U.S. Customs Intelligence Collection Analytical Team. "We were told it was some sort of nuclear device, something really bad," he recalls.

Worst Nightmare

McCabe didn't need anyone to paint him a picture of what a nuclear explosion would do to the sprawling New York-New Jersey port facilities, just across New York Harbor from lower Manhattan. A nuclear detonation in the heart of New York City, was everyone's worst nightmare.

Hundreds of thousands of people would be incinerated within seconds. The port, an economic lifeline of the entire Northeast, would be wiped off the map. Evacuation would take the area uninhabitable for decades.

McCabe grabbed his top intelligence analyst, who scurried through listings



Bearing the ultimate responsibility: President Bush and Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff.

Meet the

How high-tech gear and vigilance are protecting Americans from terrorist nuclear threats



U.S. Customs chief Robert Tenet thanks patrol agents who guard the U.S. border with Canada.



NewMax special investigative reporter Kenneth R. Timmerman is also a best-selling New York Times author. His latest book is "Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran" (Crown Forum, 2005).



of shippers and registries in the Automated Commercial System (ACS), a computer tracking system first set up in the 1990s and regularly upgraded since then. Within minutes, they located the suspect container in the database. They could see who had shipped it, what it was supposed to contain — and most importantly, where it was at that moment.

McCabe and his team rushed from their third-floor offices to the Federal container terminal to the docks, where rows of thousands of containers were

stacked in neat rows. Once they found the container, McCabe ordered the crane operators to release it. They established a security perimeter and set to work.

First, they analyzed reports from a mass spectrometer to detect explosives. Then they ran a handheld radiation detector around the container. Tests came up negative.

Defenders



An aerial view of containers undergoing inspection at the Port of Miami.



A Customs helicopter pilot scans down at recently imported containers.



Officers inspect a suspicious drum off loaded at the Miami Island port.

Miami-based Customs officers plan their offshore patrols.



By other VCI. The VCIIS machine uses gamma-rays to produce a density map of the cargo packed inside containers.

His inspectors positioned the VCIIS and its articulated arm so it hovered an inch or so over the container, then drove the machine slowly down the length of it. Twin orange lights on top of the white cab flashed a warning as the gamma-ray emitter lined up.

"The image was so good, we were able to pick out that there was anything in the container other than what was

supposed to be there," McCabe says.

Felix adds that for McCabe and his team, it was one more reminder that America was under attack.

"I watched the second plane hit the World Trade Center from my office, here in Fort Lauderdale," he says. "Terrified but at once, they cut off to rights.

Our job is to keep them as far away from the United States as possible."

McCabe's operation is just one part of a huge federal effort to protect America from weapons of mass destruction. It was led and set, U.S. Customs and Border Protection and other agencies are employing the latest technologies and procedures to minimize the chances of a devastating WMD attack on the homeland. A Norfolk investigation has found that the ongoing efforts to bolster homeland security have left the United States much better protected from WMD attacks than is commonly believed.

The two men who face each day bearing the weighty responsibility of protecting America from a WMD attack are President George W. Bush and Michael Chertoff, the man he chose to replace Tom Ridge as become the second secretary of the Department of Homeland Security in February.

Chertoff was not necessarily the obvious choice to carry out Bush's clear mission to thwart terrorist efforts to strike the homeland—a mission made all the more critical due to intelligence reports indicating that al-Qaida has actively sought to purchase WMD materials.

Chertoff was a former judge for the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. As assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's original division, he had helped trace al-Qaida's terror network. Satisfied impressed by his credentials, the U.S. Senate approved his nomination unanimously.

At that time, U.S. Customs opened on average just 2 percent of the 9 million containers that entered the United States every year.

The main priority before 9/11 had been catching drugs and other contraband, not detecting a nuclear weapon. The radiation detection equipment was rudimentary, at best.

But McCabe did have a single, truck-mounted Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VCIIS), which he had borrowed from the Norfolk, Va., port the

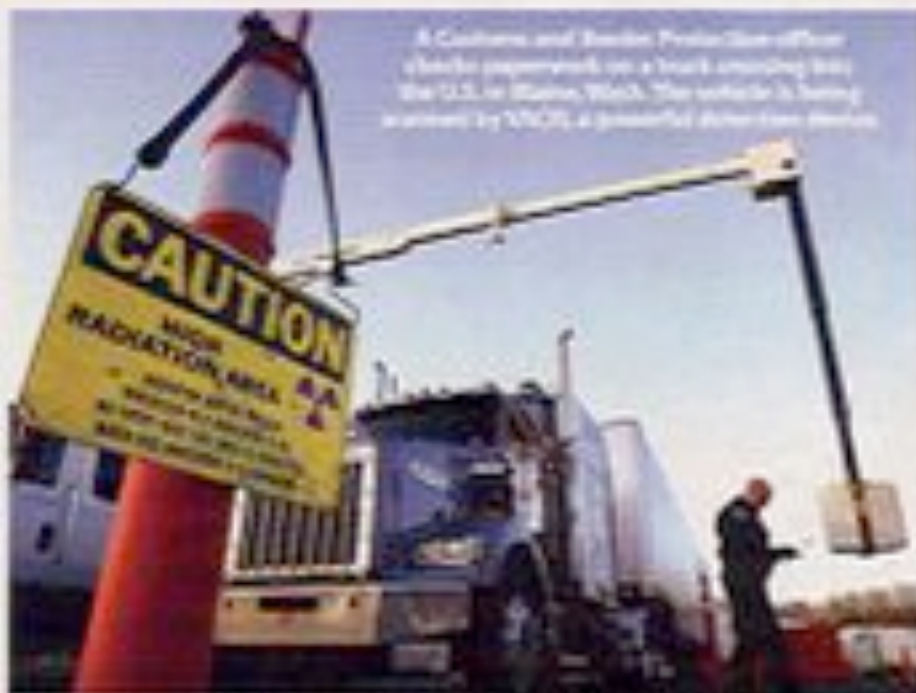
Chertoff has recently emphasized the importance of stopping terrorism before it steps onto U.S. soil.

"I think that there is no question the front line of defense is at the border," Chertoff recently said on Fox News Channel's " Hannity & Colmes" program. "And we do have to worry about the large number of people who come in and the large amount of cargo that comes in. And that's the kind of potential threat, even if it's only one out of a million, that we have to spend our resources focusing on."

Tragic Reminders

The Port Elizabeth container port, which directly abuts the runways of Newark International Airport, lies just across the Hudson River from the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. On a clear day, such as Sept. 11, 2001, the twin towers of the World Trade Center were clearly visible on the Manhattan skyline.

"They were right there, behind that patch of green trees," McCabe says as we pass through the recently installed radiation portal monitors in the container terminal. "When I saw the size of the hole the line stepless made and



A Customs and Border Protection officer checks paperwork on a truck arriving from the U.S. at Statue, Wash. The vehicle is being scanned by VACIS, a powerful detection device.

the multistory steel overhead, I had no doubt we were under a terrorist attack."

Just 2002, just nine months after the 9/11 attacks and eight months after the nuclear Iran scare, President Bush and his homeland security adviser, former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge, paid a visit to Port Elizabeth. They wanted to thank McCabe and his team for their quick response.

"The president asked me, 'What can we do for you?'" McCabe recalls.

McCabe pointed to the VACIS machine and stressed without hesita-

tion. "We need more of these."

One week later, McCabe got a call asking if he could take delivery of a mobile VACIS unit the following week. "They told me I'd get a second one in another 11 months. The president really understood our operation."

McCabe's request coincided with a dramatic shift in the mission of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. From preventing drugs, high-technology and arms smuggling, they were about to become "the policemen."

Meet the Commissioner

Seven to just two weeks after the 9/11 attacks, Customs Commissioner Robert C. Bauer was determined to prevent a nuclear attack on America. In an exclusive interview with *NewsWise*, Bauer describes the work really being done.

"We had to turn on a dime. I needed to quickly inform U.S. Customs on a new, national security priority mission: keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons from getting into the United States."

In those dark weeks after 9/11, Bauer realized that America's land borders were a sieve, where potential terrorists could penetrate apparently at will.

"We had ports of entry from Canada that were open 12 or 16 hours a day, when the real security was always



U.S. Customs Chief Inspector Kevin McCabe: "No doubt of terror attack."



Forward defense: Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Robert Bauer announces a program to inspect shipments at the Chinese ports of Shanghai and Shenzhen before the cargo leaves for the U.S.

comes to the middle of the road," Bremer says.

That had to change. Sonar gates, cameras and other monitoring devices were installed, and armed Border Patrol officers began manning them 24/7. The wait at the land borders shot up from 20 minutes before 9/11, to 12 hours on Sept. 12.

"The effect was, you freeze the borders, with the consequence that you potentially freeze the economy," Bremer says. "That wasn't acceptable to me, or to the president. So we had to come up with solutions without cutting off the flow of legitimate trade and people. That's what I've been doing for the past four years plus."

Bremer turned early on to Stephen Flynn, a former Coast Guard officer whose post-9/11 essay, "The Unguarded Homeland," presented a risk matrix of America's vulnerabilities. Trying to prevent terrorists from bringing nuclear material into the United States was like "trying to catch raindrops at the base of Niagara Falls," Flynn said.

Flynn argued that a key vulnerability was America's consumer ports, where terrorists could bring in a nuclear weapon with little risk of detection. He suggested concrete steps Bremer could take to mitigate the threat.

"We developed the key concepts during my first 60 days," Bremer says. "All the rest has been implementation."

If Bremer wishes it would simplify, I want it.

The first hurdle Bremer faced was the sheer scope of the problem. In 2001, 82 million individuals crossed the United States at the nation's international air ports. Another 400 million entered by land. Ten million more came in by sea. They arrived onboard 600,000 commercial aircraft, 130 million private cars, 11 million trucks and 214,000 ships. Add to that more than 2.4 million rail freight cars and 8 million maritime containers. Termites could pick them among 3,700 terminals and 300 ports of entry — and that was if they chose to enter the United States legally.

When Bremer came in, Customs had a handful of large X-ray machines potentially capable of detecting nuclear contraband, but they were being used along the Mexican border to catch illegal

Rogue Nuclear Players



al-Qaida

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida have been "actively looking into acquiring a nuclear weapon and other weapons of mass destruction." The Washington Times has reported that al-Qaida operatives sought to purchase materials for a so-called "dirty bomb" — a conventional explosive that would widely disperse radioactive materials.



North Korea

North Korea, led by Kim Jong-il, is believed to possess nuclear weapons. Intelligence sources say it has refined enough material for two nuclear devices, possibly more. North Korea also has 3,000 spent nuclear fuel rods that could be used to obtain weapons-grade plutonium. Its own American domestic economic analysts and its ultimate intentions are largely undetermined.



Iran

Some observers believe Iran's claims that, as an oil-rich country, it seeks to develop nuclear power for peaceful uses. Five former hostages have charged that now Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad participated in the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis. Ahmadinejad recently called for Israel to be "wiped off the map." Iran continues to play a game of diplomatic cat-and-mouse over arms inspections and uranium enrichment.



Russia

At the height of the Cold War, the Soviet Union possessed over 20,779 nuclear war heads, plus another 6,000 to 13,000 miller-ton, nonstrategic nuclear weapons, including mines. Although the United States has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to help President Vladimir Putin secure his nuclear arsenal, there have been occasional reports of nuclear weapons gone missing. Such weapons would pose a grave threat to U.S. security.

drugs. Only the Port of Miami had an X-ray machine large enough to examine whole cargo containers without unpacking them. If Customs was going to have any hope of finding nuclear material without physically opening every single container entering the United States—which would effectively shut down commerce—they needed more. Bomber sought funding from Congress to install 240 of these large, expensive machines. That was the first step.

CBP also has installed 100 Radiation Portal Monitors at major U.S. land and seaports. Now, 90 percent of transborderers coming in from Canada pass through these highly sensitive detectors, as do 90 percent of passenger vehicles.

"If you're trying to smuggle in radiological material to construct a dirty bomb, or a nuclear device itself, we're going to see it," Bomber says.

Answering Critics

Not everyone agrees with Bomber's assessment.

A team of physicians working for the

Department of Transportation concluded in a May 2005 study that terrorists were "most likely to use highly enriched uranium (HEU), not plutonium."

If terrorists decided to shield the weapon, it would emit virtually no radiation whatsoever.

“If you’re trying to smuggle in radiological material to construct a dirty bomb, or a nuclear device itself, we’re going to see it”

The report called Bomber's strategy of installing land radiation portal monitors "a dead wall." The only effective solution, the DOT physicists argued, was to develop new, smaller detectors carried in vehicles that would roam the nation's highways, taking radiation samples and "reporting their readings to a network of checkpoints." This is the same way E-Check automatically subjects highway tolls to the Northeast.

Bomber has heard it all.

The report continued: "The gamma rays—and neutrons needed for detecting shielded HEU permit detection only at short distances (100 to four feet or less) and require that there is sufficient time to count a sufficient number of particles (several minutes to hours)."

"Those activities have never been to a point of entry," he says. "They are only thinking of one thing: how to detect radiation sensors. But we are concerned with detecting a variety of potentially dangerous materials that are existing out there. We use a combination of technology, and that's very important."

Not long after Bomber took office, his officers made a drug seizure in El Paso, Texas. The smugglers had stashed their whole load of cocaine with lead, thinking they could defeat the X-ray scanners at the border crossing. And they were right.

"We couldn't see the drugs," Bomber says. "But we did see the lead shielding, because lead is one of the heaviest materials in the table of elements." It was a clear sign-off that something was amiss.

Call it the human factor: the human Customs "nose."

"We are a very curious bunch," says McCabe, the chief inspector. "If your suspicion is high, it's not going anywhere until we're satisfied." And that goes for ongoing cargo, as well.

McCabe is standing inside the Customs inspection hangar in Port Elizabeth, watching CBP officers tear apart a pair of SUVs that had been packed inside a container headed for Macedonia. The gentlemanly seaman pulled up a dark shadow in the trunk of a car that looked like the barrel of a Milwaukee heavy machine gun. That prompted Customs to inspect the container. When they saw the real gun, the mysterious object turned out to be a support arm for a bomb.

Goal-line Defense

CBP officers use the same instinct when the radiation detectors go off.

McCabe got a call at 11 p.m. one night earlier this year, asking him to rush back to the port because the detectors flagged a shipment of floor tiles.

"I'm thinking, 'Floor tiles?' It threw me a real curveball. It took me until 6 a.m. to figure it out. It turned out that the granite was naturally radioactive and emitting neutrons."

In another incident, the portal monitors picked up traces of radiation from a container as it was heading out of the port. When McCabe's officers did the search,



The search for weapons and contraband is a two-way street. Here Customs officers in an inspection hangar in Port Elizabeth, N.J., search an SUV found inside a container bound for Macedonia.

BYRON BOESCH (continued on page 22)

Photo Report: NewsMax on the Scene



'Eagle' Eyes Probe for Nuclear Threats

This large X-ray cargo screening machine, known as the "Eagle," can "see" through 10 inches of solid steel. Here, at the Port of Baltimore, the Eagle advances at half a mile per hour down a row of containers that have been singled out as high risk — containers that make too many stops as en route to the U.S., for example. Despite the high-tech equipment, CBP officers pride themselves on developing a sixth sense to detect suspicious cargo.

Just across from the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, Customs has five mobile Vehicle and Cargo Inspection Systems (VICS), and two fixed VICS machines. They can examine whole containers or palletized cargo. The VICS uses less precise gamma rays to map out the density of cargo inside containers.



Prior to 9/11, Customs inspectors used small radiation detectors to alert them to radioactive material. Today, with massive funding from Congress, far more precise Radiation Portal Monitors have been installed at major U.S. ports and land border crossings. They are built to resemble tollbooths. Trucks hauling containers out of most large U.S. ports must pass through these sensitive detectors before leaving the port. So far, more than 600 have been installed.

DEFENDERS *continued from page 20*

son, it turned up positive for cobalt-60, a subtle ingredient of a dirty bomb. So they requested the container. Inside, we found a shipment of metal wiring trays, and they were hot. Apparently they had been made from contaminated scrap metal, so we took them out of circulation. The importer was actually pretty happy about that and turned against his supplier."

India makes huge quantities of consumer items and tools from scrap metal it buys on the world market. The Chinese also buy scrap, and suck down old artillery barrels from the People's Liberation Army. So CBHA risks apply. Sometimes the results can be deadly.

Detection at ports of entry is the last line of defense. "Most of us believe the long pole in preventing nuclear terrorism is securing nuclear materials overseas and preventing nuclear proliferation," a top physicist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory tells Newkirk.

This physicist, one of the nation's top experts in designing new systems to detect weapons of nuclear terror, agreed to speak for this article on condition he not be identified by name, because of security concerns.

He likens the effort by CBP to detect nuclear materials at America's ports to a hockey game. "You have to have the goalie catch the puck. But you can't just want to play the game without a goalie."

The president's 2006 budget request includes \$246 million to create a Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop a nationwide plan for detecting smuggled nuclear materials.

While the experts continue to debate what type of detectors to buy and where to put them, "there is a growing consensus within the national security community that the deterrence value of detectors is as important as whether they'll actually detect something," says the physicist.

Unlike drug smugglers, who

accept a 20 percent seizure rate as the cost of doing business, nuclear terrorists, or a terrorist state such as Iran, is not going to want to take that kind of risk.

Loopholes

"Terrorists want a scenario with zero contingencies, zero risk," says Arnon Hendler, a former El Al Israel Airlines security guard who now runs his own security firm, Chameleon Associates.

DHS wants to prevent the container ports. But most of the time, they're looking in the wrong place. They might be looking for the inside man, the crane operator, or perhaps the person who can turn off the gamma-ray detector when a specific cargo comes through. If it's processed, the terrorist will go around," he says.



U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers use several devices to detect nuclear radiation.



A radiation alarm triggers a closer inspection by a Port of Baltimore Customs officer, who uses a hand-held Radiation Isotope Identifier device to scan a container.

Some U.S. ports had better physical security until just recently, even as CBP was installing new equipment to scan suspicious cargo.

Melvin Jackson headed security at the Port of Baltimore until early October 2005.

"Prior to '01, the Maryland Port Authority didn't even have a security department," he said. "We had police, and their main concern was theft. '11 changed our mind-set completely."

Jackson worked hard to get DHS green so he could buy new security equipment, but he never thought like a terrorist. "You could get into the port with a stick and a rod," says one freight brokerer Newkirk spoke to. "Now, all of that has changed."

It changed once the Coast Guard gave the Port of Baltimore a failing grade during a recent post-'11 security review. The Maryland state director of homeland security, Dennis Schneider, replaced the director of the Maryland Port Authority, and hired him a 25-year Customs veteran, former assistant state secretary Homer Williams, to oversee a revamped security department with new authority to change the way port security was handled.

"Terrorists seek to exploit your weaknesses, your blind spots," Williams says. "So I am trying to get an appreciation of our blind spots."

Newkirk spoke with Williams in late October, after he had been on the job for just three weeks. Already, he had put in place new port procedures that required truckers, freight agents and even longshoremen to get security clearance before they could get into the port.

"Do the new procedures make us really safe? No. We can only address those things that make us vulnerable to attack," Williams says.

"If somebody really wants to get in and they are creative enough... it's a challenge. So we need some intelligence. We need to know our clients, the visitors, the regulars, their patterns of com-

ings and gangs. It's like knowing who you let in your house. If someone showed up at your house with a little badge and said they were going to spend the night with your kids, would you let them in just like that, without knowing them?"

And yet, that's how the elderly system in Baltimore and other smaller ports around America has worked for years. If you know the guy at the gate you get in — drunk, sober or armed to the teeth.

Williams has been taking flak from angry truckers and shippers, as NewsMax witnessed while paying him and Jackson a visit, and he acknowledges that "the diplomacy piece" is not a small part of his job. "But when something goes wrong, everyone is pointing fingers," he says, crossing his arms across his chest so his hands point in opposite directions.

"All during the 1990s we just created dog. We said we didn't need security. Then came 9/11, and the fingers start pointing."

"I don't want to be the guy pointing fingers if something goes wrong," he says. "It's not going to happen on my watch."

"It's hard to imagine a terrorist attack more consequential to the American people and the economy than the delivery of a nuclear device by al-Qaida or al-Qaida associates," Bremer says.

Pushing the Borders Outward

"This is why we've designed a layered approach that makes it much more difficult for al-Qaida to successfully get a nuclear device into the United States. It may not be foolproof, but I'm not sure you can design anything that would be 100 percent foolproof."



Inspector Maurice Peoples guides a truck at the Port of Los Angeles through a VICE system that examines the container's contents.

A key part of the U.S. strategy to prevent terrorists from bringing nuclear weapons into the country was the Container Security Initiative, announced by Bremer in January 2002. The idea was to push the borders out-

DEFENSE continued on page 24

Why Should Israel Wait for Iran to Attack?

Israel's population, which now comprises 5 million Jews and 1 million Arabs, has always been minute compared with that of the immediately surrounding Arab states, which now have a population of over 250 million. The Israelis have repelled invasions from the surrounding Arab states five times since 1948, because they had no choice — a reality described by the phrase "ayn levayah."

Israel has the right to self-defense under U.N. Charter Article 51, as does every other U.N. member country. Must Israel wait until Iran's nuclear bomb is launched against it, or should it act now to defend its people?

In 1961, when Saddam Hussein threatened Israel with destruction, Israel bombed and destroyed Iraq's nuclear bomb facility and was condemned at the United Nations. So how lucky were the United Nations and the coalition nations in the first Gulf War against Iraq 19 years later when coalition forces, with U.N. sanction and under U.S. leadership, threw Iraq out of Kuwait and prevented Iraq's threatened invasion of Saudi Arabia?

Thanks to Israel, coalition forces did not have to worry about Iraq using nuclear weapons. It was then that voices were raised around the world expressing appreciation to the Israelis for their having taken on Iraq in 1961.

So what should Israel do now that Iranian President

Mohammad Khatami has said that Israel must be wiped off the map? Obviously, Israel's military leadership will advise its civilian government about what Israel can and should do militarily. There are doubts that if the military leadership concludes that Israel can and should destroy Iran's nuclear bomb capability, it will.

Given its minute size, Israel cannot afford to be attacked with nuclear weapons. Any such attack would also be the start of a wider nuclear war. Israel is unambiguously ready to fight back in kind.

Regrettably, it appears that world opinion does not accept the fact that the Islamic fanatics, comprising many millions of Muslim world-wide, believe that Christians, Jews, Hindus and others are infidels — not accepting the supremacy of Islam — and that by they should die. Islamic terrorists in India recently killed 59 people and injured more than 200 mostly civilian Hindus.

This kind of terrorism goes on throughout the world. We are in a war of civilizations. Those who refuse to recognize it as such have their heads in the sand, or elsewhere.

Many Americans would like to see President Bush politically weakened, even though we are at war. Of course, criticism of the president on a host of issues is justified, and I join in it regularly. But when it comes to foreign policy, criticism should be respectful and responsible, and not done with glee and venom, as is often now the case. America and its future should be our paramount concern, not partisan political advantage.





Called America's gateway to Central and South America, Miami is Florida's busiest cargo port. Customs officers spending out of nearby Homestead, Fla., port have continued.

DEFENSES *continued from page 27*

ward, to keep the threat as far away from America's shores as possible.

CBP now has agreements with 26 of the world's largest ports to inspect cargo en masse, with the help of local Customs officials, before it ever leaves port.

Prior to 9/11, only about 2 percent of all containers entering the U.S. were opened for inspection. Today the Customs and Border Patrol says that it flags 20% of incoming containers for inspection upon arrival in the U.S. More importantly, however, are the efforts through the Container Security Initiative to flag suspicious cargo before it ever leaves foreign ports, and to carry out inspections on-site.

Shippers are now required to file electronic manifests 72 hours before their cargo leaves a foreign port headed for the United States. Before 9/11, they only filed the manifests once their ships reached port. The new CBP aims to check the information against their com-

Former Soviet Gen. Alexander Lebed shocked a U.S. congressional delegation visiting Moscow in 1997 when he revealed that the Soviet Union had produced more than 200 suitcase-size nuclear bombs — but could only account for 48 of them.

The other 52, he said, were “missing.”

Lebed repeated his spectacular claim in an interview later that year with *Newsweek*’s “50 Minutes.” He claimed that the missing weapons were “somewhere in Ukraine, somewhere in the Baltic countries. Perhaps some of them are even outside these countries. One person is capable of assembling this nuclear weapon — one person.”

That the myth of the “nuclear suitcase weapon” was born.

Author Richard Meier takes apart the nuclear atomic myth in a new book, “22 Million Myths That Undermine the War on Terror,” published by Regency Publishing Inc.

According to the book, the Soviet Union did produce nuclear mines, but they were much larger and could not

The ‘Suitcase Nuke’: — Real or Hoax?

be transported by one person. In addition, Russian officials, from President Boris Yeltsin on down, later claimed that Russia had dismantled them in accordance with an agreement made with President George H.W. Bush in 1991 to repatriate all tactical nuclear weapons from foreign soil.

Ironically, it was the United States that produced the only known suitcase nuclear weapon, the B61. It was transported in the B-512 container, pictured at right in a *Soviet* exclusive, courtesy of the National Atomic Museum in Albuquerque, N.M. According to the museum, the device and container together weighed only 56 pounds.

The B61 could be carried by paratroopers, Navy SEALs or other special forces in a backpack, according to Sand National Laboratory in New Mexico. It was deployed with U.S. forces around the world from 1967 to



The B61 is the only known one-man nuclear weapon. Designed to be carried in a backpack, it weighed just 56 pounds.

1969. After 1969, all B61 units were removed from America's military stockpile.

tral targeting database and assign a risk rating to the cargo.

Take Iranian exports. How can CIP be sure that a container of carpets originating in Bandar Abbas, Iran, presents a low risk?

"We've been compiling information on shippers and importers for over 20 years," McCabe says. "If a given shipper has been sending two containers per month to the same importer for 20 years, with no record of violation or other violations, there is no reason why that company should be considered high risk just because their goods are coming from a high-risk area. But if all of a sudden they send four containers, or change importers, or loading procedures, or routing, then we're going to take a look. Our job is to identify and manage the risk."

As we watch the huge stationary nuclear core melt in Port Elizabeth do a seat on a 40-foot container inside the Customs shed, Newfoundland VACIS operator Diane Gainer what she would do if she were running a container from Pakistan and the alarm went off.

"I'd probably run," she laughs. Then she points to McCabe. "We'd probably try each other out of here."

"And we'd be taking the scientists analyzing the data how fast we should run," McCabe adds. "Before 9/11, when we found something suspicious, everybody would be fighting to get in there first to make the screen, get the glory." But today, with the fear that a suspect container might contain a nuclear, chemical or biological weapon, "we've all taken a step back."

The Government Accounting Office is the investigative arm of Congress. Its latest report on the Container Security Initiative, issued in May 2008, will look "gaps" in this effort to identify high-risk cargo long before it enters the United States.

"Thirty-five percent of U.S.-bound shipments from CIP ports were not targeted and not subject to inspection overseas — the key goal of the CIP program," the GAO found.

In addition, as of Sept. 11, 2008, 28 percent of the containers referred to host governments for inspection were not inspected overseas for various reasons such as operational limitations.

New York City's Nuclear False Alert

Terrorists were preparing to strike New York City again just two months after the September 11 attacks, one month after the nuclear scare from Dragonfire.

That was the report that U.S. intelligence had picked up from Iranian sources, who indicated that terrorists carrying heavy diesel fuel bags had taken over a cargo vessel headed for New York harbor and would be carrying a nuclear weapon. The report was eerily similar to information received from a CIA source code-named Dragonfire, who had previously — and erroneously — claimed that al-Qaeda had obtained a 10-kiloton nuclear weapon and smuggled it into New York City.

To avert the new attack, the U.S. Coast Guard organized a mid-night boarding party and brought U.S. Customs Chief Inspector Kevin McCabe along for the ride.

"It was dark, it was cold, and it was windy," McCabe recalled. "We were getting knocked all over the place." About two dozen armed men were aboard the tiny 40-foot patrol boat as they steamed 25 miles out to sea, lights out, to the intercept the vessel.

"Intelligence was telling us that terrorists had taken over the vessel,"

McCabe said. "So our plan was to come up alongside, without lights, and climb up the Jacob's ladder. We were just hoping they'd already put it down, since they were coming up fast."

The Jacob's ladder, made of rope, is used by harbor pilots to board oversteering cargo ships and tankers as they approach port. "I remember they told me, 'Don't look down.' I'm like 20 feet up, and if you're looking down,"

McCabe said, because of high waves and the uncertainty of what they'd find once the men reached the deck, the boarding party cancelled the Jacob's ladder use at a time, after which the Coast Guard ship backed away. "So now you had to let go, you wanted to tell them something was up," McCabe said, referring to the wave.

Automatically reflex on the beach, the boarding party formed out across the ship, and reached up its crew into the wheelhouse and began searching the cargo. "It was pretty tame in the beginning," McCabe said. "Nonetheless, we took the vessel all the way into port, just to make sure."

It turned out to be a false alarm — and one more successful test of the professionalism of America's International Detainers.

Intelligence was telling us that terrorists had taken over a vessel!

One percent of these referrals were denied by host government officials, generally because they believed the referrals were based on factors not related to security threats. For the 72 percent of referred containers that were inspected overseas, CIP officials told us that no WMD were discovered.

Another Bremer initiative that has been closely scrutinized by Congress and the GAO are the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT). In return for improving the security of

their shipments and providing advance information to Customs, C-TPAT members receive a kind of "gold card" that reduces the likelihood their goods will be subjected to container inspection.

Since every day a container remains in demurrage at port costs money to shippers and importers, Customs officials believe it has given them leverage in getting the shipping industry to put in place more serious security procedures.

While there has been much copying from Congress (the latest GAO report

is titled "Key Cargo Security Programs Can Be Improved"). Former owners that companies can be prosecuted for providing false information under the program. "We kick companies out if they don't meet the security requirements," he says. "We want to incentivize this. We've proven that you can take away the terrorist threat, and that's important to do if you don't want to shut down the American economy. You'd do severe damage to our economy if you examined every single cargo container that came into the United States. And you don't need to do it."

On the Front Lines

Despite the billions of dollars, thousands of new employees and massive amounts of new equipment, the threat of terrorists attempting to bring a nuclear weapon into the United States remains very real, and every CBP officer interviewed for this article is keenly aware of it.

"Narratives for smuggling a nuclear weapon across unguarded ports or borders are similar to those for smuggling boxes of marijuana," the Congressional Research Service observed in a Sept. 22, 2004, report on nuclear terrorism.

Like Miami harbor, long known as a paradise for smugglers of all varieties of contraband, from drugs to human cargo.

NewsMax ventured out on routine patrol with CBP officers Brandon Snaden, 35, and his partner, Andrew Reyes, 34, on board their *Midnight*

Express "go-fast" boat. They are among the young men and women on the front lines of the war on terror. Highly trained and highly motivated, they also have some of the best equipment in the world.

"The Customs Air and Marine branch is like a microcosmic lotus," says Special Agent Zachary Mann. "These boats are the fastest thing on the water." Mann is one of only five special agents in the country who retained that title after Customs merged into DHS.

By coincidence, Snaden and Reyes had worked together in the Coast Guard 15 years ago at over 100 miles, but just back of each other before separately joining CBP three years ago.

"Terrorists are not happy when we show up," Snaden says as he pulls back the throttle and the motorboat lurches into the wind over 30 knots in about three seconds. "We're wearing black hoods and carrying things that weigh, and they don't want us coming on board their \$5 million boat."

They realize that the same techniques used by drug smugglers could very well be used by terrorists.

"We've seen cargo ships come in port with possible devices attached

to the hull, underwater," says Mann. "We've found drugs concealed in the human waste storage tank on ships, and inside a full diesel fuel tank. The smugglers had a circumferential valve with a foot pump to get it in place. That definitely violates OSHA requirements."

As he runs through the harbor in the *Lanborough* on duty, Snaden is asked what goes through his mind when he is called to interrupt a peaceful cruise boat in the middle of the night. "Bring on," he calls over his shoulder.

"We take a rubber turn to the left, control lowered at a 45-degree angle as Snaden orders his boat beneath the canopy to make sure the other boats are in view. Then he spins the

wheel hard right, creating a rapidly changing hull wave, and we push almost instantly in the other direction, as wild as a tractor on hard dirt.

"Now imagine it's pitch black and there's another boat alongside of you and he doesn't want to stop," says Mann, who used to direct an outfit generation of Customs inspectors, the Blue Thunder.

Snaden is serious. "I'm thinking how are we going to prosecute this guy? What are my next steps? Like an athlete, I'm thinking about how I'm going to get to the resolution. It's assessing what great training and great equipment does for you. There's no time to be afraid."

On our return to the Customs dock at the mouth of the Miami River, we come up quickly on a harbor ferry, and Reyes waves to the captain. Suddenly, Snaden tells an agent to hang on, reverses back, and we come to a dead halt almost instantly. Our bow hits the crest of the wake from the ferry with a crash, then Snaden floors on full throttle and we keep across the crest of the wake into the calm.

As I talk with Snaden and Reyes back at the dock and contemplate their calm professionalism, I am thinking how proud I am to be an American, and how lucky we are to still attract people like these to our shores.

We've proven that you can risk-manage the terrorist threat, and that's important to do if you don't want to shut down the American economy.



U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers Andrew Reyes, left, and Brandon Snaden, center, take NewsMax senior correspondent Kenneth R. Timmerman on a patrol aboard the *Midnight Express* speedboat.