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## A Micro-Threat With Macro-Impact: The Bio-Threat and the Need for a National Bio-Defense Security Strategy.

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**Abstract :** The United States enters the 21st Century facing many challenges and threats. Several commissions, such as the US Commission on National Security/21st Century, cite a myriad of threats including ballistic missiles, cyber-attacks against our infrastructure, attacks using conventional weapons and attacks using weapons of mass destruction (WMD). With

the exception of thermonuclear war, the threat posing the greatest risk to the U.S. is a biological attack on the homeland. It is the only other one that can threaten our national survival because of its potential catastrophic results. The threat of a bio-attack is very real. The capability of nation states and terrorists to acquire, cultivate, and disseminate pathogens is widespread. Past events and present knowledge indicate that nations and terrorists possess the intent to use such weapons. The decline of the U.S.'s public health system leaves it unable to respond to a large natural epidemic, much less an intentional one, and further suggests a vulnerability to a bio-attack greater than anytime in recent history. Both the Administration and Congress have taken well-intentioned piecemeal actions to address this threat, but none reflect a comprehensive strategy. The contradictory laws and directives result in redundancies, inefficiencies, a waste of money, and confusion among federal, state, and local authorities responsible for responding to a bio-attack. The lack of a comprehensive national security strategy countering a bio-attack on the homeland places U.S. citizens, the very core of our national vital interests, and the nation itself at great peril. This paper assesses the credibility of the bio-threat to the U.S. homeland, reviews and assesses past Government actions to address the threat, and offers suggestions to establish a comprehensive and coherent national strategy to counter such a threat.

**Descriptors :** \*TERRORISTS , \*MILITARY STRATEGY , \*NATIONAL SECURITY , \*MASS DESTRUCTION WEAPONS , \*THREATS , WEAPONS , VULNERABILITY , MONEY , THERMONUCLEAR REACTIONS , PATHOGENIC MICROORGANISMS , SURVIVAL(GENERAL) , CORES , UNITED STATES , GUIDED MISSILES , CONGRESS

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