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Special Investigations Briefing — The Biological Weapons Convention: Rethinking Our Priorities After September 11

The terrorist attacks of September 11, and especially the recent anthrax attacks, have caused the nation to reevaluate many of its priorities. President Bush has warned that members of Al Qaeda “are seeking chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons.” He further vowed to “cut off every possible source” for weapons of mass destruction.

The Administration, however, currently opposes international negotiations to establish a new inspection regime under the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention. The original treaty included no enforcement provisions and allowed signatories to operate massive biological weapons programs, as the Soviet Union did until 1992. Although the Clinton Administration spent years negotiating an amendment to the treaty, the Bush Administration announced in July that it would reject these negotiations. Instead of inspections, the Administration offered alternatives such as a “code of ethics” or disease surveillance systems which would not be activated until after a potential biological weapons attack.

In light of the September 11 and anthrax attacks, many experts have renewed the call for mandatory inspections under the Biological Weapons Convention. Unfortunately, the Administration has recently reaffirmed its opposition to these inspections.

With the next round of international negotiations beginning next week in Geneva, Rep. Henry A. Waxman is inviting two former government officials to brief members of Congress on the value of an inspection regime under the Biological Weapons Convention:

- In over 32 years with the Central Intelligence Agency, **Douglas J. MacEachin** was a prominent Soviet-Warsaw Pact military analyst. He became Chief of the Arms Control and Intelligence staff, and was then appointed to the post of Deputy Director of Intelligence. Since leaving government service, he has been at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government.
- **Elisa D. Harris** is the former Director for Nonproliferation and Export Controls at the National Security Council. From 1993 to 2001, she had primary responsibility for coordinating U.S. policy on chemical, biological, and missile proliferation issues. She is currently a Research Fellow at the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland.

This briefing will be held on **Thursday, November 15, at 11 a.m. in 2247 Rayburn HOB.**