

# Alliance for Biosecurity

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April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

General James L. Jones, Jr., USMC (Ret.)  
United States National Security Advisor  
The White House  
Executive Office of the President  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Biosecurity Position in the NSC

Dear General Jones:

We are writing on behalf of the Alliance for Biosecurity to urge that high level leadership of US Biosecurity policy be continued in the Executive Office of the President, either in the National Security Council or within the Homeland Security Council, should that Council be preserved following completion of the ongoing organizational review. The Alliance for Biosecurity is a collaboration between the Center for Biosecurity of UPMC, pharmaceutical companies, and biotechnology companies working to develop vaccines and medicines for our nation's Strategic National Stockpile. The Alliance mission is to work in the public interest to promote a sustainable research and development infrastructure necessary to prevent and treat 21<sup>st</sup> Century infectious disease threats that present security challenges.

The magnitude of the threat of bioterrorism necessitates the need for strong, centralized biosecurity policy leadership with access to the President on both prevention and consequence management issues, and with the capacity to track and coordinate biosecurity-related programs across the government. Senior Director level leadership of biosecurity policy for prevention and consequence management – at either the NSC or the HSC – would be the most appropriate position given the span of major biosecurity programs across the government and given that biological threats are among the nation's most significant national security challenges.

As noted by President Obama during his campaign<sup>i</sup>, "Biological weapons pose a serious and increasing national security risk...Al Qaeda was attempting to develop biological weapons in Afghanistan before the U.S. discovered and disrupted its program in 2003. Al Qaeda or other adversaries may seek to use biological weapons to do great harm to American civilians or our military. The spectrum of possible biological threats is broad; it is unwise to assume that the next threat will look like the last one. We must not fixate on fighting the last war. The central concern is that as biological science and related technologies accelerate and as human and veterinary applications expand, the materials, skills and know-how needed to build and use bioweapons become ever more globally available. And biological weapons materials cannot be

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controlled in ways that nuclear weapons materials can.” The Alliance agrees with this assessment, and commends the President for recognizing this critical national security issue.

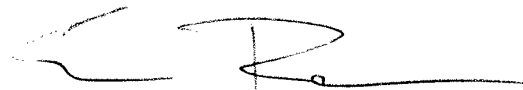
In November of 2008, the National Intelligence Council reported that “one of [its] greatest concerns continues to be that a terrorist might acquire and employ biological agents, or less likely, a nuclear device, to create mass casualties.” Similarly, the December, 2008 report of the Congressionally established *Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism* found that “it is more likely than not that a weapon of mass destruction will be used in a terrorist attack somewhere in the world by the end of 2013,” and that “terrorists are more likely to be able to obtain and use a biological weapon than a nuclear weapon.”

Clearly, biosecurity is, first and foremost, a national security issue. Diminishing the seniority of leadership on biosecurity issues within the Executive Office of the President or moving biosecurity out of the national security or homeland security policy process would lessen the ability of the government leaders to manage and coordinate a complex and critical set of biosecurity-related programs across the government. And it would send the wrong signal to the biosecurity community outside of government who have been working to improve the country’s ability to prevent and respond to biological threats. We strongly urge you to consider maintaining Senior Director level leadership on both biosecurity prevention and consequence management issues within the NSC or HSC.

We thank you for your consideration of this important issue, and stand ready to serve as a resource to the Obama administration as you work to strengthen our nation’s preparedness for biosecurity threats. Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Alliance,



Susan Berger, Ph.D.  
Senior Director of Operations and Communications  
Pfizer Inc.  
Co-Chair, Alliance for Biosecurity



Eric A. Rose, MD  
Chairman & CEO  
SIGA Technologies, Inc.  
Co-Chair, Alliance for Biosecurity

cc: John Brennan, National Security Council, Executive Office of the President  
Gary Samore, White House WMD Coordinator

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<sup>i</sup> *FACT SHEET: Obama's New Plan to Confront 21st Century Threats.*  
[http://www.barackobama.com/2008/07/16/fact\\_sheet\\_obamas\\_new\\_plan\\_to.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/07/16/fact_sheet_obamas_new_plan_to.php)