

\$10 billion for "anti-terrorism" plan

Clinton proposes huge police buildup

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In a speech January 22 to the National Academy of Sciences, President Clinton announced a \$10 billion plan to strengthen the repressive powers of the federal government, in the name of waging war against "terrorism." Combined with \$6.6 billion in new spending on anti-missile systems and a \$110 billion increase in the Pentagon budget over the next six years, the Clinton administration will launch the biggest military-police buildup since the heyday of Ronald Reagan.

In both the speech, and an interview given the previous day to the *New York Times*, Clinton gave a picture of America in the twenty-first century beleaguered by terrorists threatening to kill millions with biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, or to disrupt the US economy through attacks on its computer-based infrastructure.

"We must be ready," Clinton declared, "ready if our adversaries try to use computers to disable power grids, banking, communications and transportation networks, police, fire and health services--or military assets ...

"We have to be ready for adversaries to launch attacks that could paralyze utilities and services across entire regions. We must be ready if adversaries seek to attack with weapons of mass destruction, as well. Armed with these weapons, which can be compact and inexpensive, a small band of terrorists could inflict tremendous harm."

Clinton boasted that he had tripled FBI anti-terrorist efforts since 1993, and that last year the administration obtained from Congress a 39 percent increase in spending for preparedness against chemical and biological weapons. The new budget will more than double this effort to nearly \$1.4 billion, including \$683 million to train and equip emergency personnel in major cities, \$206 million to protect federal facilities

and \$381 million for dealing with "nuclear emergencies."

Another \$1.46 billion will be expended on measures to protect US computer systems from external or internal attack, including the formation of a "CyberCorps" of computer specialists working as an arm of the police and military. While Clinton cited the threat of hackers invading Pentagon and other critical computer systems, the creation of a specialized detachment of military and police officers with computer expertise raises an obvious threat to the present relatively unrestricted access to information on the Internet.

The bulk of the anti-terrorism funds will be expended on a massive effort to fortify American embassies around the world, in the wake of last year's bombing of the Kenyan and Tanzanian embassies. The effect will be to transform these facilities from diplomatic missions into essentially military bunkers, outposts of the American military-intelligence complex in every country of the world.

Clinton defended his decision to order missile strikes against the Sudan and Afghanistan in the wake of the African embassy bombings, although the Sudanese target was a pharmaceutical plant which produced the bulk of that country's medicine and no connection has been demonstrated between either target and the bombings. Future preemptive actions would be taken, he said: "We are doing everything we can, in ways I can and in ways that I cannot discuss.... We must be deliberate, and we must be aggressive."

Clinton told the *Times* that he was considering a proposal from the Pentagon to restructure the military command through the appointment of a commander in chief for the defense of the continental United States--a measure never undertaken even in World War II or at

any time during the Cold War. Such an action would be the precursor to ending 130-year-old policy, under the *posse comitatus* law, which bars the use of American military forces for internal police purposes.

Just as significant as the measures themselves was the nearly hysterical language in which Clinton presented the danger of terrorism. He claimed that the threat of biological and chemical attack "keeps me awake at night and bothers me." He described the prospect of such attacks as the greatest threat to US national security in the twenty-first century, justifying a vast mobilization of federal resources.

Introducing Clinton to his audience at the NAS, National Security Advisor Sandy Berger noted the unprecedented scale of the administration's proposed deployment against the supposed terrorist threat, including not only the Pentagon, Justice Department and CIA, but the Department of Energy, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Transportation (aviation security) and even the Department of Health and Human Services, which will oversee some of the preparations against biological warfare.

Richard A. Clarke, recently appointed by Clinton to the new post of national coordinator of counterterrorism and computer security programs, warned of the threat of "information warfare" involving "systematic national intrusion" into computer systems, with effects comparable to the strategic bombing of World War II. "What we're concerned about is in the future, nations will have that same capability to destroy each other's infrastructure, not by bombs, but by cyber attack," he told reporters.

Clarke admitted that there had been few terrorist attacks on American soil, adding, "We do not know of any imminent attack being planned in the United States using chemical or biological weapons or using cyber attack techniques." Nonetheless, he justified the massive increase in expenditure by claiming that the absence of terrorist attacks proved that anti-terrorist programs were working and should be intensified!

Congressional Republicans voiced their support for Clinton's initiative, faulting it only for not being even more sweeping. Thomas Bliley, chairman of the House Commerce Committee, called for new legislation to tighten control over the use and transfer of biological and chemical agents, as well as legal and financial

sanctions against persons who "falsely report or conduct hoaxes regarding biological or chemical attacks--a growing problem that creates unnecessary panic and fear among this nation's citizens."

This latter proposal, if it were taken literally, would be justly applied first of all to the Clinton White House, the Pentagon and the media itself, which have repeatedly raised the specter of terrorism in order to stampede public opinion in favor of greater measures of police repression. It remains a fact that the country with by far the largest arsenal of chemical and biological weapons is the United States, weapons that have been repeatedly and illegally tested on American citizens.

Moreover, the bloodiest terrorist attack on American soil came, not from a foreign country or overseas terrorist group, but from the homegrown neo-fascist milieu--closely linked to the congressional Republicans--which produced the Oklahoma City bombers.



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