

WebMemo



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Electromagnetic Pulse Attacks: The Heritage Foundation's Research

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An electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack on the United States could wreak havoc on the nation's electronic systems—shutting down power grids, sources, and supply mechanisms, irreparably crippling the country. Such an attack could simultaneously inflict large-scale damage while critically limiting our recovery abilities.

Yet, despite the tremendous threat EMPs pose to the United States, this danger has been largely ignored.

Congress and the new Administration must recognize the significance of the EMP threat and take the necessary steps to protect against it.

Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack: Another Tool for America's Enemies

Dr. William R. Graham

November 17, 2008

<http://www.heritage.org/press/events/ev111708a.cfm>

EMP is a high-intensity burst of electromagnetic energy caused by the rapid acceleration of charged particles. EMP can be a weapon of mass disruption when these particles, either through a nuclear warhead or a bomb composed of isolated EMP, spread throughout electronic infrastructure, wreaking extensive damage on our electronic systems, vastly crippling America's recovery abilities. For instance, airplanes could literally fall from the sky, food would rot, and our medical and emergency response capabilities would be non-existent. The lives and property lost would be immense.

Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack: A Preventable Homeland Security Catastrophe

Jena Baker McNeill and Richard Weitz, Ph.D.

October 20, 2008

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/bg2199.cfm>

A major threat to America has been largely ignored by those who could prevent it. An EMP attack could wreak havoc on the nation's electronic systems—shutting down power grids, sources, and supply mechanisms. An EMP attack on the United States could irreparably cripple the country. It could simultaneously inflict large-scale damage and critically limit our recovery abilities. Congress and the new Administration must recognize the significance of the EMP threat and take the necessary steps to protect against it.

Iran's 'world without America'

James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.

October 17, 2008

<http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed101708e.cfm>

Which world leader is on record musing about “a world without America”—a goal he calls “attain-

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:
www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm2159.cfm

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able”? Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Until recently, it was possible to believe that whatever Mr. Ahmadinejad’s intentions, Iran was a long way from acquiring the capabilities it needs to achieve its goals. But a blue-ribbon commission has reported to Congress on what appears to be an Iranian drive to obtain the means to carry out an EMP attack.

Congress Should Establish EMP Recognition Day

Jena Baker McNeill and James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.

September 15, 2008

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm2063.cfm>

The threat of an EMP attack against the United States is credible. Such a strike could have a devastating impact on the nation by disabling electrical systems, grinding the economy to a halt, and possibly resulting in the deaths of millions. Yet other than establishing a commission to study the problem and holding a handful of hearings, Congress has done virtually nothing to address the issue. Such inaction could change virtually overnight, however, if Congress held even one EMP Recognition Day.

The Electromagnetic Pulse Commission Warns of an Old Threat with a New Face

Jack Spencer

August 3, 2004

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/bg1784.cfm>

A nuclear-generated electromagnetic pulse “is one of a small number of threats that has the potential to hold our society seriously at risk and might result in defeat of our military forces.” The Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attack announced this startling conclusion in a report to Congress. This alarming report clears the way for Congress to debate more seriously the most effective measures to meet the threat of an EMP attack.

America’s Vulnerability to a Different Nuclear Threat: An Electromagnetic Pulse

Jack Spencer

May 26, 2000

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/MissileDefense/bg1372.cfm>

In the 1980s, Americans feared neutron bombs that could kill everyone but leave buildings, roads, and cars intact. Today, Americans should fear a different kind of nuclear threat that can instantaneously destroy power grids, electronic systems, and communications along an entire coast but spare people.