

[PDF] Living Terrors: What America Needs To Know To Survive The Coming Bioterrorist Catastrophe

John Schwartz, Michael T. Osterholm Ph.d - pdf download free book

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Description:

"We are ... at the brink of a new age: what some experts call catastrophic terrorism," write Michael T. Osterholm (an epidemiologist) and John Schwartz (a *Washington Post* science reporter) at the start of this slim volume. What's more, "the United States is not doing enough to prepare." Smallpox, anthrax, bubonic plague--a smart terrorist could use any of these deadly diseases to wreak havoc on thousands or even millions of Americans. Yet there aren't enough antibiotics and vaccines in

stockpile, public-health facilities can't handle a "surge," and most law enforcement agencies have no idea how to cope with a crisis. "I do not believe it is a question of *whether* a lone terrorist or terrorist group will use infectious disease agents to kill unsuspecting citizens; I'm convinced it's really just a question of when and where," writes Osterholm in the introduction.

Books about disease and bioterrorism have become a subgenre in recent years, following the popular success of Richard Preston's and Ken Alibek's . *Living Terrors* probably provides the best quick-and-dirty guide to the problem for lay readers, with its harrowing descriptions of why certain diseases are so fatal and its clear assessment of America's disturbing vulnerabilities. Each chapter begins with a fictionalized account of how an attack might occur. In one, Osterholm and Schwartz write of a disgruntled scientist who loads anthrax into a crop-duster and flies over a crowded stadium. The authors believe this kind of sensationalism is completely warranted, given the nature of the threat and federal government's lackadaisical response to it. The point, they say, is "to warn you that the threat of biological terrorism is real without frightening you out of your wits. Instead, we hope to frighten you *into* your wits." --*John J. Miller* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly With the help of Washington Post science writer Schwartz, Osterholm (formerly chief state epidemiologist in Minnesota) sounds a frightening alarm in this compact book. "I do not believe it is a question of whether a lone terrorist or terrorist group will use infectious disease agents to kill unsuspecting citizens," he writes. "I'm convinced it's really just a question of when and where." Combining urgent, fact-filled prose with a series of fictional scenarios, the book outlines the scope of the potential threat. Osterholm introduces the various types of people and organizations he thinks might be planning to unleash an epidemic on a major U.S. city; he covers the six diseases that pose the greatest threat (such as anthrax and smallpox); he explains how underprepared we are for such an attack; and he proposes a "seven-point plan for change" (including stockpiling antibiotics and vaccines). Its hard to know whether Osterholm's panic is justified, as he prudently declines to get into the sort of detail that could facilitate a terrorist attack. But although the threats he describes are bone-chilling, his pro-public health, seven-point plan is sensible and compelling. (Sept.)

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