

Opening Remarks

Assistant Director John G. Perren

- On behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate, I want to extend my welcome to you for attending this International Conference on Health and Security. I am honored for the FBI to be supporting this event alongside our partners at the Department of State.
- This is a great opportunity for us all to gather from around the world to discuss not only how the United States is addressing all biological threats, but also how we can work together with our international partners to combat this challenge.
- The key to addressing this challenge is coordination. We must all be working harmoniously to aggressively address the biological threat. Over the next couple of days, you will hear about ways in which the U.S. Government, other governments, non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations handle the threat posed by not only the natural and accidental occurrences, but also the deliberate use of biological agents. No one entity can manage all of these alone, but as a cohesive community, we can combat this threat.
- These times are critical, as the next terrorist attack in one of our countries could utilize a weapon of mass destruction, including a biological agent, to cause panic, injury and even death. It is imperative that we are doing all we can to address this bioterrorism threat.

- In the United States, the FBI is the lead law enforcement agency responsible for investigating all acts of terrorism, including the use of weapons of mass destruction. In addressing this responsibility, we greatly value our partnerships with not only our United States colleagues, but also the international community. As an extension of our efforts at the FBI, the Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate maintains detailees at the International Criminal Police Organization, or INTERPOL, the Republic of Georgia and Singapore to allow for coordination internationally.
- Among our relationships with state and local law enforcement, and the public and private sector, we work closely with the health community. The FBI has taken great strides to address the interface between health and security, and prepare to not only detect and respond to a suspicious biological incident, but ultimately prevent the incident from happening in the first place. These partnerships allow us to proactively address the misuse of biological agents as weapons of mass destruction.
- The goal is prevention. In addressing this goal, the FBI targets many of our efforts toward preventing another attack. In this mode, working together with our U.S. and international partners, we can collectively reach this goal.
- I am pleased to announce that among our efforts at the FBI, we have established a new international initiative to address the misuse of biological agents as WMD. The initiative is called the International Biosecurity and Prevention Forum, or IBPF.

- The IBPF provides a premier international resource for the health and security communities to share biosecurity and bioterrorism prevention and response best practices among a member community. The IBPF involves an information sharing website, which is the focal point of the IBPF and will be demonstrated at this Conference over the next two days. The IBPF also includes supporting Conferences such as this event today to foster discussion and interaction regarding biosecurity and the deliberate use of biological agents as WMD. Lastly, the IBPF supports Training alongside our partners at INTERPOL to educate and propagate the security message as it pertains to the biological threat.
- As we are all here to share experiences with regard to the biological threat, the IBPF is a tool to continue that sharing of information. In this way, we can strengthen international cooperation by creating opportunities for countries from all regions of the world to engage and develop innovative solutions for preventing the misuse of biological agents as weapons of mass destruction. I highly recommend you become involved with the IBPF, and join us in this venture.
- I hope that this Conference will be fruitful for you over the next two days, and we look forward to building future relationships with you. Thank you very much.