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Biodefense Panel responds with concern over Zika virus budget request

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 10, 2016) – The Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense has released the following statement in response to the President’s \$1.8 billion emergency supplemental request for Zika virus response:

“The President has issued a \$1.8 billion emergency supplemental request to fight Zika virus at home and abroad. We are pleased to see this aggressive response to Zika, but believe we cannot continue to govern on an emergency basis every time a new disease arises,” said Senator Joe Lieberman, co-chair of the Panel.

Governor Tom Ridge, also co-chair, stated, “We must address the root causes underlying the frequent emergence of infections like Zika, and we must also build preparedness for them into existing budgets. Governing by the billions on an emergency basis for the now predictable problem of emerging infections is tactically inefficient, financially untenable, and potentially costly in human lives.”

The Panel’s October 2015 [report](#) found that a lack of biodefense innovation in many areas, including biosurveillance and medical countermeasure development, and an inefficiency in the governance of the national biodefense enterprise, make the United States vulnerable to a bioterrorist attack or infectious disease outbreak.

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About the Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense

The [Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense](#) released its report, *A National Blueprint for Biodefense: Leadership and Major Reform Needed to Optimize Efforts*, in October 2015. The report identifies capability gaps and recommends changes to U.S. policy and law to strengthen national biodefense while optimizing resource investments. The panel is co-chaired by former Sen. Joe Lieberman and former Gov. Tom Ridge, who are joined by former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, former Sen. Tom Daschle, former Rep. Jim Greenwood, and the Hon. Kenneth Wainstein. [Hudson Institute](#) is the institutional sponsor of the Panel, along with the [Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies](#).