

Sum Of All Fears Critique

What the movie didn't show you, and should have!

Saw the movie at a sneak preview in Austin the Tuesday before it opened nationwide. Have some thoughts on it here, but if you haven't read the Clancy book and don't want the story line spoiled, you should pass on reading the following critique till after you've seen it. Or, if you read the book and want to see it for yourself without being 'tainted' first going into it, you might not want to read more now either.

You gotta like anything that might help wake up some folks, and this surely will, but it was disappointing in a number of areas where it could have enlightened everyone a whole lot more by having been more believable, probable, and instructive for future 'for-real' threats, IMO.

#1 - The premise that the Israeli's couldn't find their downed nuke-carrying plane, especially over so many years, was hard to embrace as plausible and a weak starting point.

#2 - More importantly, though, that this was the only radioactive materials source, and it was a one-time unique source, thus implying when gone the threat largely is too, ignores focusing on all the other more likely sources floating around today that have been stolen, sold or lost throughout the years.

#3 - The choice of the 'bad guys' being NAZI's might have been politically correct with their being less risk of ethnic or religious groups protesting having been negatively stereotyped, but I'd rather it have been more realistic, believable and topical with the very real groups today who are eager for our demise.

#4 - The special effects to help illustrate the destructive power of a nuke were woefully brief and much less than they were capable of compared to other big budget flicks, IMO. Regardless, even after seeing dozens of nuke videos over the years, it was still both surrealistic and frightening to briefly see that classic mushroom cloud developing over Baltimore!

#5 - The biggest disappointment, though, was the lack of more footage and story line depicting the wide scale of destruction, loss of

life, and especially the fate of those many millions more (totally ignored in this movie) within the fallout created swath of radioactive contaminated areas far downwind. And, how those people there would have suffered, and many died needlessly, for lack of basic nuclear survival education taught every 5th grader in Russia! We should have seen how they struggled enmass absorbing (avoidable) lethal radiation to try and evacuate themselves to the fate of refugee camp status. Or, seen how those fared who had hunkered down in ill conceived shelters without any clue to the lack of protection it afforded.

What a realistic scene of panic and despair that could have been that would later swell the ranks of our fellow Americans vowing '*never to end up like those unprepared people did in the movie*'. But, alas, no such scenes to motivate our citizens to prepare for future nuclear emergencies. Instead, it was all fate, you were either dead and forgotten or off to an instantly appearing makeshift hospital with some typical car wreck type injuries. The orderliness and calm of the local citizens shown, and the immediately functioning ad-hoc medical support was all wishful thinking, all with little concern or mention of radioactive fallout anywhere.

Showing families, both those prepared and not, downwind in the fallout zone, could have demonstrated how individuals really can make a life-saving difference in their families survivability with long proven nuclear survival strategies. And, we should also have seen the cruel fate that awaits those that don't! That single lost opportunity here in this movie will serve to only reinforce for many Americans their myths of nuclear non-survivability and thus their own rationalizations for not even trying. That's the real shame.

#6 - The picnic scene of serenity at the close with US/USSR signatures further outlawing WMD is fine for Hollywood and the NWO crowd, but for alerting the American people, I would have wrapped up with a much different scene. Like a bunch of Arabs busy at work making another nuke in some sandy locale with a Cargo container in the background obviously being prepped for its trip to the USA. But, that's just me!

Anyways, the message I saw showed viewers a very unlikely source of both the bomb making materials and potential enemies (Nazi's!) and watered down the destructiveness of the nuke explosion/fallout itself and the subsequent mayhem and suffering of the unprepared populations who will have survived the initial blast hundreds of miles away. Then sealed it all up with Hollywood happy-ending signatures of

cooperation finally beginning to outlaw forever the evil in men's hearts! Ya, right!

But, hopefully, I'm way off base here and much too critical and millions of Americans will find something in this movie to spur them onto the net or elsewhere in search of knowledge and preparations with which they might begin to protect their families in these dangerous times. We can only hope/pray...

[-Shane Connor](#)

P.S.- Another aspect the movie didn't touch upon, and here I'm probably getting too picky now with asking way too much of it, is the chaos created nationwide if this scenario of a nuke explosion in any single US city ever really did happen. I'm referring to the unbridled panic and pandemonium everywhere, perhaps even coast-to-coast, with everyone trying to cash out at the bank and stock-up on groceries, guns, and gas and evacuating all major cities at once in the very real fear that their city might be next. What a humongous and deadly nation-wide mess that'd be! If you thought the Florida hurricane evacuation a few years ago was bad, you've likely not seen anything, yet!

The movie instead had the weird feel that all that happened or mattered was only there at ground zero, like it was an isolated island in a vacuum and there was no mention or hint of any nationwide citizen reaction at all in it. Like we will all just sit at home and watch it unfold detached on CNN awaiting the inevitable fund-raising drive 800 number to come up. That most certainly would not be the case as much of our urban populations would instantly become desperate refugees on the move themselves, too, as they dumped out of the cities and into the surrounding rural countryside!

I'm reminded, too, that fewer citizens of our country today are as morally restrained and made of the self-reliant stuff our grandparents were, as nowadays even just a temporary blackout in a major city is an excuse for looting and riots. (I'm old enough to remember that the biggest effect of the late sixties blackout of the East Coast was 9 months later when all the maternity wards were crammed full!)

Many more of our citizens today will expect, and be 'disappointed' not to get, instant and automatic government hand-outs as services disappear and store shelves empty in an afternoon. Many more today

will be much quicker to panic and/or revert to lawlessness than in times past. And, there will be little to stop them.

Multiply that by the general lack of knowledge about all things nuclear held by the general public and deadly fallout spreading who knows where (and everywhere) in their minds, and I'm genuinely concerned it'll be a real mess, not an orderly urban exodus, especially so anywhere along the same coast or region as the first city nuked.

Anyways, a great educational and motivational opportunity was missed in this movie for all Americans to learn/do more to prepare their families for the very real dangers at our doorstep right now. Instead, we leave the theatre with a Hollywood tale of suspense and ultimate success, us against them, where in all honesty it's not over and has only just begun. And, unfortunately, we are really not so smart and they are not so dumb, as this movie depicts.

When it comes down to Civil Defense here in the USA today, be assured your top politicians have their provisioned bunkers to head for, but for American families, they are truly on their own, whether they know it or not...

Update, since the movie was released, from an employee here at KI4U, Inc....

Much of what is presented below is from a paper presented November, 2002 by the Director of Homeland Security Programs of the major supplier to the Federal Government of radiological detection instruments. Some of it is gleaned from my over 40 years of work in the nuclear industry, including 7 years as Chairman of a Nuclear Technology Program at a major southern college, 2 years at the DOE PANTEX FACILITY, 5 years at Los Alamos National Laboratory and 2 Years a Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

There are 4 basic problems concerning nuclear terrorism facing the U. S. today. These are [not in order of importance]:

(1) A terrorist act at a domestic nuclear facility such as

- A commercial nuclear reactor
- A DOE nuclear facility

- A commercial nuclear fuel enrichment or fabrication facility
- A university nuclear reactor

(2) Explosion of a "Dirty Bomb" in a public place such as

- A major city
- An amusement park
- A sports stadium
- An airport or sea port

(3) Release of radioactive material into and air or water supply

- An aerosol or other airborne radioactive material released into the air intake of a major building
- Radioactive material released into the water supply of a major city

(4) Explosion of a nuclear weapon

- There are over 200 documented cases of persons attempting to purchase special nuclear material (stuff to make bombs) or tactical nuclear weapons on the black market
- There are over 100 "suitcase bombs" missing from the Soviet nuclear inventory

This last item is probably the most important. The former head of Soviet National Security, Alexander Lebed testified to that fact before congress. He stated that the devices measure approximately 24" x 16" x 8" and can be set off by an individual in less than 30 minutes, producing a 1 kilo ton yield. Such a device, set off in New York Harbor would produce a 15 to 20 foot wave that would destroy New York City. Other sources have confirmed that the number of suitcase bombs missing from the Soviet inventory is correct.

Now, how do we detect such a device coming into the U.S.? Weapons grade plutonium, 94% Pu-239 produces a 414 KeV gamma ray, detectable and identifiable by gamma spectroscopy. It also contains approximately 6% Pu-240 that undergoes spontaneous fission, producing neutrons that can be detected by neutron detectors. It also contains Am-241 that produces 60 KeV gamma rays, again detectable by gamma spectroscopy. The significant quantity of weapons grade Pu is about 8 kilograms. The physical size of 8 Kgm of Pu 239 is about the size of a baseball. (Try to find that in a sea/land container.)

Weapons grade uranium is approximately 93% U-235, producing a 186 KeV gamma ray detectable by gamma spectroscopy and 7% U-238, producing a 1001 KeV gamma ray from it's daughter Pa-234m, also detectable by gamma spectroscopy. The significant quantity is about 25 Kgm, a sphere about 7" in diameter. (Again, try to find that in a sea/land container.)

The radiological signature of any of the gamma emitters could easily be shielded by a few inches of lead or tungsten. Four or five inches of steel would effectively reduce the radiations to background. Think about putting it inside the cylinders of and engine in a car being imported!

So where could this material enter the U.S.? It could come in as Sea Cargo. The U.S. Customs has stated that only 2% of Sea Cargo is inspected. It could come in as Air Cargo. FedEx, UPS and USPS are not inspected! It could come across at border crossings. Only a few of the border inspectors are equipped with alarming dosimeters and even fewer are trained in how to use them. A nuclear device or special nuclear material could come in with luggage from commercial aviation, general aviation, cruise ships or by private car. Or, perhaps, by fishing boat or private yacht. As you can see, there are many ways for an enemy to get a device into the U.S. (There's more to this story of our porous borders that can't/shouldn't be shared publicly, but bottom line is, it's actually much worse and easier penetrated than stated here.) Incidentally, there are not enough instruments currently available for purchase to equip all of the ports of entry and it will take at least 2 more years to manufacture such instruments. They are also expensive, ranging in price from a killobuck or so for an alarming dosimeter to detect special nuclear material to more than \$100,000 for a single installation to survey a sea/land container.

What is being done to protect us?

Thursday morning, June 6 (anniversary of D-day), 2002, President George W. Bush met with his Homeland Security Council and discussed a Department of Homeland Security (DHS). That evening he proposed that Congress establish a Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The mission of the DHS would be to prevent terrorist attacks within the U.S., reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur. There would be four divisions of the Department. They would be Border and Transportation Security, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Countermeasures and

Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection. The DHS would have approximately 169,000 employees and a budget of \$37 billion.

Thus far the DHS has not been funded by Congress. Sleep well tonight!