



## **Operations Research Seminar**

# **Department of Homeland Security Bioterrorism Risk Assessment: A Call for Change**

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The 2006 DHS Bioterror Risk Assessment (BTRA) was conducted by order of the President. The title of our seminar is that of a National Research Council (NRC) report released on 25 September, 2008, analyzing BTRA. Brown served on the NRC committee and Washburn provided a completely independent analysis that appears as an appendix to the NRC report. We recount our findings, using slides we have presented to DHS, the Senate, House, and White House.

From the NRC report abstract:

“The threat posed by biological agents employed in a terrorist attack on the United States is arguably the most important homeland security challenge of our era. Whether natural pathogens are cultured or new variants are bioengineered, the consequence of a terrorist-induced pandemic could be millions of casualties—far more than we would expect from nuclear terrorism, chemical attacks, or conventional attacks on the infrastructure of the United States such as the attacks of September 11, 2001. Even if there were fewer casualties, additional second-order consequences (including psychological, social, and economic effects) would dramatically compound the effects. Bioengineering is no longer the exclusive purview of state sponsors of terrorism; this technology is now available to small terrorist groups and even to deranged individuals.”

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**Date: Thursday, November 6, 2008**

**Time: 15:00-16:00**

**Location: GL-109**