

Dear Editor:

The United States was the target of the world's most devastating terrorist attack in September 2001. It now faces the threat of a strike by terrorists armed with a nuclear device. A 10-kiloton bomb set off in midtown Manhattan on a typical workday not only could kill half a million people and cause \$1 trillion in damage. The social and economic effects of such a calamity could affect every man, woman and child in America -- from Augusta, Maine, to Zillah, Wash., from Anaheim, Calif., to Zuber, Fla.

The United States must take the lead in a worldwide effort to prevent nuclear terrorism. It must create effective global nuclear standards. It must remove weapons-usable material from the world's most vulnerable sites as rapidly as possible.

Not enough is being done to ensure that nuclear weapons and the materials that make them are being locked down fast enough worldwide. They must be kept out of the reach of terrorists. An estimated \$3 billion a year -- a fraction of the Pentagon budget -- must be spent to ensure sufficient progress in keeping these weapons and materials safe. The U.S. government has committed only \$1 billion annually to that effort.

The 9/11 terrorists didn't have access to nuclear materials. The federal government must make sure that future terrorists also will be prevented from getting to them. It must do this before it's too late, before all we will be left with will be post-apocalyptic investigations such as the one conducted by the 9/11 Commission.

Sincerely,

