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### New Study Warns Of "Dirty Bomb" Attacks On Urban Canada

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CityNews.ca Staff

The "dirty bomb" has long sparked fear and anxiety in the minds of international security experts, governments and the generally aware, but a new federal study claims that a small dirty bomb near the [CN Tower](#) or one of several other Canadian landmarks would irradiate more than four square kilometres, triggering the billions.

Dirty bombs, in the simplest terms, are inexpensive conventional explosive devices containing a modest amount of radioactive material -- often [americium](#) or [cesium](#) -- used in terrorist attacks. The purpose of the bombs isn't to accumulate mass casualties, but rather to spark mass panic and economic fallout. It's for this reason they're

Still, there's no history of the actual detonation of dirty bombs to terrorist ends, though [Chechen](#) rebels twice had attempts foiled.

The study's part of an attempt by the federal government to prepare for a terrorist attack in urban Canada that some argue is inevitable. The findings come just as an assault was "overdue."

"We've done research, worked with other countries at looking at a real good dirty bomb," said Insp. John Bureaux, officer in charge of the [RCMP's](#) explosives

takes a lot of work."

And now there's even more cause for concern. At least 76 radioactive devices have gone missing in Canada over the last five years, stolen from cars, construction sites or taken after falling off trucks.

**The study also claims:**

- An explosion of a cesium-137 device on the second floor of Parliament Hill's Centre Block would contaminate 45 per cent of the building and, even with the effects largely contained by the majestic Gothic structure, would be smashed in the blast.
- A similar cesium detonation in Montreal's Lafontaine Tunnel would be much like exploding the device outside, in that 70 per cent of the contamination would be released through ventilation ducts to disperse radiation.
- Mere placement -- not explosion -- of a backpack containing 1,000 curies of radioactive cobalt-60 in packed B.C. Place Stadium during a four-hour sporting event would claim about 85 lives and result in economic damage.

**More on dirty bombs:**

[U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#)

[The White House](#)

[Wikipedia](#)

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