

10:46 , 12.02.07



news חדשות

Print

Dirty Bomb

Growing concern in Israel over 'dirty bomb' attack

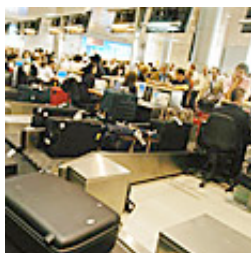
Heightened security measures at Israeli airports, seaports and border crossings

Arieh Egozy

[Israel](#) has tightened security at its airports, seaports and border crossings—increasing both technological surveillance as well as information gathering efforts—in order to thwart attempts at smuggling radioactive materials into the country.

These materials could potentially be used in the production of a “dirty bomb” that could be detonated within Israel.

A “dirty bomb”, which is essentially a low grade nuclear weapon, is far less lethal than an atomic bomb, but can still lead to massive casualties and injuries should it be employed. It basically consists of an ordinary explosive “laced” with radioactive materials. When detonated, these nuclear materials then emit dangerous levels of radiation, which can quickly spread across a rather large area.



Ben Gurion Airport (Archive) Photo: Yaron Brener

[click here to enlarge text](#)



Firefighters dispose of hazardous materials at Ben Gurion Airport

As previously noted, Israel is growing increasingly vigilant of a possible ‘dirty bomb’ attack. Supervision at seaports is at an all time high, and new detectors have been put in place to identify nuclear materials hidden in containers and freight cargo.

Moreover, heightened security has been instituted at sensitive sites, such at the nuclear waste site in southern Israel, in order to prevent theft and smuggling of radioactive materials.

The United States instituted similar heightened security measures at its borders crossings and sea ports several months ago, following repeated security alerts. Radiation detection devices were placed along major access points into Manhattan, including bridges and tunnels.

Security measures were tightened after it was discovered that they were especially prone to attack. Cargo is often left unsupervised at US harbors, and incoming shipments are seldom screened for radioactive materials.

A senior Israeli security official stated that, "There is growing concern regarding 'dirty bombs' among Israeli anti-terrorism units. They work at thwarting such potential attacks on a daily basis."

Dirty bomb frighteningly simple to put together

According to experts, only a rudimentary knowledge of explosives is needed in order to put together this "poor man's nuke".

Attaining radioactive materials is equally - and frighteningly—simple. Hospitals and medical research facilities, various industrial plants, and, of course nuclear plants and facilities all regularly discard radioactive materials that can be used to produce "dirty bombs".

The former Soviet Union, in particular, appears to be a hotbed for those seeking ingredients for a "dirty bomb". Lax regulation of nuclear facilities following the collapse of the Soviet bloc makes it relatively simple for arms dealers and other criminal syndicates to deal in, and sell, radioactive materials coming from these sites.

Invariably, these illicit materials find their way to al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. Only last Wednesday, three suspects were arrested at the Slovak-Hungarian border after trying to sell roughly a pound of enriched Uranium, typically used as fuel in nuclear facilities. Enriched Uranium is a prime ingredient for "dirty bombs" and other nuclear weapons.

[Back](#)