

Dirty bomb could cause Toronto nightmare

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A new federal study says the explosion of a small dirty bomb near the CN Tower would spew radioactivity over four square kilometres, resulting in mass anxiety, a rush on Toronto's medical facilities and an economic toll of up to \$23.5 billion.

The nightmarish scenario -- detonation of a device containing a modest amount of americium-241, a silvery plutonium byproduct -- is among several sobering projections quietly mapped out by federal officials to prepare for a terrorist attack in urban Canada.

The findings come just months after the Canadian Security Intelligence Service said a dirty bomb assault was "overdue."

A senior al-Qaeda leader in Iraq exhorted sympathetic scientists to help the terrorist organization build radioactive and germ-laced weapons.



Fred Chartrand, the Canadian Press

Chris Clarke, president of the Ottawa company Mobile Detect, says dogs can't find dirty bombs -- only detectors.