



American Biodefense: How Dangerous Ideas about Biological Weapons Shape National Security (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs)

Frank L. Smith III

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Biological weapons have threatened U.S. national security since at least World War II. Historically, however, the U.S. military has neglected research, development, acquisition, and doctrine for biodefense. Following September 11 and the anthrax letters of 2001, the United States started spending billions of dollars per year on medical countermeasures and biological detection systems. But most of this funding now comes from the Department of Health and Human Services rather than the Department of Defense. Why has the U.S. military neglected biodefense and allowed civilian organizations to take the lead in defending the country against biological attacks? In *American Biodefense*, Frank L. Smith III addresses this puzzling and largely untold story about science, technology, and national security.

Smith argues that organizational frames and stereotypes have caused both military neglect and the rise of civilian biodefense. In the armed services, influential ideas about kinetic warfare have undermined defense against biological warfare. The influence of these ideas on science and technology challenges the conventional wisdom that national security policy is driven by threats or bureaucratic interests. Given the ideas at work inside the U.S. military, Smith explains how the lessons learned from biodefense can help solve other important problems that range from radiation weapons to cyber attacks.

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