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## **Homeland Security: Ready or Not?**

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### **Issue**

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As part of its responsibility to investigate operations of Sacramento County and jurisdictions within the County, the Grand Jury embarked on an investigation to determine the extent to which the County of Sacramento and its political subdivisions are coordinated and prepared to respond to an incident in which a weapon of mass destruction<sup>1</sup> is used.

The Grand Jury sought to understand at the broadest level possible, whether the basic elements of readiness exist in our community. The Grand Jury sought to draw an overall conclusion from a review of the multi-faceted programs and systems currently under development for prevention, preparation and response to a multi-jurisdictional terrorist attack.

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### **Reason for the Investigation**

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The September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center has heightened the nation's sensitivity to the vulnerability of another attack. Experts agree the likelihood of another attack somewhere in this country is nearly certain. The need for every community to be prepared is without question. The co-chairs of the U.S. Commission on National Security, Sens. Warren Rudman and Gary Hart put best the reason for the investigation: "Are we living on borrowed time and squandering it?"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, a "weapon of mass destruction" refers to the intentional use of a chemical, nuclear, biological, radiological, or explosive device to cause harm to life or property, or to disrupt the economy of the region.

<sup>2</sup> The Wall Street Journal, "Our Hair Is On Fire," p. A 16, Dec. 16, 2004