

US vulnerable to serious cyber-attacks

WASHINGTON, USA: The United States has failed to sufficiently adapt to new cyber-security threats, exposing itself to potential terror strikes as devastating as September 11, authors of the report on the 2001 attacks have warned.



Former 9/11 Commission Co-chairman Tom Kean warns that the US is vulnerable to cyber-attacks and is inadequately prepared to counter them. Image: [Shred of Truth](#)

In July 2004, the independent 9/11 commission issued a comprehensive, 600-page report with numerous recommendations for upgrading the US security mechanisms to avoid potential catastrophes from cyber-attacks.

A decade later the commission's former members have released a blunt follow-up, pointing out gaps in US security that increase the risk of cyber-attacks on infrastructure, including energy, transport and finance systems, and the theft of intellectual property from the private sector.

9/11 Commission Co-chairman Tom Kean told a House homeland security panel that after extensive meetings with national security officials, every single member said the US is not doing enough to protect the country against cyber-security threats.

"And because this stealing of information is so invisible to the American public, they don't realise what a disaster it is," he said.

The new report warned that the fight against terrorism was entering a new and dangerous phase marked by a sense of counter-terrorism fatigue that masked the urgency to address emerging threats.

"We are at September 10th levels in terms of cyber preparedness," it quoted a former senior national security leader as saying.

More cooperation needed

The former commissioners pointed to the difficulties in beefing-up security that brings government to cooperate with the private sector in terms of countering cyber-attacks.

"The government is doing much better protecting itself and its systems than it is helping the private sector protect itself. We think our vulnerability in the latter area is greater," former commission member Jamie Gorelick said.

"We are uncomfortable with having our national security apparatus operating in the private sector," she added.

"But if you think about what the real threats are, an enemy who could shut down our power grid for example, pose real threats to which I don't believe we have answers at the moment," Gorelick added.

For months Congress and the White House have debated cyber-security legislation that would improve information sharing about cyber threats between federal authorities and companies in strategic sectors.

But such coordination remains contentious, amid concerns about the confidentiality of personal data.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge



9/11 Commission member, Jamie Gorelick warns that enemies could shut down US power grids, posing real problems for the country. Image: [Cashill](#)

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