Osg3 2012-08-02 CHEMICAL

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They sit on the outskirts of some of our biggest cities. Chemical plants – thousands of them. And usually, even though they handle some pretty dangerous toxins, they operate without incident.

But suppose they were attacked?

(((SPOT)))

Five years ago, Homeland Security started a program to make those plants terror-proof. And yet the man responsible for overseeing the program Todd Keil, discovered – after ordering a review – that many inspections weren’t happening. So he went to his boss:

(Keil:) The response was: 'Let's keep this internal, we'll see what we can do...' - and my efforts at correcting the program were thwarted." (:32)

Keil finally resigned from Homeland Security. But last week, the Government Accountability Office seemed to back up Todd Keil’s claims – revealing that, as of the end of June, not one of the 4,400 chemical plants in the program had been fully inspected.

CBS’s Armen Keteyian decided to go to Keil’s former boss, Rand Beers, to ask just what the taxpayers got for their money:

“What the American public has gotten for 480 million dollars is a map of the vulnerabilities that this country has with respect to chemical facilities and the process of developing the plans to make those sites safer for the American public. And we've made significant progress in that regard. (Keteyian:) Four-and-a-half years into the program, though - there were no inspections, there were no approved site security plans - there were a large number of inspectors that were said to be unqualified for the jobs they were doing. And there was a quote-unquote 'an environment of fraud, waste and abuse.' (Beers:) We certainly face some management challenges. And I think we have as a result of the good, hard work of the people who are associated with this program - we are moving forward properly according to the basic risk and management standards that are set by independent organizations." (1:01)

But Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa, a ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, doesn’t sound convinced:

"I think it's about time that the Department of Homeland Security comes clean and admits that this program isn't running - because the longer they try to mislead Congress, when the truth comes out, the more egg they're gonna have on their face." (:12)

He wants us to admit publicly the program to protect thousands of dangerous chemical plants from terrorists isn’t running. Am I the only one hoping that the terrorists aren’t near a radio?

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