

The former Inspector General for the Department of Homeland Security says he was pressured to tone down criticism of security failures in the months before the 2004 Presidential election.

Clark Kent Ervin says he was confronted personally by then Secretary Tom Ridge "to intimidate me, to stare me down, to force me to back off, to not look into these areas that would be controversial, not to issue critical reports."

Ervin will appear this evening on ABC News' Nightline in advance of the publication of his memoirs, "Open Target: Where America is Vulnerable to Attack."

Ervin says Ridge and his top aides saw him as "a traitor and a turncoat" because of a series of reports his office delivered to Congress detailing failures by the Department of Homeland Security.

Ervin says he believes another 9/11 hijack attack could be carried out. "I am quite confident that it could be done again," he tells ABC News.

He says Ridge and others in the Bush Administration urged him to tone down his report. "Rather than acknowledging the vulnerability, efforts were made to deride us and to

dismiss our criticism," Ervin says.

Ervin was not re-appointed as Inspector General in January 2005 when his initial term expired.

A spokesman for the Department of Homeland Security, Russ Knocke, said "the notion that he was stifled is fundamentally flawed." There was no immediate comment from former Secretary Ridge.