



TERRORISM OR ALL-HAZARDS? BROADENING HOMELAND SECURITY

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In response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the federal government underwent the largest re-organization since World War II. The executive branch defined a new mission area of “homeland security” and Congress created a new agency, the Department of Homeland Security. Since that time, the federal government alone has spent more than \$200 billion on securing the homeland.

Elected officials, the media, security experts and others have raised issues about the implementation of homeland security to date: Much has been made about small towns (or less populated states) receiving levels of federal funding out of proportion with their level of risk. It also seems as if the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is following in the footsteps of the Department of Defense (DOD) in terms of procurement contracts with “significant overcharges, wasteful spending or mismanagement.”ⁱ Yet, others have pointed to vulnerabilities that remain under-funded such as port security.ⁱⁱ

Hurricane Katrina and the possibility of a bird flu pandemic raise other questions about the nation’s level of preparedness in the event of a catastrophe regardless of cause. There are many interpretations of what went wrong with the response to Hurricane Katrina from local and state incompetence to federal indifference. This brief takes the view that federal government should adopt an all-hazards approach to homeland security. The administration and Congress acknowledged the importance of all-hazards preparedness, yet the mission area of homeland security remains focused – too focused – on terrorism. While the National Response Plan (NRP) is intended to be “a single, comprehensive approach to domestic incident management,”ⁱⁱⁱ the actual implementation of the homeland security mission is by definition concerned only with terrorist incidents. Federal support for first responder equipment and training has followed the emphasis on terrorism over all-hazards. Yet, an all-hazards approach will better prepare first responders and state and local officials for any incident, whether terrorist attack or natural disaster. This approach is not only more cost efficient, it means that first responders will have more experience with equipment and training if employed during response to the non-terrorist incidents which happen in their jurisdiction more frequently.

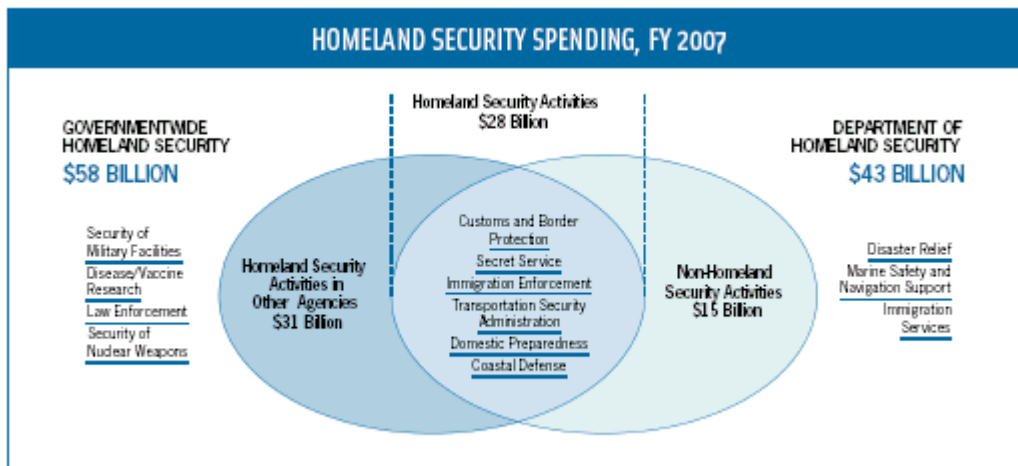
After discussing the mission of homeland security and the Department of Homeland Security, the brief focuses on the issue of preparedness. It concludes with suggestions for broadening homeland security.

WHAT IS HOMELAND SECURITY?

The executive branch defines homeland security as a mission area that “is a concerted national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America’s vulnerability to terrorism, and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur.”^{iv} The mission area of homeland security is not coterminous with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), though the agency’s mission is similar in definition “[to] lead the unified national effort to secure America...prevent and deter terrorist attacks and protect against and respond to threats and hazards to the nation...ensure safe and secure borders, welcome lawful immigrants and visitors, and promote the free-flow of commerce.”^v

DHS was created in 2002 out of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and parts of the following nine federal agencies: Justice, Transportation, Treasury, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Energy, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Defense, and the General Services Administration. The agency is organized into four directorates: Border and Transportation Security, Science and Technology, Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection, and Emergency Preparedness and Response.

The mission area of homeland security includes activities outside of the agency, but also, some of the agency’s activities are not considered part of the mission area. Out of the \$58 billion in proposed budget authority for the homeland security mission area in fiscal year 2007, around \$31 billion would be directed to agencies outside of DHS. Most of the major federal agencies carry out some form of homeland security activity, but the largest share of the non-DHS money – 55% under the proposed budget – goes to the Department of Defense (DOD). The DOD uses most of its homeland security money for protecting military facilities. The other major non-DHS agencies include the Department of Health and Human Services for disease and vaccine research, the Department of Justice for the FBI and other law enforcement activities, and the Department of Energy for protection of nuclear weapons and related activities. DHS activities that are not considered homeland security activities include disaster relief, some Coast Guard activities, and immigration services. The majority of DHS budget, \$28 billion out of \$43 billion proposed in 2007, is devoted to the homeland security mission area.^{vi} (See box below.)



NEGLECTING MORE COMMON DISASTERS AND INCIDENTS

Neither the mission statements of homeland security or of DHS mention natural or accidental disasters. The administration made the exclusion clear in the most recent budget proposal (for fiscal year 2007):

Response to natural disasters, including catastrophic natural events such as Hurricane Katrina, does not fall within the definition of a homeland security activity. However, in preparing for terrorism-related threats, many of the activities within this mission area also support preparedness for catastrophic natural disasters.^{vii}

Legislation, presidential directives, and appropriations related to homeland security have placed a special emphasis on preparedness for terrorism. For example, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 indicated an all-hazards approach to national preparedness, but with a special emphasis on terrorism. It specifically stated that funding to local governments for first responders should emphasize terrorism.^{viii}

Department of Homeland Security funding to state and local government has followed the course. Of the first responder grants and assistance, the only two all-hazards programs, the Assistance to Firefighters Program and the Emergency Management Performance Grants, make up less than one-fourth of funding. The remainder of funding is directed toward terrorism preparedness. Even after the consequences of Hurricane Katrina, the trend continues. Under the administration's proposal for fiscal year 2007, the total federal assistance to state and local government for homeland security would be cut by 17% in nominal terms. Both of the all-hazard programs would be cut, with the Assistance to Firefighters Program cut by more than half.

Yet, state and local government need a different emphasis. Interviewed for a Government Accountability Office report, first responders commented on federal support. Firstly, they did not believe that the DHS training programs, exercise activities, and grant funds which claimed to be all-hazards were actually all-hazards. They found that all-hazards training over-emphasized terrorism preparedness to the detriment of the training. Secondly, they disagreed with the overall emphasis on terrorism. Natural and accidental disasters were much more likely to happen in their jurisdictions and training that supported dealing with non-terrorist disasters was potentially more beneficial, more practical. State officials and first responders interviewed also stated a need for more dual use equipment for several reasons: to prevent the equipment from just rotting away on the shelf; maintain proficiency in its use by actually using it for everyday responses; and to build stronger all-hazards capabilities.^{ix}

There seems little justification for federal support to emphasize terrorism preparedness at the expense of more comprehensive all-hazards preparedness. The DHS has identified 36 first responder capabilities specific to terrorism. Of the 36, a full 30 are all-hazards.^x While intelligence and law enforcement may prevent a terrorist attack, and infrastructure, environmental planning and weather systems may mitigate the impact of natural and accidental disasters, the human and financial costs of the latter can be just as devastating as the former. Moreover, natural disasters like terrorist attacks do not confine their impact to one town, county or state. In many cases, they can be a national event even if the more serious impact is local.

National Planning Scenarios, which are "all hazards planning scenarios for use in national, federal, state and local homeland security preparedness exercises"^{xi} created by the DHS, overwhelmingly focus on terrorism. Of the 15 national planning scenarios, 12 of them are terrorist attacks and only 3 are natural disasters:

1. Nuclear Detonation – 10-Kilton Improvised Nuclear Device
2. Biological Attack – Aerosol Anthrax
3. Biological Disease Outbreak – Pandemic Influenza
4. Biological Attack – Plague
5. Chemical Attack – Blister Agent
6. Chemical Attack – Toxic Industrial Chemicals
7. Chemical Attack – Nerve Agent
8. Chemical Attack – Chlorine Tank Explosion
9. Natural Disaster – Major Earthquake
10. Natural Disaster – Major Hurricane
11. Radiological Attack – Radiological Dispersal Device
12. Explosive Attack – Bombing Using Improvised Explosive Device
13. Biological Attack – Food Contamination
14. Biological Attack – Foreign Animal Disease (Foot and Mouth diseases)
15. Cyber Attack

Some state and local officials as well as experts in emergency preparedness felt that these scenarios did not adequately reflect an assessment of risk and questioned whether these were appropriate planning scenarios in terms of plausibility and number of scenarios that are based on terrorist attacks.^{xii}

The major exercise for disaster training, referred to as “TOPOFF” for Top Officials Exercise, only involves terrorist-related incidents. TOPOFF is a congressionally mandated biennial cycle of seminars, exercises and planning events to prepare for and respond to a terrorist incident. The most recent TOPOFF exercise employed scenarios 4, 5 and 12, involving a biological attack of the pneumonic plague in New Jersey, and mustard gas and a high-level explosive device in Connecticut.

The resources are much more limited for exercises concerning natural disasters. For example, in 2004, the Federal Emergency Management Agency conducted a 5-day, tabletop exercise where a major hurricane hit Louisiana, “Hurricane Pam.” A second Hurricane Pam was planned for summer of 2005 (that would have hopefully achieved better results than the first exercise), but did not take place due to a lack of funding.

After the devastating consequences of Hurricane Katrina, the House of Representatives acknowledged the importance of all-hazards preparedness in its appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security:

The Committee believes that the Office of the Under Secretary for Preparedness must continue to encourage an all-hazards approach to preparedness in grants, assistance, and funding requests and allocations. The House Bipartisan Committee on Hurricane Katrina concluded that, while a majority of State and local preparedness grants are required to have a terrorism purpose, this does not preclude a dual use application...The Committee expects that the fiscal year 2007 grant guidance will further support all-hazards activities. The Committee encourages the Under Secretary for Preparedness to give natural disasters appropriate weight in its risk based funding methodology.^{xiii}

In the appropriations bill for homeland security, the House did not adopt the cuts to all-hazards programs proposed by the administration. Yet, these two programs would constitute only 22% of federal funding to state and local governments for first responder and related money. It is not

enough for Congress to say that the Preparedness Directorate should “continue to encourage” all-hazards. Natural and accidental disasters must be recognized for what they are: all too common costly events that negatively impact our country and its economy. The nation will be more secure and mitigate the costs of disaster if more than rhetoric is applied to the all-hazards approach to preparedness.

MOVING FORWARD FOR BETTER SECURITY

Adopting an all-hazards approach involves redefining the mission of homeland security to include the preparation for and response to not only terrorist attacks, but also natural and accidental disasters. By better integrating all-hazards planning and ensuring comprehensive state and local planning, the federal government will be in a much better position to co-operate or co-ordinate any type of response. First responders will be better trained and equipped to deal with emergencies. The financial and human costs of natural and accidental disasters will be mitigated. Possible steps include:

- Redefine the mission of homeland security to explicitly include the preparation for, mitigation of, and recovery from natural and accidental disasters;
- Broaden all first responders programs to explicitly allow funding for all-hazards preparation without a necessary terrorism focus;
- Include in the mission of the Preparedness Directorate preparation for natural and accidental disasters, and base risk assessments that guide funding decisions on all types of disasters.
- Conduct more planning exercises for natural and accidental disasters so that expenditures for natural and accidental disasters is closer to the resources spent on the TOPOFF exercise, and impose greater accountability for implementing the lessons learned from the exercises.^{xiv}
- More specifically integrate the timing and role of proactive federal support during an emergency in the National Response Plan.

¹ House Committee on Government Reform, 'Waste, abuse, mismanagement in Department of Homeland Security procurement,' July 2006.

² For example, see L. Korb and M. Permberton, "A Unified Security Budget for the United States, 2007," (Foreign Policy in Focus and Center for Defense Information, Washington DC, May 3, 2006).

³ Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, February 8, 2003.

⁴ Executive Office of the President, 'National strategy for homeland security,' July 2002, p. 2.

⁵ Department of Homeland Security, 'Securing our homeland: U.S. Department of Homeland Security strategic plan,' 2002, p. 4.

⁶ Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the U.S. Government, FY2007* and Department of Homeland Security, *Budget-in-Brief, FY2007*.

⁷ Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the U.S. Government, FY2007, Analytical Perspectives*, pp. 28-29.

⁸ Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8, December 17, 2003.

⁹ Government Accountability Office, 'DHS' efforts to enhance first responders' all-hazards capabilities continue to evolve,' July 2005, GAO-05-652.

¹⁰ The six not in common are: chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive detection; terrorism investigation and intervention; information collection and threat recognition; information sharing and collaboration; intelligence fusion and analysis; and, critical infrastructure protection against terrorist attack. Though it may also be said the some of the six have commonalities with criminal investigation and information sharing.

¹¹ Office of the Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security, A Review of the Top Officials 3 Exercise, p. 6.

¹² Government Accountability Office, 'DHS' efforts to enhance first responders' all-hazards capabilities continue to evolve,' July 2005, GAO-05-652.

¹³ House Report 109-476, Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, 2007.

¹⁴ The House appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security directs the department to report to Congress in January 2007 on its method for tracking results of exercises

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Anita Dancs is Research Director for the National Priorities Project. She researches and writes on the impact of federal policies, and is the primary author of NPP publications. Anita has a PhD in economics from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and spent years teaching and researching at universities in Hungary, the UK and the US. She also has over 10 years experience teaching popular economics to activists as a staff economist with the Center for Popular Economics, and is a member of the Security Policy Working Group.

ⁱ House Committee on Government Reform, 'Waste, abuse, mismanagement in Department of Homeland Security procurement,' July 2006.

ⁱⁱ For example, see L. Korb and M. Permberton, "A Unified Security Budget for the United States, 2007," (Foreign Policy in Focus and Center for Defense Information, Washington DC, May 3, 2006).

ⁱⁱⁱ Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, February 8, 2003.

^{iv} Executive Office of the President, 'National strategy for homeland security,' July 2002, p. 2.

^v Department of Homeland Security, 'Securing our homeland: U.S. Department of Homeland Security strategic plan,' 2002, p. 4.

^{vi} Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the U.S. Government, FY2007* and Department of Homeland Security, *Budget-in-Brief, FY2007*.

^{vii} Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the U.S. Government, FY2007, Analytical Perspectives*, pp. 28-29.

² Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8, December 17, 2003.

³ Government Accountability Office, 'DHS' efforts to enhance first responders' all-hazards capabilities continue to evolve,' July 2005, GAO-05-652.

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⁵ Government Accountability Office, 'DHS' efforts to enhance first responders' all-hazards capabilities continue to evolve,' July 2005, GAO-05-652.

^{xiii} House Report 109-476, Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, 2007.

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