

Chapter 1

Homeland Security: The Concept, The Organization

The Department of Homeland Security, as we know it today, is the result of actions taken in the immediate and ongoing aftermath of the events of September 11th, 2001. In fact, just nine days after the attacks, the President announced by executive order that an Office of Homeland Security would be established within the White House and that a Homeland Security Council “to develop and coordinate the implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to secure the United States from terrorist threats or attacks” would also be created. Despite the obvious connection between these events and the Department, the movement to establish such broad-sweeping measures was initiated long before the attacks took place. Domestic and international terrorists have been striking Americans, American facilities, and American interests, both within and outside the nation’s borders, for decades — though only fleeting interest was garnered in the aftermath of these events.

Out of the tragic events of September 11, an enormous opportunity for improving the social and economic sustainability of our communities from all threats but primarily terrorism, was envisioned and identified as homeland security. Public safety officials and emergency managers championed the concept of an all-hazards approach, and despite some unique characteristics, they felt terrorism could be incorporated into that approach as well. However in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the single issue of preventing a future terrorist attack was foremost in the minds of federal officials and legislators.

Much has changed with regards to national security since the September 11 attacks. One of the most tangible examples came on September 24, 2001, when President Bush announced he would be seeking passage of an act entitled “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism,” which would become better known as the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001. This act, which introduced a large number of controversial legislative changes in order to significantly increase the surveillance and investigative powers of law enforcement agencies in the United States (as it states) to “. . . deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and around the world,” was signed into law by the president on October 26 after very little deliberation in Congress.

The nature of homeland security, as it was now becoming more commonly known, quickly developed through the issuance of numerous Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPDs), which were specifically designed to “record and communicate presidential decisions about the homeland security policies of the United States” (HSPD-1, 2001). The most significant of these include:

- HSPD – 1: Organization and Operation of the Homeland Security Council
- HSPD – 2: Combating Terrorism Through Immigration Policies.
- HSPD – 3: Homeland Security Advisory System.
- HSPD – 4: National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction.
- HSPD – 5: Management of Domestic Incidents.
- HSPD – 6: Integration and Use of Screening Information.
- HSPD – 7: Critical Infrastructure Identification, Prioritization, and Protection.
- Presidential Policy Directive / PPD-8: National Preparedness (replaced HSPD – 8).
- HSPD – 9: Defense of United States Agriculture and Food.
- HSPD – 10: Biodefense for the 21st Century.

- HSPD – 11: Comprehensive Terrorist-Related Screening Procedures.
- HSPD – 12: Policy for a Common Identification Standard for Federal Employees and Contractors.
- HSPD – 13: Maritime Security Policy.
- HSPD – 15: U.S. Strategy and Policy in the War on Terror.
- HSPD - 16: Aviation Strategy.
- HSPD - 17: Nuclear Materials Information Program.
- HSPD – 18: Medical Countermeasures against Weapons of Mass Destruction.
- HSPD – 19: Combating Terrorist Use of Explosives in the United States.
- HSPD – 20: National Continuity Policy.
- HSPD – 20 Annex A: Continuity Planning.
- HSPD – 21: Public Health and Medical Preparedness.
- HSPD – 23: National Cyber Security Initiative.
- HSPD – 24: Biometrics for Identification and Screening to Enhance National Security.
- HSPD-25: Arctic Region Policy.

The creation of a Department of Homeland Security affected many government functions, including that of emergency management given the incorporation of FEMA into the new Department. After DHS was established in 2002, most of the FEMA grant programs and non-disaster funding focused on terrorism and programs were diverted or reduced to support counter terrorism efforts. Because of this, many state and local governments who were more concerned about natural disasters had no choice but to focus on terrorism. Similar decisions in the 1980s over nuclear attack planning have been blamed on the botched response to Hurricane Andrew, and it could be said that the same explains the nature of the Hurricane Katrina response.

Following the Katrina debacle, the focus of homeland security shifted back in the direction of all-hazards preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery, and the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act helped to reestablish many of the since moved or dissolved former offices and functions of FEMA. The Obama Administration continues to build on the efforts of the Bush Administration to understand and implement a more balanced, universal approach to homeland security, as reflected in the first ever Quadrennial Homeland Security Review.

Since its inception, DHS has identified three concepts as together defining foundation for the nation's comprehensive homeland security approach. These include:

1. **Security:** Protect the United States and its people, vital interests, and way of life;
2. **Resilience:** Foster individual, community, and system robustness, adaptability, and capacity for rapid recovery; and
3. **Customs and Exchange:** Expedite and enforce lawful trade, travel, and immigration.

The nature of terrorism itself is quickly changing, however, and homeland security must follow suit. Reflecting the increasingly complex issues surrounding homeland security, the recently completed 2014 Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) builds upon the work of the 2010 QHSR in that it strives for a more global and comprehensive approach to its mission. Jeh Johnson, who replaced Janet Napolitano as DHS Secretary in December of 2013, stated his intention to continue leading the department in pursuit of five basic homeland security missions set forth in the first QHSR – adding that these missions would be refined to reflect the evolving

nature of homeland security threats. These missions include:

- Preventing terrorism and enhancing security
- Securing and managing the nation's borders
- Enforcing and administering the nation's immigration laws
- Safeguarding and securing cyberspace
- Strengthening national preparedness and security

Homeland security is viewed as an “enterprise,” described as including the “Federal, State, local, tribal, territorial, nongovernmental, and private-sector entities, as well as individuals, families, and communities who share a common national interest in the safety and security of America and the American population.” DHS is one among many components of this national enterprise which, in addition to countering terrorists, also work to secure borders and manage immigration, protect infrastructure, and manage the relationships between the United States and other nations, among other important tasks. The QHSR elaborates on the definition of homeland security as “the intersection of evolving threats and hazards with traditional governmental and civic responsibilities for civil defense, emergency response, law enforcement, customs, border control, and immigration.” By creating this broader definition of homeland security, DHS is stressing the diversity of organizations and individuals who have responsibility for, and interest in, the safety and security of the U.S.

DHS activity in response to recent emergency and disaster events, which include the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Hurricane Sandy (2012), and the 2013 bombing of the Boston Marathon. Each of these, with regards to the Federal emergency management role, has been judged as successful in most assessments, thereby indicating that while DHS has a lot more to do to become an effective Federal department it does appear to be making strides towards becoming more mature, disciplined and effective.

Essay Questions

1. What does the term “homeland security” mean to you?
2. Do you think that the nature of the creation of the Department of Homeland Security in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks affected the all-hazards mission of FEMA? Why or why not?
3. Homeland security as established in the aftermath of September 11th changed not only our government, but also our way of life. In what negative and positive ways has homeland security affected you personally?
4. How has the concept of homeland security changed over time, from before the September 11th attacks until after Hurricane Katrina?
5. Is the function of homeland security maintained wholly by the Department of Homeland Security, or is this function shared among other governmental and non-governmental agencies? Explain your answer.