

FACT SHEET

-- June 28th, 2005 --

SECURING THE HOMELAND

Pre-9/11 Shortcomings

Border Security

- Terrorist groups exploited gaps and weaknesses in the passport, visa, and entry systems.
- Border security and immigration systems were not integrated. Government personnel did not have access to relevant information when processing passports and visas.
- Passports and other ID documents were vulnerable to tampering and fraud.

Transportation Security

- There was no single list of suspected terrorists shared across all U.S. agencies. The FAA watchlist contained 12 names, while the State Department's contained over 60,000.
- Neither passengers nor their luggage were screened for explosives.

Emergency Preparedness

- Local first responders did not have access to sufficient radio spectrum.
- There was no national standard for private sector emergency preparedness.

How far have we come?

Border Security

- The US-VISIT program uses biometrics to monitor foreign visitors who enter the U.S., but does not yet track their departure. There is no way to know which foreign visitors have overstayed their visas.
- Databases monitoring passenger and cargo travel are not yet integrated.
- Biometric requirements for foreign passports have been delayed.

Transportation Security

- There is still no consolidated terror watchlist that can be updated in real time. Some of the data is incomplete or incorrect.
- The National Strategy for Transportation Security, mandated in Public Law 108-458, was due on April 1, 2005. It has not yet been completed by DHS.
- In-line screening of checked baggage is in the initial stages of nationwide deployment. Questions remain as to who will bear the costs (air carriers, airports, or government).
- Penetration rates for airport security checkpoints are reportedly similar to those recorded before 9/11.

Emergency Preparedness

- Homeland security funding has been allocated largely without risk analysis or threat prioritization.
- New broadcast spectrum has not been allocated to America's first responders.

What remains to be done?

- Federal homeland security grants should be distributed on the basis of risks and vulnerabilities.
- Congress should reclaim, and reallocate for public safety purposes, the broadcast spectrum currently allocated for analog TV broadcasts.
- DHS must establish priorities for transportation security, based on a strategic assessment of threat, vulnerability, and consequences.
- The Terrorist Screening Center must accelerate the process of creating a single consolidated, real-time updateable terror watchlist, accessible to front line security personnel
- Border security systems must be integrated into a nationwide network capable of monitoring entry and exit.