



Homeland Security

Point #1 Threats such as terrorism and disease, which do not respect borders, make homeland security a key component of national security.

Point #2 Created after 9/11, the Department of Homeland Security consolidated more than 20 federal agencies into one single entity.

Point #3 Problems such as fraud, low morale, and organizational structure have hindered the Department of Homeland Security from its inception.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

The National Strategy for Homeland Security defines “homeland security” as the 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.

Homeland security also refers to efforts aimed at guarding U.S. borders and ports; enforcing customs and immigration laws; protecting critical infrastructure; improving emergency response capabilities; protecting the nation from a range of transnational threats and natural hazards; and coordinating homeland security responsibilities of federal, regional, state, local and tribal governments (more than 87,000 often overlapping jurisdictions).

DHS is the third largest federal agency by workforce (about 215,000) and the eighth largest by budget (\$47 billion FY 2008). DHS is comprised of the Office of the Secretary, seven operational component agencies and a number of directorates, offices and centers that support the Department through management, research, policy, coordination and advisory roles.

The Department of Homeland Security: Creation

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, President George W. Bush announced the creation of the Office of Homeland Security (OHS).

Originally, the Bush Administration opposed the creation of a cabinet department focused on homeland security, preferring to use OHS to coordinate government-wide efforts to secure the homeland against terrorism.

However, in the face of pressure from Congress, the President proposed legislation in June 2002 creating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Congress passed the Homeland Security Act on November 25, 2002. Tom Ridge was appointed secretary in January 2003, and the Department began operating on January 24, with most of the component agencies not transferring into the new organization until March 1.

The creation of DHS involved the consolidation of people, responsibilities and resources from all or part of 22 federal agencies, with specializations ranging from law enforcement to disaster mitigation to research. It was the largest government reorganization since the National Security Act of 1947.

Reorganization

In July 2005, Secretary Chertoff instituted a major reorganization of the Department, based on lessons learned over the previous 2.5 years. The restructuring created the Office of Policy and decentralized the non-operational organization from five large directorates to numerous component offices and centers reporting directly to the Secretary.



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Operational Components of DHS

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is charged with preventing dangerous or illegal people and goods from entering the U.S., while facilitating the flow of legitimate trade and travel. CBP collects import duties; enforces trade, drug and immigration laws; protects agriculture from harmful pests and diseases; screens air passengers to the U.S. for terrorist risk; and oversees the Container Security Initiative (CSI), which identifies and inspects foreign cargo units.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest and primary investigative arm of DHS and works closely with CBP in investigating and apprehending the people, money and materials that penetrate U.S. borders in support of terrorist and criminal activities.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) oversees lawful immigration and is thus responsible for immigration, naturalization and asylum adjudication functions and for establishing immigration services policies.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is responsible for leading efforts to prepare the country for and protect it from natural disasters. It is in charge of managing federal response, recovery and mitigation activities following any domestic emergency that overwhelms the resources of local and state authorities. For this to happen, the governor of a give state must declare a state of emergency and request assistance from the President. FEMA also assists state and local governments with expertise in specialized fields and funds for first-responder training and provides funding and low-interest loans to individuals, businesses and governments for rebuilding efforts.



The United States Secret Service (USSS) provides security to the President and other high-level officials and their families, visiting heads of state and foreign embassies and residences. In addition, USSS investigates and prevents counterfeiting, major fraud, identity theft and cyber attacks on the financial, banking, and telecommunications infrastructure.

United States Coast Guard (USCG) is a multi-mission maritime service. It is a branch of the U.S. military, a maritime law enforcement agency (with jurisdiction in international waters, domestic coasts, ports and inland waterways), and a federal regulatory agency. There are 42,000 active duty coast guard personnel, 8,000 reservists and an auxiliary volunteer force of 35,000.



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The Department of Homeland Security: Problems

DHS has been plagued with problems since its creation. Multiple attempts at restructuring have not solved the Department's poor communication across agencies, outflow of quality leaders, difficulty responding to crises, and gaffes such as the widely derided color-coded warning system. Other significant problems include:

Fraud and Waste: In 2003, the Department's Chief Information Officer, Laura Callahan, was found to have obtained her computer science degree from a diploma mill, while DHS was blamed for \$2 billion in waste and fraud, including the purchase of iPods and beer brewing kits.

Low Morale: In 2006, when the U.S. Office of Personnel Management conducted its last survey of all Federal Agencies, DHS staff rated the Department dead last in job satisfaction and in "results-oriented culture." It ranked 33 out of 36 agencies in "talent management."

Insufficient Safeguards: In 2007, the Department's heralded \$42 million anti-terrorism data-mining tool, ADVISE, was scrapped after the GAO found that it could "misidentify or erroneously associate an individual with undesirable activity."

Hurricane Katrina and Politicizing FEMA

Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 raised questions about the capability of the Department of Homeland Security and its component agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to manage large-scale catastrophes. Yet the issues raised by Katrina go deeper than bureaucratic arrangements.

President Clinton. Before Bill Clinton took office in 1993, FEMA was universally regarded as an ineffective agency. President Clinton appointed James Lee Witt – who had emergency management experience in Arkansas – as FEMA director. By trimming bureaucracy, dismissing political hacks, and hiring professionals, Witt turned FEMA into a highly efficient organization, recognized by Democrats and Republicans alike.

President Bush. When George W. Bush became President, he immediately began staffing FEMA with political allies who lacked emergency management experience. Michael Brown – who was FEMA director when Katrina hit – was a GOP party activist who had worked for the previous decade as a commissioner with the International Arabian Horse Association. Immortalized by President Bush's "heckuva job, Brownie," comment, his lack of experience showed.



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DHS, the Homeland Security Council, and the Obama administration

The Homeland Security Council (HSC), within the Executive Office of the President, provides a direct oversight and policy coordination role for homeland security. It is not a part of the Department of Homeland Security. During the Bush administration, the HSC acted as an advisory body to the president, coordinating U.S. Government policies for a wide variety of national security challenges, including counter-terrorism efforts.

In the spring of 2009, President Obama absorbed the Homeland Security Council into the National Security Council. Since threats such as terrorism, natural disasters, and disease do not respect national borders, the administration decided to view homeland security as a critical component of national security, and to organize the federal government's ability to protect American lives and interests in accordance with that principle.

DHS and Obama administration priorities

FEMA. \$1.8 billion devoted to FEMA for preparedness grants.

Airports. \$800 million devoted to new machinery which is being put into airports across the country.

Border Security. \$700 million devoted to increasing both the number of agents on the border and the amount of fencing and security. Increasing drug-related violence in Northern Mexico has made this another top issue regarding border control.

Cyber Security. \$400 million devoted to a National Cyber Security Initiative, which is meant to strengthen U.S. computer networks in order to be able to detect intrusions and protect U.S. military or personal computer systems from attack. The Department of Defense is also in the process of creating the "U.S. Cyber Command," meant to defend military computer systems.

DHS Issues Going Forward

- Determine whether the creation of DHS has helped the federal government, state and local governments, and the private sector better secure the homeland against terrorism.
- From 2001 to 2007, FEMA reported nearly 1,200 natural disasters. During that same time period, it reported only 4 disasters related to terrorism. Evaluate whether the prioritization of resources to fight terrorism has reduced the nation's capabilities to address natural hazards, transnational threats, and other domestic security concerns.



- Determine the continuing usefulness of the color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System.
- Promote research and development of emerging technologies to secure the nation's porous borders, i.e. the Secure Border Initiative Network or "SBINet," which is struggling with contract, technology, and program management challenges.
- Create an effective management structure that rewards individuals who demonstrate initiative and knowledge of homeland security issues, and a unified culture within DHS that eliminates "stove-piping" of mission resources and resulting duplication of effort.



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