

PREFACE

The terrorist attacks of September 11 struck at the very heart of the American homeland. By intentionally targeting civilians in major U.S. cities, the terrorists were sending a signal: Their war against America would no longer be confined to such overseas targets as embassies, or to U.S. servicemen on ships like the U.S.S. *Cole*. Instead, they would take their war to America's heartland, killing as many innocent civilians as they could with any means at their disposal—first to change U.S. policy, and ultimately to destroy American and Western civilization. It was a new form of total war in the age of terrorism, and it put all Americans on notice that the United States is dangerously vulnerable and that new means are urgently needed to strengthen the security of the homeland.

The Heritage Foundation Homeland Security Task Force was formed days after the September 11 attacks to meet this urgent need. Comprised of some of the best homeland security experts in the world, the Task Force was asked to make specific proposals on how best to eliminate the vulnerabilities exposed on September 11.

The Task Force was co-chaired by two veteran policymakers regarding terrorism and homeland security: former Attorney General Edwin Meese III and L. Paul Bremer, Chairman of the National Commission on Terrorism and Ambassador at Large for Counterterrorism under President Ronald Reagan. They and their fellow Task Force members have reviewed a vast number of ideas and proposals already put forth on homeland security and have developed a set of priority recommendations to prevent and respond effectively to limit the repercussions of another terrorist attack on the American homeland. The conclusions and recommendations in each chapter reflect those of these Working Group members, and not necessarily of those who also were consulted on portions of each chapter.

Ever mindful of past studies on this important issue, the Task Force members reviewed and critiqued the findings of the reports of previous commissions on which some of them had worked, such as the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century (the Hart–Rudman Commission) and the Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction (the Gilmore Commission). However, the main purpose of each Working Group was to move beyond these studies to provide new ideas and proposals that would effectively address the problems identified by the September 11 attacks.

The Working Groups determined that there was no need for a general description of the threat or a lengthy justification for the need to make homeland security a higher national priority; this has been a major purpose of several other homeland security studies, and the September attacks merely made that threat and national priority self-evident. Rather, they saw a need to develop priorities for action and how to implement and make operational the recommendations to the executive branch of the Federal government, to Congress, and to State and Local governments.

The Task Force members always remained cognizant that the Administration and Congress have worked intently on improving homeland security since September 11. Every attempt has been made to incorporate any new policies and laws implemented by the Federal government since this Task Force was convened.

With these requirements in mind, the chairmen of The Heritage Foundation Homeland Security Task Force established four Working Groups to address specific areas identified by the September 11 attacks as needing priority action. These are:

- **Infrastructure Protection and Internal Security**, to make recommendations to better coordinate planning and consequence management among Federal, State, and Local agencies; to improve airport and seaport security; to protect vital space assets for the nation's telecommunications system; to enhance the private sector's role in infrastructure protection; and to secure Federal networks and information systems.
- **Civil Defense Against Weapons of Mass Destruction**, to advise the government on how to improve the coordination of Federal agencies in planning and responding to a chemical, biological, radiologic, or nuclear (CBRN) attack on the homeland; to better plan for the early detection of such an attack; to enhance planning by Local and State authorities as the "first responders" to attacks; to facilitate the production of new vaccines and pharmaceuticals against the toxic agents sought by terrorists; to improve international cooperation for planning for and consequence management in the event of an attack; and to develop public education and public relations programs for civil defense.
- **Intelligence and Law Enforcement**, to make proposals to improve threat assessments and planning by the Office of Homeland Security; to enhance intelligence gathering, analysis, and sharing among all levels of government; to strengthen the visa approval process and border security mechanisms; to eliminate theft and fraud in state identity documents systems; and to create new mechanisms to monitor and obstruct money laundering that supports terrorist activities.

- **Military Operations to Counter Terrorism**, to advise the U.S. Department of Defense on how best to boost port security and homeland security with the National Guard and Reserves; to protect critical infrastructure with air defense and missile defense; to enhance rear-area operations to protect against terrorist attack; to provide better intelligence support for military operations; and to ensure clear command and control over overseas anti-terrorism operations.

In devising these recommendations, the Task Force focused on specific steps that could be implemented by the executive branch agencies, by Congress, or by Local and State authorities. The intention was to provide policymakers with ready-made ideas that can be acted on immediately or in short order to solve the most urgent problems facing the nation and homeland security.

Another important task was to identify key recommendations in other homeland security studies that remain unimplemented. The Task Force reviewed these recommendations and reached a consensus on the ones that deserve urgent attention by government. These are listed at the end of each chapter. Also provided in this report is an inventory of the major legislative proposals and initiatives since the September 11 attacks. Past executive orders and presidential directives relating to terrorism and homeland security are also listed in the Appendix to give the reader a fuller appreciation of what other Administrations have already done.

Defending the American Homeland: A Report of The Heritage Foundation Homeland Security Task Force is part of a series of studies and activities in The Heritage Foundation's Homeland Security Project. This project reflects the urgent priority placed on the issue of homeland defense by The Heritage Foundation, which has worked diligently on one facet of this issue—ballistic missile defense—for many years. The Homeland Security Project reflects Heritage's dedication to building an America where freedom, opportunity, prosperity, and civil society can flourish.

On behalf of my colleagues at The Heritage Foundation, I would like to thank the members of the Homeland Security Task Force for participating in this study. They volunteered their valuable time and expertise to a project that was completed in a very short period of time and under a very tight schedule. We greatly appreciate their contributions and their patience.

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