

# Executive Memorandum

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## Top Homeland Security Priorities for the Next Four Years

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With the election decided, Congress and the Bush Administration are beginning to map out their priorities for the next four years. In the area of homeland security, they should continue to focus on building a national homeland security system that will serve the nation for the long term by enhancing America's ability to thwart terrorists, promoting economic growth, and protecting civil liberties and privacy. Several items should be at the top of the homeland security agenda.

**Reauthorizing the PATRIOT Act.** The PATRIOT Act provides law enforcement with the same tools to investigate terrorists as those used to prosecute drug dealers and mobsters. The legislation accomplishes three critical goals. First, it gives investigators familiar tools to use against a new threat. Second, it breaks down a wall that has prevented information-sharing among agencies. Third, it updates U.S. laws to respond to the current Internet environment. Renewing the provisions related to foreign intelligence and law enforcement surveillance authorities that will expire in 2005 must be a priority. (See Paul Rosenzweig, "Make Information-Sharing Authority Permanent," Heritage Foundation *Executive Memorandum* No. 942, September 22, 2004.)

**Increasing Funding for the Coast Guard's Deepwater Program.** The current funding level of Deepwater—the Coast Guard's primary acqui-

sition program—is totally inadequate to support rapidly building up this essential component of the nation's homeland security system. Doubling the annual budget for Deepwater from its current \$750 million to \$1.5 billion would not only establish more quickly the capabilities needed for

a long-term security system, but also garner significant savings by lowering procurement costs. Reducing life-cycle expenses by retiring older and less capable systems would realize additional savings. Funding for the increases should come from cuts in less essential programs. (See

James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., "An Appropriator's Guide to Homeland Security," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1767, June 7, 2004.)

**Refining the DHS.** Two years after its creation, the Department of Homeland Security needs to undergo an assessment with regard to structural, performance, management, resource, and legal authority issues. The President and Congress need to ensure that the department is structured

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and resourced to perform its missions efficiently and effectively. (For example, see James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., and David Heyman, "DHS 2.0: Rethinking the Department of Homeland Security," Heritage Foundation *Special Report* No. 2, December 13, 2004.)

**Restructuring Federal Homeland Security Grants.** As the final report of the 9/11 Commission concluded, current grant programs are in danger of becoming pork-barrel legislation. Federal funding should focus on initiatives that will make all Americans safer. These include providing state and local governments with the capability to integrate their counterterrorism, preparedness, and response efforts into a national system and expanding their capacity to coordinate support, share resources, exchange and exploit information, and respond to catastrophic terrorism. In order to achieve this, the Administration should fully implement Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8. Congress should pass legislation mandating a structure for distributing funds based on strategic needs, performance-based spending, and assessments of readiness. Giveaway grant programs such as COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) and Fire Grants should be terminated. (See James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., "Homeland Security Dollars and Sense #1: Current Spending Formulas Waste Aid to States," Heritage Foundation *Web Memo* No. 508, May 20, 2004.)

**Developing Technology Programs.** Programs such as US-VISIT and Secure Flight should be fully implemented as soon as practical. The government should also develop new technologies such as data mining, link analysis, and other data analysis tools,

and the government should create policies and programs that allow law enforcement resources to better target legitimate threats, while limiting intrusion into the lives of citizens. (For example, see Paul Rosenzweig, James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., and Alane Kochems, "Secure Flight Takes Flight: It's About Time," Heritage Foundation *Web Memo* No. 574, September 27, 2004.)

**Pushing for More Robust Global Economic Growth and Better Global Security.** Achieving both goals requires promoting economic growth in the developing world. The United States should aggressively pursue free trade agreements; ensure that U.S. foreign aid does not perpetuate policies that retard growth and development in poor nations by targeting assistance toward developing countries with good governance; expand technical assistance programs to focus on security programs; and create one-stop shops for security assistance and coordination. (See James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., and Ha Nguyen, "Homeland Security and Emerging Economies," Heritage Foundation *Background* No.1795, September 14, 2004.)

**Conclusion.** This to-do list is both essential and achievable. If Congress and the Administration take the correct next steps in the war on terrorism, four years from now America will be safer, and the nation will remain strong and free.

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