

Homeland Security

Homeland Security

Policy and Politics

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This book is dedicated to our children:

NM: Jacob and Anthony

KC: Serena and Leo

WMO: Paul, James, Mark, & Sarah

May you all have healthy and happy futures.

Table of Contents

Introduction	xiii
Chapter 1 · Should FEMA Be Reorganized?	3
Introduction	3
History of FEMA	3
FEMA Today	14
Plan, Prepare, and Mitigate	15
Disaster Response	15
Should FEMA Be Reorganized?	16
Conclusion	18
Endnotes	18
Chapter 2 · The Costs of Homeland Security: Are We Safer?	23
Introduction	23
DHS Funding	24
DHS Appropriations FY2004–FY2014	25
A Brief History of Homeland Security Funding	29
Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP)	31
State Homeland Security Program (SHSP)	31
Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI)	33
Operation Stonegarden (OPSG)	33
Funding Trends and Controversies	33
Regionalism	37
Costs: Defining Homeland Security	38
The Costs of Homeland Security — Are We Safer?	39
Conclusion	41
Endnotes	41
Chapter 3 · Are Fusion Centers a Proper Role for Local Police?	47
Introduction	47

Fusion Centers	48
Implementation Issues	53
Terrorism vs. Crime	53
Funding	55
Classified Material	56
Civil Liberty Issues	57
Are Fusion Centers a Proper Role for Police?	62
Conclusion	63
Endnotes	63
Chapter 4 · Has DHS Federal Law Enforcement Grown out of Control?	71
Introduction	71
History of Federal Law Enforcement	73
Department of Homeland Security and the Growth of Federal Law Enforcement	76
Growth Issues	78
Has DHS Federal Law Enforcement Grown Too Large?	82
Conclusion	83
Endnotes	84
Chapter 5 · Is Intelligence-Led Policing a Proper Role for Local Police?	89
Introduction	89
History of Police Intelligence	90
Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP)	94
Is Intelligence-Led Policing a Proper Role for Local Police?	99
Conclusion	101
Endnotes	101
Chapter 6 · Is the Threat of Terrorism on the Rise?	107
Introduction	107
The Terrorist Threat: An Overview	108
1978–1995: The Unabomber	109
1993: The First World Trade Center Bombing	110
1995: Oklahoma City Bombing	110
1996: Centennial Olympic Park Bombing	111
2001: 9/11 Attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pa.	111
2001: The Shoe Bomber	113
2003: Plot to Collapse the Brooklyn Bridge	113

2006: Plot to Blow up the Sears Tower in Chicago	113
2009: Synagogue Terror Plot	113
2012: AQAP Bomb Plot	114
Weakening of Al-Qaeda Central?	114
A New Threat Environment	115
International Threats	115
Homegrown Threats	116
“If You See Something, Say Something™”	119
Is the Threat of Terrorism on the Rise?	119
Conclusion	122
Endnotes	123
Chapter 7 · What Should Be the Role of Citizen Volunteers in Disaster Response?	129
Introduction	129
FEMA	131
Youth Disaster Preparedness and Education	131
National Preparedness Community	132
Individuals/Families	132
Businesses	132
The Public	133
USA Freedom Corps/Citizen Corps	133
Citizen Corps	134
Citizen Corp Councils	135
Five Citizen Corp Partner Programs	137
CERT	139
Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)	140
USAOnWatch/Neighborhood Watch	140
Volunteers in Public Service (VIPS)	141
Fire Corps	141
What Should Be the Role of Citizen Volunteers in Disaster Response?	142
Conclusion	144
Endnotes	144
Chapter 8 · What Should Be the US Policy Toward the Detainees at Guantanamo Bay?	147
Introduction	147
History	148
Allegations of Mistreatment	151

Held without Charge	151
Lack of Trial Proceedings	153
Torture	155
Gitmo and the Obama Administration	157
What Should Be the US Policy toward the Detainees at Guantanamo Bay?	161
Conclusion	163
Endnotes	163
Chapter 9 · Should the USA PATRIOT Act Be Eliminated?	167
Introduction	167
Expanded Powers	168
Sunset Provisions	172
Travel	173
Effects on Travel and Relations with Canada	174
Should the Patriot Act Be Eliminated?	176
Conclusion	179
Endnotes	179
Chapter 10 · Cybersecurity: How Protected Is America's Critical Infrastructure?	183
Introduction	183
What Is Cybersecurity?	184
Critical Infrastructure Protection	185
Brief History	185
How Protected Is America's Critical Infrastructure?	188
US Power Grid	188
Nuclear Power Plants	191
Davis-Besse Worm Infection	192
Browns Ferry Shutdown	193
Hatch Automatic Shutdown	193
Stuxnet	193
Other Critical Infrastructures	195
Pipelines	195
Water and Waste Water Systems	196
Financial Services Sector	196
National Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act 2014	196
Conclusion	197
Endnotes	197

Chapter 11 · Immigration Policy and the American-Mexican Border: Humanitarian Crisis or US Invasion?	201
Introduction	201
History of Immigration/Border Protection	202
DREAM Act & Border Incursion 2014	204
Controversies	205
Immigration Policy at the American-Mexican Border: Humanitarian Crisis or US Invasion?	217
Conclusion	219
Endnotes	219
Chapter 12 · How Do We Make US Transportation Networks Safer?	227
Introduction	227
The US Transportation Network	228
Mass Transit and Passenger Rail	228
Maritime Transportation	232
US Ports	232
Commercial Ships Using US Ports	233
Cargo Containers	233
Potential Port Security Threats	234
Maritime Security Initiatives	235
How Do We Make US Transportation Networks Safer?	237
Conclusion	239
Endnotes	239
Index	243

Introduction

On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the US in New York City and Washington, D.C., killing almost 3,000 innocent people. While homeland security was a minor concern prior to that event, the issue immediately leaped to the forefront of the minds of most Americans in the days following the attack. Politicians quickly began debating different policy actions in the following weeks, allocating millions of dollars to build up infrastructure geared toward identifying potential terrorist activity and preventing a future attack. As the new policies were created and implemented, the controversy surrounding the new policies grew. What should the policies be? Should the government be able to read citizen's e-mails and track the books they check out of the library or the websites they visit? Should illegal immigrants be permitted to come into the country and under what circumstances? Should border security be increased at the expense of tourism? How much power should the government have in the name of protecting the homeland?

This book contains more information about these and other controversies related to homeland security. In Chapter 1, the reorganization of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), an agency established to assist citizens after disasters such as the 9/11 attacks, is considered. The agency was reorganized after the terrorist attacks, leading some to argue that the new agency became ineffective and unable to respond as it should. What should the future hold for this group? Another question raised by many politicians concerns the costs of our new homeland security policies. It is clear that the new policies are expensive and the US must pay more for the new programs designed to ensure Americans' safety. But do these increased costs mean we are safer? Are they truly preventing a future attack? This controversial debate is the topic of Chapter 2.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are related to law enforcement's role in homeland security after 9/11. In the days after the attack, many state and local law enforcement agencies created fusion centers as a way to gather and analyze intelligence on homeland security. The question soon became, are fusion cen-

ters a proper role for local police? This question remains unanswered but described in Chapter 3. While local police were developing new policies, federal law enforcement agencies were reorganized and expanded. Many continue to wonder if this expansion has succeeded in protecting Americans and if it is worth the increased budgets. The question of whether a larger federal law enforcement is effective is debated in Chapter 4. Another technique adopted by police in the post-9/11 period is Intelligence-Led Policing. Under this approach, law enforcement collects information about a crime and uses that as a basis for action. However, does this lead police to violate the civil rights of innocent people? This controversy is the basis of Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 poses the question, is the threat of terrorism on the rise? Have the agents within the Department of Homeland Security succeeded in keeping Americans safe from terrorists? What should they do in the future? Chapter 7 concentrates on the role of citizen volunteers in providing aid and assistance to those injured in the event of a disaster, either natural or man-made. To what extent should citizens be involved in responding to emergencies, or should we rely on volunteers at all during such a critical time?

The question posed in Chapter 8 is one that has received a substantial amount of attention since 9/11. What should be the US policy toward holding those individuals detained in the War on Terrorism? At this point, we hold detainees in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Some have alleged that the inmates are held unfairly, without formal charges or being given basic human rights. Should the US continue to maintain this facility? And if not, what do we do with the detainees?

More controversy surrounds the law passed by Congress in the weeks immediately following the terrorist attacks called the USA Patriot Act. This statute gave law enforcement increased power of surveillance over citizens. Should the police be able to do things like track communications and search a person's personal records without their knowledge? This and other provisions are debated in Chapter 9.

One of the most controversial policies in the US at this time is immigration at the American-Mexican border, especially related to thousands of unaccompanied children entering the US. What should the US do with all of these people who seek to come into the country illegally?

Each chapter of this book examines a different controversy by providing the reader with a history of the issue along with evidence supporting all perspectives. While these disputes will undoubtedly continue for many years, debate will help to clarify what our policies should be regarding the security of the homeland.