



# HOMELAND SECURITY PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION INITIATIVE

PREPARED BY



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HOMELAND SECURITY  
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## Protecting the Homeland From Day One: A Transition Plan

### Introduction

Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and U.K. Prime Minister Gordon Brown share at least one sobering experience: each saw a major domestic terrorist attack by al Qaeda and its allies during his first year in office. This recent history is one reason many experts believe there will be an increased risk of a terrorist attack during the first months of the new president's term. Such a test could define this presidency just as 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina defined President Bush's. Given the magnitude of this challenge, the President-elect must take decisive steps immediately after his election to best enable his administration to prevent or respond to a potential attack.

The task is daunting. This will be the first transition since 9/11 and the first for the various branches of the homeland security apparatus created in its wake. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is five years old, but still very much a work in progress. Other homeland security structures, such as the Homeland Security Council within the White House and the military's Northern Command (NORTHCOM), merit a formal review. The public remains uncertain about its precise role in the broader homeland security mission.

There will be a number of critical issues immediately demanding the President-elect's time and attention, such as the economic crisis and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Homeland security must also be among the new team's top priorities as the country approaches the inauguration. The President-elect and his senior advisors should prepare to invest meaningful time during the transition and their first year in office on an identifiable number of significant challenges confronting the homeland seven years after 9/11. In the short-term, the new team will need to make a series of decisions to secure and prepare the homeland for a potential major event. This process should begin on November 5th.

To help the next President, Democrat or Republican, best meet the varied challenges of the homeland security transition, the Center for American Progress Action Fund and Third Way joined forces to create the Homeland Security Presidential Transition Initiative (HSPTI), which culminated in this transition manual. The manual recommends a series of steps that the president should undertake, generally through existing executive authority, to make the country as secure and prepared as possible. It is intended to be a **comprehensive and practical plan** to assess threats and take a series of urgent actions to protect the American homeland in the short-term. The manual concentrates primarily on the transition and first 100 days in office. Major structural changes, such as bureaucratic adjustments involving the Department of Homeland Security, should follow a detailed strategic review and be

addressed later in the first term. We therefore offer the steps the new team can take in the short-term to keep the country safe, including:

- Make selection of the DHS Secretary a Tier 1 choice, announced along with the first wave of appointees (Treasury, Defense, etc.).
- Engage early and often with the Bush administration security team and transition council.
- Conduct a table-top exercise with the new leadership team prior to the inauguration to clarify roles and responsibilities in the event of a terrorist attack.
- Integrate the existing White House Homeland Security Council within the National Security and Domestic Policy Councils, but maintain an Assistant to the President (and Deputy National Security Advisor) to oversee homeland security policy functions.
- Organize a homeland security summit within the first 100 days, bringing together federal, state, local, and private sector leaders to review the state of intergovernmental cooperation and public-private partnership, particularly in light of the unfolding economic crisis.

## **Background on HSPTI**

Over the course of 2008, the HSPTI met extensively with leading homeland and national security experts from both parties, with experience at every level of government. Many served in the Bush and Clinton administration's homeland and national security sectors, at the highest levels of the White House staff, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, the intelligence community, presidential commissions, and elsewhere. Others have served in homeland security roles in Congress, state, tribal, and local governments, the private sector, think tanks and academia. Together, they represent the leading thinkers on the structure, staffing, and operations of homeland security before and since 9/11. The members and leadership of the HSPTI's working groups are listed at the end of this document.

The Initiative's members structured their discussions, analysis and recommendations in four specific policy areas: Homeland Security Structure and Personnel; Federalism (working with state, tribal, and local officials); a "100 Day Script" for the new president; and Engaging the Public.

**The Leadership Working Group**, chaired by former White House Chief of Staff John Podesta, covered the challenge of addressing senior leadership within the White House and DHS and structural challenges such as the relationship between the Homeland Security Council and the National Security Council.

**The Federalism Working Group**, chaired by former Senator Gary Hart of Colorado Discussed actions the incoming president can take regarding major cities such as New

York and Los Angeles; governors and the fusion centers operating in the states; regions of the nation; and private enterprise.

**The “100 Day Script” Working Group**, chaired by Jamie Gorelick, a partner at Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale & Dorr and a member of the 9/11 Commission Aimed to generate a calendar of urgent items that should be taken by the incoming president and his senior aides. The fourth event was a public panel titled,

**“Beyond Duct Tape and Color Codes: How the New President can Engage the Public on Homeland Security,”** was a public panel including Frances Fragos Townsend, former Homeland Security Advisor to President George W. Bush; Jerome Hauer, former Director of the Office of Emergency Management in New York City; and P.J. Crowley, Senior Fellow and Director of Homeland Security at the Center for American Progress.

## Recommendations

This Transition Plan offers a series of recommendations, broken into ten sections that follow this summary. The recommendations are sequenced chronologically in an action calendar that concludes the manual. The actions are designed to occur in general time periods by month—e.g. “early December” and “mid-December”—in order to provide maximal flexibility and impact.

The recommendations cover actions that can be undertaken more or less unilaterally from the Executive Office of the President at the direction of the new President (both pre- and post-inauguration), his Chief of Staff, and other top aides. As we note and recommend, however, significant consultation with Congress and other stakeholders in many cases will still be essential. In cases where a proposed action involves a radical departure from current practice or an otherwise difficult or controversial judgment, the action is framed as requiring a decision memo to the President-elect. Throughout this manual, however, the HSPTI offers concrete recommendations that draw from the collected suggestions of our advisors and staff. In sum, the actions are intended to be practical, achievable, and effective. They are meant to be treated as an integrated whole. Together, they provide the President-elect and his senior team with a strong and effective homeland security plan for the first 100 days of the new administration.

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## I. Top Appointees

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### DHS Secretary

Filling the position of DHS Secretary with a qualified, skilled individual should be the highest priority on the new president's homeland security agenda. The Secretary-designate should be identified as quickly as possible after the election and announced publicly along with the first tranche of appointees—presumably the Secretaries of Treasury, Defense, and State. That will send an important signal that while the economy and the war have received the most attention, the President-elect is also focused on homeland security as a top priority.

***HSPTI Recommendation: The new Secretary should be announced quickly. An optimal candidate should have executive management experience at a high level, a demonstrated ability to communicate to the public (particularly in a crisis), and build confidence and credibility across the federal government, with state and local partners and in the private sector. Three possibilities are: (1) a governor who is well-versed in homeland, border or disaster response issues; (2) a mayor or law enforcement professional from a large, complex city with a record of achievement and experience with emergency response or counterterrorism challenges; or (3) a retired military leader with a reputation for strong management and crisis response.***

### Assistant to the President/Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism

In the section below titled "The Executive Office of the President," HSPTI recommends that the new president integrate the Homeland Security Council (HSC) within the National Security Council (NSC). The homeland security policy staff would also support the President's Domestic Policy Council, since their work would have international, transnational and domestic policy implications. If the President-elect decides on this course, he should create a new position of Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism. This individual would be a Deputy National Security Advisor and would manage interagency policy deliberations on behalf of the president in conjunction with the National Security Advisor.

Because this position would serve as the leading White House coordinator of homeland security activities, a terrorist attack or other crisis could make it very high profile. Thus, in addition to strong administrative, management, collaborative and substantive experience, this appointee will need demonstrated communications ability to be able to build local, national and international support for the administration's policies.

***HSPTI Recommendation: An optimal candidate for Assistant to the President/Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism will be effective at***

***coordinating multiple and overlapping lines of authority during times of crisis; a strong professional familiarity with homeland security issues; strong interagency and intergovernmental experience; strong public communications skills; and demonstrated skill at addressing the political sensitivities of critical homeland security issues, including regional, state, and local players.***

## **Deputy Secretary of DHS**

As the second-in-command at DHS, the Deputy Secretary will be the most important operational leader of the homeland security mission (though he or she will be less important than the Secretary as a public figure for the agency). There is broad consensus that at many administrative levels, DHS still suffers from a variety of organizational challenges, including a policy and planning capability that is weak and insufficiently integrated, poor acquisition and contract management, lack of an effective long-term analytical and budgeting process, an uncertain government workforce and too many contract employees, insufficient national standards and critical unfunded mandates, a complex organizational structure guided by unclear priorities, and a dysfunctional interagency process. The general DHS management function and the day-to-day relationship with other agencies will fall to the Deputy Secretary. Finally, many of the challenges at the Department that the Deputy Secretary will handle are related to new, large systems being acquired, adapted, integrated, or developed from scratch.

***HSPTI Recommendation: An optimal candidate for Deputy Secretary of DHS will have demonstrated professional competence in homeland security; a positive working relationship (or strong likelihood of developing one rapidly) with the Secretary; strong, demonstrated management skills (e.g. the oversight of complex federal government agencies or a strong background in management consulting); and experience with large procurements and acquisitions.***

## **DHS Undersecretary for Policy**

The new administration also offers an opportunity to set a different course for internal policies at DHS (e.g. attempts to improve management, efficiency, and coordination within the Department), as well as help chart a new direction in the broader mission and mandate of the agency. To enable DHS to function more effectively within the interagency process, this position should be elevated from its current Assistant Secretary level, putting it on par with parallel positions in the Departments of Defense and State. The choice of a strong candidate for Undersecretary for Policy will help strengthen the office's role, implement the competent use of rigorous analysis to help drive policy, and ensure that improved security includes appropriate protections for civil liberties and privacy. We also recommend that the administration work with Congress to elevate this position from the Assistant Secretary to the Undersecretary level.

**HSPTI Recommendation: An optimal candidate will have a demonstrated capability to think and act strategically and understand how discreet programs fit together into an effective homeland security system. This advisor should be a strong conceptualizer, perhaps from a think-tank or academia, but well versed in homeland security challenges, whether local, federal or international.**

## Action Schedule

NOVEMBER	Mid	— Select DHS Secretary. — Select a Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (if integration of homeland security into the NSC is undertaken).
	Late	— Select Deputy Secretary of DHS.
DECEMBER	Early	— Fast-track vetting and security clearances for DHS Secretary, Assistant to the President/Deputy NSC Director for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, and Deputy Secretary of DHS.
		— Work with Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee to fast-track confirmation of DHS Secretary and Deputy Secretary.
		— Consult with Congressional committees to approve creation of DHS Undersecretary for Policy.
	Mid	— Announce nominations of DHS Secretary and Deputy Secretary. Announce Assistant to the President/Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism.
Late	— Select DHS Undersecretary for Policy.	



## II. Threat Assessment

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Immediately upon taking office, the President-elect must work closely with the intelligence and defense communities to reassess the threat to the American homeland. This will both inform early actions made by the new administration to protect and prepare the country from a range of hazards, but will also serve as a basis for a strategic reevaluation of the long-term risk to the country, whether conventional, natural, biological, radiological, or nuclear. Given recent history, there are reasons to be concerned that a major event could occur during the transition or early in the next president’s tenure. Each kind of attack will demand tailored governmental preparation, both in terms of response and in terms of the interaction with government agencies, private industry, and the public. The President-elect and his senior team should therefore seek the maximum amount of information from the outgoing administration.

***HSPTI Recommendation: During the transition, the President-elect, Chief of Staff, National Security Advisor, and Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism should meet with key principals in the Bush administration to review existing intelligence regarding the threat. If not already in preparation, the President-elect should request that the administration prepare new National Intelligence Estimates regarding Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the broad terrorism threat to the homeland.***

### Action Schedule

NOVEMBER	Mid	— Begin detailed meetings and briefings with top-level Bush administration appointees.
		— Request senior transition team members receive daily intelligence reports.
		— Request new National Intelligence Estimates on Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the threat to the American homeland.
Late		

### III. The Executive Office of the President

#### The Homeland Security Council

The Homeland Security Council (HSC) was created by President Bush after 9/11 to provide a staff structure inside the White House for managing the homeland security mission. It was devised in part to avoid the creation of DHS, which President Bush originally opposed. Currently, the HSC consists of about three dozen members, and it often has overlapping duties with the National Security Council (NSC). Moreover, the HSC is broadly seen as a weak sibling to the NSC. Many HSPTI advisors propose that the HSC be dissolved into the NSC. They argue that, conceptually, homeland security should not be viewed as distinct from national security. In today’s globalized world and confronting a range of transnational and international concerns, it is difficult to envision where homeland security ends and national security begins.

Others counter that the HSC does perform different functions from the NSC—e.g. the HSC oversees many state, tribal, and local policy and coordination activities which could create a murky and overloaded portfolio for the NSC. Thus, if the HSC were to be eliminated, the new president would need to instruct other Executive Office of the President (EOP) entities, such as the Domestic Policy Council or the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, to take on the domestic elements of homeland security.

Some were also concerned that eliminating the HSC could unintentionally signal a less vigilant stance on homeland security. However, as discussed extensively below, if the HSC’s current mission and staff were roughly incorporated within the current NSC, homeland security would have the largest directorate of any in the NSC—which should signify to Americans and any critics the continuing (and increased) importance of the homeland security mission.

***HSPTI Recommendation: In order to consolidate and strengthen homeland security by integrating the mission into the broader national security strategy, the president should dissolve the HSC and strengthen the role of homeland security within the National Security Council and the Domestic Policy Council.***

#### Action Schedule

NOVEMBER	Mid	Begin discussions with current HSC.
	Late	

DECEMBER	Early	Prepare decision memo for the President-elect on pros and cons of retaining HSC.
	Mid	
	Late	Decision on retaining HSC due from President-elect.
JANUARY	Early	
	Mid	
	Late	If President-elect so decides, dissolve HSC and direct NSC to reorganize to adopt homeland security mission.

## National Security Council Reorganization

To counter any perception that eliminating the HSC would de-emphasize the role of homeland security in the new administration, the President-elect and his team must make clear, particularly to governors, mayors and other key officials, that homeland security/emergency preparedness has retained a primary White House advocate. This can be accomplished through the creation of the Assistant to the President/Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, as discussed above. The new president and his advisors must demonstrate from the outset that this revised structure can focus effectively on critical homeland security challenges, including those with international dimensions. They should highlight the fact that within a revised NSC, homeland security would potentially be its largest individual directorate. Its focus would remain on (1) Domestic counterterrorism and information-sharing; (2) Border and transportation security; (3) Critical infrastructure protection and resiliency; (4) National preparedness, disaster mitigation, and emergency response; (5) Citizenship and immigration; and (6) Cybersecurity. These areas should be the basis for the establishment of standing interagency working groups (IWGs) to coordinate homeland security policy.

Cyberterrorism is of special importance, because government and private networks within the United States are under constant, active attack. National standards are inadequate, and responsibility among federal agencies is unclear. An improved interagency process led by the White House is appropriate and necessary.

Finally, the homeland security directorate within the NSC should also report to the Domestic Policy Council, to ensure that homeland security is coordinated with the president’s domestic policy agenda.

### Action Schedule

JANUARY	Early	
	Mid	— Appoint an Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism.
	Late	— Reorganize the NSC to include a homeland security directorate. — Establish new homeland security Internal Working Groups. — Launch interagency task force on urgent cybersecurity measures with 60-day deadline for results and recommendations.

## Principals Committee Meeting

Despite an urgent recommendation from Richard Clarke in early 2001, a Principals Committee (PC) meeting to discuss al Qaeda was not convened until a week before the 9/11 attacks. Obviously, understanding the nature of the immediate threat and long-term challenge posed by extremist networks like al Qaeda must be an urgent priority. The new President should convene a PC meeting rapidly after assuming office to assess any increased risk associated with the transition and evaluate actions that should be taken to improve the country's ability to prevent another attack or respond effectively should one occur.

### Action Schedule

JANUARY	Early	
	Mid	
	Late	Hold first Principals Meeting on terrorism.

## Preparedness and Coordination

If a major terrorist incident occurs in the United States, the president will be best served if his senior advisors have already come together as a team and fully understand their respective roles and responsibilities. They should thoroughly prepare for the challenging minute-to-minute decisions that will have to be made in the event of even a minor terrorist incident, much less a catastrophic event or series of coordinated attacks. Before taking office and working with the outgoing Bush administration team, the nominees for Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Homeland Security, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Attorney General, National Security Advisor, Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, Director of National Intelligence, FEMA Director and other key staff should participate in a table-top exercise that will help familiarize the incoming administration with the existing and potentially overlapping responsibilities associated with a major catastrophe.

While readily distinguishable from the sort of challenges that would face the new administration in a terrorist attack, it is worth noting that before Hurricane Katrina, officials had completed tabletop exercises about a hurricane striking New Orleans. Unfortunately, the recommendations generated by those exercises were ignored during the actual disaster response. The tabletop exercise recommended here will have the most impact if it is treated seriously by the principals involved as a real rehearsal of actions that would actually be undertaken, rather than as recommendations that will be easy to disregard in the event of an actual incident.

**HSPTI recommendation: The senior team should perform a tabletop exercise in early January. Before the exercise, the team should receive an in-depth intelligence briefing on threats to the U.S., with a focus on near-term threats.**

## Action Schedule

DECEMBER	Early	
	Mid	Incoming transition team requests that the Bush administration assist with an early January tabletop exercise for senior team on dealing with a terrorist attack or other large-scale disaster.
	Late	
JANUARY	Early	Senior leadership team, including the designates for Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Homeland Security, Attorney General, FEMA, National Security Advisor, Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, Director of National Intelligence, and related officials participate in tabletop exercise.
	Mid	
	Late	

## IV. Operational Agency Leadership

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During the transition, the leadership of key homeland security operating agencies will evolve from current Senate-confirmed political appointees to career civil servants who will be acting agency heads and provide essential expertise and continuity. The more rapidly new leadership is in place, the better the new administration can meet immediate security requirements and begin to chart a revised course for the long term. The team should pay particular heed to new leadership for the following agencies: the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (three positions: the Administrator and Deputy Administrators for National Preparedness and the U.S. Fire Administration), U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS), the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD), and the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (IA). The Coast Guard Commandant's term continues until 2010. The President-elect should consider extending the term of the Director of the United States Secret Service.

***HSPTI recommendation: As quickly as possible after identifying the nominee to be Secretary of Homeland Security, the President-elect, the Secretary-designate, and his homeland security transition team should rapidly identify a full slate of candidates to lead DHS' operating agencies. If possible, the new homeland security team should be publicly announced prior to the Inauguration.***

### Action Schedule

Early	
Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Select candidates to lead the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (three positions: the Administrator and Deputy Administrators for National Preparedness and the U.S. Fire Administration), U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS), the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD), and the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (IA).</li> <li>— Vet prospective nominees with key Congressional committees.</li> </ul>
Late	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Announce major agency nominees on a single day.</li> </ul>

## V. Public Outreach and Preparedness

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The new administration offers an opportunity to better engage the public on the homeland security mission. Some of the Bush administration's greatest missteps—such as recommending the purchase of duct tape and raising and lowering the threat level in a confusing color-coded scheme—have occurred in this area. As a result, the public is both fatigued by what appears to be a constant crying of wolf and seriously under-prepared to respond in the event of a major incident.

With the US economy already staggered by the financial crisis and recession, a terrorist attack could have a devastating impact on the US and global economies. The most important element in avoiding wide-scale economic panic in the event of an attack is a carefully considered plan to reassure markets and tamp down fear.

In the past, many agencies' crisis communications have been confused because of a lack of public clarity about the threat environment and why certain actions are necessary. To avoid these problems, the new team must quickly put in place an effective and disciplined process where all of the relevant federal agencies—for example, the Departments of Homeland Security and FEMA, Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control, Defense and NORTHCOM, Justice and the FBI, or Department of Energy or others, depending on the nature of the event—contribute to an effective interagency process centered on the White House so that the federal government speaks with one voice. All public information should be coordinated, timely, clear, and useful. Agencies must evaluate and reform their crisis communications and information-sharing capabilities, including with state and local authorities and the private sector.

The new president should fundamentally change the way that federal agencies deal with the public on homeland security—to be clearer, to encourage citizens to be better prepared and to take prudent steps to mitigate the impact of any disaster and enable the country to recover effectively and rapidly. He can use the bully pulpit to change public opinion on homeland security by offering a new direction and he can begin to change the direction of the agencies and actors in the homeland security mission by publicly signaling major policy changes. A variety of events in the first few months of his term offer excellent opportunities to communicate this redirected mission.

***HSPTI recommendation: The new president should work the new homeland security policy goals and overarching mission into his remarks at early high-profile national events, and he should make a habit of weaving homeland security themes into regular remarks. Also, during the first 100 days of the new administration, he should make at least one major speech on homeland security.***



## Action Schedule

JANUARY	Early	
	Mid	
	Late	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— National Governors Association White House meeting: Discuss homeland security and the new federalism.</li> <li>— Convene an Interagency Working Group to review crisis communications planning across the federal government.</li> </ul>
FEBRUARY	Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— In the State of the Union Address, articulate the homeland security mission clearly.</li> </ul>
	Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Ensure that the new President’s initial meetings with foreign leaders include discussion of cooperation on counter-terrorism issues.</li> <li>— Instruct DHS to review information-sharing procedures between the federal government and state and local fusion centers.</li> </ul>
	Late	
MARCH	Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— The President gives a major policy address in his first 100 days in office on national preparedness, encouraging the public to devote more attention to community and individual preparedness.</li> </ul>
	Mid	
	Late	

## VI. DHS Reform

This transition will be the first ever for the Department of Homeland Security, which, while it has been effective in many ways, also remains unwieldy, redundant, unresponsive, and inefficient. Questions will naturally arise about making changes in the department and, if changes are to be made, how and when. Congress will be an essential partner in most of the broadest aspects of DHS reform. The HSPTI’s recommendations below focus on more narrow and precise ways in which the new president can begin to make changes while undertaking a more thorough strategic review.

### Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR)

An early priority for the new administration should be taking charge of the interagency process regarding the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR). While centered at DHS, the White House should be an active participant and advocate as the federal government reassesses the nature of risk to the United States, evaluates existing programs and new initiatives, and reviews the adequacy of the existing bureaucratic structure and resources.

The first-ever QHSR is due to the Congress by the end of 2009. The president must ensure that the QHSR process is compatible with a related Quadrennial Defense Review prepared by the Pentagon. Given the potentially lengthy time required to place a full leadership team in place, the administration should give some consideration to requesting an extension for both the QHSR and QDR until June 2010.

***HSPTI recommendation: The new administration should aggressively support the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review and its full evaluation of the homeland security mission, strategy, programs and resources.***

### Action Schedule

MARCH	Early	
	Mid	
	Late	Call meeting to involve and commit key top administration homeland security leaders in supporting the QHSR process.

## Staffing

A key challenge for the next president will be staffing DHS with a higher percentage of professionals and relying less on political appointees and detailees. As has been widely reported, DHS faces critical shortages at the Senior Executive Service (SES)-level personnel, both career and political. This problem will be exacerbated as current appointees depart with the end of the Bush administration. Unlike the Department of Defense, there is not a large “bench” of skilled civilians with extensive federal homeland security experience. The new administration will need to aggressively recruit the next generation of homeland security leaders. The new president should seek to staff DHS on the basis of skill, professionalism, and practical necessity. During its early months, the new administration may need to rely heavily on career civilians and skilled bipartisan political appointees who can provide needed continuity until replacements are identified.

***HSPTI recommendation: The President-elect should create a special transition task force of 3-5 homeland security experts to assist the White House Office of Presidential Personnel with staffing decisions at DHS. He should instruct the task force to make recommendations for temporary and permanent appointments based on demonstrated competence rather than ideological affiliation.***

## Action Schedule

DECEMBER	Early	— Create a transition DHS staffing task force.
	Mid	
	Late	

## FEMA Placement

Since Hurricane Katrina, homeland security experts have debated whether FEMA is rightly placed within the Department of Homeland Security or whether it should be restored as an independent cabinet-level agency, as it was until 2003. The question is a difficult one and has broader ramifications, such as whether DHS should be an “all-hazards” agency concerned with terrorism and natural disasters, or more discreetly concerned with border and transportation security. While many experts believe that FEMA should be removed for clarity of mission, others offer persuasive arguments that removing FEMA would be a mistake. They argue that it would unnecessarily militarize the homeland security mission; it would unduly complicate lines of authority in responding to emergencies, where the nature of the event may not be immediately evident; and it would reduce the complimentary training and preparedness functions of terrorism and natural disaster responses.

There are many in Congress on both sides of this issue, and it is certain to generate as much political heat as light. Fortunately, this is not a question that must be resolved immediately.

***HSPTI recommendation: A decision to remove FEMA should be deferred until the completion of the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review in late 2009. Maintaining the status quo in the first year avoids unnecessary instability and confusion at a time of elevated risk. It also provides time for the new administration to consult with congressional leadership and build support for any major changes that may be contemplated within the QHSR process.***

### Action Schedule

DECEMBER	Early	
	Mid	Prepare decision memo to President-elect on whether to move FEMA out of DHS immediately, whether to defer the decision, or whether to retain FEMA.
	Late	
JANUARY	Early	If so decided, defer movement on FEMA until completion of QHSR.
	Mid	
	Late	

## VII. Intergovernmental Relations

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Homeland security is a mission that naturally requires as much bottom-up as top-down direction and control. As an example, both the policeman on the beat and the inspector at the border are on the front lines of this challenge. The role of states and cities as innovators and practitioners in the homeland security mission should be recognized and embraced. The new president should establish a “new federalism” in our homeland security policy.

### Governors and Mayors

Throughout the Bush administration, relations between the federal government and its state and local partners have been uneven. Too many initiatives have been driven from the top-down, with poor consultation with local stakeholders. Too many federal mandates come with little or no funding. While the situation has improved, the “linkage” between the federal government and state and local fusion centers has been spotty. The amount and value of information flowing up and down the chain has been poor. Meanwhile, the big cities are making some of the greatest advances in homeland security through the leadership of their mayors, police chiefs and homeland security advisors. Cities are innovating in technology, organization, surveillance, and coordination.

The new president should work more closely with the nation’s governors, mayors and their homeland security teams to ensure that states are valued as full partners, given their due as a primary line of response, and are reasonably supported. This is particularly important given the impact of the current economic crisis on local budgets.

***HSPTI recommendation: The new President or the DHS Secretary should host a homeland security summit for federal, state, local, and private sector leaders within the first 100 days of the new administration, where participants will confer on the practical implications of leadership, innovation, and coordination in the new administration.***

### Tribal Leaders

The new President needs to ensure that tribal leaders are included in the redirected homeland security mission. Tribes were originally left out of the Homeland Security Act, which caused significant problems. For instance, the Tohono Ono Reservation in Arizona has one of the longest borders with Mexico, yet funding efforts for homeland security were slowed because tribes were not integrated into earlier efforts. The bill to implement the 9/11 Commission recommendations, as well as other homeland security legislation, rightly attempted to remedy these problems by including tribes.

## Action Schedule

DECEMBER	Early	
	Mid	
	Late	— Hold a transition meeting between the President-elect and selected governors and mayors of the 10 cities with the greatest risks. Include the impact of the current economic situation on homeland-related budgets on the agenda.
JANUARY	Early	
	Mid	
	Late	— Schedule a special session for DHS Secretary with state Homeland Security Advisors, working in part through National Governors Association Homeland Security Advisors Committee.
FEBRUARY	Early	
	Mid	— Ask that states and cities send DHS monthly updates on steps they have taken, and for those updates to be publicized.
	Late	
MARCH	Early	
	Mid	— Consider including additional funding for states and cities in war supplemental and economic stimulus legislation. — Visit fusion center as part of early domestic travel.
	Late	— The president or DHS Secretary hosts a homeland security summit for federal, state, tribal, local, and private sector leaders.

## VIII. Presidential Directives

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Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPDs) offer a direct way for the president to unilaterally and effectively change policy, create new policy, and shift the general direction of the homeland security mission. The president should task the Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, working closely with DHS and other relevant agencies, to conduct a special review of all existing HSPDs. This reassessment should take into account that some HSPDs contain specific authorities that are not currently fixed in statute. Revised HSPDs should be promulgated as quickly as possible. At a minimum, revised HSPDs should include guidance regarding:

1. **The Homeland Security Council:** Effect decision on the HSC's status.
2. **The definition and mission of homeland security:** Direct DHS to pursue new policy goals and an overarching mission through an HSPD.
3. **National preparedness:** Direct federal agencies and sub-agencies to achieve new higher standards of preparedness.
4. **The counterterrorism mission:** Instruct relevant federal agencies and sub-agencies to move away from the "war on terror" strategy toward effective counterterrorism methods.
5. **IEDs:** Task DHS with developing the expertise and resources to specially address the threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) being used as conventional weapons in domestic attacks.
6. **Cybersecurity (including addressing classified NSPD 54/HSPD 23):** Order the comprehensive assessment of the government's cybersecurity measures, including NSPD 54/HSPD 23, which ordered a wide-ranging update of policies throughout the federal government to address cybersecurity threats.
7. **The National Response Framework:** Order the comprehensive assessment of the existing National Response Framework, the guide for the nation's "all-hazards" response system.
8. **Defenses against WMD:** Instruct relevant agencies to assess and update their defenses against weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.
9. **Infrastructure protection:** Order the federal government to work with all relevant agencies and other entities at the state and local government level to assess infrastructure protection and take action to achieve optimal protection.
10. **Immigration:** Instruct relevant agencies to reassess the connection of immigration to our nation's counterterrorism mission and make adjustments where appropriate.

**HSPTI Recommendation: The new President should revise existing HSPDs and issue new ones to cover at least the ten areas above.**

### Action Schedule

JANUARY	Early	
	Mid	
	Late	Order review of HSPDs by DHS Secretary.
FEBRUARY	Early	
	Mid	
	Late	DHS Secretary completes review and issues recommendations.
MARCH	Early	
	Mid	President issues new or revised HSPDs.
	Late	



## IX. Private Sector

One of the most powerful means available for impacting homeland security is working directly with the private sector on short-term actions. Over recent years, the private sector has made significant progress as a partner with federal, state, and local governments in homeland security. As a recent Heritage Foundation/CSIS study has proposed, the new administration should expand on this effort and focus on ensuring the continuity of business operations and safeguarding employees and customers during a terrorist incident. The new President can encourage the private sector to perform due diligence on how to achieve resiliency. It is also vital that the federal government work with private industry to take steps to ensure the safety and resiliency of cybernetworks, which are among our most vulnerable critical infrastructure.

***HSPTI recommendation: The new President should meet with CEOs from key infrastructure sectors to launch a “resiliency initiative” connected to infrastructure stimulation. The initiative should drive forward public-private cooperation and develop future policy directions and milestones. The initiative should establish clear processes and performance measures on achieving resiliency and provide legal protections to encourage information sharing and initiative both inside and across sectors. At this meeting, participants can also address the issue of how the economic crisis has impacted industry’s ability to make security and resiliency improvements. The new President should also issue instructions to the Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC), Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs), and Sector Coordinating Councils (SCCs) to assess network vulnerabilities and interdependencies and accelerate improvements in cybersecurity.***

### Action Schedule

FEBRUARY	Early	Develop a presidential resiliency initiative for private industry.
	Mid	
	Late	
MARCH	Early	
	Mid	Issue special instruction to NSTAC, ISACs, and SCCs. Schedule meeting with top CEOs to announce resiliency initiative.
	Late	

## X. Military Coordination

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The military will be a part of the response to virtually any catastrophic attack, but its proper role is still unclear. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) was established in 2002, and the Pentagon and civilian agencies are still defining and developing doctrine to guide the military's domestic responsibilities. By law and custom, the military's primary role is and should be in support of civil authority, when the disaster response exceeds capabilities at the local and regional level. The military can play an important and better-planned role, but it should not interfere with the traditional role played by local communities, states and FEMA. The transition also should be used as an opportunity to begin to set the right balance for the role of the National Guard—the original homeland defense corps—in domestic disaster response.

### QHSR/QDR

Both the defense and homeland security communities will be drafting major internal reviews beginning in Fiscal Year 2009. The Pentagon's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) process is fairly mature and will outline an overarching military strategy review based on a fresh assessment of the global security environment. As noted in an earlier section, the QDR will overlap to some extent with the first-ever Quadrennial Homeland Security Review that DHS will lead, matching a threat assessment with a long-term strategy, specific priorities, program recommendations, key capabilities and required resources. Both reports are due to Congress by the end of 2009.

While separate products, the two studies overlap and must complement one another. As part of these reviews, the respective missions of homeland security and homeland defense must be well-defined and appropriately harmonized. Two areas that should be addressed in the review of the QDR are the future of the National Guard in the homeland security mission and the role of NORTHCOM. The National Guard has been deployed in unprecedented numbers overseas during the Iraq War, with an enormous impact on the readiness of both the federal and state governments to respond to domestic emergencies. The Guard was the original homeland defense force, under the command of governors unless federalized by the president. The new QDR should address how the National Guard can be better positioned to perform the homeland security mission. It should also address the role NORTHCOM should play in any well-planned catastrophic response, consistent with the military's traditional role of supporting civilian authorities.

***HSPTI Recommendation: The new President should instruct DHS and the Pentagon to collaborate closely during the development of the QHSR and QDR with a special focus on the role of the National Guard and NORTHCOM.***

## Action Schedule

MARCH	Early	
	Mid	Direct the Secretary of DHS and Secretary of Defense to expand collaboration regarding the QHSR and QDR.
	Late	

## Calendar of Actions

NOVEMBER	Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Select DHS Secretary.</li> <li>— Select a Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (if integration of homeland security into the NSC is undertaken).</li> <li>— Begin detailed meetings and briefings with top-level Bush administration appointees.</li> <li>— Request senior transition team members receive daily intelligence reports.</li> <li>— Request new National Intelligence Estimates on Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the threat to the American homeland.</li> <li>— Begin discussions with current HSC.</li> </ul>
	Late	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Select Deputy Secretary of DHS.</li> </ul>
DECEMBER	Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Fast-track vetting and security clearances for DHS Secretary, Assistant to the President/Deputy NSC Director for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, and Deputy Secretary of DHS.</li> <li>— Work with Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee to fast-track confirmation of DHS Secretary and Deputy Secretary.</li> <li>— Consult with Congressional committees to approve creation of DHS Undersecretary for Policy.</li> <li>— Prepare decision memo for the President-elect on pros and cons of retaining HSC.</li> <li>— Create a transition DHS staffing task force.</li> </ul>
	Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Announce nominations of DHS Secretary and Deputy Secretary. Announce Assistant to the President/Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism.</li> <li>— Incoming transition team requests that the Bush administration assist with an early January tabletop exercise for senior team on dealing with a terrorist attack or other large-scale disaster.</li> <li>— Prepare decision memo to President-elect on whether to move FEMA out of DHS immediately, whether to defer the decision, or whether to retain FEMA.</li> </ul>
	Late	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Select DHS Undersecretary for Policy.</li> <li>— Decision on retaining HSC due from President-elect.</li> <li>— Hold a transition meeting between the President-elect and selected governors and mayors of the 10 cities with the greatest risks. Include the impact of the current economic situation on homeland-related budgets on the agenda.</li> </ul>
JANUARY	Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Senior leadership team, including the designates for Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Homeland Security, Attorney General, FEMA, National Security Advisor, Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, Director of National Intelligence, and related officials participate in tabletop exercise.</li> <li>— If so decided, defer movement on FEMA until completion of QHSR.</li> </ul>
	Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Appoint an Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism.</li> <li>— Select candidates to lead the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (three positions: the Administrator and Deputy Administrators for National Preparedness and the U.S. Fire Administration), U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS), the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD), and the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (IA).</li> <li>— Vet prospective nominees with key Congressional committees.</li> </ul>

<b>JANUARY</b>	<b>Late</b>	— If President-elect so decides, dissolve HSC and direct NSC to reorganize to adopt homeland security mission.
		— Reorganize the NSC to include a homeland security directorate.
		— Establish new homeland security Internal Working Groups.
		— Launch interagency task force on urgent cybersecurity measures with 60-day deadline for results and recommendations.
		— Hold first Principals Meeting on terrorism.
		— Announce major agency nominees on a single day.
		— National Governors Association White House meeting: Discuss homeland security and the new federalism.
		— Convene an Interagency Working Group to review crisis communications planning across the federal government.
		— Schedule a special session for DHS Secretary with state Homeland Security Advisors, working in part through National Governors Association Homeland Security Advisors Committee.
		— Order review of HSPDs by DHS Secretary.
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<b>Early</b>	— In the State of the Union Address, articulate the homeland security mission clearly.
		— Develop a presidential resiliency initiative for private industry.
	<b>Mid</b>	— Ensure that the new President’s initial meetings with foreign leaders include discussion of cooperation on counter-terrorism issues.
		— Instruct DHS to review information-sharing procedures between the federal government and state and local fusion centers.
		— Ask that states and cities send DHS monthly updates on steps they have taken, and for those updates to be publicized.
	<b>Late</b>	— DHS Secretary completes review and issues recommendations.
<b>MARCH</b>	<b>Early</b>	— The President gives a major policy address in his first 100 days in office on national preparedness, encouraging the public to devote more attention to community and individual preparedness.
	<b>Mid</b>	— Consider including additional funding for states and cities in war supplemental and economic stimulus legislation.
		— Visit fusion center as part of early domestic travel.
		— President issues new or revised HSPDs.
		— Issue special instruction to NSTAC, ISACs, and SCCs.
		— Schedule meeting with top CEOs to announce resiliency initiative.
		— Direct the Secretary of DHS and Secretary of Defense to expand collaboration regarding the QHSR and QDR.
<b>Late</b>	— Call meeting to involve and commit key top administration homeland security leaders in supporting the QHSR process.	
	— The president or DHS Secretary hosts a homeland security summit for federal, state, local, and private sector leaders.	

## The Homeland Security Presidential Transition Initiative (HSPTI)

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**Note: While the HSPTI Advisory Council and HSPTI Members were consulted extensively during the process of assembling this manual, the conclusions in this manual represent the opinions of HSPTI staff alone. In particular, critiques of and conclusions about present or prior presidential administrations made by HSPTI staff were not shared by several of our advisors.**

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