



Defining Homeland Security: Analysis and Congressional Considerations

Shawn Reese

Analyst in Emergency Management and Homeland Security Policy

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Summary

Ten years after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the U.S. government does not have a single definition for “homeland security.” Currently, different strategic documents and mission statements offer varying missions that are derived from different homeland security definitions. Historically, the strategic documents framing national homeland security policy have included national strategies produced by the White House and documents developed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Prior to the 2010 *National Security Strategy*, the 2002 and 2007 *National Strategies for Homeland Security* were the guiding documents produced by the White House. In 2011, the White House issued the *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*.

In conjunction with these White House strategies, DHS has developed a series of evolving strategic documents based on the two national homeland security strategies and include the 2008 *Strategic Plan—One Team, One Mission, Securing the Homeland*; the 2010 *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review and Bottom-Up Review*; and the 2012 *Department of Homeland Security Strategic Plan*. The 2012 DHS strategic plan is the latest evolution in DHS’s process of defining its mission, goals, and responsibilities. This plan, however, only addresses the department’s homeland security purview and is not a document that addresses homeland security missions and responsibilities that are shared across the federal government. Currently, the Department of Homeland Security is developing the 2014 *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*, which is due late 2013 or early 2014.

Varied homeland security definitions and missions may impede the development of a coherent national homeland security strategy, and may hamper the effectiveness of congressional oversight. Definitions and missions are part of strategy development. Policymakers develop strategy by identifying national interests, prioritizing goals to achieve those national interests, and arraying instruments of national power to achieve the national interests. Developing an effective homeland security strategy, however, may be complicated if the key concept of homeland security is not defined and its missions are not aligned and synchronized among different federal entities with homeland security responsibilities.

This report discusses the evolution of national and DHS-specific homeland security strategic documents and their homeland security definitions and missions, and analyzes the policy question of how varied homeland security definitions and missions may affect the development of national homeland security strategy. This report, however, does not examine DHS implementation of strategy.

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Introduction and Issue

Ten years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, policymakers continue to grapple with the definition of homeland security. Prior to 9/11, the United States addressed crises through the separate prisms of national defense, law enforcement, and emergency management. 9/11 prompted a strategic process that included a debate over and the development of homeland security policy. Today, this debate and development has resulted in numerous federal entities with homeland security responsibilities. For example, there are 30 federal entities that receive annual homeland security funding excluding the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) estimates that 48% of annual homeland security funding is appropriated to these federal entities, with the Department of Defense (DOD) receiving approximately 26% of total federal homeland security funding. DHS receives approximately 52%.¹

Congress and policymakers are responsible for funding homeland security priorities. These priorities need to exist, to be clear and cogent, in order for funding to be most effective. Presently, homeland security is not funded on clearly defined priorities. In an ideal scenario, there would be a clear definition of homeland security, and a consensus about it; as well as prioritized missions, goals, and activities. Policymakers could then use a process to incorporate feedback and respond to new facts and situations as they develop. This report examines how varied, and evolving, homeland security definitions and strategic missions may affect the prioritization of national homeland security policy and how it may affect the funding of homeland security. To address this issue, this report first discusses and analyzes examples of strategic documents, their differing homeland security definitions, and their varying homeland security missions.

Evolution of the Homeland Security Concept

The concept of homeland security has evolved over the last decade. Homeland security as a concept was precipitated by the terrorist attacks of 9/11. However, prior to 9/11 such entities as the Gilmore Commission² and the United States Commission on National Security³ discussed the need to evolve the way national security policy was conceptualized due to the end of the Cold War and the rise of radicalized terrorism. After 9/11, policymakers concluded that a new approach was needed to address the large-scale terrorist attacks. A presidential council and department were established, and a series of presidential directives were issued in the name of “homeland security.” These developments established that homeland security was a distinct, but undefined concept.⁴ Later, the federal, state, and local government responses to disasters such as Hurricane Katrina expanded the concept of homeland security to include significant disasters, major public health emergencies, and other events that threaten the United States, its economy, the rule of law,

¹ U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2013: Analytical Perspectives*, February 2012, “Appendix – Homeland Security Mission Funding by Agency and Budget Account,” http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2013/assets/homeland_supp.pdf.

² For information on the Gilmore Commission, see <http://www.rand.org/nsrd/terrpanel.html>. The Gilmore Commission was established prior to 9/11; however, it released its fifth and final report in December 2003.

³ For information on the U.S. Commission on National Security, see <http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/nssg.pdf>. The U.S. Commission on National Security was established in 1998 and issued its final report in February 2001. The commission did reference the idea of “homeland security” in early 2001.

⁴ Harold C. Relyea, “Homeland Security and Information,” *Government Information Quarterly*, vol. 19, 2002, p. 219.

and government operations.⁵ This later expansion of the concept of homeland security solidified it as something distinct from other federal government security operations such as homeland defense.

Homeland security as a concept suggested a different approach to security, and differed from homeland defense. Homeland defense is primarily a Department of Defense (DOD) activity and is defined as "... the protection of US sovereignty, territory, domestic population, and critical defense infrastructure against external threats and aggression, or other threats as directed by the President."⁶ Homeland security, regardless of the definition or strategic document, is a combination of law enforcement, disaster, immigration, and terrorism issues. It is primarily the responsibility of civilian agencies at all levels. It is a coordination of efforts at all levels of government. The differences between homeland security and homeland defense, however, are not completely distinct. A international terrorist organization attack on and within the United States would result in a combined homeland security and homeland defense response, such as on 9/11 when civilian agencies were responding to the attacks while the U.S. military established a combat air patrol over New York and Washington, DC. This distinction between homeland security and homeland defense, and the evolution of homeland security as a concept, was reflected in the strategic documents developed and issued following 9/11.

Evolution of Homeland Security Strategic Documents

The evolution of this new and distinct homeland security concept has been communicated in several strategic documents. Today, strategic documents provide guidance to all involved federal entities and include the 2010 *National Security Strategy* and the 2011 *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*. There are also strategic documents that provide specific guidance to DHS entities and include the 2010 *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*,⁷ the *Bottom-Up Review*, and the 2012 *Department of Homeland Security Strategic Plan*. Prior to issuance of these documents, national and DHS homeland security strategic documents included the 2002 and 2007 *National Strategies for Homeland Security* and the 2008 *Department of Homeland Security Strategic Plan*. All of these documents have varying definitions for "homeland security" and varying missions derived from these definitions.

While the definitions and missions embodied in these strategic documents have commonalities, there are significant differences. Natural disasters are specifically identified as an integral part of homeland security in five of the seven documents, and only three documents—2008 and 2012 DHS *Strategic Plans* and the *Bottom-Up Review*—specifically include border and maritime security, and immigration in their homeland security definition. All of these mentioned issues are important and require significant funding. However, the lack of consensus about the inclusion of these policy areas in a definition of homeland security may have a negative or unproductive consequences for national homeland security operations. A consensus definition would be useful, but not sufficient. A clear prioritization of strategic missions would help focus and direct federal entities' homeland security activities. Additionally, prioritization affects Congress' authorization, appropriation, and oversight activities.

⁵ Nadav Morag, "Does Homeland Security Exist Outside the United States?," *Homeland Security Affairs*, vol. 7, September 2011, p. 1.

⁶ U.S. Department of Defense, *Homeland Defense*, Joint Publications 3-27, Washington, DC, 2007, p. vii.

⁷ DHS is currently developing the 2014 QHSR which the department intends to publish and issue in late 2013 or early 2014.

Effects on Congressional Responsibilities

As deficit reduction causes demand for reduced federal spending, Congress may pay more critical attention to homeland security funding. With reduced funding comes the need for higher degrees of organization, focus, and clarity about the purpose and objectives of national homeland security policy. Limited resources heighten the importance of prioritization and need for efficient and effective federal spending. If homeland security policy priorities are unclear, Congress' ability to provide effective authorization, appropriation, and oversight may be hampered.

Definitions and Missions as Part of Strategy Development

Definitions and missions are part of strategy development. Policymakers develop strategy by identifying national interests, prioritizing missions to achieve those national interests, and arraying instruments of national power to achieve national interests.⁸ Strategy is not developed within a vacuum. President Barack Obama Administration's 2010 *National Security Strategy* states that strategy is meant to recognize "the world as it is" and mold it into "the world we seek."⁹ Developing strategy, however, may be complicated if the key concept of homeland security is not succinctly defined, and strategic missions are not aligned and synchronized among different strategic documents and federal entities.

Evolution of the Homeland Security Definitions and Missions

Prior to 9/11, federal, state, and local governments responded to domestic terrorist attacks in an ad hoc manner. These terrorist attacks, and the governments' responses, however, did not significantly affect how policymakers perceived, defined, and prioritized security as related to the homeland. Two examples of these domestic terrorist attacks are the 1993 World Trade Center (WTC) and the 1995 Alfred Murrah Federal Building bombings.

On February 26, 1993, radicalized Islamic terrorists¹⁰ detonated a bomb beneath the WTC. In response, President Clinton ordered his National Security Council to coordinate the bombings' response and investigation. The CIA's Counterterrorist Center and the National Security Agency, along with the FBI, were among the numerous federal agencies that participated in the investigation.¹¹ This use of the National Security Council was an ad-hoc response specifically to this event, and it did not result in the development of strategic documents. On April 19, 1995, Timothy McVeigh exploded a bomb-laden truck in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. Following this bombing, President Clinton directed the Department of Justice

⁸ Terry L. Deibel, *Foreign Affairs Strategy: Logic for American Statecraft* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 5.

⁹ Executive Office of the President, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, DC, May 2010, p. 9.

¹⁰ An FBI investigation identified the following individuals as the culprits: Mohammed Salameh, Ahmad Ajaj, Ramzi Yousef, Mahmoud Abouhalima, and Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman (often called the "Blind Sheikh"). All of these individuals were prosecuted and convicted.

¹¹ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, Washington, DC, July 22, 2004, p. 71.

(DOJ) to assess the vulnerability of federal facilities to terrorist attacks or violence and to develop recommendations for minimum security standards.¹² These standards, however, were not a wide-ranging strategy for U.S. homeland security strategy. It was the 9/11 terrorist attacks that initiated the debate and development of a broader homeland security strategy.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York City, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC, were a watershed event. As with the 1993 WTC and 1995 Oklahoma City bombings, the federal, state, and local government's response to the 9/11 terrorists attacks was ad hoc. In New York City, first responders included such entities as the New York police and fire departments, and Port Authority and WTC employees.¹³ Following the attack, federal entities such as the FBI, DOD, and elements of the intelligence community (IC) coordinated their efforts in investigating and tracking down the responsible terrorists. However, following the 9/11 initial response and subsequent investigations, it was determined that there was a need to reorganize the government to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from future attacks.¹⁴ This decision to reorganize the government resulted in an evolution of homeland security definitions and missions.

The debate over and development of homeland security definitions persists as the federal government continues to issue and implement homeland security strategy. All of the strategic documents in this report define homeland security as security efforts, however, each one defines these efforts in different terms.

2002–2009 Strategic Document Evolution

The first homeland security strategy document issued by the Bush Administration was the 2003 *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, which was revised in 2007.¹⁵ In 2008, DHS issued *Strategic Plan—One Team, One Mission, Securing Our Homeland*. The 2007 *National Strategy for Homeland Security* primarily focused on terrorism, whereas the 2008 *Strategic Plan* included references to all-hazards and border security. Arguably, the 2003 and 2007 *National Strategies for Homeland Security* addressed terrorism due to such incidents as the 9/11 terrorist attacks; and the attempted bombing¹⁶ of American Airlines Flight 93 on December 22, 2001. Whereas the 2008 *Strategic Plan* addressed terrorism and all-hazards due to natural disasters such Hurricane Katrina which occurred in 2005. These documents were superseded by several documents which are now considered the principle homeland security strategies.

¹² U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Building Security: Interagency Security Committee Has Had Limited Success in Fulfilling Its Responsibilities*, GAO-02-1004, September 2002, p. 5.

¹³ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, Washington, DC, July 22, 2004, p. 315.

¹⁴ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, Washington, DC, July 22, 2004, p. 399. The 9/11 Commission determined that there needed to be a unity of effort across the foreign-domestic divide, in the IC, in sharing information, and in Congress.

¹⁵ This report does not provide the 2003 *National Strategy for Homeland Security* definitions and missions due to it being revised in 2007.

¹⁶ Richard Reid was dubbed the “Shoe Bomber” because of his disguising of the bomb within his shoe.

2010–Present Document Evolution

The White House and DHS are the principle source of homeland security strategies. The primary national homeland security strategic document developed by the White House is the *2010 National Security Strategy*, which unlike the 2007 *National Strategy for Homeland Security* addresses all-hazards and is not primarily terrorism focused.¹⁷ DHS's strategic documents are the 2010 *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*; the 2010 *Bottom-Up Review*; and the 2012 *Strategic Plan*. DHS states that these documents are nested in the 2010 *National Security Strategy*.¹⁸ At the national level, the 2010 *National Security Strategy* guides not just DHS's homeland security activities, but it also guides all federal government entity mission activities. One way to understand the breadth of these activities is to examine federal homeland security funding.

Federal Homeland Security Mission Activities and Funding

The strategic homeland security documents provide federal entities information on the national approach to homeland security. These documents are intended to identify federal entity responsibilities in the area of homeland security and assist federal entities in determining how to allocate federal funding for that purpose.

In an effort to measure federal homeland security funding, Congress required OMB to include a homeland security funding analysis in each presidential budget.¹⁹ OMB requires federal departments, agencies, and entities to provide budget request amounts based on the following six 2003 *National Strategy for Homeland Security* mission areas:

- Intelligence and Warning;
- Border and Transportation Security;
- Domestic Counterterrorism;
- Protecting Critical Infrastructure and Key Assets;
- Defending against Catastrophic Threats; and
- Emergency Preparedness and Response.²⁰

OMB, however, notes that the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* was revised in 2007, and that revision consolidated these six mission areas into three: (1) prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks; (2) protect the American people, critical infrastructure, and key resources; and (3) respond to and recover from incidents that do occur. The strategy also states that these original 2003 mission areas are still used to ensure “continuity and granularity.”²¹ OMB does not address

¹⁷ President Obama's Administration addresses the terrorism issue specifically in the 2011 *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2012 Department of Homeland Security Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2012–2016, Washington, DC, February 2012, p. A-3.

¹⁹ P.L. 107-296 (Homeland Security Act of 2002), sec. 889.

²⁰ Office of Management and Budget, *Circular No. A-11: Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget*, Instructions for Homeland Security Data Collection, Washington, DC, August 2011, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/a11_current_year/homeland.pdf.

²¹ Ibid.

President Obama Administration’s issuance of the 2010 *National Security Strategy* which supersedes the 2007 *National Strategy for Homeland Security*.

In FY2012 appropriations and the FY2013 budget requests, thirty federal departments, agencies, and entities receive annual homeland security funding excluding DHS. OMB estimates that 48% of annual homeland security funding is appropriated to these federal entities, with DOD receiving approximately 26% of total federal homeland security funding. DHS receives approximately 52%. The following table provides FY2012 appropriations and FY2013 budget request homeland security mission amounts for all federal entities.

**Table I. FY2012 Appropriations and FY2013 Request for
Homeland Security Mission Funding by Agency**
(budget authority in millions of dollars)

Department	FY2012 Enacted	FY2013 Request	FY2013 Request as % of Total
Agriculture	570.1	551.4	0.80
Commerce	289.6	304.1	0.44
Defense	17,358.4	17,955.1	26.05
Education	30.9	35.5	0.05
Energy	1,923.3	1,874.7	2.72
Health and Human Services	4,146.8	4,112.2	5.97
Homeland Security	35,214.7	35,533.7	51.57
Housing and Urban Development	3.0	3.0	-a
Interior	57.6	56.7	0.08
Justice	4,055.4	3,992.8	5.79
Labor	46.3	36.6	0.05
State	2,283.4	2,353.8	3.42
Transportation	246.6	243.3	0.35
Treasury	123.0	121.1	0.18
Veterans Affairs	394.5	383.7	0.56
Corps of Engineers	35.5	35.5	0.05
Environmental Protection Agency	101.8	102.6	0.15
Executive Office of the President	10.4	11.0	0.02
General Services Administration	38.0	59.0	0.09
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	228.9	216.1	0.31

Department	FY2012 Enacted	FY2013 Request	FY2013 Request as % of Total
National Science Foundation	443.9	425.9	0.62
Office of Personnel Management	1.3	0.6	-.b
Social Security Administration	234.3	252.1	0.37
District of Columbia	15.0	25.0	0.04
Federal Communications Commission	-	1.7	-.c
Intelligence Community Management Account	8.8	-	-
National Archives and Records Administration	22.6	22.5	0.03
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	78.4	76.6	0.11
Securities and Exchange Commission	8.0	8.0	0.01
Smithsonian Institution	97.0	100.1	0.15
U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum	11.0	11.0	0.02
Total	67,988.0	68,905.2^d	100%^e

Source: U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2013: Analytical Perspectives*, February 2012, "Appendix – Homeland Security Mission Funding by Agency and Budget Account," http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2013/assets/homeland_supp.pdf.

- a. This amount is less than 0.01%.
- b. This amount is less than 0.01%.
- c. This amount is less than 0.01%.
- d. The majority of this funding is categorized as protecting critical infrastructure and key assets.
- e. Percentages in column may not equal 100 due to rounding.

This allocation of federal homeland security funding reveals that approximately 50% is *not* appropriated for DHS missions or activities. Additionally, it could mean that relying on detailed DHS strategies is insufficient and that a coordinating and encompassing national homeland security definition may be important to prioritizing homeland security activities and funding.

The 2010 *National Security Strategy* states that homeland security is “a seamless coordination among federal, state, and local governments to prevent, protect against, and respond to threats and natural disasters.”²² Homeland security requires coordination because numerous federal, state, and local entities have responsibility for various homeland security activities. The proliferation of responsibilities entitled “homeland security activities” is due to a couple of factors. One factor is that homeland security developed from the pre-9/11 concept of law enforcement and emergency management. Another factor is the continuously evolving definition of “homeland security.” Some degree of evolution of the homeland security concept is expected. Policymakers respond to events and crises like terrorist attacks and natural disasters by using and adjusting strategies, plans, and operations. These strategies, plans, and operations also evolve to reflect changing priorities. The definition of homeland security evolves in accordance with the evolution of these strategies, plans, and operations.

Definitions

The following table provides examples of strategic documents and their specific homeland security definitions.

Table 2. Summary of Homeland Security Definitions

Document	Definition
2007 <i>National Strategy for Homeland Security</i> (White House)	A 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. ^a
2008 <i>U.S. Department of Homeland Security Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2008-2013</i> (DHS)	A unified national effort to prevent and deter terrorist attacks, protect and respond to hazards, and to secure the national borders. ^b
2010 <i>National Security Strategy</i> (White House)	A seamless coordination among federal, state, and local governments to prevent, protect against and respond to threats and natural disasters. ^c
2010 <i>Quadrennial Homeland Security Review</i> (DHS)	A concerted national effort to ensure a homeland that is safe, secure, and resilient against terrorism and other hazards where American interests, aspirations, and ways of life can thrive. ^d
2010 <i>Bottom-Up Review</i> (DHS)	Preventing terrorism, responding to and recovering from natural disasters, customs enforcement and collection of customs revenue, administration of legal immigration services, safety and stewardship of the Nation’s waterways and marine transportation system, as well as other legacy missions of the various components of DHS. ^e
2011 <i>National Strategy For Counterterrorism</i> (White House)	Defensive efforts to counter terrorist threats. ^f
2012 <i>Strategic Plan</i> (DHS)	Efforts to ensure a homeland that is safe, secure, and resilient against terrorism and other hazards. ^g

²² Office of the President, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, DC, May 2010, p. 2.

- a. Office of the President, Homeland Security Council, *The National Homeland Security Strategy*, Washington, DC, October 2007, p. 1.
- b. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *One Team, One Mission, Securing the Homeland: U.S. Homeland Security Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2008-2013*, Washington, DC, 2008, p. 3.
- c. Office of the President, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, DC, May 2010, p. 2.
- d. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*, Washington, DC, February 2010, p. 13.
- e. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Bottom-Up Review*, Washington, DC, July 2010, p. 3.
- f. Office of the President, *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*, Washington, DC, June 2011, p. 11.
- g. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Department of Homeland Security Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2012–2016*, Washington, DC, February 2012, p. 2. This document does not explicitly state a definition for “homeland security” but it does define DHS’s “vision.”

Some common themes among these definitions are:

- the homeland security enterprise encompasses a federal, state, local, and tribal government and private sector approach that requires coordination;
- homeland security can involve securing against and responding to both hazard-specific and all-hazards threats; and
- homeland security activities do not imply total protection or complete threat reduction.

Each of these documents highlight the importance of coordinating homeland security missions and activities. However, individual federal, state, local, and tribal government efforts are not identified in the documents. Homeland security—according to these documents—is preventing, responding to, and recovering from terrorist attacks, which is consistent with evolving homeland security policy after 9/11.

The focus of the definition of homeland security communicated in these strategy documents differs in regard to two areas that may be considered substantive. Natural disasters are specifically identified as an integral part of homeland security in only four of the six documents, but are not mentioned in the 2007 *National Strategy for Homeland Security* and the 2011 *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*.²³ Only one document—the *Bottom-Up Review*—specifically includes border and maritime security, and immigration in their homeland security definition. The 2012 *Strategic Plan* uses the encompassing terms “other hazards” to define any threat other than terrorism. These issues are significant and call for substantial funding. An absence of consensus about the inclusion of these policy areas may result in unintended consequences for national homeland security operations. For example, not including maritime security in the homeland security definition may result in policymakers, Congress, and stakeholders not adequately addressing maritime homeland security threats, or more specifically being able to prioritize federal investments in border versus intelligence activities.

The competing and varied definitions in these documents may indicate that there is no succinct homeland security concept. Without a succinct homeland security concept, policymakers and

²³ The *National Strategy For Counterterrorism* would not mention any hazard or threat other than terrorism.

entities with homeland security responsibilities may not successfully coordinate or focus on the highest prioritized or most necessary activities. Coordination is especially essential to homeland security because of the multiple federal agencies and the state and local partners with whom they interact. Coordination may be difficult if these entities do not operate with the same understanding of the homeland security concept. For example, definitions that don't specifically include immigration or natural disaster response and recovery may result in homeland security stakeholders and federal entities not adequately resourcing and focusing on these activities. Additionally, an absence of a consensus definition may result in Congress funding a homeland security activity that DHS does not consider a priority. For example, Congress may appropriate funding for a counterterrorism program such as the State Homeland Security Grant Program when DHS may have identified an all-hazards grant program, such as Emergency Management Performance Grant Program, as a priority.

It is, however, possible that a consensus definition and overall concept exists among policymakers and federal entities, but that it isn't communicated in the strategic documents.²⁴

Finally, DHS Deputy Secretary Jane Lute recently stated that homeland security "... is operation, it's transactional, it's decentralized, it's bottom-driven," and influenced by law enforcement, emergency management, and the political environment. Conversely, DHS Deputy Secretary Lute stated that national security "... is strategic, it's centralized, it's top-driven," and influenced by the military and the intelligence community.²⁵ Some see in these comments as a reflection of a DHS attempt to establish a homeland security definition that is more operational than strategic and an illustration of the complexity of a common understanding of homeland security and its associated missions.

Missions

Varied homeland security definitions, in numerous documents, result in all the homeland security stakeholders identifying and executing varied strategic missions. Homeland security stakeholders include federal departments and agencies, state and local governments, and non-profit and non-governmental organizations. The strategic documents in this report identify numerous homeland security missions such as terrorism prevention; response and recovery; critical infrastructure protection and resilience; federal, state, and local emergency management and preparedness; and border security. As noted earlier, none of these documents specifically task a federal entity with the overall homeland security responsibilities. The following table summarizes the varied missions in these strategic documents.

²⁴ Examination of such a possibility is beyond the scope of this report.

²⁵ Christopher Bellavita, "A new perspective on homeland security?" Homeland Security Watch, December 20, 2011, <http://www.hlswatch.com/2011/12/20/a-new-perspective-on-homeland-security/>.

Table 3. Summary of Homeland Security Missions and Goals

Document	Missions and Goals
2007 <i>National Strategy for Homeland Security</i> (White House)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks. - Protect the American people, critical infrastructure and key resources. - Respond to and recover from incidents that do occur. - Strengthen the foundation to ensure long term success.^a
2008 <i>U.S. Department of Homeland Security Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2008-2013</i> (DHS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect the nation from dangerous people. - Protect the nation from dangerous goods. - Protect critical infrastructure. - Strengthen the nation's preparedness and emergency response capabilities. - Strengthen and unify the department's operations and management.^b
2010 <i>National Security Strategy</i> (White House)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen national capacity. - Ensure security and prosperity at home. - Secure cyberspace. - Ensure American economic prosperity.^c
2010 <i>Quadrennial Homeland Security Review</i> (DHS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevent terrorism and enhance security. - Secure and manage our borders. - Enforce and administer our immigration laws. - Safeguard and secure cyberspace. - Ensure resilience to disasters.^d - Provide essential support to national and economic security.^e
2010 <i>Bottom-Up Review</i> (DHS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevent terrorism and enhance security. - Secure and manage borders. - Enforce and manage immigration laws. - Safeguard and secure cyberspace. - Ensure resilience to disasters. - Improve departmental management and accountability.^f
2011 <i>National Strategy for Counterterrorism</i> (White House)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect the American people, homeland, and American interests. - Eliminate threats to the American people's, homeland's, and interests' physical safety. - Counter threats to global peace and security. - Promote and protect U.S. interests around the globe.^g
2012 <i>Strategic Plan</i> (DHS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preventing terrorism and enhancing security. - Securing and managing our borders. - Enforcing and administering our immigration laws.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguarding and securing cyberspace. - Ensuring resilience to disasters.^h - Providing essential support to national and economic security.ⁱ
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- a. Office of the President, Homeland Security Council, *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, Washington, DC, October 2007, p. 1.
- b. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *One Team, One Mission, Securing the Homeland: U.S. Homeland Security Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2008-2013*, Washington, DC, 2008, p. 6-25.
- c. Office of the President, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, DC, May 2010, p. 14.
- d. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*, Washington, DC, February 2010, p. 2.
- e. This mission of providing essential support to national and economic security was not part of the 2010 Quadrennial Homeland Security Review, but has been subsequently added as an additional mission. U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review: Enhanced Stakeholder Consultation and Use of Risk Information Could Strengthen Future Reviews*, GAO-11-873, September 2011, p. 9.
- f. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Bottom-Up Review*, Washington, DC, July 2010, pp. i-ii.
- g. Office of the President, *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*, Washington, DC, June 2011, p. 8.
- h. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Department of Homeland Security Strategic Goal: Fiscal Years 2012 – 2016*, Washington, DC, February 2012, pp. 3-18.
- i. The 2012 Strategic Plan does not designate this as a specific mission, but it does state that “DHS contributes in many ways to these elements to broader U.S. national and economic security while fulfilling its homeland security missions.” U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Department of Homeland Security Strategic Goal: Fiscal Years 2012–2016*, Washington, DC, February 2012, p. 19.

These documents all identify specific missions as essential to securing the nation. All of the documents state that the nation’s populace, critical infrastructure, and key resources need protection from terrorism and disasters. This protection from both terrorism and disasters is a key strategic homeland security mission. Some, but not all, of the documents include missions related to border security, immigration, the economy, and general resilience. Members of Congress and congressional committees, however, have sometimes criticized these documents.

Senator Susan Collins—current Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs—expressed disappointment in the *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review* and *Bottom-Up Review* because it does not communicate priorities and stated that it does not compare favorably to the most recent *Quadrennial Defense Review*.²⁶ The *Quadrennial Defense Review* identifies national security and U.S. military priorities and these priorities through a process “... from objectives to capabilities and activities to resources.”²⁷ Furthermore, the *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review* missions are different from the *2007 National Strategy for Homeland Security*²⁸ missions, and neither identifies priorities, or resources, for DHS, or other federal agencies. Since the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* and the *Quadrennial*

²⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Charting a Path Forward: The Homeland Security Department’s Quadrennial Review and Bottom-Up Review*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., July 21, 2010.

²⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, Washington, DC, February 2010, p. iii.

²⁸ The *2007 National Strategy for Homeland Security* is the most recent national strategy specifically on homeland security.

Homeland Security Review missions are differing and varied, and because the *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review* does not specifically identify a strategic process to achieve the missions, one may assume that this document is solely operational guidance. Additionally, some critics found the *Bottom-Up Review* lacking in detail and failing to meet its intended purpose.²⁹

Further congressional criticism includes an observation on the absence of a single DHS strategy. At a recent House Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations and Management hearing, Chairman Michael McCaul stated that "... DHS needs a single strategic document which subordinate agencies can follow and make sure the strategy is effectively and efficiently implemented. This single document should conform to the National Security Strategy of the United States of America. If the agencies do not have clearly established list of priorities, it will be difficult to complete assigned missions."³⁰

Other criticism includes the Council on Foreign Relations' (CFR) discussion of 2010 *National Security Strategy* (NSS). CFR states that the "... one thing that the NSS discussion of resilience omits, but which the Deputy National Security Adviser John Brennan has emphasized, is that despite all the homeland security precautions, there is likely to be a successful attack. When that happens, real resilience will entail a calm, deliberate response and confidence in the durability of the country's institutions."³¹ Multiple definitions, missions, and an absence of prioritization results in consequences to the nation's security.

Analysis and Considerations

Policymakers are faced with a complex and detailed list of risks, or threats to security, for which they then attempt to plan. However, managing those risks 99% of the time with even a single failure may lead to significant human and financial costs.³² Homeland security is essentially about managing risks. The purpose of a strategic process is to develop missions to achieve that end. Before risk management can be accurate and adequate, policymakers must ideally coordinate and communicate. That work to some degree depends on developing a foundation of common definitions of key terms and concepts. It is also necessary, in order to coordinate and communicate, to ensure stakeholders are aware of, trained for, and prepared to meet assigned missions. At the national level, there does not appear to be an attempt to align definitions and missions among disparate federal entities. DHS is, however, attempting to align its definition and missions, but does not prioritize its missions; there is no clarity in the national strategies of federal, state, and local roles and responsibilities; and, potentially, funding is driving priorities rather than priorities driving the funding.

²⁹ Katherine McIntire Peters, "DHS Bottom-Up Review is long on ambition, short on detail," *GovernmentExecutive.com*, July 2010.

³⁰ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management, *Is DHS Effectively Implementing a Strategy to Counter Emerging Threats?*, 112th Cong., 2nd sess., February 3, 2011.

³¹ Stephen Biddle, Laurie Garrett, and James M. Lindsay, et al., "Obama's NSS: Promise and Pitfalls," *Council on Foreign Relations*, May 28, 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/defensehomeland-security/obamas-nss-promise-pitfalls/p22240>.

³² Donald F. Kettl, *System Under Stress: Homeland Security and American Politics*, 2nd ed., Washington, DC, CQPress, 2007, p. 82.

DHS is aligning its definition and missions in the *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*, the *Bottom-Up Review*, and the *2012 Strategic Plan*; however, DHS does not prioritize the missions. DHS prioritizes specific goals, objectives, activities, and specific initiatives within the missions, and prioritizes initiatives across the missions. There is still no single national homeland security definition, nor is there a prioritization of national homeland security or DHS missions.

There is no evidence in the existing homeland security strategic documents that supports the aligning and prioritization of the varied missions, nor do any of the documents convey how national, state, or local resources are to be allocated to achieve these missions. Without prioritized resource allocation to align missions, proponents of prioritization of the nation's homeland security activities and operations maintain that plans and responses may be haphazard and inconsistent. Another potential consequence of the absence of clear missions is that available funding then tends to govern the priorities.

Congress may decide to address the issues associated with homeland security strategy, definitions, and missions, in light of the potential for significant events to occur similar to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina. Many observers assert that these outstanding policy issues result from the varied definitions and missions identified in numerous national strategic documents. Additionally, they note that these documents do not consistently address risk mitigation associated with the full range of homeland security threats. From this perspective one piece missing from these documents, and their guidance, is a discussion of the resources and fiscal costs associated with preparing for low risk, but high consequence threats.

Specifically, Congress may choose to consider a number of options addressing the apparent lack of a consensus homeland security definition that prioritizes missions by requiring the development of a more succinct, and distinct, national homeland security strategy. One of these options might be a total rewrite of a national homeland security strategy. This option would be similar to the Bush Administration's issuance of national homeland security strategies in 2002 and 2007. Such a strategy could include a definitive listing of mission priorities based on an encompassing definition that not only includes DHS specific responsibilities, but all federal department and agency responsibilities. A strategy that includes priorities could improve Congress's and other policymakers' ability to make choices between competing homeland security missions. This option would also be a departure from the current Administration's practice of including national homeland security guidance in the *National Security Strategy*.

Another option would be to build upon the current approach by requiring the Administration to develop the *National Security Strategy* that succinctly identifies homeland security missions and priorities. Alternatively, Congress may determine that the present course of including national homeland security guidance in the *National Security Strategy* is adequate, and may focus strictly on DHS activities. This option would entail DHS further refining its *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review* which it has begun to do with its *2012 Strategic Plan*.

It has been argued that homeland security, at its core, is about coordination because of the disparate stakeholders and risks.³³ Many observers assert that homeland security is not only about coordination of resources and actions to counter risks; it is also about the coordination of the strategic process policymakers use in determining the risks, the stakeholders and their missions, and the prioritization of those missions.

³³ Ibid.

Without a general consensus on the physical and philosophical definition and missions of homeland security, achieved through a strategic process, some believe that there will continue to be the potential for disjointed and disparate approaches to securing the nation. From this perspective general consensus on the homeland security concept necessarily starts with a consensus definition and an accepted list of prioritized missions that are constantly reevaluated to meet risks of the new paradigm that is homeland security in the 21st century. These varied definitions and missions, however, may be the result of a strategic process that has attempted to adjust federal homeland security policy to emerging threats and risks.

Author Contact Information

Shawn Reese
Analyst in Emergency Management and Homeland
Security Policy
sreese@crs.loc.gov, 7-0635