Written Statement
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Is DHS Effectively Implementing A Strategy to Counter Emerging Threats?

Introduction

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Keating, and Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the Congressional Research Service I would like to thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to discuss national homeland security strategy.

The Subcommittee requested that CRS discuss national policy on homeland security as communicated in national strategic documents and the report CRS is developing on *Homeland Security Definitions, and Missions*.

Accordingly, my statement summarizes the salient portions of this CRS work, and addresses key findings which include the absence of a universal definition of homeland security and varied strategic missions. Ten years after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the U.S. government does not have a universal view of "homeland security."

Currently, different strategic documents and mission statements offer varying homeland security missions. The strategic documents framing the U.S. homeland security mission include national strategies produced by the White House and strategy statements developed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The White House has produced documents such as the 2007 *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, the 2010 *National Security Strategy*, and the *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*. DHS has developed the *Strategic Plan – One Team, One Mission, Securing the Homeland*; the *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*; and the *Bottom-Up Review*.

Varied homeland security definitions and missions may impede the development of a coherent homeland security strategy, and the effectiveness of congressional oversight may be hampered. This written testimony discusses examples of the varying homeland security definitions and missions identified in the aforementioned White House and DHS documents, and analyzes the policy question of how varied homeland security definitions and missions may affect the development national homeland security policy. This testimony, however, does not examine DHS' implementation of strategy.

Issuance of Homeland Security Strategic Documents

The evolution of U.S. homeland security strategy produced a series of White House and DHS documents. President George W. Bush's Administration's issuance of a national homeland strategy was foundational in this process. The 2002 *National Strategy for Homeland Security* was described as a grand strategy.[9] Five years later, the Administration issued a second version and its purpose was "... to guide, organize, and unify our Nation's homeland security efforts." [10] Some critics, however, argued that while the 2002 version had merit, the 2007 version of the strategy "... obfuscates rather

[9] Richard A. Falkenrath, "Homeland Security: The White House Plan Explained and Examined," Brookings Forum, Washington, DC, September 4, 2002, p. 4.

[10] Office of the President, Homeland Security Council, *The Homeland Security Strategy*, Washington, DC, October 2007, p. 1.

than clarifies the government's homeland security mission. "[11] Conversely, others state that the 2007 version was a comprehensive effort that attempted to define America's homeland security mission. [12]

Subsequent to these two versions of the national homeland security strategy, President Barack Obama's Administration issued the 2010 *National Security Strategy* and the 2011 *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*. DHS issued the *Strategic Plan – One Team, One Mission, Securing Our Homeland*; the 2010 *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*; and the *Bottom-Up Review*.

These documents, collectively, are an example of the numerous strategies that have been issued that address homeland security. These strategic documents provide varied homeland security definitions and missions. Additionally, some of the documents do not prioritize resources to address the varied homeland security missions.

Homeland Security Defined

It has been argued that homeland security is a "uniquely" American concept, developed because of geography and an American belief in a distinct divide between events and issues inside and outside of U.S. borders. Homeland security development as a strategic concept was precipitated by the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Prior to those attacks, national policy was typically described as law enforcement, emergency response, and national defense. Discussions of the need to evolve the way national policy was conceptualized occurred with such entities as the Gilmore Commission[13] and the United States Commission on National Security (which referenced homeland security early in 2001).[14]

After the 9/11, policymakers realized a new approach was needed to address large-scale terrorist attacks. The establishment of a department, a presidential council, and a series of presidential directives in the name of "homeland security" occurring after 9/11 further demonstrated that it was a distinct, although in these cases, undefined concept.[15] Later, the federal, state, and local government responses to disasters such as Hurricane Katrina expanded the homeland security definition to include significant disasters, major public health emergencies, and other events that threaten the United States, the economy, and the rule of law, and government operations.[16]

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[11] James Jay Carafano, *New Homeland Security Misses the Mark*, Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC, October 10, 2007, http://heritage.org/Research/Homeland Defense/wm1659.cfm.

[12] Christopher Bellavita, "Changing Homeland Security: Ten Essential Homeland Security Books," Homeland Security Affairs, vol. 3, no. 1 (February 2007), pp. 3-4.

[13] 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.

[14] 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.

[15] Harold C. Relyea, "Homeland security and information," *Government Information Quarterly*, vol. 19, 2002, p. 219.

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

Homeland Security Definitions

The debate over the varied definitions persists as the federal government continues to issue and implement homeland security strategy. All of the strategic documents discussed in this written testimony define homeland security as security efforts, however, each one defines these efforts in different terms. Examples of these documents include the 2007 and 2010 *National Security Strategy*, the *Strategic Plan – One Team, One Mission, Securing Our Homeland*; the 2010 *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*; and the *Bottom-Up Review*.

Additionally, these documents provide further information on the homeland security concept. This information is not necessarily what homeland security is, but rather what it entails or how it is achieved. This conceptualization is both explicitly and implicitly implied, and includes the following:

- the homeland security enterprise encompasses a federal, state, local, tribal government and private sector approach that requires coordination;
- that homeland security can involve securing against and responding to both hazard-specific and all-hazards;
- that homeland security activities do not imply total protection or complete threat reduction;
- homeland security includes the need to ensure that the U.S. critical infrastructure, key assets, and economy are resilient; and
- that homeland security includes border, waterway, and marine security.

The following table provides examples of U.S. strategy documents and their homeland security definitions.

Table 1. Summary of Homeland Security Definitions

Document	Definition
2010 *National Security Strategy*	A seamless coordination among federal, state, and local governments to prevent, protect against and respond to threats and natural disasters.[a]
2007 *National Strategy for Homeland Security*	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.[b]
2010 *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*	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.[c]
2007 *U.S. Department of Homeland Security Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2008-2013*	A unified national effort to prevent and deter terrorist attacks, protect and respond to hazards, and to secure the national borders.[d]
2011 *National Strategy For Counterterrorism*	Defensive efforts to counter terrorist threats.[e]

2010 *Bottom-Up Review*	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.[f]

a. Office of the President, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, DC, May 2010, p. 2.
b. Office of the President, Homeland Security Council, *The National Homeland Security Strategy*, Washington, DC, October 2007, p. 1.
c. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*, Washington, DC, February 2010, p. 13.
d. 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.
e. Office of the President, *National Strategy For Counterterrorism*, Washington, DC, June 29, 2011, p. 11.
f. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Bottom-Up Review*, Washington, DC, July 2010, p. 3.

Homeland Security Definition: Analysis

The common themes among the many homeland security definitions are that national homeland security efforts are unified, concerted, and coordinated across all levels of government. Thus, the importance of the federalism approach to homeland security is highlighted. This approach is a combined effort of federal, state, local, and tribal governments, however, individual federal, state, local, and tribal government efforts are not identified in the documents. Another common theme across all of the documents in defining homeland security is preventing, responding to, and recovering from terrorist attacks, which is consistent with evolving homeland security policy after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The focus of the concept of homeland security communicated in the 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 four of the six documents, but are not mentioned in the 2007 *National Strategy for Homeland Security* and the 2011 *National Strategy for Counterterrorism.*[17] Two documents – the *Bottom-Up Review* and the *Strategic Plan* – specifically include border and maritime security, and immigration in their homeland security definition. Homeland security issues such as natural disaster prevention, response, and recovery; border and maritime security, and immigration are important and require significant funding. Failure to have consensus on their importance and role in homeland security may result in the nation's efforts being uncoordinated and counterproductive.

The competing or varied views in these documents may indicate that there is no succinct homeland security definition. It is, however, possible that such definition exists among relevant policymakers and just isn't communicated in the strategic documents. However, without such a definition, homeland security stakeholders and policymakers may not be able to coordinate and resource homeland security missions necessary to secure the

[17] Obviously, the *National Strategy For Counterterrorism* would not mention any hazard or threat other than terrorism.

nation. These differing definitions may also be attempting to identify and counter every threat and risk with prioritization.

In addition to these strategic document examples, 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.[18] Some see these comments as reflection of a DHS attempt at establishing a homeland security definition that is more operational than strategic and an illustration of the complexity of a common understanding of homeland security.

Homeland Security Missions

Varied homeland security definitions may result in all levels of government identifying and executing varied missions. These efforts may be competing rather than integrated and result in ineffective or inefficient security. The examples of strategic documents in this written testimony provide 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 homeland security entity or stakeholder with these missions. The following table summarizes the varied missions identified in these strategic documents.

Table 2. Summary of Homeland Security Missions and Goals

Document	Missions and Goals
2007 *National Strategy for Homeland Security*	- 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]
U.S. Department of Homeland Security Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2008-2013	- 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]
Quadrennial Homeland Security Review	- Prevent terrorism and enhance security. - Secure and manage our borders. - Enforce and administer our immigration laws. - Safeguard and secure cyberspace.

[18] Christopher Bellavita, "A new perspective on homeland security?" Homeland Security Watch, Dec. 20, 2011, http://www.hlswatch.com/2011/12/20/a-new-perspective-on-homeland-security/.

Document	Missions and Goals
	- Ensure resilience to disasters.[c] - Provide essential support to national and economic security.[d]
Bottom-Up Review	- 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.[e]
2010 *National Security Strategy*	- Strengthen national capacity. - Ensure security and prosperity at home. - Secure cyberspace. - Ensure American economic prosperity.[f]
National Strategy for Counterterrorism	- 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]

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. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*, Washington, DC, February 2010, p. 2.

d. 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.

e. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Bottom-Up Review*, Washington, DC, July 2010, pp. i-ii.

f. Office of the President, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, DC, May 2010, p. 14.

g. Office of the President, National Strategy for Counterterrorism, Washington, DC, June 2011, p. 2.

Homeland Security Missions: Analysis

The missions in these documents identify a consensus that preventing, responding to, recovering from, and being resilient against terrorist attacks are essential in securing the nation. Additionally, there is an agreement that the nation's populace, critical infrastructure, and key resources need protection from both terrorism and disasters. This protection from both terrorism and disasters is seen as a key homeland security mission. Some, but not all, of the documents include missions related to border security, immigration, the economy, and general resilience.

Some of these documents have been criticized. 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*. [19] 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."[12] Furthermore, the *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review* missions are different from the *2007 National Strategy for Homeland Security*[13] missions, and neither identifies priorities, or resources, for DHS, or other federal agencies. Since the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* and the *Quadrennial 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, critics found the Bottom-Up Review lacking in detail and failing to meet its intended purpose.[14]

Overall, strategic documents intended to provide guidance do not identify the same missions for any homeland security entity or stakeholder. One example, however, of homeland security entities and stakeholders being tasked with specific missions is the *National Response Framework*. The *National Response Framework* is not a strategy document but is a "guide to how the Nation conducts all-hazards response. It is built upon scalable, flexible, and adaptable coordinating structures to align key roles and responsibilities across the nation, liking all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector."[15] Some policy makers may view the *National Response Framework* as effective guidance regarding all-hazards response and may be a model to develop a similar guide to national homeland security missions. The *National Response Framework*, however, does not identify national homeland security 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. Arguably, without prioritized resource allocation to aligned missions, the nation's homeland security activities and operations may be haphazard and inconsistent. Another consequence of the absence of clear missions is that available funding then tends to govern the priorities. Thus the appropriations process may dictate national homeland security missions.

Analysis of Consequences

Congress may wish to address the issues of homeland security strategy, definitions, and missions, in light of the potential for significant events to occur much like those of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 or natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

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[19] 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.

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

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

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

[19] U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Response Framework*, Washington, DC, January 2008, p. i.

These outstanding policy issues result from the varied definitions and missions identified in numerous national strategic documents. Additionally, these documents do not consistently address risk mitigation associated with the full range of homeland security threats. Finally, one piece arguably 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.

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.[20] The actual end product of any homeland security strategic process that involves clarifying definitions and missions will invariably aid in this planning process though a number of risks may still not be adequately countered.

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 coordinate and communicate. That work begins by 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. Finally, this analysis leads to the conclusion that missions are most effective when they are the product of a prioritization process based on national homeland security interests.

It has been argued that homeland security, at its core, is about coordination because of the disparate stakeholders and risks.[21] 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.

Without a general consensus on the physical and philosophical definition and missions of homeland security, achieved through a strategic process, there will continue to be the potential for disjointed and disparate approaches to securing the nation. This general consensus on the homeland security concept 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 developed an approach that adjusts federal homeland security policy to emerging threats and risks.

Thank you.

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

[21] Ibid.