

Changing Homeland Security: The Year In Review – 2007

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As New York City and the nation prepared to remember the sixth anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks, the talk started about September 11th fatigue: “a weariness of reliving a day that everyone wishes had never happened.”

“I may sound callous, but doesn’t grieving have a shelf life?” one person asked. “We’re very sorry and mournful that people died, but there are living people. Let’s wind it down.”¹

That gets my vote for 2007’s most startling homeland security story.

One gets startled when something happens one was not expecting. Perhaps I should not have been so surprised.

I spoke with a lot of thoughtful homeland security professionals last year. In December I asked many of them to answer two questions:²

- *From your perspective – and using whatever criteria you like – what would you say was a top homeland security-related story or issue in 2007?*
- *And, in 25 words or less, why?*

Their responses present a snapshot of Homeland Security 2007 as captured by people who work with and think about these issues all year. Their ideas remind us of the continuing debate about the meaning, scope, and effect of homeland security. Not every important topic or trend is mentioned.³ What is cited, however, outlines the still emerging terrain of homeland security.

Intelligence – arguably the core of preventing another major attack – was a significant issue in 2007. Several national intelligence estimates and related products revealed more information about “the threat” and about how the intelligence community does its work. Unsurprisingly, the more one knows about this element of the nation’s security, the more questions are raised. Can we rely on the accuracy and objectivity of intelligence generated by government? How does intelligence actually help the nation be better prepared? What goes on inside the more than forty fusion centers across the country? Who is watching what they do?

Do you recall Andrew Speaker and what he taught the nation about preparedness?

Did the behavior of James B. Comey (revealed last year) demonstrate anything about ethics, courage, and loyalty in homeland security?

What about the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development trial? Are there any lessons to be learned there about whether the United States Constitution is a “suicide pact” or an effective strategy for making sure the nation remains secure?

Speaking of strategies, have you had the chance to read the “updated” National Strategy for Homeland Security? What did you think about it? What do you plan to do differently because of it?

School shootings, mall shootings, gang shootings, a bridge collapse, wild-land fires, one fake news conference – are these homeland security concerns? Should they be?

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had neither spectacular successes nor dramatic failures in 2007.⁴ As the Bush era in homeland security enters its final year, DHS continues to search for organizational coherence. We were cautioned when DHS began in 2003 that it took the Department of Defense half a century to find its coherence. Does the nation have the patience to wait that long?

On the other hand, do most Americans even think about homeland security? We have not been successfully attacked since 2001. Although jurisdictions have to write harder, they still get homeland security grants. Air travelers routinely complain about the Transportation Safety Administration's (TSA) "security theater."⁵ Immigration and border security are political fodder. Al Qaeda has "regenerated" its capabilities. While the military part of the surge in Iraq appears to be succeeding, southwest Asia swirls further into disorder. Arrests at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and trials in Miami and Los Angeles raise questions about the nature of a homegrown terrorist threat.⁶

In early January 2008, a New York Times editorial castigated presidential candidates for not focusing more attention on homeland security.⁷ One can only think candidates would be talking more about homeland security if it were important to voters.

Although I did not ask, several respondents predicted what might be a top issue in 2008. We will check back next year to see how prescient they were.

In the meantime, we offer the following thoughts for your consideration. I hope something here startles you.

THE NATURE OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The biggest issue in Homeland Security in FY '07 was the re-emergence of Emergency Management and the subsequent subjugation of homeland security. The idea of homeland security as a discipline, that it is a system of systems, responsible for risk management in a jurisdiction, was greatly set back. The resurgence of emergency management has greatly slowed the progress that was made on getting the individual disciplines (fire, law enforcement, public health, infrastructure protection, EMS, public works, medical (physicians, nurses and hospitals), communications, intelligence, agriculture etc.) involved in homeland security to look at themselves as a part of a greater whole. Homeland Security appears to have regressed back to its previous 9/11 state of stove piped planning and possibly response.

– Former Senior DHS official

Your question implies selecting from the homeland security issues that the media brought to our attention, of which there are many to choose from. I don't feel that any of these are actually "top" issues

but rather what will sell papers and sway public opinion. The big issue for me is the sustainability of our national homeland security approach. Events, the reporting of events and our response to events swing like a pendulum over time. When something happens, we get up in arms and will do anything to fix it, then time passes and we don't see why we're paying for all this homeland security stuff. I can't see how we can sustain a legitimate National Strategy for Homeland Security under these conditions. But what to do about it?

If you're asking what top issue was reported in the media, I'd say the immigration one worries me the most, particularly because it flies in the face of so many other aspects of our culture. It would be easy to lock down the border (relatively anyway) if that didn't have enormous other sociopolitical and economic impacts that we don't want. Personally I find the "build a fence" approach to be so simpleminded I have to laugh.

– *Rudolph P. Darken*

Aside from the continuing erosion of over 200 years of tested constitutional law that has protected and defended the citizens of this nation, I would consider the collapse of the bridge in St. Paul, Minnesota to be the top story. I find it a metaphor for neglecting our foundations on so many levels. We need to educate the American people that terrorism does not always come with an explosion; it can come with a collapse.

– *Homeland Security researcher*

In 2007, we saw the continued erosion of leaders to persuade Americans that we still face a terrorist threat to the United States. Few believe terrorism will ever pose an existential threat to the United States, despite the new National Strategy on Homeland Security declaring that terrorists are intent on "destroying our way of life".

During 2007, Americans continued to put the images of 9-11 behind them. We end 2007 a more complacent people than we began the year. We are fatigued – tired of being scared. We are determined to be normal again.

Yet, 2007 was a year when almost all analysts acknowledged that al Qaeda and its affiliates have regrouped and when law enforcement in Europe and America recognized that homegrown radicalization is occurring more rapidly and with fewer indicators.

It was also a year where our preoccupation with Iraq continued to deflect us from effectively countering the broader terrorist ideological appeal. As a result, the number of global jihadists grew as we failed to engage "hearts and minds."

2008 will be a transition year. The political campaigns will likely reinforce our preoccupation with domestic concerns - the economy, health care, education, and other issues. We will be challenged to avoid turning more inward. Whether we end 2008 even more complacent than we began will depend, in large part, on who we elect the next president and whether we can regain our sense of purpose, align our values with our actions, and collaborate with international partners toward policies of inclusion.

– *Mike Walker*

I would offer the ever-expanding/evolving view of the discipline itself as the top homeland security issue of 2007. This relates to our frequent inquiry regarding what should be viewed a homeland security issue and if an issue or incident is deemed non-homeland security related, what criteria was used to make such a determination. Bridge collapse, school shootings, international security concerns (Secretary Chertoff recently stated he spends most of his time on the international aspects of homeland security), federally-funded fusion centers involved in domestic non-terrorism related criminal activities, California wildfires, etc. Continued lack of definition regarding what the discipline entails could have significant negative affects in the future: security (too many issues not given proper focus), economic (Congressional and state leaders manipulating expanded funding vehicles to pay for politically popular projects but have little affect on the strategic security environment), and international security ramifications (future enemies not aligned with or bound by traditional state entities. Is this a national and/or homeland security concern? Should homeland security continue to be viewed as a separate but necessarily conjoined discipline from that of national security?) Where might the current mindset of categorizing all activities that have the possibility of affecting national safety or security concerns take us in the future?

A corollary to the 2007 to 2008 story is a current slate of presidential candidates rarely discussing homeland security issues. Is this based on the unique nature of the presidential election environment or the candidates' lack of interest or understanding of homeland security? What little has been discussed by the candidates has been universal agreement that federal homeland security efforts are not working. However, no specifics are given regarding what should be done to address the perceived problems.

Projection: Top HS related story of 2008. Response and recovery actions and new programs and policies related to a significant cyber security related issue.

– *John Rollins*

I wouldn't limit this issue to the year 2007 as I see a growing trend since the creation of DHS five years ago. It seems to me that the inability to clearly define the concept of "homeland security" serves a very useful purpose and consequently that there is little interest in clearly defining the concept (and hence we are not likely to see the issue of defining this concept resolved anytime soon). Clearly, DHS is not interested in a definition that might limit its scope and consequently it argues for the broadest definition possible in order to allow it to choose which areas will fall under its purview. This, of course, is normal bureaucratic behavior and hardly surprising. However, the more interesting process that appears to be occurring is that in which Homeland Security is proving to be a vehicle for the strengthening of the powers and influence of the federal government at the expense of state and local governments. The concentration of significant funds in the hands of DHS, and the dispersing of significant funding to state and local authorities, has enabled the federal government to attempt to remake state and local institutions in its image (or at least along the lines of its priorities). If there are data to support this argument, then this should prove to be an interesting chapter in the ongoing saga of the struggle for influence and sovereignty between state and local government on the one hand and the federal government on the other – a struggle that has been so central to American history and the evolution of this country.

Five years after the creation of DHS, we are in the midst of a mad scramble to define homeland security in the absence of any major terrorist attacks to date (after all, DHS was created in the wake of 9/11 and not because of hurricanes). The concept of "dual use" has become the mantra while the concept of homeland security has been stretched to include, in addition to terrorism and natural disasters, issues (in their non-terrorist context) such as illegal immigration, maritime safety, cyber security, criminal activity, etc.

– *Homeland Security scholar*

I would say a top issue is the renewal of the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* in October. It solidified the direction we are going in, confirmed that we have adopted an all hazards approach, and set into motion the Homeland Security Management System (which, frankly, I'm not sure will fly).

– *Stan Supinski*

I think a general malaise is afflicting the public and media about homeland security. We seem, as a nation, to have gotten past Katrina and blaming FEMA for all our woes. We've moved into a new phase of understanding the relationship between the Feds (FEMA) and major incidents. The general citizenry does not know

this, or care to know it, but the "New FEMA" is out there and it's working.

The state of security of the homeland for the average "Joe" is good. There has been no major catastrophic disaster this year or the past few years for that matter. Iraq seems to be turning around and the media are not as concentrated on finding a villain as they once were. The major incidents, wildfires and the recent winter storms and power outages in the Midwest, did not stir a large or continuing barrage of media attention. Even the FEMA mock news conference did not hold media attention for too long.

Perhaps it is the impending election in 2008 or the fact that the long dreaded attack has not taken place as of yet. Homeland Security seems to have fallen into a "lull." This may be the biggest issue at the end of 2007.

– *Vincent J. Doherty*

From my perspective the top issue is the debate over protection vs. resilience. There have been no major natural disasters, no domestic terrorist events, and no major improvements to the resiliency of domestic public safety and homeland security systems. We have, since 9/11, spent probably over five trillion (yes with a "T") overseas on the war against terrorism and have yet to top 100 billion in domestic preparedness. Is the war succeeding, are we protected? One has to say yes. Are we a more resilient nation? One has to say no. We are at the point where we have spent the money domestically on the small things. But in order to take it to the next level we have to really spend on infrastructure. Interoperable communications, improved power grids systems, improved health networks, water systems, etc. are the real challenges and we are kidding ourselves that our lack of investment in these areas and the continued flow of trillions outside our borders is the only correct formula.

– *Michael Byrne*

Several issues come to mind as candidates for the top spot. Immigration continues to be an important issue, infringements on civil liberties in this country and elsewhere concern many, and cyber-warfare is more visible. In the broader view, perhaps the most important shift is the greater emphasis on all-hazards if it signals a long-run shift in political and civic will. It is the latter that has the potential to significantly alter the emphasis or drive homeland policy and public involvement in new directions.

– *Robert Josefek*

Lack of focus and priority for homeland security and the resources it needs, by elected and appointed senior officials. In a word – apathy.

We have opportunities to visit with, see and hear lots of senior officials among the full spectrum of functional areas in states and major cities. That is where I see the apathy. As best I can tell they are trying to get a fix on the actual "threat," and then relate that to the scarce resources available to prepare for the wide array of "what ifs" they face. They primarily look to homeland security officials (state and local) to find funding sources for those needs. For the most part, they believe that, if there is a threat or a public safety need, the "Feds" should fund it.

Conversely, I do not see, feel or hear that kind of apathy from the "average citizen" who I talk with as I travel the country. They are glad that the resources (wherever they come from) are applied to the threat and grateful that we have not suffered another "9/11." It is rare that I talk to anyone in the hinterlands, restaurants, airplanes, businesses of every kind and size, etc. who are not pleased with their personal safety and faith in the "government" (generic) to protect us. Rarely does anyone question the expense involved in maintaining or increasing that level of protection. It may also seem to them that it comes without cost. If there is a question about "terrorism" it is only about the national resources (human and fiscal) being expended on the "war in Iraq."

It is a conundrum: The officials say, "My constituents want better education for the kids, safer streets and neighborhoods, and better, cheaper healthcare." Homeland security wouldn't make the officials' Top 10 list of concerns

Simultaneously, "the constituents" are satisfied with the "government's" programs for protecting us from another 9-11. It's almost like that is a given and... it is "free." The other stuff costs money.

When you combine the two different but complimentary views, apathy quickly follows, especially among those elected to public office.

– *Vince Cable*

The biggest issue with homeland security this past year has been its identity crisis. What is homeland security anyway? Where are we going with it? As I travel, I am always amazed that the average citizen really believes the extent of homeland security is the effectiveness (or lack) of the TSA screener at the airport. Additionally, they believe that when it comes down to it, homeland security is really just a political issue to justify the current administration's policies. I don't believe they really think much about homeland security. That is the problem.

We haven't been able to "show them the money." Exactly what has been built after six years? It would make such a difference if the average citizen knew that homeland security has become a part of the fabric of our local, state, and federal institutions. A large part of the problem is due to lack of leadership. I don't think the vision for homeland security has been articulated in a way that people can understand. All they see are the headlines and reports that show that DHS is the worst place to work with the lowest morale. If the citizens knew their local police chief was networked across the country with FBI, NYPD, DC public health, they would understand this concept and perhaps support homeland security as a long-term solution, not just a federal institution.

I believe 2008 will be a pivotal year for homeland security as the election rolls on. How will the Democrats and Republicans articulate their vision for homeland security? Will it be political fodder used by the candidates to get elected? Will they just simplify the issues for their gain? Will they blame everything that is wrong on DHS or will someone be able to lead us to what is next? In only a few years, a foundation has been built for this discipline. Tens of thousands of Americans have been a part of building it. We need a leader who understands that and can lead us to what is next.

– *Homeland Security administrator*

The "homeland" we are securing is not a building or bridge but our way of life, the Constitution and the protections it provides. The issue/story for me was clearly expressed by a former federal cabinet official when he spoke at a conference I attended. To paraphrase the point that struck me, he said we can either have security or we can have freedoms. It seems to me his "either/or" thinking is an excuse for an extraordinary array of activities that are an assault on the "homeland." The question/issue/challenge is how can we have security and enhance our "homeland"?

– *Tom Mastre*

INTELLIGENCE

It seems to me in 2007 there was a lot of interest in intelligence: how we collect it, how it is shared, what is legal, what is ethical. I find this interesting as a "next stage" of homeland security. Without any direct attacks in the U.S., we've had time to step back from the hysteria and look at the more long-range implications of what we are doing.

– *Editor working in the field of Homeland Security*

The top issue was politically independent intelligence analysis. The November 2007 *National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's Nuclear*

Intentions and Capabilities demonstrates a readiness by the U.S. intelligence community to offer politically independent – even politically unwelcome – analysis. Whether this NIE's specific findings are accurate or not, the community's assertion of analytical independence and professionalism is an important contribution to the ability of the political process to realistically engage risks to the nation.

– *Private sector Homeland Security executive.*

There were two issues:

1) **Information Sharing:** Absence of a continuum of intelligence support within the national homeland security network. The reason for this includes different definitions of intelligence, lack of doctrine, need for focused intelligence skills, and leadership at state and local levels.

2) **2007 Homeland Security Threat Assessment:** For the first time in six years a viable intelligence estimate has been produced. It provided strategic intelligence about the threat of terrorism to the homeland. However, it was neither well distributed nor understood (for reasons related to #1 above).

– *Robert Simeral*

One issue that got my attention was Secretary Chertoff's quote about "I have a gut feeling" that something was going to happen. His remarks made me reflect on the status of our intelligence. The one thing that would have prevented 9-11 was the flow and sharing of intelligence. We had the information on the terrorists and should have prevented the attacks. Six years later, we have a huge DHS with a huge budget but are still struggling to fix the federal intelligence bureaucracy, which is the one thing, and maybe only thing, that we had to do to prevent the 9-11 attacks. Ironically, I do believe the state and local intelligence is much better off today than six years ago.

– *Homeland Security executive*

I would say the release of *The National Strategy for Information Sharing* in October was a monumental event in history. Historically the intelligence community has been built from a need-to-know versus a need-to-share perspective and the release of the NSIS shows a marked divergence from deep roots within this community. The release of a public strategy documenting a commitment to developing a resolution and acceptance of the importance in aggregating information, analyzing and then sharing back intelligence with all partners involved at state, local, tribal as well as federal levels seemed to me to be a ground-breaking strategic statement. Of course the proof is in the pudding and we

will see if the agencies identified as key leaders in the coordination can execute on the vision.

– *Homeland Security technologist*

A few issues come immediately to mind including the immigration debate and sustainability of programs as funding is reduced. I think both of these may become more important in 2008. For 2007 I think it must be the growing skepticism about, and the politicalization of, the intelligence function. How the intelligence community handles this crisis is significant not only for them but also for practicing prevention.

I am not an intelligence wonk but I was on the receiving end of intelligence reports from the DHS and FBI while I was with a major metropolitan police department. I must say that most of the reports were not that helpful. But the reports and warnings did cause us to stop, talk, and act in a preventative manner. It re-directed our attention, if only for a short while, back on the question of homeland security. Are the officers carrying their protective equipment? Have we drilled on this scenario and when? Do they know what to look for and what to report? When was the last time we talked with our private partners about security concerns? How can we integrate actions that may prevent this type of attack into our daily business of policing?

I have no idea if the intelligence was good or if we helped to prevent a terrorist attack but in some ways those questions are insignificant. The point was that we took intelligence and operationalized it and did so with the intent to help prevent an attack. This approach is gaining hold in policing. Intelligence-led policing has been around since the late nineties but just recently it is beginning to take hold. Crime data, crime prediction, and intelligence from human sources are driving some crime fighting strategies.

My concern is that as the intelligence function becomes the nightly meal of pundits that analysts and agencies will withdraw back into their shell. State and local agencies will stop demanding more and meaningful intelligence. Executives will go back to 'gut feelings' and regular policing. In essence, intelligence is dismissed as useless and suspect. More significant, prevention, as an important and meaningful activity for government agencies, will be seen as a luxury and ineffective – until the next time.

2007 was when the curtain was pulled and we saw what was behind the wizards of intelligence. Yes there may be some smoke and mirrors as there are in every profession. The question now is whether the wizards will stand and fight for their craft and its importance or will we go back to the American way of waiting, denying, and reacting.

– *Nola Joyce*

I think a very real issue concerns the future of fusion centers. They have reached a kind of a tipping point in 2007, where they will either start to demonstrate real ongoing value and become institutionalized, or they will rapidly fade away. They have tremendous potential, but as yet, with relatively few exceptions, they have not fully realized that potential, and the next twelve to eighteen months will be crucial if they are to survive. This is an area of substantial concern at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Justice.

– *David Kaufman*

In my opinion, the top homeland security related issue of the year involved the fundamental question of how to balance the focus of state and local fusion centers on all hazards, including traditional crime prevention goals, on the one hand, and terrorism prevention goals on the other hand.

– *Larry R. Irons*

I believe the role and function of fusion centers is – or will be – the top story for 2008. I get the sense (especially from the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department) that we will have to come up with a viable product and some measure of success very soon, or the interest and participation level will seriously wane.

– *Patrick Miller*

ETHICS AND TRUST

The May 2007 revelation that the executive branch, via Andrew Card and Alberto Gonzales, attempted to pressure the Justice Department into approving the National Security Agency (NSA) domestic surveillance program was a clarifying moment. Why? Even though it happened three years prior to the testimony by James Coomey, the revelation showed three things: the Justice Department had leaders willing to block constitutionally questionable activities; some in the administration were convinced the ends justified the means; and the top people in Justice were willing to resign over the tactics. The means/ends argument, then and now, is a rationalization framework that allows well-meaning people to take actions that threaten liberties. The strength shown by Justice leaders was very surprising and refreshing.

– *William V. Pelfrey Sr.*

For me the top issue is the revelation of the CIA destroying interrogation tapes of high value detainees at Guantanamo. Why? It undercuts confidence in the honesty and integrity of our intelligence community and probably extends upwards to the pressures they may have gotten from higher-level administrators. It means I can no longer trust what my government officials report about aspects of their alleged War on Terror.

– *Phil Zimbardo*

The torture debate that raged in the late summer and early fall was to my mind the most momentous homeland security related story. It fundamentally called into question the integrity and benevolence of the "us" in our carefully constructed "us versus them" narrative. In isolation it merely created a brief value vacuum. In conjunction with all the other things that are going on (e.g., warrantless wiretaps, detentions, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.), I think the torture debate might have affected people's understanding of homeland security on a pretty fundamental level. Moral issues are not dead, especially not when they feed into folk's fear of Big Brother – which is what homeland security is to most people. And there will always be politicians ready to stand up for the ignorance of the common man.

– *Anders Strinberg*

The two most salient events in homeland security/emergency management in 2007, in my mind, are the acknowledgement of bad intelligence collection processes on the threats in Iraq leading up to the "War on Terror" and FEMA's fake press conference. The reason these events come to mind is the same: trust in government to use due diligence to determine what is true and what is not in making homeland defense and security decisions, and then its commitment to inform the public accordingly. I think the willingness of citizens to continue to fund and support homeland security efforts will be based on whether or not they trust government is telling them the truth about the threat and the decisions made. These two events knocked us down on the scale quite a bit.

– *Susan Jones-Hard*

For me, the biggest Homeland Security related story has been the on-going legal battle for the rights of the detainees in Guantanamo. It seems to crystallize the antagonistic relationship between human/civil rights versus security. We need to find a balance, protecting ourselves while not becoming the next Gestapo nation.

– *Kate Lamar*

PUBLIC HEALTH

I think the top story was the Andrew Speaker case (the individual with drug resistant TB who went globe trotting). It brought together a host of issues, affected many homeland security departments, and highlighted the need to integrate public health into the homeland security equation. There are so many issues that this case brought up – border security, sharing (or lack thereof) of information both across departments and agencies within the U.S. as well as with international partners, government powers, quarantine, no fly lists, timeliness of information, perceived reliability of information systems, personal liberties vs. public good, and lack of knowledge of fundamental public health issues. It presents excellent opportunities for discussion, analysis, and improvement.

– Anke Richter

From a public health perspective, I think the top homeland security story was the Andrew Speaker TB case. The inability of public health to appropriately manage that case – or communicate with the Department of Homeland Security to control the movement of the patient (with him entering through the northern border even after being flagged on a watch list) – was particularly disturbing to me after working so hard in my former roles to strengthen the system. Mistakes were made at all levels of public health – local, state, and national – and also within DHS. No one looked good on that one. It was fortunate that this was a single case of TB rather than pandemic influenza.

– Senior federal government health leader

THE THREAT

As 2007 ends, we sit on a precipice. Looking back, a bureaucratically mired Department [of Homeland Security] did not make direly needed changes to fight an organization without a bureaucracy. Looking forward in 2008, Arabs may try to sway the presidential election by delivering Osama Bin Laden. This event may be the "tipping point" that either dissolves or magnifies the epidemic he created. If dissolved, our focus moves to the Peoples Republic of China. If magnified, soon after the election that same department will respond to the next significant attack.

– Former senior congressional staff member

I would argue one of the most significant homeland security issues was the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) released a few months ago on "The Terrorist Threat to the U.S. Homeland." With the

politically charged discussions on Iraq as the central front in the U.S. war on terror, the NIE unequivocally argued that the core threat to the U.S. homeland emanates from the tribal areas of Pakistan. Even more than this, the U.S. intelligence community judged al Qaeda to pose an “undiminished” threat to the homeland and to have “regenerated” itself from Pakistan’s tribal areas.

The language was clear: “Al-Qa’ida is and will remain the most serious terrorist threat to the Homeland, as its central leadership continues to plan high-impact plots, while pushing others in extremist Sunni communities to mimic its efforts and to supplement its capabilities. We assess the group has protected or regenerated key elements of its Homeland attack capability, including: a safe haven in the Pakistan Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), operational lieutenants, and its top leadership.”

– *Seth Jones*

Without hesitation I looked to foreign affairs for the top homeland security issues, because of the implications for domestic homeland security and the war on terror. My first thought was that the ongoing War in Iraq (with the political instability there strengthening al Qaeda), and the circumstances around Musharraf declaring a state of emergency in Pakistan, were my top picks. But that was before the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. Now Pakistan, and the strengthening of the Islamic militants and al Qaeda there, is my top pick. I think this will have implications for years to come for our foreign policy with dire implications for our domestic homeland security threat.

– *Senior federal executive*

The biggest question for me is who actually is in charge of al Qa’ida now and are they reconstituted and able to exert authority globally? They are and they have, would be my answer to the last two parts of the question. Pakistan and the failure of our foreign policy efforts seem to play into this.

Along with this is the role Iraq will play in the future and whether or not we can resist the urge to be idiots with Iran. I am not a fan of our diplomatic capability (or full lack there of) and how that impacts us negatively with regard to homeland security.

Another issue for me is the border security issue. Important I think because it is a real thing that all the political candidates can bat around. Also, because I think that we will eventually face a serious threat from internal insurgency from Hispanic terrorists/insurgents. Securing that border would go a long way to slowing that challenge to sovereignty.

Another critical issue is whether this country is going to invest all its power in the executive in relation to Homeland Security or if we will continue to function as a Constitutional Republic (I personally think it will be the former rather than the latter). The 9-11 attacks have accelerated Bush and Cheney's desire to make the office of the president unconstitutionally powerful in the balance.

– *Homeland Security scholar*

It seems to me the growing instability in Southwest Asia (Pakistan and Afghanistan) might affect the situation in the United States. Can we have homeland security if Pakistan becomes a failed state? Can Afghanistan succeed if Pakistan descends into lawlessness? What kind of government could follow Musharaf's? Can they be trusted with WMD's? If not, what can we do about it? Can we get the regional players involved in a constructive way (India, despite their poisonous relationship with Pakistan; Iran, despite their poisonous relationship with us?) It makes me worry.

Other than that, because of the lack of "events" on the home front, I think sustainability of homeland security is the main issue domestically.

– *Rocco Casagrande*

Top Story: "Cold War II"

As we focus on securing our physical borders, preparing to respond to a terrorist event, and pursuing our enemies overseas, we are being invaded and slowly consumed by an enemy who is moving through our nation's virtual arteries.

These are the criteria I used for selecting the top HLS related story:

1. Potential impact to our national sovereignty.
2. Potential impact to our economic stability.
3. Frequency/Escalation.

And here are examples of stories that support my view we are in Cold War II:

“China’s cyber army is preparing to march on America, says Pentagon.”⁸

“Chinese subcontractor installs Trojan horses on hard drives.”⁹

“McAfee CEO David DeWalt says cybercrime has become a \$105 billion business that now surpasses the value of the illegal drug trade worldwide.”¹⁰

“Theft of personal data more than triples this year”¹¹

– *Homeland security scholar*

From my California perspective, the top homeland security issue in 2007 was the “California Wildfires.” If a boy playing with matches started a 38,000-acre fire, then what would happen if intentional fires were set all over the state? On a hot, windy day, and with the current drought conditions, multiple wildfires would cause massive devastation.

– Sarah Bentley

I have to choose the Southern California Wildfires as being a significant homeland security event for 2007. I would choose it for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is, I have family and friends down there, all of whom were impacted and some directly.

Other reasons for it being high on the list would have to include:

a) This has now happened several times within just a few years and each time has caused significant economic and emotional damage to many families and businesses. The impact was felt not only locally but also at the state, federal, and international levels as well.

b) It caused a lot of emergency management and military to be tied up in responding to the fires and related issues, as well as disrupting pretty much everything, since people were not able to get to work or school.

c) There was some initial concern that terrorists started some or all of the fires. Although it was not the case, it wouldn't take much for one to see how easy it would be to plan for the next dry/El Nino season to coordinate the setting of a number of fires in strategic locations to cause major social and economic disruption.

– Gretta Marlatt

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

I would say the top homeland security issue of 2007 is specific to DHS itself. Recently, the department has adopted a habit of “lunging” where it turns all its resources from one crisis to the next. The most prevalent example of this was Hurricane Katrina, where afterwards, the department became focused solely on hurricanes and recovery. As they have inadvertently adopted this doctrine, an environment has been created where the guiding agency of the U.S. government becomes singly focused on one issue. DHS must find a way to manage crises instead of allowing those crises to guide the department.

– Former DHS executive

The number one story was the total breakdown of federal/state/local collaboration in the process of drafting the National Response Framework. The breakdown revealed DHS' broader misunderstanding of the leadership roles that states and localities should play in homeland security. The progress made at the end of 2007 in restoring collaboration is much needed, and critical to sustaining homeland security capacity over the long haul.

– *Paul Stockton*

I am curious, but uneducated, about the interaction between DHS and various regulatory agencies such as FERC, DOE, and EPA. Two things struck me as odd: (1) The "take over" by DHS of petrochemical regulations – regarding the tagging of rail tankers, and the ability for DHS to suspend licenses (if it is true), and (2) the recently passed Energy Bill.

What bothers me is that DHS appears to be stepping on toes, again, by adding more patches to the patchwork we call regulation. I don't know if this is true, but I am speculating that we may be headed towards more confusion over who is in charge of what, by allowing DHS to regulate industries that already have regulators.

Somewhat on the flip side, it seems to me that the Congress missed a big opportunity to add security to the energy/power sector when it passed the Energy bill. But, I didn't hear much about it.

– *Homeland Security scholar*

This comes to my mind as the most significant situation in which we currently find ourselves:

Event: The Congressional Appropriations Acts, PL109-295 and PL110-161, that directed organizational change within DHS and FEMA, directed operational change with regards to the PFO and FCO, directed a grant program to assist with security of not-for-profit organizations, and increased the funding for Emergency Management Performance Grants above administration requests, and other provisions.

Rationale: State and local emergency management professionals have campaigned for these and other type changes for years. Recent events and poor response performance have caused Congress to recognize the validity of the arguments and take a leadership role where DHS/FEMA have not taken action nor provided the necessary leadership for these improvements.

It is a shame that Congress has to become involved in such operational matters. Congressional staffers have listened to field professionals and now appear more qualified and willing to take action than DHS/FEMA senior officers who have not discussed and acted in partnership with local and state practitioners of emergency management and homeland security. Part of my frustration is that

NEMA and IAEM among others have tried, and there have been projects, funded by DHS/FEMA, which have also pointed out these issues and recommendations that have been slow, at best, in coming. We still do not have planning guidance or training courses or a National Response Plan worthy of the name even though base documents and training courses existed years ago upon which we could build updates.

– *Former state director of emergency management*

OTHER ISSUES IN 2007

Just thinking about this brings all kinds of ironic sugarplums to my mind. What pops up are: the suspension of habeas corpus, the destruction of evidence on interrogations and secret prisons, warrant-less spying on U.S. citizens, a potential solution to Guantanamo detentions, the conduct of privatized security armies in Iraq, and the use of homeland security issues to fuel immigration politics. Maybe poison toys and toothpaste from China should also be a homeland security issue? Or adolescents with guns shooting up their schools? Yet another issue: what will happen to all the jihadists who will be released from their sentences around the globe? Have they just become even more hardened militants? Has there been "rehabilitation" or any mind-changing successes? On the home front, here is an interesting turn of events: private security firms providing disaster response for rich people.¹²

– *Terrorism researcher*

Here are a couple stories/ issues that I think were/are interesting. I also think they will be with us in some capacity in the coming years.

1. Immigration – The national debate is becoming more political and polarizing.
2. Homegrown terrorist threat – How are we handling the domestic threat? Is there a domestic threat?
3. The Andrew Speaker TB story. He was the lawyer who disregarded authorities and snuck back home with TB. That was a real confidence booster in the public health system. Can't wait for a bio outbreak or pan flu epidemic. The CDC lost control of this early on and never really regained control.
4. The fake FEMA press conference – This is a water cooler classic at home and abroad. It shows they just don't get it. Terrific material for the Area 51 crowd.
5. Guantanamo – Mind boggling. How long is this going to go on?
6. Fusion Centers – Who is watching the collectors?

– *Homeland security researcher*

I think the top story and perhaps issue for 2007 was related to our borders with Mexico and with Canada. It seemed that Congress and the administration were continuously battling over the best way to approach the issue. State government officials were also engaged in the dialogue, whether or not they were a border state due to the immigration policy implications which has an affect on the economic stability of many states.

In addition, some of the presidential candidates have been using this issue as a part of their campaign platform. This puts the issue in front of us on an almost daily basis.

– *Former state homeland security adviser*

From my perspective the most significant issues for homeland security is the collapse of our southern border and subsequent uncontrolled immigration. In addition to adding an element of insecurity, the obfuscation of our immigration laws, pertinent police powers, and a growing "gray" economy do more to erode our social, economic, health, and educational security than perhaps any collection of terrorist threats facing this nation. In some circles, the lack of border security means there is no homeland security.

– *Homeland Security scholar*

Andrew Speaker TB incident – The event demonstrated strengths and weaknesses in prevention and response capabilities. Information sharing systems helped to connect the dots,¹³ yet the success or failure of a system is ultimately dependent on human factors. In this case, the human factors of the border security officer came into play.¹⁴

Holy Land Foundation Trial – The event demonstrated the challenges of fighting terrorism in the American court system.¹⁵

The lack of multi-disciplinary/academic research in homeland security. Much of the homeland security budget has been directed towards developing equipment in the private sector and procuring it. Priorities are focused on projects that are immediately applicable. Many homeland security issues, however, are complex and change over time – which may require strategic approaches from multiple disciplines.¹⁶

Protection of personal data was the theme in several stories in 2007 – from databases being stolen from laptops in cars to England's concern about the use of personal information in flight screening.¹⁷ As our technology advances in the information age, our policies and practices need to keep pace.

– *Lauren Fernandez*

The top stories for me are about collaboration and leadership. Where have we gotten in the past year?

The San Diego Fire Storm: What happened to unified command? What can we learn from that experience?

Jay M. Cohen’s leadership: The Department of Homeland Security’s under secretary for science and technology has stepped outside bureaucracy to find out what really going on in the science and technology domain. Has publishing information about gaps and accepting solutions from the ‘street’ made a difference?

DHS Grants moving back to FEMA: Is this a regional solution or just more confusion for state and locals.

Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS) and other portals for communicating best practices: Why is it still so hard to share?

– Former DHS staff member.

ONE MORE LOOK



A tag cloud is a box displaying a set of words. The size of each word is proportional to the frequency with which it appears in a relevant set; the bigger

the word, the more often it appears. The tag cloud here shows the top 100 terms used in this article.¹⁸ The cloud depicts the semantic field that emerges from the ideas discussed above. It is one portrait of homeland security in the year 2007.

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¹ N. R. Kleinfield, "As 9/11 Draws Near, a Debate Rises: How Much Tribute Is Enough?" *New York Times*, September 2, 2007. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/02/nyregion/02fatigue.html?_r=1&scp=184&sq=september,%2011,%202001&oref=slogin

² I asked 75 people to respond; 46 people provided observations I thought were worth reporting. One person asked that his response not be used. Several people requested they not be identified by name.

³ Some significant issues not mentioned in this review include port security, the vehicle borne improvised explosive device attacks in Scotland, the Congressional passage of additional 9/11 Commission recommendations, the failure to pass an immigration bill, and efforts to revoke the 2006 changes to the Restoration Act (previously called the Insurrection Act). If you think other strategic concerns, trends, or incidents should be included in a portrait of 2007, please send us a comment.

⁴ Secretary Chertoff wrote that "2007 was, in fact, a year of tremendous progress and maturation for" the department. DHS, "Remarks by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff on 2007 Achievements and 2008 Priorities," http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/speeches/sp_1197513975365.shtm. (In 2007, Secretary Chertoff, and other DHS leaders, started their own blog at <http://www.dhs.gov/journal/leadership/>.) For another assessment of how DHS performed in 2007, see Majority Staff of the [House] Committee on Homeland Security, *The State of Homeland Security 2007*, ND. homeland.house.gov/SiteDocuments/20070413143439-12273.pdf

⁵ For examples, see Associated Press, "TSA Draws Travelers' Complaints," *New York Times*, December 20, 2007, <http://nytimes.com/aponline/us/AP-Airport-Complaints.html?pagewanted=all>. Clark Ervin, "Screening Dreams," *New York Times*, December 10, 2007, <http://jetlagged.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/12/10/screening-dreams/>. Patrick Smith, "The Airport Security Follies," *New York Times*, December 28, 2007, <http://jetlagged.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/12/28/the-airport-security-follies/>. For a defense of what TSA does (and does not do), see the interview with TSA's director at Bruce Schneier, "Interview with Kip Hawley," *Schneier.com*, 2007, <http://www.schneier.com/interview-hawley.html>.

⁶ "Jury in 'Miami 7' Terrorism Trial Deadlocked," *cbs5.com*, December 13 2007, <http://cbs5.com/national/miami.sears.tower.2.610440.html>; "Radicals wanted to create carnage at Fort Dix," *CNN.com*, May 9, 2007, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/05/08/fortdix.plot/index.html>. Andrew Murr, "Thwarting Terror," *Newsweek.com*, December 15, 2007, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/78189>

⁷ "Homeland Security on the Hustings," *New York Times*, January 11, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/11/opinion/11fri1.html?ref=opinion>. (Accessed January 12, 2008)

⁸ see http://technology.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/tech_and_web/the_web/article2409865.ece

⁹ See <http://hsdailywire.com/single.php?id=5045>

¹⁰ See <http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=201807230>

¹¹ See http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/technology/2007-12-09-data-theft_N.htm

¹² See <http://www.michiganmessenger.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=399>

¹³ See <http://govexec.com/dailyfed/0607/060107cdpm1.htm>

¹⁴ See <http://www.cnn.com/2007/HEALTH/conditions/05/31/tb.flight/>

¹⁵ For an interesting article on the threats analyzed in the trial, see http://www.americanthinker.com/2007/09/homeland_security_implications_1.html

¹⁶ See http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/dec2007/tc20071219_695982_page_2.htm

¹⁷ See http://observer.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,,2132099,00.html

¹⁸ The list used for this tag cloud was refined by eliminating common words (e.g., “is,” “the”) and words not directly related to homeland security (such as “ago,” “biggest,” “recently,” et al.). The cloud was produced by using the resources at <http://www.tagcrowd.com>.