

Terrorism

In the eight years since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, 27 terrorist plots against the United States have been foiled. These plots included plans to collapse the Brooklyn Bridge, blow up the Sears Tower, and set JFK Airport in flames. These threats, as well as al-Qaeda's continued presence in Pakistan and concerns that transnational terrorists seek to obtain weapons of mass destruction, demonstrate the necessity of vigilance against terrorism.

The Obama Administration's refusal to recognize the war on terrorism and downgrading the importance of the Islamist terrorist threat put the nation at risk.

Protecting America is of the utmost importance to all. In a recent poll, 58 percent of liberals and conservatives alike ranked the mission to defend America, support our troops, and protect the border from terrorists as "absolutely essential." National security remains a top priority for American voters.

That said, Americans are ambivalent over what represents "good" security. They are confused by what they hear in the media and unfamiliar with many of the details of what it takes to protect them from transnational terrorism.

Effectively combating terrorism requires policies and programs at home and overseas that keep Americans safe, free, and prosperous. Any policy or program must support all three priorities equally well: getting terrorist leaders, disrupting their organizations and operations and cutting off their sources of funding and recruiting; protecting the liberties and freedoms of Americans; and allowing the economy to grow and prosper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Win the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, denying al-Qaeda sanctuary and eliminating its leaders. Efforts to create a stable Afghanistan through the removal of al-Qaeda and the Taliban cannot be achieved without a strengthening of Pakistan's commitment and the

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overall relationship between the two nations. Pakistan must not be allowed to undermine the security of the region by continuing its dual policy on terrorists, sending soldiers to fight the cross-border movement of extremists while ignoring known ties between Pakistani security forces and the Taliban. The U.S. must condition future military assistance to Pakistan such that U.S. military assistance to Pakistan would come under review and threat of revocation if information came to light that members of the Pakistani security forces were continuing to support and aid the Taliban.

2. Create sustainable homeland security programs that respect federalism. Congress needs to stop throwing money at the problem, wasting scarce homeland security dollars and undermining federalism and strong, sustainable state and local programs. The 9/11 Commission reported that homeland security grants were becoming pork barrel legislation. The commission was right. Currently, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) allocates state and local homeland security funding by using a grant structure. The grant structure is the wrong tool because it does not foresee substantial federal involvement when in fact DHS is integrally involved—from issuing requirements to unfunded mandates to requiring yearly applications for funds. Given the integrated nature of building a national system across multiple levels of government, the federal government will be involved. Unlike grants, cooperative agreements do foresee substantial federal involvement and respect our nation’s federalist principle. With cooperative agreements, the federal government and the states and localities can sit down as true and equal partners and negotiate outcomes at the beginning, including covering programmatic and financial oversight requirements, and then direct funds to achieve those outcomes without the need of yearly applications. This approach will ensure in a more effective, efficient, and constitutional manner that America is prepared for the next terrorist attack or catastrophic natural disaster.

3. Keep our borders safe and secure. Amnesty measures do not provide a solution to illegal immigration; they encourage it. Proposed amnesty measures such as the Agricultural Jobs, Opportunity, Benefits and Security Act (AG Jobs), show illegal immigrants that the U.S. is not serious about interior enforcement. Prior to the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, estimates put the illegal immigrant population at around 3.5 million. Today numbers are closer to 12 million, showing that amnesty measures only provide an incentive to illegal immigration.

Measures instead need to be taken to encourage interior enforcement and legal immigration. Congress must continue to support the growth of cooperative agreements between federal, state, and local law enforcement in combating crimes related to illegal immigration. Further, introducing a temporary worker program and improving the system for temporary visas for both high- and low-skill workers would allow an alternative to illegal immigration with clear economic benefits to both immigrants and American industry.

4. Congress passed measures after 9/11 as political bumper stickers to claim they were tough on terrorism. These measures offer little practical security and undermine the economic competitiveness. They should be repealed. The U.S. cannot afford to waste time and resources on them. For example, the 100 percent cargo screening mandate fails to bring any added security to the United States, but rather alienates allies in cargo security efforts, weakens the economy, slows down supply chains, and blatantly ignores infrastructure and technology limitations. The cost burden and delay in transit alone cause major profit loss to American companies that are already struggling within the weakened economy. The 100 percent cargo screening mandate should be repealed in favor of looking to expanding the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and Customs Trade Partnership against Terrorism (C-TPAT).

5. Renew focus on efficacy for detention and interrogation for American security. Recent discussion of closing Guantanamo Bay and of CIA interrogation techniques drew attention away from the fact that detention and interrogation are vital and legal security measures. Military detention has long been an integral tool in armed conflict, preventing terrorists and other enemies from continued efforts to harm the U.S. and its soldiers. Likewise, interrogation has provided intelligence leading to the identification and apprehension of countless terrorists. Executive orders to close Guantanamo Bay do not negate the fact that enemy combatants will still need to be held at other locations for the security of the nation and investigation into CIA measures will only harm national security by making officers reluctant to gather intelligence. Focus must be turned from supposed controversy to the true efficacy of detention and interrogation for American security.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- At least 26 terrorist plots have been foiled since 9/11.
- Cooperative law enforcement agreements offer a combined perspective and shared ownership of goals and outcomes.
- The yearly average of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declarations has tripled since the early nineties, leading the agency to respond to a new declaration every 2.8 days.
- State and federal homeland security spending greatly exceeds that of federal grants. Federal grants comprise anywhere from 0.1 percent to 17.7 percent of annual state homeland security spending.

- Estimates put the number of people trained in terrorist camps in Afghanistan between 20,000 and 70,000.
- The illegal immigrant population in the United States has nearly quadrupled since the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act.
- More than 120,000 illegal immigrants have been identified under 287(g).
- The 100 percent cargo screening mandate requires measures at over 700 ports and 2,100 shipping lanes with a cost of \$8 million per shipping lane to fund the equipment alone.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Jena Baker McNeill, "26 Foiled Terror Plots Show Success of Information Sharing," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2634, September 29, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm2634.cfm>

Jena Baker McNeill and James Jay Carafano, "Terrorist Watch: 23 Plots Foiled Since 9/11," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2294, July 2, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/bg2294.cfm>

Lisa Curtis, "Afghanistan and Pakistan: Understanding and Engaging Regional Stakeholders," testimony before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, March 31, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/tst040209a.cfm>

Matt A. Mayer, "Effective Counterterrorism: State and Local Capabilities Trump Federal Policy," Heritage Foundation *Center for Data Analysis Report* No. 09-02, June 3, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/cda0902.cfm>

Matt A. Mayer, "Controlling Illegal Immigration: State and Local Governments Must Do More," Heritage Foundation *Special Report* No. 66, August 25, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Immigration/sr0066.cfm>

Jena Baker McNeill, "15 Steps to Better Border Security: Reducing America's Southern Exposure," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2245, March 9, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/bg2245.cfm>

Charles D. Stimson, "Holding Terrorists Accountable: A Lawful Detainment Framework for the Long War," Heritage Foundation *Legal Memorandum* No. 35, January 23, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/lm35.cfm>

Todd F. Gaziano and Robert Alt, "A CIA Special Prosecutor: A Wolf in Wolf's Clothing," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2588, August 14, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/LegalIssues/wm2588.cfm>

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