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HOMELAND SECURITY POLICY INSTITUTE

# Thinking Anew—Security Priorities for the Next Administration

PROCEEDINGS REPORT OF THE HSPI PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION TASK FORCE
April 2008-January 2009



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### About the Institute

Founded in 2003, The George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute (HSPI) is a nonpartisan "think and do" tank whose mission is to build bridges between theory and practice to advance homeland security through an interdisciplinary approach. By convening domestic and international policymakers and practitioners at all levels of government, the private and non-profit sectors, and academia, HSPI creates innovative strategies and solutions to current and future threats to the nation.

For further information, please contact: Homeland Security Policy Institute The George Washington University Medical Center 2300 I Street NW, Suite 721 Washington, DC 20037 Phone: 202-994-2437

hspi@gwu.edu

http://homelandsecurity.gwu.edu

# The Homeland Security Policy Institute Presidential Transition Task Force\*

Initiated by HSPI's Steering Committee in Spring 2008, the Task Force sought to further policy discussions of the top strategic priorities in the area of security in order to generate actionable recommendations, for the Administration taking office in January 2009, designed to effectively meet the most vexing challenges the United States faces today.

Genieve Abdo Fellow The Century Foundation

Abdullah Ansary Independent Scholar

Michael Balboni Deputy Secretary for Public Safety State of New York

Seth Carus
Deputy Director, Center for the Study of
WMD's
National Defense University

Jonah Czerwinski Senior Fellow, Homeland Security IBM Global Leadership Initiative

Stephen E. Flynn
Ira A. Lipman Senior Fellow for
Counterterrorism & National Security Studies
Council on Foreign Relations

George Foresman
Former Under Secretary for
National Protection & Programs
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

David Heyman
Director, Homeland Security Program
Center for Strategic and International Studies

David B. Low International Advisory Board Oxford Analytica

Ronald Marks
Senior Vice President for Government
Relations
Oxford Analytica, Inc.

Alan McCurry
Former Chief Operating Officer
American Red Cross
The McCurry Group

Kirstjen Nielsen Managing Director & General Counsel Civitas Group, LLC

> Jon Nowick Course Designer SAIC

Dan Prieto
Vice President
Homeland Security & Intelligence
IBM

Kenneth Rapuano Former Deputy Homeland Security Advisor The White House

Marc Sageman
Principal
Sageman Consulting, LLC

Suzanne Spaulding Principal Bingham Consulting Group LLC

Seth Stodder Senior Counsel Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP

> George Vradenburg Chairman Vradenburg Foundation

Richard Weitz Senior Fellow and Director Center for Political-Military Analysis Hudson Institute

Christine Wormuth
Senior Fellow
International Security Program
Center for Strategic and International Studies

### HSPI TASK FORCE STAFF

Frank Cilluffo Reaghan Bik
Director Executive Associate

Jan LaneJoseph ClarkDeputy DirectorPolicy Analyst

Sharon Cardash Jordan Evert
Associate Director Presidential Administrative Fellow

Daniel Kaniewski Laura Keith
Counselor Policy Analyst

<sup>\*</sup> Titles of individuals at the time of initiation of the Task Force.

# HOMELAND SECURITY POLICY INSTITUTE STEERING COMMITTEE

Richard V. Allen Former National Security Advisor

> Hal Bruno Former Political Director ABC News

Gen. Richard A. Chilcoat
Dean, Bush School of Government
Texas A&M University

Chief Dennis Compton International Fire Service Training Association

Colleen Conway-Welch
Dean
Vanderbilt University School of Nursing

Ambassador Henry A. Crumpton Crumpton Group LLC

Charles B. Curtis
President & Chief Operating Officer
Nuclear Threat Initiative

Robert Davi Actor, Spokesperson i-SAFE

Martin C. Faga Former President and CEO The MITRE Corporation Stephen E. Flynn
Ira A. Lipman Senior Fellow for
Counterterrorism & National Security Studies
Council on Foreign Relations

Rohan Gunaratna Associate Professor Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies Singapore

Bruce Hoffman Professor, Security Studies Program Georgetown University

Ambassador W. Nathaniel Howell Former Ambassador to Kuwait

Bobbie Greene Kilberg

Member

President's Council of Advisors on Science and

Technology

E. Floyd Kvamme Former Co-Chair President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology

Senator Connie Mack (R-FL) Former United States Senator, Florida

Secretary John O. Marsh, Jr. (D-VA) Former Secretary of the Army Former U.S. Congressman Andrew C. McCarthy Former Chief Assistant U.S. Attorney

Alan McCurry
Former Chief Operating Officer
American Red Cross
The McCurry Group

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Council for Excellence in Government

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General Edward "Shy" Meyer Former Chief of Staff U.S. Army

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Former Ambassador to Denmark

Dr. Lydia W. Thomas President and CEO Noblis

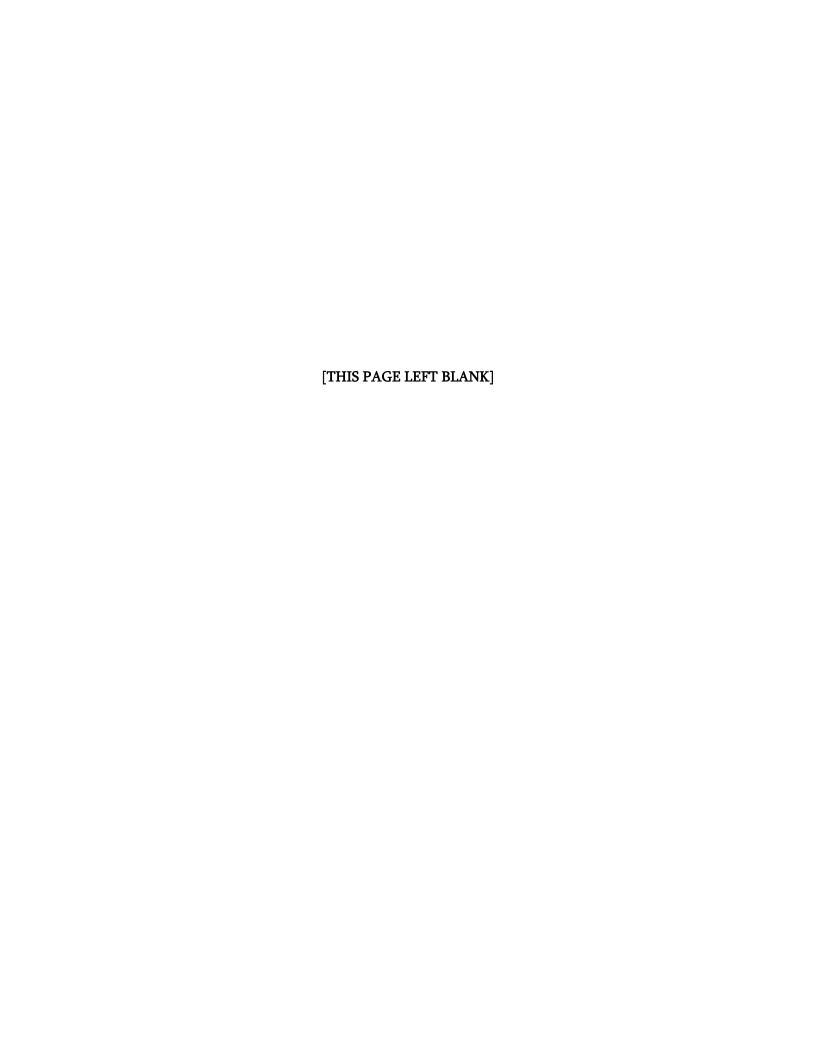
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George Vradenburg Chairman Vradenburg Foundation

Judge William H.Webster
Former Director of Central Intelligence and
Former Director of the Federal Bureau of
Investigation

James Lee Witt Former Director Federal Emergency Management Agency

> R. James Woolsey Former Director Central Intelligence Agency



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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The nation is in the midst of a crossroads in its consideration of security policy. A coherent strategy to address 21<sup>st</sup> century threats to the United States, one that treats national and homeland security as a seamless whole, has yet to emerge. Washington is now marked by a new Administration, a new tone, and a new space – offering a rare opportunity to catch our collective breath, to think creatively and anew about the most vexing challenges this country faces, and to put the most powerful of those reasoned ideas into action.

To help fuel this process, in April 2008 The George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute (HSPI) established the Presidential Transition Task Force, comprised of national and homeland security experts, policymakers and practitioners. Task Force members included representatives from past Administrations, State government, Fortune 500 companies, academia, research institutions and non-governmental organizations with global reach. The goal was to determine the top strategic priorities to advance the nation's security in the coming decade and to further policy discussions by identifying the benefits and challenges to achieving these goals, as well as the way forward. Given prevailing fiscal realities, prioritization of security efforts and resources becomes all the more important.

The Task Force held internal deliberations, which included a number of briefings from subject-matter experts at the forefront of their fields.<sup>1</sup> From these discussions and debates, four strategic priorities emerged that serve to inform the new Administration:

- development and implementation of a proactive security strategy at the federal level that integrates international and domestic aspects of security, is founded upon the concepts of resilience, and is effectively resourced;
- enhancement of a national approach to preparedness and response through the development of a risk-based homeland security doctrine that effectively draws upon and coordinates all available assets (governments, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and the public);
- realistic public discussion of the threats the nation faces and constructive engagement of the American public in preparedness and response efforts; and
- re-invigoration of the United States' role in the world, through a recognition that our security and that of our allies depends upon the stability and engagement of other nations.

To further develop and vet these priorities, HSPI and the Presidential Transition Task Force hosted a series of public roundtables titled, *Thinking Anew – Security Priorities for the Next Administration*, to draw upon the expertise, insights and perspectives of the broader policy community. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For a list of briefers, see Appendix A.

roundtables drew significant audiences and featured respected speakers from a variety of relevant arenas, including policymakers; federal, state and local government officials; concerned and involved citizens; recognized think tank experts and academics in international studies; leaders in the NGO community; and media experts steeped in an understanding of new media and behavioral research. Reports of these proceedings follow; a roster of participants and an overview of media coverage is also included at the end of this document.

The security policy priorities identified by the Task Force, as well as key findings and recommendations, are as follows:

### Proactive Strategy and Resilient Foundations: Striking the Right Federal Stance

Challenge and opportunity within the security realm exist for the new Administration. The chance to think creatively and anew accompanies the myriad complex matters on the horizon. The Task Force determined that a coherent strategy to address 21st century threats to the United States requires that national and homeland security be treated as a seamless whole; but that strategy has yet to emerge. To achieve a proactive and resilient posture, U.S. strategy, policy, practice and organizational structures may need to be revised or recalibrated. The following findings and recommendations underscore gaps in the current circumstance, and suggest specific steps for how the new Administration might best meet the challenges ahead.

### **Findings**

- The US has adopted reactive rather than proactive strategic approaches to homeland security and national security.
- The US has not built sufficient resilience into its strategic security posture.
- Since 2003, homeland security and national security policy have been treated as separate and distinct enterprises.
- The budgeting process for homeland security investment priorities is opaque and oriented towards the short-term.

### Recommendations

The President should:

- more closely align homeland and national security entities within the executive branch of government in order to get ahead of the threat;
- use the forthcoming Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) to leverage long-term planning and budgeting for homeland security and national security priorities; specifically, align the QHSR with the Quadrennial Defense Review;
- streamline congressional oversight of homeland and national security entities by working with Congress to enact Department of Homeland Security authorization legislation;
- embed privacy protections and due respect for civil liberties in homeland and national security program development; and
- invest in education and professional development training, to include rotation details, for the homeland security professional civilian corps.

### National Approach to Preparedness and Response: Shaping Expectations, Enhancing Capabilities

A truly national approach to prevention and preparedness for natural and man-made disasters is lacking. A national approach would integrate the capabilities and efforts of all levels of government, the private sector, and the not-for-profit sector. Though a robust regional structure led by the Department of Homeland Security has long been discussed as a means of coordinating federal interagency support, as well as drawing forward State and local government capabilities, current efforts continue to be limited. Incidents of a catastrophic magnitude that require federal support need a proactive, coordinated federal response. The Task Force noted that the next Administration should consider whether presidential policies and associated plans and frameworks should be adjusted or created anew to provide such a response. In light of how crucial state and local law enforcement efforts are to prevention, preparedness and response, policies should reflect and capitalize on those efforts to successfully adapt to 21st century needs.

### **Findings**

- Catastrophic disasters that compel state and local governments to request federal assistance require a proactive, coordinated federal response capability.
- A robust national regional structure for planning and response efforts led by the Department of Homeland Security is necessary, but has thus far been limited in scope.
- Incident management roles and responsibilities at the federal level remain unclear.
- Public and private sector efforts for catastrophic disaster response are not fully integrated.

### Recommendations

The President should:

- develop homeland security doctrine that includes a multi-layered approach to threat response—utilizing all aspects of the federal government, to include homeland and national security entities—to improve regional capability;
- incorporate anti-crime and counterterrorism planning, "intelligence-led policing," and all-hazards preparedness into preparedness planning;
- utilize and foster State and local law enforcement intelligence relationships with DHS via fusion centers;
- continue incorporating the National Guard into Northern Command's mission; and
- encourage the formulation of strategic relationships with academia and the private sector at the national and regional levels to inform security policy.

### Engage and Enlist the American Public: People—Our Greatest Strength

The absence of a sustained "culture of preparedness" has been lamented over the years. The new Administration should foster such a culture, in which individuals take seriously the responsibility of being prepared to survive for three days on their own, create evacuation plans for themselves and their families, and get out of harm's way when appropriate. New or bolstered programs to engage the public in preparedness efforts should also harness new communications technologies to enable social networks to act as bases for civic literacy as well as a volunteer response network during crises, incorporate lessons learned from human behavioral studies, and lay guidelines for responding to those with special needs. Moving forward, the Task Force found these to be the channels in which the

government could enlist the public to be most constructively and meaningfully engaged in these endeavors.

### **Findings**

- A culture of preparedness as recommended by congressional and White House reports following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 has yet to prevail in America.
- The American public has yet to be constructively and meaningfully engaged in disaster planning and preparedness efforts.
- New communications technologies give rise to new opportunities to productively engage the American public in preparedness efforts.
- Volunteers have little or no liability coverage in the event that they assist during a crisis.

### Recommendations

The President should:

- utilize local opinion leaders to engage the public in preparedness efforts, and to deliver messages in the event of a crisis;
- invest in or leverage existing communications technologies to advance public preparedness initiatives; and
- release area-specific risk-assessment information to enable a local population to prepare more effectively for higher probability events.

### International Strategy: Re-Invigorating Our Role in the World

America's security depends upon the stability and engagement of other nations. Historically, the U.S. has been a good global partner, making full use of the range of tools of statecraft, including humanitarian and development assistance, and trade initiatives. Yet, U.S. standing in the world has suffered for reasons both real and perceived. The current international landscape is marked by a number of complex foreign policy challenges. The Task Force determined that the nation would be well served by efforts to elevate the instrument of diplomacy, and to examine the lessons of post-conflict reconstruction, in part to recapture and reinvigorate key elements of the country's past which recognized that we cannot go it alone.

### **Findings**

- U.S. security depends on the stability and engagement of other nations.
- A coordinated outreach and strategic communications strategy is a necessary, but lacking, precursor to confront radicalization and recruitment by extremist groups in a non-kinetic manner.

### Recommendations

The President should:

- employ a strategy that amplifies voices within the Muslim world that seek to counter radicalization and recruitment, and that exercises care regarding the use of lexicon;
- foster respect for and adherence to international law in the form of longstanding, fundamental and widely accepted norms; and
- engage productively with international organizations and institutions to build security abroad

### Chapter 1

## Proactive Strategy and Resilient Foundations: Striking the Right Federal Stance



On October 15, 2008, The George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute (HSPI) launched its Presidential Transition Task Force Roundtable Series titled "Thinking Anew: Security Priorities for the Next Administration." The panel discussion featured leading experts in the field: P.J. Crowley of the Center for American Progress; Stephen Flynn of the Council on Foreign Relations; and Fran Townsend, former Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism.

The next Administration will meet both challenge and opportunity in the security realm. The chance to think creatively and anew accompanies the myriad complex matters on the horizon. What should be the top strategic priorities for the next Administration? A proactive and resilient posture is needed, but what is the best way forward to achieve it? To further policy discussions of these and other crucial issues, HSPI's Presidential Transition Task Force convened the first in a series of forums

intended to identify the benefits, challenges, and way forward to achieving objectives critical to our nation's security in the coming decade.

Townsend began by citing the need to create 21st century structures and strategies to meet 21st century threats. Current threats to U.S. security must be addressed through integrated national and homeland security initiatives. She noted that the tribal areas of Pakistan are the source of the greatest immediate threat originating from outside



U.S. borders, along with nuclear terrorism and cyber security.

These threats affect everyday life in America and demand greater focus and coordination across the federal government as well as between the federal and state and local governments. Townsend illustrated how a cyber attack could cause a lack of confidence in e-commerce, undermining local businesses and the economy. To address the cyber security threat as well as many others, the federal government must enlist the help of Americans in academia and the private sector because it lacks the intellectual capital and understanding to address these threats alone.

Asked for guidance that she would share with the incoming Administration, Townsend encouraged the next president to engage the public in a discussion on the necessary balance between security and privacy and civil liberties. The decisions made immediately after 9/11 might not be right for today, and the U.S. requires a national dialogue to bring balance to this issue. Further, Townsend believes the next president can take a lead in improving information sharing across federal, state, and local



levels. Effective information sharing requires a closer alignment of homeland and national security strategy to develop a national approach to preparedness and response. The civilian side of the national and homeland security structure needs to implement "jointness," drawing from the benefits that have emerged from the military reforms under the Goldwater-Nichols Act. This not only includes structural reform, but a revised system of education and a new budget process as well. Crowley built upon the issue of

integration, by noting that important adjustments need to be made in terms of strategy, priorities, resources, and structure. To this end, he suggested that the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review and the Quadrennial Defense Review "must talk to each other," meaning that each must acknowledge

and take into account the imperatives of the other. In addition, it is imperative to bind homeland security and national security together because what the U.S. does abroad impacts threats at home. Implications from the national security realm affect the homeland security realm; thus a change in mindset must accompany a change in structure. Crowley also mentioned that the U.S. is not self-sufficient, and it can't tackle security issues alone. As a result, the concept of homeland security must adjust to consider global security in partnership with other countries.

Elaborating on the concept of strategy, both Crowley and Flynn discussed the importance of prioritizing specific security issues. Crowley pointed out that the 15 threat scenarios determined by DHS should be prioritized. As a result of this lack of prioritization, government officials have taken the worst possible threat—terrorists with nuclear weapons—and made it the standard for which we prepare. The upshot is a lack of preparedness for those disasters we are most likely to confront. A new national security budget should make some tradeoffs to address issues such as public health and public safety, because these are the bottom line issues where security becomes important. Too much of the current national security budget is on offense, some of which should be recalibrated to defense. Capabilities-based planning should be implemented to prioritize those items that will be vital to preventing an attack, mitigating consequences, and enabling recovery.

Tying strategic priorities to the need for a national approach to preparedness and response, Flynn posited that the most probable and consequential risk to the public in terms of mass casualties and property is likely to arise from natural events, not an attack. Unfortunately, current security spending fails to reflect this reality. Instead, the federal government presently leaves natural disaster management to state and local governments, but appropriates most of the available funds to its own national security programs.

Furthermore, Flynn related strategic priorities to the need to engage the public and bolster resiliency. He asserted that terrorism, while a major hazard, is not an existential threat to the U.S. because it's too big and too populous. A terrorist's goal is to cause U.S. leaders and the public to overreact in ways that are incredibly costly and destructive, which is an internal problem, not external. Consequently, the leadership challenge for the next president will be to build a greater level of confidence in American society.

In addition, Flynn argued that a more resilient society has deterrent and economic value. Resiliency erodes the justification for why terrorists will initiate attacks and it also involves ordinary citizens in the national security process. Through public engagement and a holistic approach to national and homeland security, the U.S. can develop a more open and inclusive security apparatus that offers greater support to citizens.



Crowley added that U.S. strategy has to do more to take public expectations into account. If something happens on one particular day, it could mean the "bad guys" were better, but it doesn't

mean the strategy is wrong or the system is broken. The important thing is for the government to communicate with the public to form realistic expectations about the security it can provide.

Finally, all three speakers emphasized the need to revamp U.S. international strategy and re-invigorate our role in the world. Townsend encouraged the next administration to increase foreign assistance and to tie foreign aid to policy goals. In her view, the U.S. fails to take advantage of this critically important measure.



Flynn urged the next administration to identify the things Americans value and to reinvest in them, because these are the same values that the rest of the world admires. Crowley specified, saying it was imperative for the next administration to practice transparency and the rule of law, which means closing Guantanamo Bay. HSPI Director Frank Cilluffo went further, stating that we ought to abandon the label "Global War on Terror", which has the effect of elevating our adversaries and isolating our allies. In

response, Crowley agreed and suggested the British term, "struggle against violent extremism," as a more viable alternative.

"Fundamentally," said Flynn, "We must step back and be an open society that engages the world." The next president must help Americans to exercise greater confidence. When reassessing security strategy, we must think of it not as a cost, but as an investment in our future. Communities that can think anew about security priorities and that can best deal with disruptions—whether natural or man-made—will be more adaptable and viable in the 21st Century.

### Chapter 2

### National Approach to Preparedness and Response: Shaping Expectations, Enhancing Capabilities



On October 23, 2008, The George Washington University's Homeland Security Policy Institute (HSPI) hosted the second event in its Presidential Transition Roundtable Series – "A National Approach to Prevention, Preparedness and Response: Shaping Expectations, Enhancing Capabilities." The panel discussion featured leading experts in the field: Michael Balboni, Deputy Secretary for Public Safety for the State of New York; William Bratton, Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department; George Foresman, former DHS Under Secretary for National Protection and Programs; and Michael Hickey, Chairman, U.S. Chamber of Commerce National Security and Emergency Preparedness Task Force.



America has yet to achieve a genuinely national approach to prevention, preparedness and response. The roundtable considered how best to integrate the capabilities and efforts of all levels of government, the private sector, and the not-for-profit sector.

Foresman observed that we are not truly prepared for a catastrophic event in the United States, whether natural, man-made, or cyber. Of the four pillars of preparedness, we are strongest on response and recovery, but need to shore up our prevention and protection capabilities. He noted that the system for managing disasters is broken, and reforming it will be a fundamental challenge for the incoming Administration. The different levels of government in this country were not designed to be interoperable, but rather, are independent levels of government that interoperate. Moving forward, the United States must figure out how best to marry up anti-crime, counter-terrorism and other efforts, so as to achieve a

more robust preparedness posture overall.

Foresman emphasized that building a culture of preparedness is crucial, and this means engaging and galvanizing the American public. In response to a question from HSPI Senior Fellow and Task Force Member David Heyman about "engaging the public without scaring the public," Foresman noted that it is important for the next Administration to "take some time to listen to lessons learned from this Administration" in terms of public messaging. He added that there is at least a 100-day window where the next Administration can help shape expectations for preparedness and response to future national crises.

The private sector is also instrumental to a national approach sustained by enhanced capabilities. Hickey noted that resilience "starts at home" with the individual corporation, and is multi-layered. Looking to the future, he suggested that a wide range of partners should come together, including the National Governors Association and the National Emergency Management Association, in order to take a regional approach that will enable effective response to crises.

Former U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese, an HSPI Steering Committee Member and the lead for the 1980 transition efforts of then President-elect Reagan, raised the issue of the role of the National Guard. In response, Foresman stressed the importance of training and equipping the Guard for its 21st century mission. Balboni noted that New York State now has a rapid reaction force staffed by National Guard troops and based in Hamilton, which will allow for onsite arrival in one hour. In the context of this discussion, HSPI Director Frank Cilluffo cited the need for pre-arranged mutual assistance between, among and across States in the form of emergency management "compacts."



The panelists offered a few simple, concrete pieces of advice to the next Administration. Bratton suggested that getting the right people in the right positions is of first and foremost importance, while Foresman suggested that incoming individuals with key leadership roles should participate in exercises designed to enhance their crisis decision-making abilities. Balboni accentuated the need to exert real leadership – to make tough decisions in tough times, while Hickey encouraged the next Administration to bring the private sector into prevention, preparedness and response efforts in an ever-more integral manner.

To meet prevailing challenges, Bratton also called for a "convergent strategy" that weaves together community policing and counterterrorism strategies under the "guiding philosophy" of intelligence-led policing. For maximum operational effectiveness, a supporting culture, capability and awareness of the "first preventer" role of local police must be created. Strategic relationships must be forged and an "international consciousness" attained, with both grounded locally. Collaboration with a wide range of partners, including academia and the private sector, is necessary. Building and leveraging intelligence at the State and local levels also means resourcing their law enforcement authorities.

Balboni, in turn, emphasized that "disconnects" still exist seven years out from 9/11. Spending continues on fusion centers meant to remedy the pre-9/11 failure to "connect the dots," but creating an infrastructure does not solve the problem. We have yet to define what a "successful" fusion center looks like, and further national discussion is needed with regard to privacy concerns. Intelligence products and information flows are not yet standardized, and we are still relying on a "leap of faith" that the individual who hands out information actually knows who needs it. In sum, he argued for a homeland security system and strategy that is scaleable and flexible, tailored to current needs (rather than fighting the last war), and that does more with less given the economic constraints that prevail.

An all hazards, all crimes approach is needed. Cilluffo reinforced this idea, observing that fighting terrorism and fighting crime "is not an either/or proposition."



### Chapter 3

### International Strategy: Re-Invigorating Our Role in the World



On December 3, 2008, The George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute (HSPI) hosted a panel discussion titled "International Strategy: Re-Invigorating Our Role in the World." This event, the third in HSPI's Presidential Transition Roundtable Series: "Thinking Anew: Security Priorities for the Next Administration," featured presentations by leading experts: Kristin Lord, Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, The Brookings Institution; Karin von Hippel, Codirector, Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies; as well as comments by: David Meltzer, Senior Vice President, International Services, American Red Cross; and Jonah Czerwinski, Senior Fellow, Homeland Security, IBM Global Leadership Initiative.



To meet the international security challenges of the twenty-first century, Lord discussed the need for a more robust American public diplomacy strategy, structure and operations, calling U.S. public diplomacy efforts "a multidisciplinary challenge that needs a multidisciplinary response." Globalization and other international changes have made strong public diplomacy "more important than ever" in the face of transnational threats such as terrorism, climate change and trafficking of goods and people that cannot be solved by individual nations alone. Public diplomacy must be an essential non-kinetic resource in an

era where many security threats cannot be confronted by military force alone, and where use of such force may actually strengthen adversaries. In the current "information tempest," America is required to communicate more effectively in a variety of new ways. U.S. public diplomacy must be nimble in an era where winning public support is "increasingly more important." Among her recommendations

towards that effort, Lord proposed "USA World Trust" a new non-profit organization to complement current U.S. public diplomacy efforts. With a goal of bringing "together new voices and talent," Lord sees the World

Trust as a dynamic agency that could tap into existing expertise and "translate it into useful formats for public diplomacy professionals" in the field. The new organization would also work with the private and non-governmental sector, provide grants and experiment with new media technology, all while bringing together U.S.



government, private and foreign "media professionals in a way that is not currently possible."



Von Hippel, in turn, emphasized the challenge of improving the way civilian governments, military forces, NGOs and international organizations alike integrate their foreign operations work in difficult environments such as Afghanistan, the Darfur region of Sudan, post-war Lebanon and throughout United Nations peacekeeping operations. It is vitally important to "translate learning" accomplished in Iraq on issues such as stabilization,

nation building and democratization, for example, to existing civilian and military missions in Afghanistan. Von Hippel called current efforts "disappointing." In Afghanistan in particular, von Hippel noted a "lack of integrated strategies on the ground" between the humanitarian, diplomatic

and security communities; between bi-lateral relationships and multi-lateral institutions; and between various U.S. government agencies themselves. This required integration should focus on "forging consensus and figuring our priorities," while attempting to bring together as many



interested actors as possible to find solution sets to ongoing security and humanitarian issues.

In offering comment on the presentations, Meltzer "110 percent" endorsed the strategy of focusing public diplomacy on a variety of concerns to American interests rather than just counterterrorism. While agreeing on the need for more vigorous American public diplomacy capabilities, he questioned whether the stated suggestion of the State Department coordinating an interagency strategy is viable considering the more than 24 different agencies involved in foreign assistance. Meltzer also offered that he is "often struck" at how the defense industry—governmental and private—is "embracing disaster assistance missions and humanitarianism," and believes these new arenas further their strategic objectives. He noted that the defense industry's work in the humanitarian field "undermines" the NGO community's "ability to act as neutral actors and get our work done." Meltzer did, however, affirm HSPI director and discussion moderator Frank Cilluffo's point that NGOs operating in dangerous environments such as Afghanistan or Somalia often must rely on militaries for protection, calling it an option of "last resort."

For his part, Czerwinski noted the positive role private industry has and can continue to play in public diplomacy. We need stable populations that view the U.S. as a stable partner; therefore, the private sector must serve as "more than a vendor for public diplomacy" in order to help create global partnerships. In many strategic areas of the world such as the Middle East, the private sector is perceived as being "much more legitimate" than the U.S. government, and has more resources at its disposal. Looking toward the future, Czerwinski suggested that much could be gained in terms of public diplomacy if America concentrates on bringing more than "the U.S. flag" to our current and future prospective partners.

During the question and answer session, a question was raised concerning specific goals of U.S. public diplomacy within larger foreign policy objectives. Lord responded with several suggestions under the theme that the U.S. can and should legitimately try "to inform and advocate for specific policies



overseas." Her suggestions included "promoting values that are not exclusive to the United States, such as disgust of suicide bombings and promoting free trade," helping people overseas better understand America, and incorporating a public diplomacy dimension into all U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives. In response, von Hippel noted that she is "more concerned with America understanding other cultures better, and less concerned with foreigners understanding Americans."

### Chapter 4

# Engage and Enlist the American Public: People—Our Greatest Strength



On January 30, 2009, The George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute (HSPI) hosted a panel discussion titled "Citizen Preparedness: Harnessing an Engaged Public." This event, the fourth and final in HSPI's Presidential Transition Roundtable Series: "Thinking Anew: Security Priorities for the Next Administration," featured presentations by leading journalists and authors Andy Carvin, Senior Product Manager for Online Communities, National Public Radio; and Amanda Ripley, reporter for TIME Magazine and author of The Unthinkable - Who Survives When Disaster Strikes. Jan Lane, HSPI Deputy Director, and former government relations lead for the American Red Cross, provided comment.

Ripley suggested that the U.S. government writ large tends to attempt to carry the burden of preparedness, response, and recovery during disasters, rather than including ordinary citizens in the process of making and facilitating such policy. However, Ripley notes that "the most important people" that government needs to include are its citizens, those who will be on the scene and responding in their communities. To better involve "regular people", Ripley suggests that these citizens not only be at the table during policymaking, but that the government should also be specific in directing citizens about what they could be doing to prepare, respond, or recover. Finally, the government should tell the truth, including about the threats for which communities



should be preparing. In other words, by being "frank and specific," the nation as a whole will better understand the nature of the threat, and society will become more resilient. According to Ripley, the federal role in public preparedness efforts is, in short, to "inspire, facilitate, and then get out of the way."

Carvin presented the evolution of online-mobilization of citizens during crises starting with the earthquake in Los Angeles, California in 1994. As use of the internet has increased over the last 15 years, so has the ability of the public to communicate using new technological tools. In the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S., volunteers set up email list-servs to discuss where they could assist; by 2006, citizens on the ground posted information and photos on blogs during the tsunamis that ravaged Southeast Asia, a phenomenon now known as "citizen journalism." In preparation for Hurricane Gustav in 2008, over 500 volunteers across the globe worked together to build a citizen-coordinated website to provide real-time information. Carvin noted that through such movement of information, "taken as a whole, you can observe the trends" of what is occurring on the ground—in effect, situational awareness. Carvin suggested that "we need to create various ways of visualizing" how to exploit this mobilization of volunteers online, and "have the infrastructure available" so that next time there will be a portal through which to channel people who wish to assist. An additional challenge is balancing the needs of specific communities in particular geographic locations, while finding ways to take advantage of organized communities online whose members may reside in different parts of the world.

Lane noted the HSPI Presidential Transition Task Force recommendation that active civic engagement underpin the new Administration's homeland security efforts. She pointed out that President Obama's calls for public service and personal responsibility provide the opportunity for greater engagement. Noting that there has been a history of government reluctance to bring the public into preparedness planning, Lane said "we need a real discussion with the American people of what the threat is, why it matters to them, and how the public can be effectively involved." Government officials need to understand the evolving nature of public preparedness and how to incorporate social media to aid in public safety, situational awareness,



and mobilization of resources outside of government control. Civic engagement is vital to rebuilding the public's trust in governments' disaster preparedness and response capabilities following Katrina. In response, Cilluffo proposed that "trust and confidence is crucial" to calibrating the discourse and cementing the bonds between the public and government.

In the discussion that followed, the key themes of education and training arose. During crises, citizens able to overcome the paralysis engendered by such an event are those that in past have been educated and trained to respond, whether on the job or through volunteer organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America. If people know what to do and have practiced it, they are more likely to take action. Many city fire departments have engaged the public on issues including risk assessment (geared to prevention) and have instructed citizens on response techniques. Public outreach, whether in the schools or online, is crucial to effective preparation for disaster.

The Ready.gov campaign is one example of government action; but Ripley and other experts participating in the roundtable discussion posited that government could do more – and better. For example, DHS provides a list of various supplies families might gather in preparation for a disaster.



The lists are not tailored to specific geographic locations, though effective preparation is context-dependent. One suggestion made to improve this list was to add a forum to its online version, in order for the public to give their opinions on what else could be helpful to have on hand. By comparison, the United Kingdom has made baseline threat and risk information available to its citizens, which facilitates preparedness efforts.

Clearly, the keys to drawing successfully upon volunteers during a disaster include education, training, engagement, and the use of social media tools before, during and after disaster strikes. That said, "you don't have to wait to have all the pieces right before you act," as Cilluffo notes, "you just have to act."

# APPENDIX A TASK FORCE BRIEFERS

### Michael Alexander

Majority Staff Director, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs U.S. Senate

### John Cohen

Senior Advisor, Office of the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment Office of the Director of National Intelligence

### Rosaline Cohen

Chief Counsel, Committee on Homeland Security U.S. House of Representatives

### Beth Grossman

Senior Counsel, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs U.S. Senate

### Alethea Long-Green

Program Area Director, National Academy of Public Administration

### Mark Lowenthal

President and CEO of the Intelligence & Security Academy, LLC Former Assistant Director of Central Intelligence for Analysis and Production

### Monica Schoch-Spana

Senior Associate, Center for Biosecurity, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and Assistant Professor in the School of Medicine Division of Infectious Diseases

### John Solomon

Author and Blogger,
In Case Of Emergency, Read Blog: A Citizen's Eye View of Public Preparedness

### Fran Townsend

Former Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism

# APPENDIX B **Task Force Event Media Coverage**

Thinking Anew – Security Priorities for the Next Administration October 15, 2008

Next president Must Outline Homeland Security Aims

**Associated Press** 

October 15, 2008

Lack of Campaign Focus on Homeland Security Could Leave Winner Unprepared

Congressional Quarterly Homeland Security (Registration required)

October 15, 2008

Ex-Bush Adviser Cites Need For New Security Apparatus

Congress Daily

October 15, 2008

A National Approach to Prevention, Preparedness, and Response: Shaping Expectations, Enhancing Capabilities October 23, 2008

LAPD Chief: No more Brownies in New Administration

**Associated Press** 

October 23, 2008

L.A. Police Chief Has 'No Interest At All' in Top Job at DHS

Congressional Quarterly Homeland Security (Registration required)

October 23, 2008

Outlining DHS Priorities: Better Communication, Smarter Hiring, Defining Tasks

Congressional Quarterly Homeland Security (Registration required)

October 23, 2008

International Strategy: Re-Invigorating Our Role in the World December 3, 2008

Report Sees Need for New Independent Voice on Public Diplomacy

Congressional Quarterly Homeland Security (Registration required)

December 5, 2008

Time to 'Reset Our Thinking' Says HS Policy Institute's Cilluffo

Congressional Quarterly Homeland Security (Registration required)

November 24, 2008

Citizen Preparedness: Harnessing an Engaged Public January 30, 2009

<u>Informed Citizenry Is Indispensable in Responding to Disaster, Says Author</u> Congressional Quarterly Homeland Security (Registration required)
January 30, 2009

#### APPENDIX C

### Task Force Event Participants\*

Charles Adams Brad Belzak

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Michael Alexander Martin Bengtsson
U.S. Senate BCI Consulting

Waleed Alshahari Tim Beres

Embassy of Yemen CNA Corporation

Eric Andersen Stephanie Berrong

U.S. Senate Security Management Magazine

Craig Anderson Brian Bettis

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Jennifer Arangio Chris Bigelow

U.S. House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives

Scott Atack Capt. Charles Blue

U.S. of Homeland Security U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Alec Attfield Scott Brenner

Embassy of Canada O'Neill and Associates

Lucy BannermanGeorge BrettThe London TimesInternet2

Sharon Barnes Esther Brimmer

Embassy of Australia Johns Hopkins University

Meg Bartow Wayne Brown

Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide U.S. Coast Guard

Ann Beauchesne Tom Brune
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Newsday

Christian Beckner Mallory Barg Bulman

U.S. Senate Government Accountability Office

François Begin Ben Burdon

Olive, Edwards and Cooper LLC Embassy of Australia

Robert Burke Vittorio Daniore
The George Washington University Embassy of Italy

Mark Camillo Erin Daste

Lockheed Martin U.S. House of Representatives

Holly Canevari Katherine Davies

U.S. House of Representatives U.S. Department of State

Sean Carroll Richard Deasy

Congressional Fire Services Institute

U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement

Edward Cash Bernd Debusmann

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Reuters

Jagdish Chandra Brandon Declet

The George Washington University U.S. House of Representatives

Jessica Chasen Antonio Delgado

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Amanda Christopher Jen Dimascio American Red Cross Politico

Robert Clerman Kristina Dorville

Noblis U.S. House of Representatives

Andrew Cochran Matthew Drane
Gage International Gallup Consulting

John Cohen Daniel Dreyfus

Information Sharing Environment, ODNI Booz Allen Hamilton

Andy Cooke-Welling Joe Dunn

UK Serious Organised Crime Agency U.S. House of Representatives

Rich Correll Lesley Durfee

U.S. Department of Defense Homeland Security Institute

William Courtney RP Eddy
Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) Ergo

Patrick Endress Phil Garfinkle

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Trust Strategy Group

Steve Etter Alihah Gaspard
Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education Detica, Inc.

Clark Kent Ervin Keri Geiger
Aspen Institute Deutsche Bank

Richard Esposito Safiya Ghori

ABC Muslim Public Affairs Council

George Evans Cindy Gillespie

U.S. Special Operations Command McKenna Long and Aldridge

Richard Fairbanks Lilly Gilmour

CAN SRA International

Roberto Figueredo Emily Goldman

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Department of State

Patrick Flanagan Chad Gorman

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Robert Foust Siobhan Gorman
The George Washington University Wall Street Journal

Dan Fowler Brandon Graham

Congressional Quarterly GW Office of Homeland Security

John Fricas Christoph Griebling

Strategic Analysis Inc Embassy of Germany

Kat Friedman Jesper Grönvall
Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide Embassy of Sweden
Corey Gruber

Michael Fullerton U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Joy Fulton Kay Guinane

Transportation Security Administration Nonprofit Speech Rights

Chris Furlow Yasoja Gunasekera

The Pennant Group, LLC Embassy of Sri Lanka

Kevin Gundersen

U.S. House of Representatives

Jeff Gunnulfsen

National Petrochemical &. Refiners

Association

Vikram Gupta

Homeland Security Institute

David Hagy

U.S. Department of Justice

Ronna Halbgewachs

The George Washington University

Amanda Halpern

U.S. House of Representatives

Beth Hampton

Homeland Security Institute

Nidal Hasan

Uniformed Services University School of

Medicine

Donald Hawkins

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Eric Heighberger

Homeland Security Council

Jessica Herrera-Flanigan

Monument Policy LLC

R. Denton Herring

U.S. House of Representatives

Andrew Herrmann

National Counterterrorism Center

**Greg Holmes** 

Holmes Management Group

Milton Hoenig

Nuclear Physicist and Author

Jonathan Hoffman

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

David Hutchison Embassy of Canada

Spencer Hsu Washington Post

Kwei-Bo Huang

Johns Hopkins University

David Jennings

Homeland Security Institute

Venilde Jeronimo

The George Washington University

Fernando Jimenez

Interamerican Investment Corporation

Jean Johnson

The George Washington University

Beth Jones

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Ed Jopeck

SRA International, Inc.

Paul Joyal

National Strategies Inc.

Hisham Kamal IBM Corporation

Daphne Kamely

Potomac Institute of Policy Studies

Andrew Koch

Judith Kordahl

Mark Koumans

David Laufman

Brian Kamoie Robert Knake

U.S. Department of Health and Human Good Harbor Consulting LLC

Services

Alex Karr U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Analytic Services Inc.

James Kasprzak Penny Koerner
U.S. Department of Defense

IRM College

David Kaufman Matthew Korade
Congressional Quarterly

**CNA** Corporation

Gail Kaufman Government Accountability Office

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Frank Kelleher U.S. Department of Homeland Security

The World Bank

Jonathan Kraden Bob Kelly U.S. Senate

CenTauri Solutions, LLC

Michael Kraft
Francine Kerner Kraft Associates

Transportation Security Admnistration

Robert Krikorian

Frank Kesterman

GW Elliott School of International Affairs

University of Maryland

Tomohisa Koyama Lisa Khouri Dynamic Strategies Asia, LC

Canadian Liaison Officer to FEMA

Randall Larsen

Adam Killian

The Institute for Homeland Security

U.S. Senate

Meghann King Kelley Drye & Warren LLP

U.S. House of Representatives

Mark Lavin
U.S. House of Representatives

Kerry Kinirons
U.S. House of Penysophatiyas

U.S. House of Representatives

Shanette Lawrence

National Academy of Public Administration

Keiji Kita

Japan Financial Intelligence Center Stefan Leader
The Analysis Corporation

Eric Leckey

Price water house Coopers

Gordon Lederman

White & Case

Peter Lejeune

Strategic Analysis Inc.

Frederick Lemieux

The George Washington University

Jack Lichtenstein ASIS International

Lawrence Lin

U.S. Department of State

Andrew Livermore

**Homeland Security Solutions** 

Gina Lohr

GW Office of Homeland Security

John Lombardi

GW Office of Homeland Security

Gregg Lord

GW Office of Homeland Security

Ben Mallory

Homeland Security Institute, DHS

Paul Maniscalco

GW Office of Homeland Security

Salma Mansour

National Petrochemical and Refiners

Association

John Markey

Applied Research Associates, Inc.

**Becky Marquis** 

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Karen Marsh

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Joe Martin

Congressional Fellow

Tania Masiuk

Meridian Medical Technologies

Matt Mattingley MG Group

Lynn Mattice

Security Executive Council

Greg McCarthy Embassy of Australia

Kristen McCone

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Robert McCreight

The George Washington University

Patrick McCrummen American Red Cross

Marcus McDaniel

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Sibel McGee

Analytic Services, Inc.

Tyrik McKeiver

U.S. House of Representatives

Jena McNeill

The Heritage Foundation

John Medve Patrice Motz

Abrams Learning and Information Systems, LondonPotomac Consulting

Inc.

Joyal Mulheron
Chris Metsala Center for Best Practices

TechOp Solutions

Christopher Mulkins

Government Accountability Office

Josh Meyer

Los Angeles Times Erin Murphy

U.S. House of Representatives

Katharine Middleton
Bancomercio de El Salvador, Inc
Patrick Murphy

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Mike Miron

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Samuel Murray

Woodrow Wilson International Center for

Joseph Mitchell Scholars

National Academy of Public Administration

John Mitnick

Jennifer Myers

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Raytheon

Tijana Milosevic Aaron Naas
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

The George Washington University

Jessica Nagasako Michael Mohr U.S. Senate

Embassy of Sweden

Amna Nawaz Patrick Moore NBC News

International Center for Religion and

Diplomacy Will Neil

GW Office of Homeland Security

Carolina Morgan

Government Accountability Office Kirstjen Nielsen
Civitas Group

Audrey Mossberger

National Defense University Greg Nojeim

Center for Democracy and Technology

Vahid Motevalli

The George Washington University Carlos Nunez

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Chuck O'Neill Alexis Pierce

Potomac Institute for Policy Studies U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Gordon O'Neill Larry Phelps

Potomac Institute for Policy Studies U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Kevin O'Reilly Roger Platt

U.S. Department of State

The Real Estate Roundtable

Kevin O'Shea Cynthia Powell

Embassy of Canada The George Washington University

Christine Pace Zhu Qin

Embassy of Malta Embassy of China

Julia Pallares Raffaella Querci-Daniore

U.S. Department of State Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress

Bill Parker Tim Quinn

U.S. Navy

U.S. Department of Justice

Katherine Parramore Norm Rabkin

TDR Government Accountability Office

Paul Byron Pattak Fabien Raccah

Pi2 Strategies, LLC U.S. Department of Energy

Rex Patterson Pradeep Ramamurthy

U.S. Department of State Federal Bureau of Investigation

Jason Paul Dante Randazzo

CBS News Federal Emergency Management Agency

Hillary Peck Linda Recht

U.S. Department of Homeland Security U.S. Department of State

Lewis Perelman Sarah Reid

Institute for Regulatory Science Embassy of Canada

Robert Petersen Elizabeth Reuss

U.S. Department of State Strategic Analysis Inc.

John Petrie Houcine Rhazoui

The George Washington University Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco

Michael Russell

Mark Ryan

Jack Rich U.S. House of Representatives

U.S. Department of State

Marisa Rijpkema Government Accountability Office

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee

Leon Rios Brian Sailer

Dutko Worldwide

Abrams Learning and Information Systems,

Inc Marisela Salayandia

U.S. House of Representatives

Harvey Rishikof National War College Claire Sale

American Red Cross

Anja Rivara
Embassy of Mexico Patcho Santiago

Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress

Carmen Rivera-Lowitt

Government Accountability Office Tim Sample
Consultant

Gail Robertson

U.S. Department of State Donald Santarelli

Bell, Boyd & Lloyd PLLC

James Robinson

Denver Health

Carrie Santos

American Red Cross

Cynthia Rohrbeck
The George Washington University

Kevin Saupp

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Samantha Rollinger

The World Bank Group Amy Schapiro

U.S. Department of Justice Louise Rosenthal

George Washington University Crystal Schautz

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Stephen Rossi

Catapault Technologies Frank Schmiedel

European Union Mission

Marie Rudolph

The George Washington University

Eric Schmitt

New York Times

Steffen Russ

Embassy of Germany Matt Schrader

Dutko Worldwide

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Candace Stoltz

Marie O'Neill Sciarrone U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Detica, Inc.

Demetri Sevastopulo Robert Strayer U.S. Senate

Financial Times

Eileen Sullivan
Mark Shaheen Associated Press

Civitas Group, LLC

Kristina Tanasichuk

Craig Sharman Homeland Security & Defense Business

Tyco International Council

Brendan Shields Adam Thiel

The White House Alexandria, Virginia Fire Department

Jason SlackneyFrank ThorpSage ManagementNBC News

Peter Slort Donald Tighe Embassy of the Royal Netherlands In Q Tel

Leslie Smith Katie Tolan

American Red Cross Embassy of Canada

Michael Smith David Trulio

Emergency Management Association Homeland Security Council

Paula Smith Carl Truscott

Catastrophic Planning and Management ASERO Worldwide

Institute

Pam Turner

Tom Soroka BKSH & Associates Worldwide

U.S. Telecom

Bert Tussing

Alisa Stack-O'Connor U.S. Army War College

U.S. Department of Defense

Justine Uhlenbrock
Jim Steiner Program Associate

SUNY Albany National Association of County and City

Health Officials

Jeff Stern

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Alexandra Usher

U.S. Department of State

Donald Van Duyn

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Nathalie Velarde

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Irv Varkonyi

Supply Chain Operations Preparedness

Education

Candice Vincent

The MITRE Corporation

Stephen Viña

U.S. House of Representatives

Sean Walsh

Booz Allen Hamilton

Sheryl Walter

U.S. Department of Justice

Bill Webb

Congressional Fire Services Institute

Sandra Webb

U.S. Department of Justice

He Weibao

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Andy Weis U.S. Senate

Mark Williams

Embassy of the United Kingdom

Timothy Williams

U.S. Department of Justice

Andrew Wilson

U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services

Craig Wilson

SRA International

Beth Windisch

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Nicolas Wuest-Famose Embassy of France

Stephen Yates DC Asia Advisory

Nancy Yee

IBM Sales & Distribution Federal

Al Yurek

Global Defense Solutions

Jen Zakriski

U.S. Department of Defense

Martin Zbinden

**Embassy of Switzerland** 

Bini Zomer

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee

Cara Zujewski

Embassy of the United Kingdom

<sup>\*</sup>Participant titles as of the event date.

