

# CIVIL SECURITY

## AMERICANS AND THE CHALLENGE OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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Amanda J. Dory

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# Executive Summary

During the Cold War, a comprehensive program of civil defense was designed to address the survival of individual Americans in the event of a massive Soviet nuclear attack. Today we need a new concept—“civil security”—that recalls the nation’s experience with civil defense and updates it, addressing and enhancing the ability of Americans to recognize danger, limit damage, and recover from terrorist attacks. In so doing, we should learn from the nation’s experiences, both positive and negative, with Cold War civil defense as well as the many related aspects of coping with natural disasters and public health emergencies.

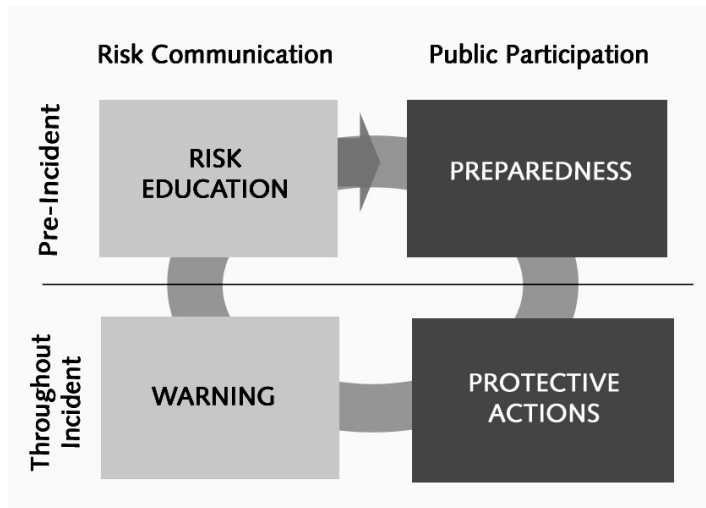
**RATIONALE.** Although we no longer confront a superpower rival capable of inflicting nuclear Armageddon, our confidence in the deterrability of terrorist foes is much less sanguine, while the likelihood of another attack on U.S. soil has increased. Establishment of a contemporary civil security program is crucial for a number of reasons: Americans are potential targets of terrorist attacks; as taxpayers and consumers they provide the resources to underwrite homeland security; and public assistance is fundamental to government efforts during and following a terrorist attack. Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Bush administration has launched several initiatives aimed directly or indirectly at the general public. These include the color-coded Homeland Security Threat Advisory System, the “Ready” public service announcement campaign, a Web site (<http://www.ready.gov>), and the Citizens Corps initiative. A coherent framework that links these initiatives and explicitly addresses the role of Americans in homeland security in detail has thus far been lacking.

**DEFINITION.** In the post–September 11 threat environment, civil security is defined as: “measures undertaken to reduce Americans’ vulnerability to the impact of terrorism (physical, psychological, economic) and enable individual Americans to minimize damage and recover from terrorist attacks in the United States.” This definition parallels the Bush administration’s definition of homeland security, but focuses first and foremost on the American people, rather than America as a place.

**COMPONENTS.** Civil security incorporates four key components needed to increase Americans’ resilience before and during a terrorist attack (see chart, next page):

- risk education and communication;
- preparedness activities;
- public warning (alert and notification); and
- protective actions (e.g., shelter, evacuation, quarantine, shielding, medical countermeasures, individual protective equipment).

## Integrated Civil Security Approaches



Risk education and communication is the foundation of civil security, a fundamental prerequisite to enabling individual Americans to minimize damage and recover from terrorist attacks. Risk education can provide the impetus for individual Americans to undertake preparedness activities. It can also serve as the basis for individuals to make informed decisions during an emergency, to include taking protective actions on an expedient basis if official alerts or notifications with recommended protective actions are not immediately available.

**RECOMMENDATIONS.** In the short term, the most effective structural solution for advancing civil security would be to create a small civil security liaison office within the immediate office of the secretary of homeland security (joining counterparts that have been created for other homeland security stakeholders, including the private sector, a legislative affairs office, and an office of state and local coordination).

The primary mission of the civil security liaison office would be to develop linkages among diverse activities that directly impact the entire U.S. population so that from the public's perspective a coherent whole is evident in how it should respond and how its capabilities will be buttressed by official resources in a terrorist attack. In doing so, the office would acknowledge the merits of the all-hazards approach, but make clear where terrorism requires different types of preparedness activities and protective actions and further differentiate among the unique characteristics and corresponding protective action responses associated with attacks involving chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) effects.

Four existing efforts are logical pillars to begin building a civil security program—the “Ready” campaign, the Citizen Corps initiative, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), and the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). If adequately funded, the “Ready” campaign and Citizen Corps initiative offer methods for improving risk

education and risk communication with the public. Similarly, the EAS provides a system, albeit outdated, for warning Americans in an emergency. And the SNS brings together critical medical countermeasures that may be required in a terrorist attack that exhausts local resources.

In defining homeland security as a “concerted national effort” in its National Homeland Security Strategy, the Bush administration emphasizes that all stakeholders have roles and responsibilities in preventing terrorist attacks, reducing vulnerabilities, and minimizing damages. Advancing civil security will similarly require the many homeland security stakeholders to take action. The list below highlights recommendations for each of the civil security components at the federal, state/local, and individual levels.

## **Federal**

- Risk Education
  - Develop unclassified national intelligence estimate on terrorism
  - Use scenarios in risk education/risk communication with public to improve understanding of nature and magnitude of potential attacks
  - Add interactive element to risk communication with public (e.g., town halls, Web casts, ready.gov interactivity)
  - Recalibrate all-hazards preparedness and response educational approach to include information about the unique aspects of CBRN
  - Emphasize risk education as part of Citizen Corps initiative
- Preparedness
  - Accept responsibility for preparedness information provided to Americans, including an explanation of the inherent uncertainty associated with some recommendations
  - Expand cross-marketing (e.g., medical community, faith-based organizations, service providers to vulnerable community members)
  - Conduct periodic surveys and focus groups activities to measure the effectiveness of preparedness campaigns over time
  - Emphasize the dual-use nature of individual preparedness for terrorism events and other disasters
- Warning (alert and notification)
  - Designate the Department of Homeland Security as the lead for national warning for terrorist attacks and expand EAS authority to include the Secretary of Homeland Security
  - Develop and publish a national warning strategy
  - Establish a public-private partnership for warning standards and devices
  - Develop training programs for media communicators in a terrorist crisis



- Require and review state EAS plans
- Facilitate regional EAS workshops
- Protective Actions
  - Use scenarios in risk education/risk communication with public to explain and justify recommended protective actions
  - Continue to resource and expand Strategic National Stockpile based on evolving threat information
  - Develop individual protective equipment standards for the public
  - Ensure continued viability of vaccine industry through incentives or a guaranteed market share, if necessary
  - Provide funding for and promote development of protective action decision-support tools
  - Develop rules of thumb for expedient individual decisionmaking in a crisis
  - Conduct protective action training and incorporate protective action decision opportunities into exercises for decisionmakers

## **State/Local**

- Risk Education
  - Incorporate Citizen Corps Council structure with existing disaster mitigation preparedness and response activities
  - Use a threat-vulnerability integration approach as a basis for dialogue with the public
  - Recalibrate all-hazards preparedness and response educational approach to include information about the unique aspects of CBRN
- Preparedness
  - Expand cross-marketing (e.g., medical community, faith-based organizations, service providers to vulnerable community members)
  - Conduct periodic surveys and focus group activities to measure the effectiveness of preparedness campaigns over time
  - Emphasize the dual-use nature of individual preparedness for terrorism events and other disasters
- Warning (alert and notification)
  - Develop/participate in training programs on providing warnings in a crisis
  - Develop state and local EAS plans
  - Ensure that law enforcement and other emergency responders are aware of EAS capabilities and how to access the system if necessary

- Negotiate updated agreement on the provision of terrorist-related EAS alerts by state and local level officials with broadcast organizations
- Protective Actions
  - Develop state and local plans for shelter, evacuation, and quarantine that are compatible with the National Response Plan
  - Conduct protective action training and incorporate protective action decision opportunities into exercises for decisionmakers

## Individual Americans

- Risk Education
  - Participate actively in risk education and risk communication process, including seeking out information from federal, state, and local authorities if/when it is not provided
- Preparedness
  - Develop emergency plans to enable protective actions in a crisis and stockpiles of relevant supplies
- Warning (alert and notification)
  - Determine multiple methods for receiving warnings in the event of terrorist attack
  - Invest in communication devices that provide wake-up and battery-powered capabilities
- Protective Actions
  - Develop personal plans for shelter, evacuation, and quarantine
  - Consider acquiring expedient respiratory equipment and expanding first aid supplies to include potassium iodide

**CONCLUSION.** Civil security emphasizes and amplifies Americans' participation in and contribution to homeland security. Efforts by stakeholders at every level to improve risk education, preparedness, warning, and protective actions can strengthen Americans' ability and resolve to endure and prevail against adversaries that deliberately seek to instill fear and undermine confidence in ourselves, our government, and our way of life. Increasing individual Americans' self-confidence through education and preparedness can serve to undermine the psychological aspects of the threat of terrorism. At the same time, the process of engaging in meaningful risk communication between the government and the public, as well as developing a common understanding of recommended protective actions in the event of a crisis, can build the public's confidence in governmental responses (at all levels) to future attacks.

