

HOMELAND SECURITY AND YOU

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October, 2001

**THE
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In October of 2001 an additional cabinet level position was created by President George W. Bush—The White House Office of Homeland Security which will be headed by former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge.

Homeland defense is hardly a new concept. In World War II Great Britain had its Home Guard, largely made up of men well beyond the age for active duty in the regular forces. In the United States, we had air raid wardens and beach patrols made up of men either too young or too old for active military service. In place of National Guard units called to active duty, states created various military-type organizations that could respond to local emergencies. And at the federal level there were dozens of wartime created offices and directorates. It could also be argued that Switzerland's entire armed force is made up of a home guard and that the only responsibility tasked to America's armed forces in the 19th century was to protect the United States at its borders.

In our present war on terrorism, which knowledgeable authorities expect to last years, not months or days, it is fair to ask what will be expected, what should be expected, and what will be required of the general population. What new security related policies will be put in place? What curtailment of civil liberties will occur under a state of emergency declared by President Bush and new laws passed by Congress, and how will the marketplace adapt to an undeclared war but a war nevertheless?

In this respect:

- * There will be new authority to monitor communications channels, i.e. e-mail, and telecommunication messages. U.S. mail will be interfered with only under extreme circumstances. There will be no national identity card as some authorities have proposed.

- * The requirement for young men to register for the draft by post card on their 18th birthday will continue. Proposals will be made to amend the law to include young women. We simply cannot give a pass to 53 percent of our population which includes a fair share of our best, brightest and most patriotic citizens.

- * Requirements for acceptance into active duty in our armed forces will be increasingly difficult. Students interested in military careers (commissions)

should understand that some college degrees are more valuable than others. This is a trend that has already begun. Our armed services will more and more rely on technology and brain power, not numbers.

- * Those called upon to serve via the draft will not necessarily be assigned to active duty in the armed forces. How best to utilize our man and woman power when and where needed will be a responsibility of the Director of Homeland Security.

- * The Director of Homeland Security will have little, if any, authority over the FBI, the CIA and the various intelligence agencies. His primary responsibility will be to identify, add to, and make highly mobile our non-military anti terrorist assets. These include medical, EMS, and law enforcement personnel as well as supporting supplies and equipment. e.g. medicines and vaccines. These assets must be instantly mobile, able to move from where they are to where they are needed. In this respect transport capabilities must be planned for and in place. Laws and regulations that impede this mobility will be repealed or amended. In times of emergencies, e.g. hurricanes, earthquakes, forest fires, resources have voluntarily moved from state to state as needed. A national policy will be modeled on this experience.

- * At the state and local level auxiliaries of key personnel will be established. e.g. reserve law enforcement, EMC, fire fighting and medical specialists. Retired individuals in these fields will be identified and new pools established as necessary. Some 20 states issue concealed weapon permits to its most responsible citizens. In an emergency, these individuals could be deputized much as was done on the western frontier and portrayed in legions of western movies.

All states have technical schools of one sort or another. Where backup pools of emergency personnel are required, courses offering the necessary training should be instituted. Approved courses of airport security personnel are a certainty.

- * Major hospitals across the country should have plans in place to immediately expand their capabilities in an emergency. They should be prepared to accept the sick and injured not only in their own locality or region but from hundreds of miles away as circumstances dictate.

- * CIA, FBI and intelligence agencies will have expanded powers to counter terrorism. Some of these new powers will be made public, many will not.

* Immigration laws will be tightened with the result that legal and illegal immigration will be significantly slowed. While identity cards for American citizens is not in the cards, more sophisticated identification requirements for aliens can be expected.

* Just as American have increasingly embraced the use of credit cards with built in safeguards to prevent fraudulent use, e.g. fingerprints and photos, voluntary cards will be offered to those passing background checks for entry into specific areas. Such identification cards will be endorsed by the federal government as a means of speeding security checks at airports and various government and private sector buildings. Federal employees have long had such identity cards.

Finally, the marketplace, not government, will make the necessary adjustments in our economy as America's war of terrorism progresses. While government can influence the economy in a capitalist system, day to day decisions are left to the marketplace. Imagine a multi-trillion dollar, state owned and centrally directed economy trying to efficiently make the thousands of required daily economic decisions when waging a war against essentially unknown adversaries. Imagine a government directed economy returning to business as quickly as did the United States after September 11th. Our marketplace economic system is a blessing we probably did not appreciate until now.