

Recommendations for U.S. Homeland Security

In an article for *International Affairs Review* published during the summer of 2001, ICF Consulting used its extensive experience in emergency management to develop recommendations that would strengthen the United States' ability to fight international terrorism. Some of the recommended actions included the following:

- Strengthening the domestic policy on terrorism
- Targeting and implementing sanctions against known foreign terrorist organizations
- Implementing sanctions against state sponsors of terrorism
- Enhancing domestic intelligence capabilities and information sharing
- Increasing coordinated information sharing capabilities on an international scale



In response to the attacks on September 11, 2001, the White House implemented many of the concepts noted in the above recommendations. President Bush ratified the White House Office of Homeland Security to solidify and intensify preparedness efforts. The U.S. Department of Justice has taken action to freeze the domestic assets of known terrorist organizations. The President and Congress have worked together to enact anti-terrorism legislation that implements stricter fines for harboring or financing terrorist organizations, increases the investigative intelligence powers, and promotes domestic and international information sharing.

While these efforts are sure to increase national preparedness, a more comprehensive policy approach needs to be applied to produce an effective system for strengthening domestic security.

The ICF Consulting assessment produced additional recommendations aimed at promoting national security. One recommendation suggests that federal agencies specifically account for counterterrorism-related expenditures. Accounting for these types of activities will require an oversight process that should eliminate any duplication of efforts and ensure a more effective and efficient use of available funds.

Another recommendation endorses the utilization of a universal standard. International terrorism experts have recognized a set of eight *incident traits* that could be used as criteria for classifying an event as an act of terrorism. The elimination of definitional differences of terrorism, both in U.S. agencies and foreign governments, would facilitate efficient responses.

The adoption of a universal extradition treaty within the international community was also recommended. A broadly adopted extradition treaty that encompasses governments as well as organizations and individuals—and carries heavy sanctions—is expected to create a strong deterrent to terrorist activities.

In the emergency management community, prevention, mitigation, and preparedness (to include planning, training, and exercises) are key ingredients that help minimize impacts and victims of terrorist events, and increase the effectiveness of emergency response. Thus, comprehensive emergency management principles are the same building blocks needed for the foundation of our homeland security. In response to the extensive and far-reaching impacts from the September 11 attacks, those responsible for public safety must focus on coordination among agencies as not experienced heretofore, and work with the international community to strengthen deterrents. ■