

EDITOR'S NOTE

America is a target; the homeland is under threat. While Americans have been targets of terrorist attacks for quite some time, September 11, 2001, awoke the nation to the reality that we are vulnerable in our homes, in our places of work and worship, and in our public transportation system. And yet, we must continue to function as best we can as the world's most vibrant economic and political community. The current threat environment requires greater engagement with the public, as the necessary eyes and ears of the nation's homeland security infrastructure. However, to be effective the public must be equipped with the knowledge of where and why specific locations and activities may be a terrorist target, what is being done to protect those targets, and how individuals can help.

The chapters of *Homeland Security: Protecting America's Targets* revolve around a core of central questions. Are we safer today than we were pre-9/11? What steps have been taken to protect ourselves? What are the threats we face, and what new threats have developed since 9/11? Are we staying one step ahead of those who wish to do us harm? In 2002, more than 400 million people, 122 million cars, 11 million trucks, 2.4 million freight cars and 8 million containers entered the United States. Over 59,596 vessels entered the United States at its 301 ports of entry. Clearly, the amount of activity this represents will require a long-term commitment to innovation, organizational learning, and public vigilance to complement an already overstretched network of government agencies and security professionals.

Contributors to the volumes have been drawn from the nation's security, academic, and intelligence communities, and they address specific issues of security, threat, and prevention. While civil liberties and privacy are a key dimension to the homeland security debate, several recent publications on this topic have emerged which need not be duplicated in this effort. For the same reason, preparedness and response are a small part of the discussion, but individual chapters are not devoted to such issues. For analysis and recommendations regarding such issues, please see an earlier three-volume set, *Community Preparedness and Response to*

Terrorism (edited by James Johnson, Gerald Ledlow, and Mark Cwiek), published by Praeger in 2005. Rather, the overall emphasis of these volumes is on the big picture—building the nation's intellectual capacity for prevention and deterrence by examining America's vulnerabilities in critical areas such as aviation, public transportation, borders, critical infrastructure, ports and maritime commerce, and water and food supplies.

The chapters are organized in three volumes. Chapters in the first volume cover borders and points of entry, including coastal ports and issues of maritime security. Some authors address what the United States has done since 9/11 or what it should be doing, while other authors expand our discussion of homeland security beyond mere lines drawn on a map, emphasizing the need for greater international cooperation. The second volume provides a variety of insights on the protection of public spaces and social institutions. While these are sometimes referred to as "soft targets," the reality is that virtually all potential terrorist targets—except, perhaps, military bases and a relatively small handful of buildings with fortified security barriers and armed personnel—could also be included under the same category. Thus, we have limited the discussions in this volume to issues which would be most salient to communities, large and small, throughout the United States. Contributors to the third volume focus on securing elements of the nation's critical infrastructure, exploring what federal, state, and local authorities can do to ensure that our water, food, and energy supplies; transportation systems; and financial and technical infrastructure are protected against a terrorist attack.

In all three volumes, authors were asked to focus on what has been done in recent years to increase security, but also to alert us to persisting vulnerabilities. However, while a critical analysis of vulnerabilities is needed, authors have been encouraged to avoid "fueling the fear"—that is, giving an already troubled nation new reasons to "duct tape themselves inside their homes." Instead, an underlying mission of this publication is to educate the general public on what each of us can do to reduce the vulnerabilities we share as a nation.

This project complements an earlier three-volume set, *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training and Root Causes*, released in November 2005, and it will be followed next year by a third and final project, *Countering Terrorism in the 21st Century: Strategies, Tactics, and Lessons Learned*. Together, these multivolume publications address the primary topics of the national security debate in the post-9/11 policy environment and will be valuable to educators, leaders in the public and private sectors, and the general public for many years to come.

In sum, the chapters of *Homeland Security: Protecting America's Targets* illuminate critical areas of vulnerability to terrorist attack in the United

States, and in doing so, inform our understanding of the overarching national security challenges we face today. As a whole, the volumes reveal the need for increased vigilance and public-private cooperation throughout the country, and they underscore the importance of the daily decisions made by every policy maker and individual citizen.