HOT TOPICS

The Army’s Role in Homeland Security

Since the founding of our nation, the Army has played an active and critical role in homeland security. It has defended our borders, participated in counterdrug operations, and supported civilian authorities during natural disasters, emergencies, insurrections, and riots. But the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon have now required policymakers to fundamentally reassess the Army’s past homeland security role in today’s new, daunting environment. So far, the Army has taken many important steps to improve its planning and capabilities. Yet, with the U.S. facing a resolute, dynamic, and nefarious enemy, and given the uncertain demands that could be placed on civilian law enforcement agencies and emergency responders, should the Army do more to hedge against the risks of not being adequately prepared for homeland security tasks?

This new RAND report attempts to answer this question by creating five theoretical yet plausible scenarios, which the Army may wish to hedge. It goes on to illustrate possible responses the Army could undertake today and looks at the potential financial, opportunity, and political costs of each particular response. Lastly, recommendations are made for a multifaceted hedging strategy in order to better prepare the Army for homeland security tasks in an uncertain and precarious future.

Read more: An Army Strategy for Homeland Security

Government Intervention for Terrorism Insurance

On September 11, 2001, the U.S. and the rest of the world learned that terrorists possessed both the intention and capability to execute an attack of catastrophic significance. In response, the U.S. adopted numerous measures in order to prevent the eventuality of a future terrorist attack. But while many important steps have been taken, the threat of terrorism still poses a serious challenge for the United States’ insurance system.

This RAND Occasional Paper helps frame the central issues that should be considered in the debate over whether to extend, modify, or end the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA), which expires on December 31, 2005. It explores the broader issue of the appropriate role of disaster insurance within the system for managing the risks created by the possibility of terrorist attacks, and also discusses options that policymakers might consider in addressing this and other issues.

Read more: Issues and Options for Government Intervention in the Market for Terrorism Insurance

Biological Terrorism Against Livestock

In the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the U.S. has made large strides in increasing its ability to detect, prevent, and respond to terrorist incidents. Much of this focus has aimed at upgrading public infrastructure security, using vulnerability threat analyses designed to maximize both counterterrorism and consequence management efforts. However, the agricultural sector is one area that has received comparatively little attention in this regard. With one in eight people in the U.S. working in an occupation that is directly supported by food production, a successful attack on this sector will have enormous social, economic, and political consequences.

Actuated by these various concerns, the RAND Corporation, under the auspices of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, organized a Blue Ribbon Panel/Conference in December 2003 to investigate policy options available for attenuating the potential threat of biological terrorism against the Unites States’ agricultural livestock. This RAND Conference Proceeding Report summarizes the state of research on threats to agricultural livestock, identifies and prioritizes the principal steps needed to safeguard industries associated with this sector, and proposes recommendations for the U.S. policymaking community.

Read more: The Office of Science and Technology Policy Blue Ribbon Panel on the Threat of Biological Terrorism Directed Against Livestock

FORTHCOMING REPORT

Security of the Global Containerized Supply Chain

In November 2002, Congress passed the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 in order to improve overall U.S. port and maritime security. While this legislation and various other actions and policies have been adopted in order to facilitate security along the containerized supply chain, the question of how successful these efforts have been remains to be answered.

This forthcoming RAND Technical Report, titled Evaluating the Security of the Global Containerized Supply Chain, outlines a framework for assessing and managing supply-chain security and efficiency by viewing the supply chain as three interdependent and interacting networks: 1) a business-enabling network of suppliers, 2) a physical system for moving goods, and 3) a set of oversight organizations. Using this framework of analysis, the paper contends that security and efficiency are distinct yet inseparable properties of the same system, defines a framework for assessing the effects of security policies on the supply chain, and makes recommendations on what policies and technological efforts should be pursued in order to improve overall supply security.

For over 30 years, RAND has been a world leader in terrorism research and analysis. To view RAND’s terrorism and homeland security research, go to http://www.rand.org/research_areas/terrorism/.

For more information, go to RAND Washington External Affairs or contact us at wea@rand.org or 703.413.1100 x5632. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world.