
Addressing a Changed World and Evolved Threat Landscape

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS’s) contributions to U.S. economic security and, by extension, the economy itself can be seen in the formulation of one of the six homeland security missions that pertains directly to promoting U.S. economic security. The department describes the importance of its mission to “preserve and uphold the nation’s prosperity and economic security” as follows:

America’s prosperity and economic security are integral to DHS’s homeland security operations, which affect international trade, national transportation systems, maritime activities and resources, and financial systems.1

But DHS’s contributions are often misunderstood and undervalued, and this direct formulation of the department’s role in economic security neglects the
broader and deeper ways in which it contributes to U.S. prosperity and economic security.

By reducing DHS’s role to four bins—international trade, national transportation systems, maritime activities and resources, and financial systems—the myriad ways in which the department contributes to economic security become obscured. This reduction fails to account for the thousands of authorities (laws and regulations), some that accrued as part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and others that have since been added in the almost 20 years since the department was established.

We further believe that DHS’s role in U.S. prosperity and economic security cannot be reduced to a list of static bins but must be considered open to the interpretation of the relevant authorities and will, therefore, continue to evolve.

DHS has a significant and growing role in ensuring U.S. economic security. The country’s economic prosperity depends increasingly on the flow of goods and services, people and capital, and information and technology across U.S. borders—both visible and invisible. The challenges

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<td>BRI</td>
<td>Belt and Road Initiative</td>
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<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>coronavirus disease 2019</td>
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<td>DHS</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Homeland Security</td>
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<td>EO</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
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<td>IP</td>
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<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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is uniquely postured to support, facilitate, and, in some cases, promote U.S. economic leadership.

The department’s place in shaping the future economic environment is clear: Economic security supports and promotes homeland security. DHS plays a crucial role in proactively identifying and addressing the harmful influence on U.S. economic actors or sectors that would result in a geopolitical disadvantage to the United States and limit U.S. persons, companies, or entities from prospering in the global economy. This Perspective begins by describing the evolving strategic environment and concludes by examining DHS’s critical role in supporting economic security, including specific programs or initiatives that could be beneficial for supporting economic resilience.

This Perspective does not seek to define economic security in terms of its component parts or major indexes. Doing so can lead to very different views of the economy. For example, one often thinks of gross domestic product (GDP) as a measure of the economy. The shorthand is useful but does not tell the whole story. To provide greater insight, such units as per capita are often used to describe Americans’ average income. However, even such an averaging fails to account for the income inequalities in which the “top 1% of U.S. households hold 15 times more wealth than [the] bottom 50% combined” (Beer, 2020). The stock market indexes also provide a false picture of the economy in that many at the lower levels of the economy do not benefit from these investments. Measures of economic well-being have also been employed to attempt to capture economic security, albeit more qualitatively and less precisely. Likewise, such measures as intellectual property (IP) theft fail to describe the harm to the economy associated with these losses. Finally, DHS’s contributions to economic security tend to be indirect and thus set the conditions for the direct contributors, such as commerce, innovation, trade, and travel, to function effectively and efficiently.

**The Evolving Strategic Environment**

The strategic environment has evolved since the creation of DHS. So have the challenges and opportunities that shaped the past 20 years. The keen focus on countering terrorism has given way to a global competition with more-diffuse and growing security challenges. One of those areas is the realm of economic security, which directly and indirectly falls under DHS authority. For the future, five key themes undergird these economic security challenges: a shifting economic landscape, interwoven global supply chains, the rise of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), infrastructure challenges, and an uncertain and likely lengthy economic recovery from the COVID-19 global pandemic.

**A Shifting Economic Landscape**

The global economic landscape continues to shift, powered by the democratizing of research, development, and innovation. At the end of World War II, a link between scientific discovery and technological advancement on the one
hand and economic prosperity and national security on the other was asserted (Bush, 1945). This concept has guided the United States ever since. By 1960, the United States accounted for about 70 percent of global research and development (R&D). The result has been that, for much of the past 70 years, the United States has enjoyed primacy in R&D, resulting in unprecedented economic prosperity and unrivaled military capabilities. With 4 percent of the world’s population and 25 percent of the world’s GDP and military capabilities having global reach and overmatch with potential rivals, the United States had risen to hyper-power status with no peer.²

Today, the global R&D enterprise has been transformed. Although the United States remains the largest R&D-performing country, with a 26-percent share of the global total, others are rapidly catching up. The PRC is now second, at 21 percent of global R&D spending, with Japan third and Germany fourth. These four nations also had the largest economies, as estimated in GDP, as of 2020 (pre-COVID) with the United States at $22.3 trillion, the PRC at $14.7 trillion, Japan at $5.5 trillion, and Germany at $4.8 trillion (Beauchamp, 2019).

Determining the exact contribution that technology development has made to the economy remains challenging, but we have seen a correlation between technology and growth in GDP. Some economists have offered such assertions as “almost 90 percent of US output came thanks to technological change” (O’Sullivan, 2019). Another estimated that, from “1909 to 1948, the growth in total factor productivity (TFP) [as a result of technology] accounted for . . . 88.5 percent of labor productivity growth” (Bakker, Crafts, and Woltjer, 2017, p. 2). Regardless of the exact totals, technology development reflects an important advantage that the United States should seek to protect and for which DHS has important responsibilities.

For much of the past 70 years, the United States has enjoyed primacy in R&D, resulting in unprecedented economic prosperity and unrivaled military capabilities.
“Managing” these supply chains has also been critical for policing sanction regimes in support of U.S. policy outcomes. Examples include the crippling sanctions that have been levied on such countries as Iran, North Korea, and, more recently, Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. Although, arguably, these global supply chains provide economic benefits, they also serve as conduits for the illicit flow of advanced technologies and associated IP. They also make technology limits, such as nonproliferation regimes and export controls, more difficult to implement. For example, despite crushing economic sanctions, North Korea has been able to skirt these provisions to develop advanced missile and nuclear technologies.3

These global supply chains and DHS missions will also be affected by the proliferation of these new technologies. The growing use of the internet (including the dark web) for illicit activity complicates control of advanced technologies and IP. Advanced manufacturing and three-dimensional printing will further strain the control of advanced technologies. Some 72 percent of the active pharmaceutical ingredient manufacturers supplying the U.S. market were overseas (Woodcock, 2019). Rare-earth metals—the PRC supplies approximately 80 percent of the rare earths imported into the United States—serve to illustrate the growing concerns about dependence on global supply chains (“U.S. Dependence on China’s Rare Earth,” 2019).

COVID-19 exposed significant weaknesses in global supply chains and has led to efforts to make U.S. supply chains more resilient by increasing their security and diversity. President Joe Biden signed a new executive order (EO) on U.S. supply chains on February 24, 2021. Although it calls for immediate actions, the longer-term changes will require whole-of-government reconsideration of the vulnerabilities of current U.S. supply chains, new approaches to adapt those supply chains, and follow-through to ensure that the required changes are made. The February 2021 EO contains guidance on the changes that are required going forward (Biden, 2021a).

The Rise of the People’s Republic of China

The rise of the PRC signals a direct competition—some might say confrontation—between the world’s two largest economies. But it also signals a growing diffusion of economic power. Through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Made in China 2025, the PRC intends to dominate or replace global power structures that have been in place since the end of World War II. The BRI represents a massive global infrastructure project for some 60 partner nations affecting more than two-thirds of the world’s population (Chatzky and McBride, 2020). The Made in China 2025 initiative aims to place the PRC in a position of global political and economic leadership. The initiative is underwritten by the Chinese government’s support, with one account asserting, “The program aims to use government subsidies, mobilize state-owned enterprises, and pursue intellectual property acquisition to catch up with—and then surpass—Western technological prowess in advanced industries” in key technologies, including biotechnology, electric cars, next-generation information technology, and advanced robotics and artificial intelligence (Sutter, 2020).

The PRC’s significant economic growth in the past 20 years was aided by its entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 and through predatory practices, including forced technology transfer, unfair licensing require-
ments, government-backed cybertheft of U.S. trade secrets, and efforts to acquire U.S. technology and IP through acquisitions to support its industrial plans (Sutter, 2020). Today, the PRC is outcompeting the United States in some key technology sectors and policy and regulatory forums. The PRC has joined and nominated a candidate in 2019 to head the United Nations’ World Intellectual Property Organization (Lynch, 2019) and is transforming its biotech industry, through policy support, regulatory reform, and capital investments from government and private investors (Kazmierczak et al., 2019). Chinese companies export (to Western markets) information and communication technology (ICT) equipment with inherent vulnerabilities that can be used to attack and disrupt a nation’s telecommunications, critical infrastructure, and military capabilities (e.g., the Chinese military’s cyber-attack on Equifax). Furthermore, by infiltrating commercial e-commerce and social media, the PRC can regularly track U.S. internet users’ behavior for surveillance, silence corporate criticism, detect market trends, and hijack nascent innovations.

Infrastructure Challenges

Infrastructure challenges have become more acute, exposing both the aging of critical U.S. infrastructure and its inadequacy to face future challenges. U.S. bridges, railway systems, and roadways require significant attention. The highway system was established and built beginning in 1953 during the Eisenhower administration; many bridges date from the earliest days of the highway system and lack the weight and volume capacities to support today’s traffic. U.S. railroads continue to age and fail to incorporate the most-advanced technology for performance or safety. Local commuter systems are suffering from decades of underfunding and deferred maintenance. Critical U.S. infrastructure is also challenged to weather the changing conditions. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the number of “U.S. billion-dollar disaster events from 1980–2021 (Consumer Price Index [CPI]–adjusted)” per year has increased from three in 1980 to 20 in 2021 (National Centers for Environmental Information, 2022; Smith, 2022).

Today, the United States is at a crossroad with respect to infrastructure and requires infusion of new concepts, technologies, and processes to remain economically competitive well into the future. One estimate puts the annual cost of maintaining highways and bridges through 2030 at $65.3 billion per year. By another estimate, the total cost to repair aging U.S. infrastructure is more than $1 trillion, and that does not include the cost to modernize U.S. systems (Marshall, 2017). The bipartisan $550 billion in new federal investment that President Biden signed into law as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58) would provide a sizable down payment for addressing U.S. infrastructure needs (White House, 2021).

The future of work directly relates to global supply chains, the democratization of R&D and innovation, and the infusion of advanced technologies across the globe. Lower-skilled workers, such as those fulfilling jobs in the agricultural sector, will likely continue to be in high demand. Advanced technologies, particularly those in artificial intelligence, robotics, and related fields, will eliminate many positions for workers in the middle class. Some of those workers might be retrained and find their way back into the workforce, but some might be challenged to
find their niche in this future labor market. Analysts in one study estimated that “60 percent of all occupations have at least 30 percent technically automatable activities,” based on currently demonstrated technologies (Manyika et al., 2017, p. 5). Another team found that, of 702 occupations considered, “47% of workers in America had jobs at a high risk of potential automation” (“Automation and Anxiety,” 2016).

But targeted competition for scarce human capital resources will be keen. Workers with those essential skills will be required, and immigration will likely need to factor in to satisfy U.S. demands. Scientists and engineers will be needed as a ready source to fuel R&D and innovation requirements. It is noteworthy that, from 1901 to 2019, 35 percent of the Nobel Prize awards to Americans in the fields of chemistry, medicine, and physics were to immigrants (Schiller, 2019).

An Uncertain and Likely Lengthy Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Global Pandemic

Continued economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the current inflationary period, and potential for a recession combined provided a historic set of challenges to be addressed, and DHS has an important role in this recovery. Although the economic recovery to date has been remarkable, it has not been uniform across sectors and socioeconomic groups. Although the country has recovered from most recessions in two to three years, it took more than six years for employment to fully recover from the 2009 Great Recession (Rampell, 2020). Yet the effects from COVID-19 have been different in that the collapse was more rapid (one month) and deeper than other post–World War II recessions. Unemployment in 2020 went from 3.5 percent in February to a peak of 14.7 percent in April and had, as of August 2022, returned to 3.5 percent (Gurley, 2022). Still, small businesses, particularly in the service sector, were disproportionately affected. The airlines and hospitality sectors are notable as also being challenged in this recovery. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis estimated that U.S. GDP contracted 4.8 percent at an annual rate in the first quarter of 2020, the first decline in six years (White House, 2020).

To mitigate the immediate impact of COVID-19 and aid in the recovery, Congress passed four bills. Two relief bills signed by Presidents Trump and Biden, respectively, include almost $4 trillion in COVID-19–related spending. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (Pub. L. 116-136, 2020) provided about $2 trillion—the largest economic stimulus legislation in U.S. history since the New Deal in the 1930s (Werner, Kane, and DeBonis,

The COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated certain economic trends. For example, the greater reliance on electronic collaboration platforms has the potential to reduce business travel dramatically. Clear economic winners are emerging, including the need for assured broadband communications across the United States and security for vital networks. Other sectors, such as agriculture, have demonstrated that they might need to receive higher priority in the future. Shortages related to COVID-19 preparedness and response demonstrate that approaches to manufacturing for key items, such as personal protective equipment and reagents for test kits, might need to be brought back to the United States rather than to remain offshored as they currently are.

DHS has reach and insight into many of the forces that shape the U.S. economy and secure Americans’ way of life.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Crucial Role in Economic Security

DHS is uniquely situated to protect and promote U.S. economic security. The department functions at the core of the U.S. national security complex, with responsibilities and interests at the federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels, in addition to working with business and the private sector and maintaining open dialogue with civil society in such areas as trade, travel, and cybersecurity.

As a result, DHS has reach and insight into many of the forces that shape the U.S. economy and secure Americans’ way of life. Via its components, DHS has a long and storied history of protecting the growth and maintaining the dominance of the U.S. economy—U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Coast Guard both trace their origins back to the beginning of the country (U.S. Coast Guard, undated; U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2022). Moreover, DHS components maintain strong ties globally with many of the United States’ most trusted allies and partners with which the department works every day on technical, regulatory, law enforcement, and strategic issues to ensure seamless and secure trade and travel.

The Source of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Authority

The department’s primary sources of economic authority reside in more than 1,000 foundational documents, including federal statutes, EOs, presidential policy directives, homeland security presidential directives, DHS management directives, and DHS delegations.6 And many of these
authorities either directly or indirectly pertain to or affect economic U.S. security.

In these DHS authorities, four overarching conclusions are clear:

1. The Secretary of Homeland Security’s ability to enhance or facilitate economic recovery is diffuse and primarily indirect in effect.
2. The Secretary (and the department) is vested with many types of authority. Most of that authority was inherited from legacy agencies subsumed into DHS when it was created and relates to three principal domains: law enforcement, emergency management, and infrastructure protection.
3. DHS does not have an overarching or unifying doctrinal framework that it can apply in order to easily organize and exercise its authority in a targeted manner. The department has separate doctrinal documents that guide its law enforcement, emergency management, and infrastructure protection actions and operations.
4. Many of the authorities charge or assign DHS with numerous responsibilities but not direct authority over the entirety of personnel and resources necessary to execute those responsibilities in the absence of collaboration and coordination with external government entities.

In considering the implications of these authorities, we observed that, in some cases, an authority would have both a broad scope and a high impact on numerous factors, sectors, functions, and capabilities. In other instances, the scope would be narrower and the impact would be less. For example, exercising a particular immigration authority might have a broad scope and high impact because of a significant increase in both capital investment and job creation across the economy. Other immigration authorities might be specific in scope (say, to certain industry sectors or critical functions) and have a low impact because they affected only a small group of foreign-national workers.

Specific Areas for Increased Visibility

Within the five thematic areas discussed previously, we have identified opportunities for future emphasis that could contribute to building greater economic capacity and security. Each has direct implications for the department and its components as they seek to protect and enhance U.S. economic security. They are intended to capture areas that could benefit immediately from increased emphasis and from looking forward for shaping the future economic security of the United States.

Each of the five thematic areas has direct implications for the department and its components as they seek to protect and enhance U.S. economic security.
Global Economic Landscape

- **Lead global regulatory and standard-making bodies.** The PRC is beginning to outflank the United States in its efforts to influence global standard-setting organizations. The PRC uses its power to compel the development of standards that advance its own technological priorities, often to the detriment of other states. In some cases, the PRC uses its influence on standards to steer away from U.S. innovations in order to impede the United States’ competitive edge.

- **Prioritize science, technology and innovation.** Develop strategies for advancing priority areas and fully fund the strategies to promote economic prosperity and national security. Protect critical IP through enhanced efforts to eliminate theft. Reverse trends that have seen nations employ predatory practices to gain access to U.S. technologies.

Global Supply Chains

- **Reevaluate the global supply chains that support the United States.** Examine the 16 critical infrastructure areas and 55 national critical functions to understand where the United States must invest to develop and retain critical manufacturing and human capital capacities. Build surety into critical supply chains on which the United States depends for maintaining its security.

- **Employ advanced technologies to protect global supply chains.** Incorporate technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, into supply-chain visibility, management, and protection.

Examine alternatives to improve the export-control mechanisms that are in place today, and build international coalitions to halt the flow of key information, equipment, systems, and technologies.

Rise of China

- **Counter the PRC’s efforts to expand influence.** The PRC is pushing out its sphere of influence through “modern colonization” efforts, enshrined in such initiatives as the BRI. This project and others like it are a direct use of trade and finance to encourage the expansion of the country’s geopolitical reach into developing countries that have much-needed natural resources or offer strategic geographical assets for future use.

- **Counter the PRC’s predatory and unfair economic practices.** Build and lead international coalitions and national efforts to counter documented violations of the PRC’s World Trade Organization and World Intellectual Property Organization obligations; eliminate IP theft and misappropriations; and prevent coercion of companies, particularly U.S. companies, through joint venture and IP transfer requirements or “voluntary” IP transfer requirements in exchange for access to the PRC’s market.

Infrastructure Challenges

- **Develop and resource a national plan for infrastructure revitalization.** Eliminate the $1 trillion shortfall to repair aging infrastructure or build replacement infrastructure that responds to the
needs of an evolving U.S. economy decades into the future. Expand on the 2021 bipartisan legislation (Pub. L. 117-58) that represents only about half the total shortfall. Such a plan would rely on strategic calculations to ensure that, where necessary, decisions would be made on whether to repair or replace. In particular, recovery from disasters would seek to rationalize decisions to prioritize future needs over rebuilding obsolete infrastructure with limited future utility.

- **Encourage smart city designs and approaches.** Seek to incorporate smart city technologies, including internet-of-things capabilities into future planning that improve quality of life while protecting civil liberties and civil rights and ensuring cybersecurity and network resilience. Seek to incorporate ICTs that generate and aggregate data; analytical tools that convert those data into usable information; and organizational structures that encourage collaboration, innovation, and the application of that information to solve public problems (Center for City Solutions and Applied Research, 2016).

The Future of Work (and the Workforce)

- **Identify key human capital requirements.** Determine the human capital needs for building today’s and tomorrow’s economy. Seek to identify labor markets that are advancing and those that are declining as a result of economic necessities, incorporation of information technology, and changing market demands.

- **Reform the immigration system, establishing economic security as a priority.** Identify specific areas in which immigration could be used to acquire the necessary human capital (this is related to the preceding point). Aggressively pursue job candidates with the education, training, and skill sets that would be beneficial for greater economic capacity in the United States.

Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

- **Improve screening and vetting to allow for security at the speed of life.** Screening and vetting that increase accuracy and efficiency would provide great benefit for building economic prosperity and security. For example, convincing the public that transportation systems, such as commuter trains and aircraft, are safe and convenient and require a minimum amount of processing and contact with screeners could result in an improved customer experience while still maintaining acceptable levels of security.

- **Eliminate burdensome regulations where appropriate.** DHS should seek to eliminate regulations that are unduly burdensome or out of date or relate to obsolete technology, processes, or procedures. These regulations can hinder economic competitiveness and might not contribute to people’s safety and security. Examples include U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulatory processes, which were shortened for vaccines and therapeutics for COVID-19 but will likely return to prepanademic approaches for other medical countermeasures.
Another example is the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 (Pub. L. 66-261, commonly known as the Jones Act), which affects trade and supplies and, in the case of COVID-19, hindered movement of domestic products (“Jones Act Impacts in the Coronavirus Crisis,” undated).

However, this list should not be considered all-inclusive. Rather, the list represents important examples of areas in which DHS-related authorities in promoting and supporting U.S. economic prosperity could be prescient. We recognize that the list should certainly be augmented as new challenges arise or new opportunities or encountered.

**Conclusions**

Today, the United States faces an evolving strategic economic environment with the rise of the PRC, a shifting economic landscape, interwoven supply chains, infrastructure challenges, and an uncertain and potentially lengthy economic recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Each of these items mandates reflection and changes to address these challenges. However, taken together, they require nothing short of a call to action.

The department’s role in shaping the future economic environment is clear. Simply put, economic security is homeland security. DHS plays a crucial role in proactively identifying and addressing the harmful influence on U.S. economic actors or sectors that would result in a geopolitical disadvantage to the United States and limit U.S. persons, companies, or entities from prospering in the global economy.

Congress has also begun to identify the need for planning to ensure the continuity of the economy. To this end, in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Pub. L. 116-283), Congress requested that the U.S. Department of Defense, aided by other departments, including DHS, develop plans “to ensure the renewal of the U.S. economy following a significant cyberattack” (Ravich and Cancelmo, 2022). Although this initiative pertains directly to cybersecurity, it could certainly be broadened to include an all-hazards approach to economic renewal.

To ensure America’s economic security now and in the future, the United States should safeguard both continued global economic leadership and security of its key economic advantages. To this end, the United States must continue to lead in trade, technology, information systems, innovation, human capital acquisition (through both education and immigration), and travel. These are all areas in which DHS is uniquely postured to support, facilitate, and, in some cases, promote U.S. economic leadership.

**Notes**


2. The statistics in this section come from National Science Board, 2018.


4. In August 2017, the U.S. Trade Representative launched a Section 301 investigation to determine whether China’s policies on IP, innovation, and technology were unfair and harmed U.S. stakeholders. (*Section 301* refers to that section of the Trade Act of 1974 [Pub. L. 93-618, 1975],
which gave the U.S. Trade Representative responsibility and authority to investigate and enforce trade practices and agreements.)

5 In an effort to check China’s aggressive posture, both Congress and the executive branch have taken steps to try to protect U.S. ICTs. See, for example, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, §§ 8498 (modification of prohibition on acquisition of sensitive materials from nonallied foreign nations), 12601 (prohibitions on Huawei telecommunications), and 12601 (compliance requirements for ZTE telecommunications); the Federal Acquisition Supply Chain Security Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-390, Title II); EO 14028 (mandating enhanced cyber–supply chain risk management contracting requirements) (Biden, 2021b); and EO 13873 (prohibiting certain acquisitions of, imports of, transfers of, installations of, dealings in, or use of ICTs or services involving foreign adversaries) (Trump, 2019).

6 The department’s foundational documents—the Homeland Security Act (Pub. L. 107-296, 2002) (affecting approximately 900 statutory sections) and the department’s directives (277) and delegations (23)—are sources to identify the universe of laws, regulations, EOs, presidential policy directives, and homeland security presidential directives covering DHS’s entire jurisdiction.

7 See 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(5) (“Employment Creation”), which could be exercised in a manner so as to prioritize and expedite the influx of capital investment ($1.8 million per immigrant visa applicant) into multiple business sectors in order to create at least ten jobs per visa.

8 See 8 U.S.C. §§ 1184 (admission of nonimmigrants) and 1324a(h)(3) (unlawful employment of aliens), which could be exercised to grant temporary work authorization to a specific individual, group, or category of workers (e.g., agricultural workers, truck drivers, physician’s assistants).

References


“Jones Act Impacts in the Coronavirus Crisis,” Oil and Energy Online, undated.


Public Law 66-261, an act to provide for the promotion and maintenance of the American merchant marine, to repeal certain emergency legislation, and provide for the disposition, regulation, and use of property acquired thereunder, and for other purposes, June 5, 1920.


U.S. Code, Title 6, Domestic Security; Chapter 1, Homeland Security Organization; Subchapter III, Science and Technology in Support of Homeland Security; Section 185, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers.

U.S. Code, Title 8, Aliens and Nationality; Chapter 12, Immigration and Nationality; Subchapter II, Immigration; Part I, Selection System; Section 1153, Allocation of Immigrant Visas.

U.S. Code, Title 8, Aliens and Nationality; Chapter 12, Immigration and Nationality; Subchapter II, Immigration; Part II, Admission Qualification for Aliens; Travel Control of Citizens and Aliens; Section 1184, Admission of Nonimmigrants.

U.S. Code, Title 8, Aliens and Nationality; Chapter 12, Immigration and Nationality; Subchapter II, Immigration; Part VIII, General Penalty Provisions; Section 1324a, Unlawful Employment of Aliens.


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About This Perspective

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has important authority and responsibilities with respect to promoting economic prosperity and protecting U.S. economic interests. Each component contributes to this authority and responsibility, many having brought them to the department when it was formed by the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-296). This Perspective focuses on how the evolving strategic environment has created challenges and opportunities for DHS to contribute to economic prosperity. In considering the evolving strategic environment, five specific areas were identified as affecting the department’s role in economic prosperity: the global economic landscape, global supply chains, the rise of China, infrastructure challenges, and the continued recovery from coronavirus disease 2019. The sources of DHS authority are reviewed and specific opportunities for increased visibility are developed. These specific opportunities are not meant to be comprehensive but rather to be representative of the areas in which DHS can directly contribute in a meaningful way to promoting economic prosperity and protecting U.S. economic interests.

Funding for this research was provided by gifts from RAND supporters and income from the operation of the RAND Homeland Security Research Division (HSRD). HSRD operates the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by DHS. HSRD also conducts research and analysis for other federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and public- and private-sector organizations that make up the homeland security enterprise, within and outside the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center contract. In addition, HSRD conducts research and analysis on homeland security matters for U.S. allies and private foundations.

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