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Building on the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review to Improve the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Department of Homeland Security

Addendum

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RAND Office of External Affairs

CT-412/1

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Document submitted on July 18, 2014 as an addendum to testimony presented before the House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency on June 20, 2014

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The RAND Corporation

*Building on the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review to Improve the Effectiveness and
Efficiency of the Department of Homeland Security
Addendum²*

Before the Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency
United States House of Representatives

July 18, 2014

The subsequent questions and answers found in this document were received from the Committee for additional information following the hearing on June 20, 2014 and were submitted for the record.

Question:

Components, such as TSA and CBP, are ultimately responsible for implementing DHS's strategic plan. While the QHSR developed a strategic framework, it remains unclear to what extent these efforts are impacting specific programs and operations at the component level.

- a. Do you know of any component level programs or operations that have changed, or been cancelled or initiated as a result of the prior QHSR or the current QHSR?
- b. To what extent have/will components adjust their own strategies to be in line with the QHSR?

Response:

One of the results of the first QHSR was the recognition of the importance of having a valid national risk assessment. The methods for national risk assessment developed through the first QHSR were then applied in this second QHSR. However, as I stated in my testimony, the next challenge for DHS is to connect the strategic planning based on this assessment to decisions

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² This testimony is available for free download at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT412z1.html>.

about budgets and program priorities. To this end, it is important that the Department complete the steps outlined in the Secretary's Unity of Effort memo that can implement budget processes and build the analytic capability that will allow components to adjust their own strategies and programs to be in line with the guidance in the second QHSR.

Question:

The QHSR specifically tasks the Department with assessing its organizational structure, including its "management systems, budget and accounting systems, human resources systems, procurement systems, physical and technical infrastructure." This was not included in the QHSR. Please expand on why you believe the Department did not include these elements. Would doing so in a public document expose the country to risk?

Response:

I am not aware of the reasons why the Department decided not to address issues related to management more explicitly or in greater detail. I do not believe that doing so in a public document would have exposed the country to greater risk.

Question:

The 9/11 Act requires the Department to conduct the QHSR every four years, consistent with the Presidential election. During the preparation of the first QHSR, the Department was simultaneously going through the process of an administration and political party change. This time, the administration and political party stayed the same. As a result, the Department has had an opportunity to prepare a QHSR during two different election outcomes. How could each outcome - new Administration and party and same - affect the QHSR process and should Congress reconsider the timing to the QHSR so that it does not occur during the same year as the Presidential election?

Response:

As indicated in this question, both the first and second QHSRs were required to be completed as new leadership stepped into DHS. This timing led to delays in the release of the reports and limited the utility of the reports to the Department leadership Congress as a tool for strategic planning and budgeting. The QHSR would be better timed if it were initiated when new leadership came aboard (rather than completed at that time) and was developed and released in

coordination with the President's budget request, so that it could serve as strategic guidance for that request.

Question:

The purpose of the QHSR is to inform the budget. How could the Department mature the QHSR process so it will bear some relationship to the budget request?

Response:

To reiterate a few points made in my written testimony and in the responses to questions above, there are two steps that could be taken to mature the QHSR process so that it will bear a relationship to the budget request. First, the Secretary's Unity of Effort memo identifies steps to implement budget processes and build analytic capability to connect budget decision-making to the strategic guidance in the QHSR. Second, the QHSR would be a more effective strategic planning tool if it were scheduled to be initiated when new leadership comes on board at the Department and it was developed and released in coordination with the budget request.

Question:

When examining the statutory requirements for what should be included in the QHSR, has the evolution of time and the changing homeland security environment, are these still the best requirements, in your opinion, should be any legislation additions or deletions to the requirements?

Response:

The statutory requirement for a QHSR reinforces the importance of strategic planning for DHS and the stated requirements are appropriate for such a review and remain relevant.

Question:

Many of the documents submitted to DHS by stakeholders were not made public. In your opinion could the process have been more open and transparent?

Response:

I am supportive of greater transparency for the analysis and information to support strategic planning for homeland security. Ultimately, the effectiveness of DHS at countering terrorism, managing risks from disasters, and facilitating trade and travel depends on the ability of state and local governments, private companies, and non-government organizations to contribute to making the nation safer, more secure, and more prosperous. When these organizations have more information, they are in a better position to offer solutions.

Question:

The Secretary's Unity of Effort memo, in addition to the numerous cross-cutting strategies laid out in the QHSR envisions a unified cohesive DHS; yet, its Component agencies and high-level officials remain spread out in various offices across the National Capital Region. And yet, from some Members, there remains a lack of support for the consolidated headquarters at St. Elizabeth's. How would a consolidate headquarters assist the Department in carrying out its mission? And do you believe that consolidating DHS' physical infrastructure supports the Secretary's Unity of Effort?

Response:

As mentioned in my testimony, the Secretary's Unity of Effort memo includes several steps that can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department. I believe that close cooperation between the Secretary and Congress will greatly improve DHS's ability to implement these initiatives. I have not examined how consolidation of headquarters at St. Elizabeth's would affect management of DHS. However, to the extent a convincing case can be made that a consolidated headquarters would improve management, it would deserve support by Congress.