

Mission NOT Accomplished: Bush's Failed Record on Jobs & Protecting the Homeland

HOMELAND SECURITY: MISSION NOT ACCOMPLISHED

As Bush tours the country touting his record on the war on terror, important Homeland Security needs are going unmet, leaving serious gaps in key areas of public security.

☒ Bush Stalled DHS' Creation

From Day One, Bush Opposed Creating a Homeland Security Department. Bush stalled the creation of a new cabinet agency for months, opposing it until it became apparent that legislation creating it would pass Congress in mid-2002. Prior to Bush's reversal, then-press secretary Ari Fleischer said Bush told Congress "there does not need to be a Cabinet-level Office of Homeland Security." [WH Briefing, 10/24/01; National Journal, 6/5/02; Bush, 11/19/02]

☒ Bush Shortchanges First Responders and Leaves Major Security Gaps

Bush Killed Chemical Plant Security Plan Under Pressure from Industry. Bush killed off a plan to more strongly regulate chemical plants that Tom Ridge and EPA supported. Industry exerted massive pressure against both the EPA/HS plan and against a similar Senate plan, and was credited with being the force that killed them off. Bush has instead supported letting companies regulate themselves. [GAO, 3/2003; Washington Post, 10/3/02]

Air Travel is Still Not Secure. The initial federal air security screening force of over 55,000 has been cut by thousands, to an eventual level of 45,000, an 18 percent cut. TSA's air cargo security program meant to alleviate concern about unscreened cargo on passenger jets mandates only spot checks conducted by the cargo carriers themselves, allowing most cargo to remain unscreened. [TSA; AP, 4/30/03; Wash Post, 5/1/03, 7/31/03; House HS Cmte Dems, 1/04]

Over 2 Years After 9/11, Intelligence Sharing Still Not a Reality. DHS still competes with the CIA and FBI for intelligence consolidation, and investigators with the GAO reported that other agencies continued to have "responsibilities that overlap with, duplicate, or even trump those of" DHS. GAO also found that the vast majority of state and even federal officials believed intelligence sharing was inadequate. [CQ, 2/20/04; House HS Cmte Democrats, 1/04; CQ, 03/02/04]

Unified Terrorist Watch List Still Not Completed. Two years after the terrorist attacks, and after "struggling for months," the government still had not created an integrated terrorist watch lists, missing a December 2003 deadline. Bureaucratic infighting as well as confusion over the role of various entities helped cause the delay. Tom Ridge said the "goal now is to have the work done by midsummer [2004]." [CQ, 03/02/04; AP, 3/15/04]

Bush's Port Security Strategy Ineffective and Unreliable. Bush's Container Security Initiative uses ships' manifest data, which the GAO called "one of the least reliable or useful for targeting purposes," to assess risk. Only one port in the country has radiation portals installed, while others screen for radiological weapons using handheld detectors not designed for large containers. In addition, Bush slashed port security grants by \$150 million from 2004 to 2005. [Sunday Telegram, 3/30/03; House HS Cmte Dems, 1/04; US Budget, OMB; Journal of Commerce, 3/24/03; CQ, 2/9/04]

Bush Administration Regularly Missing or Extending Critical Security Deadlines. Significant deadlines for important security measures to be implemented have repeatedly slipped by on Bush's watch:

- Tom Ridge recently asked Congress for a two year extension on requiring biometric data on allied nations' passports, saying the security measures would cause "undue burden."
- Bush missed a 2003 deadline to unify the myriad terrorist watch lists used by various law enforcement and intelligence entities.
- Bush and the aviation industry pressured congressional negotiators kill a plan instituting a 2003 deadline for all cargo on passenger airlines.
- The Transportation Security Administration "formally stretched" in April 2004 the deadline for fingerprinting hazardous materials truck drivers.
- TSA only "met" a 2002 deadline to screen all passenger baggage because Congress granted an 11th hour deadline extension.

[Ridge, 4/21/04; CQ, 03/02/04; AP, 3/15/04; Wall Street Journal, 9/18/03; The Trucker, 4/6/04; Air Transportation Intelligence, 12/30/02; Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 12/31/02]

Bush's Border Security Priorities Leave Nation's Longest Border Underdefended. Only 1,000 border agents patrol the 5,000 mile-long northern border, despite the fact that Canada's intelligence agency has documented Al Qaeda activity within the country. [Deseret Morning News, 7/20/03; Washington Post, 12/25/02; New York Times, 12/17/02]

JOBS: MISSION NOT ACCOMPLISHED

"When America works, America prospers, so my economic security plan can be summed up in one word: jobs." [President Bush, 1/29/02]

2.9 Million Private Sector Jobs Lost Under Bush. Since Bush took office, 2.9 million private sector jobs—and 2.6 million total jobs—have been lost. [Bureau of Labor Statistics]

2.8 Million Manufacturing Jobs Have Been Lost Under Bush. Since Bush took office, 2.8 million manufacturing jobs have been lost. [Bureau of Labor Statistics]

2 Million Americans Are Experiencing Long-Term Unemployment. Under Bush, long-term unemployment--27 weeks or more of unemployment--has increased nearly 200 percent, to 2 million. [Bureau of Labor Statistics]

Bush Administration Claims That Outsourcing Is "Good." The Economic Report of the President embraced foreign outsourcing as a positive development. According to Gregory Mankiw, chairman of Bush's Council of Economic Advisors, "Outsourcing is just a new way of doing international trade... More things are tradable than were tradable in the past. And that's a good thing." [LA Times, 2/10/04]

To Avoid Counting Millions Of Lost Jobs, Bush Proposed Counting Fast Food Workers As "Manufacturers." The Economic Report of the President questions whether fast-food restaurants should continue to be counted as part of the service sector or should instead be reclassified as manufacturers. According to the New York Times, "David Huether of the National Association of Manufacturers, said he had heard that some economists wanted to count hamburger flipping as manufacturing, which he noted would result in statistical reports showing many more jobs in a declining sector." [NYT, 2/19/04, 2/23/04]