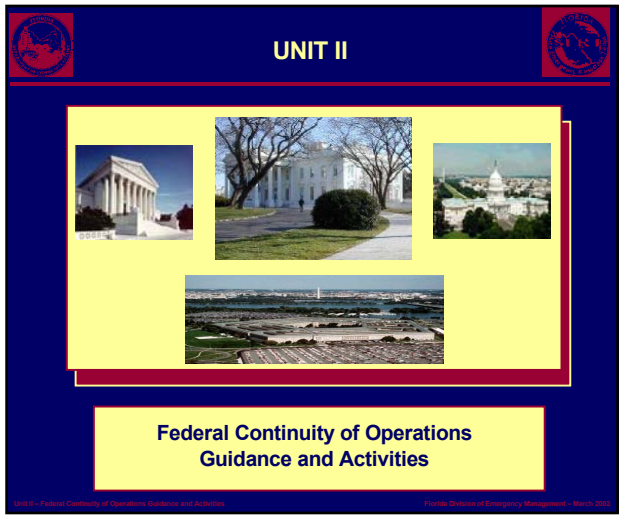
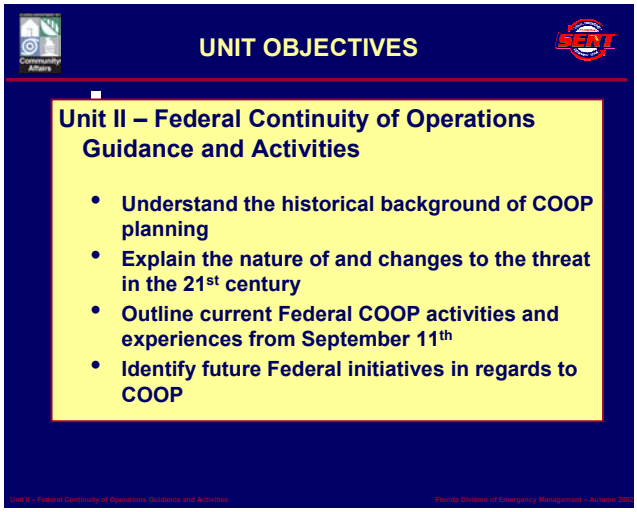


Unit II – Federal Continuity of Operations Guidance and Activities

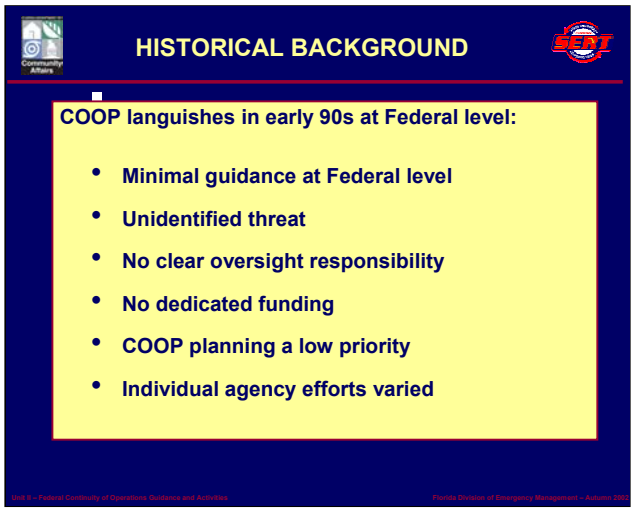
This Unit provides the general philosophy of COOP planning from the Federal perspective. General background and historical information are included to facilitate understanding of the evolution of the program. Federal guidance documents and information on the Executive Branch coordinating committee are also presented. Finally, the section summarizes the lessons learned from activation of Federal agency COOP plans on September 11, 2001 in response to the terrorist attacks on the United States.



Unit Objectives

At the conclusion of the unit, the participants will be able to:

1. Understand the historical background of COOP planning.
2. Explain the nature of and changes to the threat in the 21st century.
3. Outline current Federal COOP activities and experiences from September 11th.
4. Identify future Federal initiatives in regards to COOP.



Historical Background

After the end of the Cold War, many of the nation's national security emergency preparedness activities were either discontinued or allowed to atrophy. There was limited Federal guidance on what each agency should maintain and very little funding available. The Federal government did not have one single point-of-contact for COOP or COG planning, and agencies did not maintain dedicated COOP planning efforts. Each individual agency had varying COOP capability levels.

According to press reporting, for many years the Federal government had a robust COG program aimed at ensuring the survivability of constitutional authority in the event of a decapitating strike in a general nuclear exchange. Reports released in 1994 stated that approximately $8 billion was spent on COG activities over the 11-year period up to 1994[1]. The report continued that the program sought to create an unbreakable chain of command for military and civilian leaders that would withstand a six-month nuclear war, which was regarded as a plausible length for a controlled conflict. Reporting now suggests that much, perhaps most of this program, was discontinued.

Presidential Decision Directive 67 (PDD) was issued on October 21, 1998, and relates to enduring constitutional government, COOP planning, and COG operations. The purpose of *Enduring Constitutional Government (ECG)* is to ensure survival of a constitutional form of government and the continuity of essential Federal functions. PDD 67 replaced the first Bush Administration's National Security Directive (NSD) 69 *Enduring Constitutional Government* of June 2, 1992, which in turn succeeded NSD 37 *Enduring Constitutional Government* of April 18, 1990 and (National Security Directive (NSDD) 55 *Enduring National Leadership* of September 14, 1982.

With the reduced threat to this country of nuclear attack by the former Soviet Union and its successor nations, ECG programs were scaled back in the early 1990s.

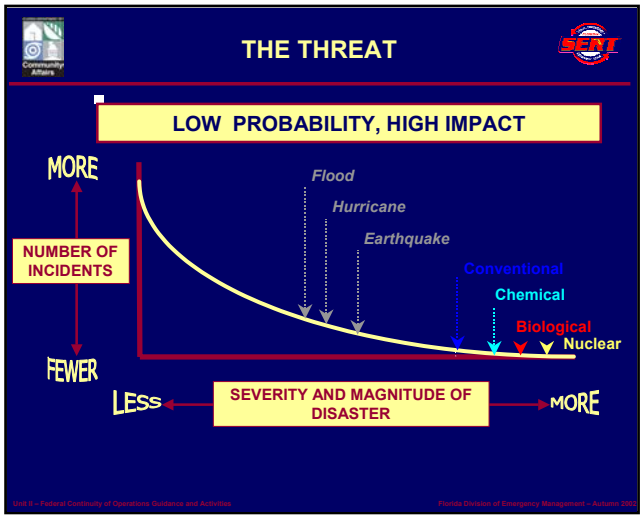
[1]Weiner Report, 1994.

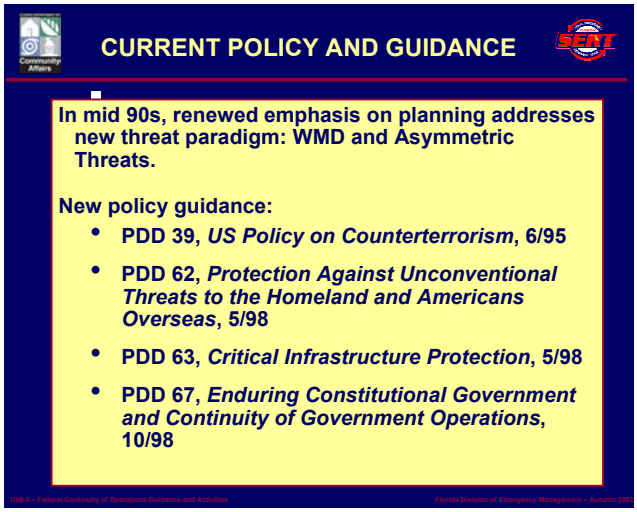
The Changing Threat

Present and future opponents may expend considerable intellectual and material resources to develop political-military responses designed specifically to upset or counter the great strengths inherent in the force posture of a conventional military. The Nation's great capability in high-technology power projection forces may lead future opponents to devise a variety of "asymmetric" counters or stratagems to frustrate, if not defeat, the U.S. military advantages and bring the front of war to the American homeland. The threats to the U.S. can be political, economic, social, and/or financial.

Simply stated, asymmetric threats are a version of not "fighting fair," which can include the use of surprise in all its operational and strategic dimensions and the use of weapons in ways unplanned by the United States. Not fighting fair also includes the prospect of an opponent designing a strategy that fundamentally alters the terrain on which a conflict is fought. Historical examples of such strategies include: NATO's Cold War doctrine; terrorism by proxy used by various Islamic states; and the Serbs taking UN personnel hostage to deter military escalation by NATO forces during 1994-95.

The most significant asymmetric threats facing the U.S. are: the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and long-range ballistic or cruise missiles; the acquisition of high-technology sensors, communications, and weapon systems; the exploitation of cyberweapons which could be used to disrupt the nation's critical infrastructure and information technology systems and bring the war home; and the opponents could choose to fight in environments, such as large cities or jungles, that degrade the U.S. capacity to find and attack militarily significant targets. Any of these threats could include conducting acts of aggression that purposely blur boundaries between actions considered crimes and those viewed as warfare.


THE THREAT
LOW PROBABILITY, HIGH IMPACT
MORE
NUMBER OF INCIDENTS
FEWER
Flood
Hurricane
Earthquake
Conventional
Chemical
Biological
Nuclear
LESS
SEVERITY AND MAGNITUDE OF DISASTER
MORE

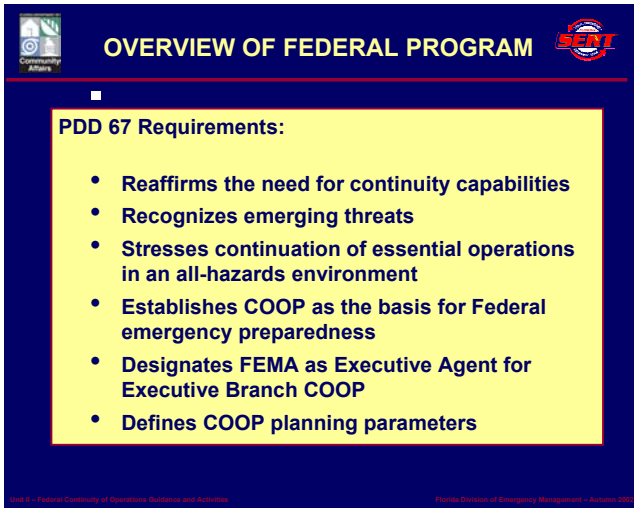


Current Policy and Guidance

After the Oklahoma City bombing, the first World Trade Center terrorist incident, and Japanese subway chemical-terrorism attempt, the Federal government in light of the post-cold war threat environment began a re-evaluation of national security emergency preparedness planning and programs. This process resulted in the release of PDD 67 – *Enduring Constitutional Government and Continuity of Government Operations*, on October 21, 1998. This classified directive notes the widening range of possible threats (terrorism) in a new era of proliferating technologies and materials related to weapons of mass destruction/disruption. The directive stresses the importance of having in place a comprehensive and effective program to ensure the survival of a constitutional form of government and continuity of essential functions under all circumstances.

During this interim and to the present, State and local COG planning has languished. Most State and local governments have not reconfigured their pre-existing Cold War programs to meet the changing threat paradigm of the 21st Century. Some plans and programs were updated to meet the challenges of the potential Y2K event. When no major problems materialized after years of planning and billions of dollars spent, most governments returned to a state of complacency.

State and local governments have plans for COG that would be exercised in an emergency/disaster, with limited Federal training that is available. However, it is not at all clear the degree to which these State and local plans anticipate the possibility and nature of a significant crisis which would require the emergency relocation of facilities and personnel to continue the performance of critical services. Since the end of the Cold War, the Federal government has not issued any policy or guidance to the States for either COOP or COG. Furthermore, the Federal government has not provided any domestic threat assessments to the States from which to base their emergency planning. No specific information or guidance in regards to State and local planning for COOP has been released by the Federal government since events on September 11, 2001.

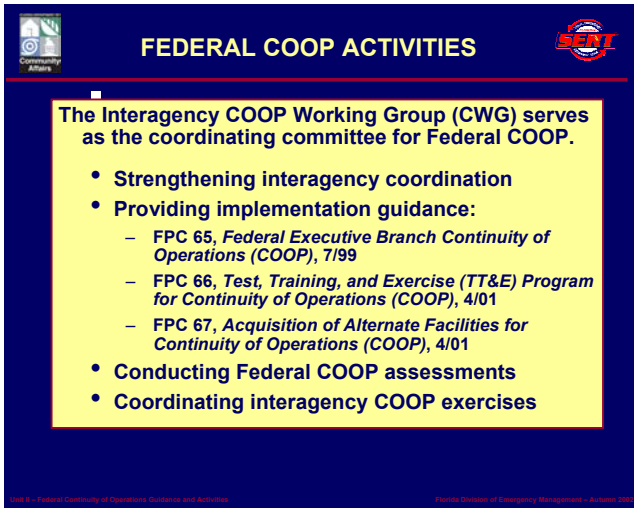


PDD 67 Requirements

Among other things, PDD 67 requires Federal agencies to develop COOP plans for essential operations. In response to this directive, many Federal agencies formed task forces of representatives from within the agency who were familiar with agency contingency plans. They developed the COOP as a unifying concept that did not replace existing plans but, instead, superimposed COOP functions if and when a problem threatens serious disruption to agency operations. The plans identify those requirements necessary to support the primary functions, such as emergency communications, establishing a chain of command, and delegations of authority. The text of PDD 67 has not been released, and there is no White House factsheet summarizing its provisions because of its security classification.

In addition, Executive Order 12656 [Section 202] requires that "The head of each Federal department and agency shall ensure the continuity of essential functions in any national security emergency by providing for: succession to office and emergency delegation of authority in accordance with applicable law; safekeeping of essential resources, facilities, and records; and establishment of emergency operating capabilities."

PDD 67 requirements for Federal agencies included: activation with or without warning; designate alternate facilities; be operational within 12 hours of activation; and be able to sustain operations for up to 30 days. FEMA has issued several Federal Preparedness Circulars (FPCs) which provide specific guidance on COOP in accordance with PDD 67. The first in the series, FPC 65 presents recommendations to to Federal agencies for use in developing viable and executable contingency plans for each agencies' COOP program. FPC 66 provides direction to agencies on the development of a comprehensive test, training, and exercise program and FPC 67 contains procedures for the acquisition of alternate facilities for a COOP program. These FPCs in concert with EO 12656 establish the framework for the Federal COOP program.



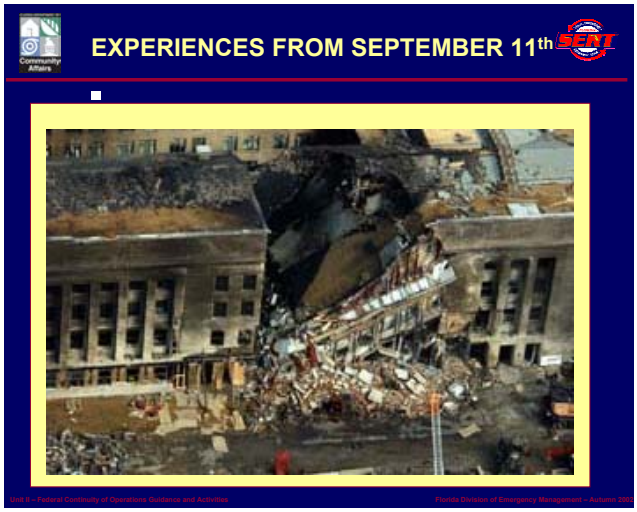
Federal COOP Activities – Continued

evaluation program for terrorism preparedness, and facilitate the delivery of homeland security assistance. In addition, FEMA will closely coordinate its overall efforts with other federal agencies, and will bring renewed focus to ensure that appropriate COOP and COG programs are in place. Finally, the plan states that while the focus will be on terrorism, COOP and COG are included as critical objectives to be pursued and achieved as part of FEMA's well established all-hazards framework for emergency management. The plan cautions that FEMA's responsibilities with the Office of Homeland Security are still being refined and that the agency's Office of National Preparedness structure and staffing are still in development.

FEMA Objective 3.6 – *Continuity and Contingency Programs* states that the agency will: Ensure that appropriate COG, COOP, and Contingency Programs are in place. Specific strategies outlined are: a) Identify gaps between existing and required FEMA Continuity of Operations capability. b) Develop plans to close any gaps identified and initiate corrective measures. c) Coordinate, with other agencies, efforts to identify gaps between existing and required COG capability, and develop corrective action plans. d) Review agency contingency plans and coordinate the review of federal agency contingency plans to ensure that they are up to date.

FEMA in coordination with the CWG has assured continuous improvement in the Federal agencies COOP capabilities by issuing formal guidance documents, conducting assessment, and coordinate various training and exercise events. Some of the via activities include:

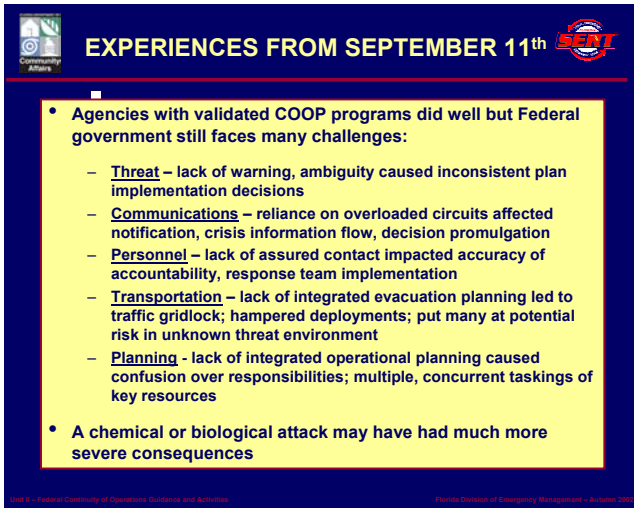
- FPC 65 (Basic COOP Guidance) issued July 1999
- COOP assessment released July 2000
- FPC 66 (Test, Training & Exercises) issued April 2001
- FPC 67 (Alternate Facilities) issued April 2001
- Interagency COOP exercise scheduled for April 2002



Experiences from September 11th

In a matter of two hours all of the following events occurred. This rapid progression of events emphasizes the necessity of planning and implementing a COOP capability prior to any incident. In addition, WTC 7 (NYC Emergency Management EOC location) was reported to be on fire at 16:10 and collapsed by 17:20.

08:45 A hijacked passenger jet, American Airlines Flight 11 out of Boston, crashes into the north tower of the WTC, tearing a gaping hole in the building and setting it afire.
09:03 A second hijacked airliner, United Airlines Flight 175 from Boston, crashes into the south tower of the WTC and explodes. Both buildings are burning.
09:17 FAA shuts down all NYC area airports.
09:21 Port Authority of NY and NJ orders all bridges and tunnels in the NY area closed.
09:40 FAA halts all flight operations at U.S. airports, the first time in U.S. history that air traffic nationwide has been halted.
09:43 American Airlines Flight 77 crashes into the Pentagon, sending up a huge plume of smoke. Evacuation begins immediately.
09:45 White House evacuates.
10:05 South tower of the WTC collapses, plummeting into the streets below. A massive cloud of dust and debris forms and slowly drifts away from the building.
10:08 Secret Service agents armed with automatic rifles are deployed into Lafayette Park across from White House.
10:10 A portion of the Pentagon collapses.
10:10 United Airlines Flight 93, also hijacked, crashes in Somerset County, PA.
10:22 State and Justice departments in DC are evacuated, along with the World Bank.
10:24 FAA reports that all inbound transatlantic aircraft flying into the United States are being diverted to Canada.
10:28 WTC's north tower collapses releasing a tremendous cloud of debris and smoke.
10:45 All federal office buildings in DC are evacuated.



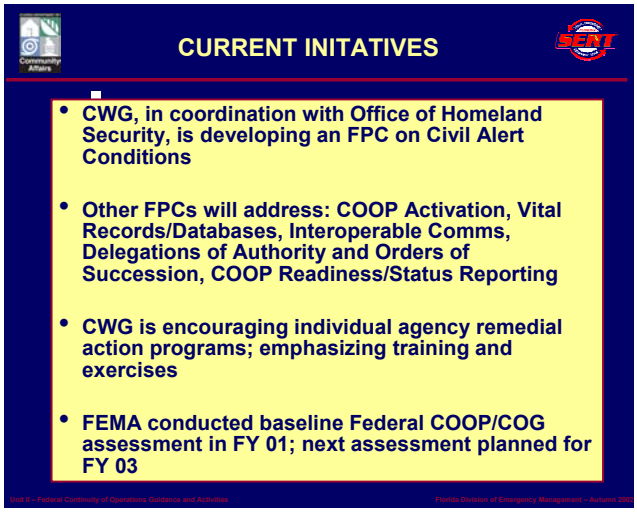
Experiences from September 11th

On September 11, 2001, multiple Federal agencies activated their COOP plans; those operations that were successful had been validated previously through training and exercising activities. However, some significant challenges remain. The Federal agencies need to:

- Reduce or mitigate reliance on communications circuits which will quickly become overloaded in a crisis situation, to ensure ability to notify personnel, receive and coordinate timely information about the situation as it unfolds, promulgate activation and follow-on decisions, and although not often thought of, maintain a level of operational security to respond to the situation without putting the leadership or responders at risk for further attack by exposing operating methods or vulnerabilities.

- Maintain accurate contact information and establish assured capability to contact not only response personnel but all personnel within an organization to provide accurate accountability for any potential rescue/recovery operations.

- Integrate and/or deconflict evacuation plans with all government and non-government organizations and officials in the area to facilitate rapid, orderly movement via personal and public transportation, reduce traffic gridlock which hampered. This issue re-emphasized the necessity of personnel assigned from multiple geographic areas.



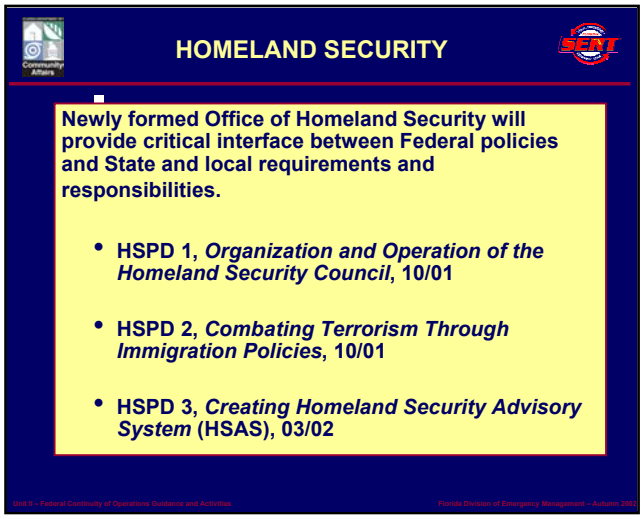
Current Activities

The CWG, in coordination with the Office of Homeland Security (OHS), is developing and FPC on the newly established Civil Alert Conditions. The CWG is encouraging individual agencies to develop remedial action programs based on real world experiences and a program of regularly scheduled training and exercises. Additionally, FEMA and the CWG are in the preliminary stages of preparing specific guidance on COOP Activation, Vital Records and Databases, Interoperable Communications, Delegations of Authority and Orders of Succession, and COOP Readiness and Status Reporting through additional FPCs. When these documents are completed, there will be an FPC to address each of the essential components necessary for the development of a viable and executable COOP plan.

Per PDD 67, FEMA is responsible to the National Security Council for conducting periodic assessments of Federal COOP/COG capabilities. In FY 01, FEMA completed the baseline assessment, from which future progress will be measured. FEMA is planning to conduct the next assessment in FY 03.

Answering the Call: Communications Lessons Learned from the Pentagon Attack, a report released on February 1, 2002, by the Public Safety Wireless Network Program, a joint initiative sponsored by the Justice and Treasury departments. The report noted that as Federal and State agencies increased their presence at the site, there was no a means of direct interoperability immediately available and that the level of interoperability necessary to support these secondary responders had not been documented. The report contains recommendations to assist communities and regions to increase their interoperability some of the conclusions in the report are:

- Regional planning/coordination efforts produced procedures for mutual aid interoperability for locals.
- Local agencies regularly rehearse mass casualty incidents.
- Agencies had early establishment of and strict adherence to a formal ICS.
- Responders most reliable form of communication was their private land mobile radio systems.



Homeland Security

"The mission of the Office [of Homeland Security] shall be to develop and coordinate the implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to secure the U.S. from terrorist threats or attacks." – President George W. Bush, Executive Order 13228, Section 2, October 8, 2001.

The President directed Governor Tom Ridge, Director of OHS, to develop a national blueprint for securing the nation from the threat of terrorism. This publication will be the first of its kind and entitled the *National Strategy for Homeland Security*. The process by which this document is generated, however, will involve consultation with literally hundreds of people, including officials from all relevant Federal agencies, the Congress, State and local governments, as well as the best experts in private industry and at institutions of higher learning.

Homeland Security is a challenge of monumental scale and complexity. It will not be cheap, easy, or quick. Achieving our homeland security objectives will require hard work and a sustained investment of money and time. A carefully conceived plan is required to ensure that these efforts yield maximum- security benefits at the least possible financial and social cost.

The strategy will take full account of the existing government institutions and systems for providing homeland security, such as law enforcement, public safety, public health, and emergency management. The strategy will reflect the basic management principle that individual agencies' responsibilities and authorities for homeland security should be clearly and logically aligned with their core competencies. It will build upon systems that currently work well and are sensibly organized, but will also lay out plans to improve those that either do not work well today or are poorly or redundantly organized.

HSPD 3, released on March 11, 2002, establishes the Homeland Security Advisory System which will provide a comprehensive and effective means to disseminate information regarding the risk of terrorist attacks to Federal, State, and local authorities and to the American people.