

**ESTABLISHING
PRINCIPLES FOR
EVALUATING MEASURES
DESIGNED TO PROTECT
THE HOMELAND FROM
TERRORISM**

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Policy considerations: premises

1. The number of potential terrorist targets is essentially infinite
2. The number of terrorists appears to be exceedingly small and their efforts and competence rather limited

**TERRORISTS HAVE PROVEN TO BE
RELENTLESS, PATIENT,
OPPORTUNISTIC, AND FLEXIBLE,
LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE AND
MODIFYING TACTICS AND TARGETS TO
EXPLOIT PERCEIVED
VULNERABILITIES AND AVOID
OBSERVED STRENGTHS.**

Policy considerations: premises

- 1. The number of potential terrorist targets is essentially infinite**
- 2. The number of terrorists appears to be exceedingly small and their efforts and competence rather limited**
- 3. Terrorist target-selection is often effectively random**
- 4. The probability that any specific target will be attacked is extremely small in almost all cases**
- 5. If one potential target is protected, the agile terrorist generally can readily move on to another one**
- 6. To the degree protection measures make one target safer, they make other ones less safe**
- 7. Most targets are "vulnerable" in that it is not very difficult to damage them, but invulnerable in that they can be readily rebuilt and at tolerable expense**
- 8. It is essentially impossible adequately to protect a very wide variety of potential terrorist targets except by completely closing them down**

Policy considerations: implications

- 1. Any protective policy should be compared to a "null case": do nothing, and use the money saved to rebuild and to compensate any victims**
- 2. Abandon, or at least greatly scale back, efforts to imagine a terrorist target list**
- 3. Consider the negative effects of protection measures: not only direct cost, but inconvenience, enhancement of fear, negative economic impacts, reduction of liberties**
- 4. Consider the opportunity costs, the tradeoffs, of protection measures**

Applications: situations in which protection is essentially futile

Weapons of mass destruction attacks

Small, essentially random conventional attacks

Applications: situations where protection may potentially be effective

Nuclear and chemical plants and material

Key infrastructure nodes

Major ports

Symbolic targets

Application: the case of commercial passenger airliners

The special impact of airliner destruction

Can commercial passenger airplanes be adequately protected?

Is the response to 9/11, like the event itself, an outlier?

Can costs be reduced?

Abandon efforts to prevent a replication of 9/11

Reconsider the protection of airports

Relax weapons ban

Reduce harassment of automobiles picking up and dropping off passengers

Reduce crew screening

Reduce orange alert?

How much security theater is necessary?

What are the negative consequences of the security measures?