

# Protecting the Homeland from Day One: A Transition Plan

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## SUMMARY

A manual for the President-elect and his team in dealing with the threat of a terrorist attack on the United States early in his administration.

The Homeland Security Presidential Transition Initiative, or HSPTI, is a joint project of Third Way and the Center for American Progress Action Fund. The premise of the HSPTI is that the country may face an increased risk of a terrorist attack during the transition and the first months of the administration, just as U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and U.K. Prime Minister Gordon Brown all saw terrorist attacks during their first years in office. The new president and his senior team must act urgently to address this threat, beginning during the transition itself.

To discuss how best to equip the new president to manage this challenge, during the course of 2008, the HSPTI convened a number of experts from both parties on homeland and national security. Many served in the Bush and Clinton administration's homeland and national security sectors, at the highest levels of the White House staff, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, the intelligence community, presidential commissions, and elsewhere. During the course of 2008, the HSPTI convened three working groups: the "Leadership" working group, chaired by former White House Chief of Staff and Center for American Progress Action Fund Chairman and CEO John Podesta; the "Federalism" working group, chaired by former Senator Gary Hart; and the "100 Day Script" working group, chaired by Jamie Gorelick, a partner at Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale & Dorr and member of the 9/11 Commission. The HSPTI concluded with a public panel titled, "Beyond Duct Tape and Color Codes: How the New President

Can Engage the Public on Homeland Security,” including panelists Frances Fragos Townsend, former Homeland Security Advisor to President George W. Bush, Jerome Hauer, former Director of the Office of Emergency Management in New York City; and P.J. Crowley, Senior Fellow and Director of Homeland Security at the Center for American Progress Action Fund.

On the basis of these discussions, the HSPTI culminated with a homeland security transition manual that was intended to provide the incoming president with a strong, effective guide to keep the country safe during and after the first presidential transition since 9/11. This manual was presented to the transition teams of both presidential campaigns prior to the November 4 election.

The manual offers a schedule of urgent actions that can be undertaken more or less unilaterally through the transition and the new president’s first 100 days in office from the Executive Office of the President at the direction of the president-elect, his chief of staff, and other top aides. Taken together, this blueprint of actions will help the new president keep the country as safe as possible in a critical time, while improving our homeland security mission for the future.

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