



Preparedness News and Information

From FEMA's Office of National Preparedness

July 25, 2003

NATIONAL NEWS

Report on USA Patriot Act Alleges Civil Rights Violations

NY Times, July 21, 2003

An unreleased report by internal investigators at the Justice Department has identified dozens of recent cases in which department employees have been accused of serious civil rights and civil liberties violations involving enforcement of the sweeping federal antiterrorism law known as the USA Patriot Act.

First Responders' First Stop Against Terrorism

Washington Post, July 20, 2003

This year, Emmitsburg's U.S. Fire Administration training center expects to provide free training in how to handle attacks and other mass emergencies to 300,000 first responders - including fire, police and city officials.

Focus on Bioterror Shelves Other Federal Health Efforts

GovExec, July 21, 2003

Recent public health legislative policy initiatives have primarily been security-related—including a bill to compensate those who become ill from side effects of vaccines protecting health care workers against smallpox, which many fear could be used as a biological weapon in a terrorist attack.

- [Statement by DHHS Sec. Tommy Thompson on Project Bioshield, DHHS Press Release, July 17](#)

9/11 Report Cites Intelligence Failures

Washington Post, July 24, 2003

Prior to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the CIA failed to act on intelligence it had about hijackers, the FBI was unable to track Al Qaeda in the United States, and key National Security Agency communications intercepts never were circulated, a congressional investigation has concluded.

- [CIA, FBI Faulted for 9/11 Failures, MSNBC, July 24](#)
- [Agencies Failed to Grasp Pre-Sept. 11 Terrorist Threat, Lawmakers Find, GovExec, July 24](#)

FBI Director Says Agency has Become 'Flexible and Agile'

GovExec, July 23, 2003

The FBI is using new anti-terrorism powers in a responsible manner, is boosting its intelligence capabilities, and is progressing toward upgrading what agency officials have acknowledged as weak information technology capabilities, Director Robert Mueller said on Wednesday.

Feds don't Track Airline Watchlist Mishaps

Herald Tribune, July 24, 2003

The government has no idea how many air travelers are being subjected to delays and missed flights because of confusion over security watchlists, according to interviews and internal Transportation Security Administration documents.

CONGRESS

Homeland Security, Doubts Arise Over Intelligence

Washington Post, July 21, 2003

The intelligence unit of the four-month-old Department of Homeland Security is understaffed, unorganized and weak-willed in bureaucratic struggles with other government agencies, diminishing its role in pursuing terrorists, according to some members of Congress and independent national security experts.

- [Lawmakers Air Concerns About Terrorism Intelligence Office](#), *GovExec*, July 22

Congress, Administration Eye Closing Visa Loophole

CNSNEWS, July 24, 2003

Homeland Security Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security Asa Hutchinson told the Senate Judiciary Committee that efforts to revise visa revocation procedures are nearly complete.

Democrats Give Administration 'D' on Security Efforts

GovExec, July 23, 2003

The Homeland Security Department has failed to create the information systems necessary to defend the nation against a future terrorist attack, the moderate Democratic group Progressive Policy Institute (PPI) charged in a homeland security [report card](#) released Wednesday.

BILLS RECENTLY INTRODUCED

- **H.R.2807:** To establish grant programs to improve the health of border area residents and for bioterrorism preparedness in the border area, and for other purposes. *House Energy and Commerce, House International Relations Committee, July 21*
- **S.1447:** A bill to establish grant programs to improve the health of border area residents and for bioterrorism preparedness in the border area, and for other purposes, *Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, July 23*

RECENT HEARINGS

- [Federal Biodefense Readiness](#), Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, July 23
- [Oversight Hearing: Law Enforcement and Terrorism](#), Senate Judiciary Committee, July 23

- [Cyberterrorism: The New Asymmetric Threat](#), House Armed Services Committee, July 23
- [Improvements to Department of Homeland Security Information Sharing Capabilities](#), House Select Committee on Homeland Security, July 24

STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Emergency Management Assessments Completed In Nine States Under Joint FEMA/EMAP Initiative

FEMA News, July 24, 2003

Launched earlier this year by FEMA in cooperation with EMAP and the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), the assessment project is designed to provide information about emergency management and response and preparedness capabilities at the state level.

Health Officials Making Strides in Effort to Prevent Biological Attacks

Orlando Sentinel, July 22, 2003

Health officials nationwide are struggling to find better ways of detecting potential biological attacks in their earliest stages by tracking everything from sales of over-the-counter drugs to symptoms of emergency-room patients.

Disaster Planning Forum to Help get FEMA Grants

Morning Sentinel, July 22, 2003

An informational forum in Farmington will explain a federal requirement for communities to have hazard mitigation plans in order to qualify for grants from the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

OSHA Unveils Resource on Emergency Preparedness

Safetynext.com, July 22, 2003

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration yesterday announced the availability of two new pages on the agency's website which will provide information on [workplace emergency preparedness](#) and information on how OSHA helps small businesses.

National Security Not a Priority in North Iowa

KIMT, July 21, 2003

September 11th left a lasting mark across the country, and a new study says some North Iowa counties are lagging behind when it comes to terrorism preparedness.

City Left Wondering on Funds for Security

Buffalo News, July 24, 2003

Discussions in Congress about sending funds to municipalities to cover added security costs have been going on for nearly 20 months, but Senator Hillary Clinton told reporters that Buffalo is an example of what is wrong with the way homeland security funds are distributed.

Technology Touted as Key Weapon against Terrorism

San Mateo County Times, July 24, 2003

In a first-ever foray to the Bay Area, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge promised the nation was more secure than ever before -- and that California was profiting -- as he talked tech with scientists and marveled at next-generation biosensors.

➤ [Lab Officials Show off Anti-Terror Gadgets](#), *Oakland Tribune*, July 24

Homeland Security Chief Unveils School Safety Web Site

NBC4, July 19, 2003

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge joined Education Secretary Rod Paige at Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, Md. as a new Web site to help schools prepare for terrorism was unveiled that outlines plans for schools that include evacuation drills to practice for a bioterrorism attack.

Terror Response Tested

HeraldNet, July 24, 2003

Snohomish County's largest emergency drill ever started with a bang Wednesday, but took hours to unfold while police and firefighters moved carefully to remove two "terrorists" and stop a chemical leak at the Port of Everett.

State News of National Interest

Associated Press, July 24, 2003

Gov. Ruth Ann Minner signed an executive order creating the Delaware Homeland Security Council that includes representatives from the fire service, police departments, the National Guard, Dover Air Force Base and state agencies and will focus on protecting key resources, preventing attacks and developing proper responses.

➤ [Security Agency is Official](#), *News Journal*, July 24

Tens of Thousands Nearby Wait, Worry as Army Prepares to Burn Chemical Weapons in Alabama

The State, July 24, 2003

Inside the pink zone - where tens of thousands of people live and work near an Army chemical weapons incinerator - the debate over weapons of mass destruction hits dangerously close to home.

RELATED INFORMATION

RECENT REPORTS

- [America at Risk: A Homeland Security Report Card](#), The Progressive Policy Institute, July 2003
- [Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001](#), U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and U.S. House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, December 2002
- [Information Security](#), GAO-03-1037T, July 2003

The information contained in this newsletter was collected from Internet sources. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the official position of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Office of National Preparedness.