



## **A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY IN AMERICA'S CITIES**

### **Summary of Key Provisions**

In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attack on the nation and the anthrax mailings that have since taken lives in two cities, threatened lives in several others, and disrupted the work of the U.S. Congress, cities' preparations for disasters have been given the highest priority, and guarding against terrorist acts, in particular, is recognized as a critical need. Efforts to strengthen comprehensive emergency management plans have redoubled and there have been significant additional deployments of police and other public safety resources. This is occurring at significant additional cost to local treasuries and at a time when tax revenues being generated by local economies are dropping. The combination of an already weakening national economy, job layoffs and consumer anxieties created by the terrorist attack, and rising public safety and security costs now threatens the solvency of local governments throughout the nation.

Within 36 hours of the terrorist attack, The U.S. Conference of Mayors issued a call for the federalization of all airport security screening services. It quickly formed task forces on airport security, coordination of federal and local law enforcement, and water system security, and conducted two national webcasts on biological and chemical terrorism. The mayors' executive committee also held regular conference calls to guide the organization's overall response to the attack and its aftermath, a response that included a Mayors Emergency, Safety and Security Summit, October 23-25 in Washington. This summit brought together more than 200 mayors, police chiefs, fire chiefs and emergency response managers from cities across the nation for briefings by top administration officials and public health experts and for the initial drafting of A National Action Plan for Safety and Security in America's Cities.

In drafting the action plan, summit participants focused on four priority areas: transportation security, emergency preparedness, coordination of federal-local law enforcement, and economic security. Summit participants viewed the fourth area, economic security, as an ultimate goal for the nation that would not be achieved in the absence of the first three.

The key provisions of the action plan are the following:

#### **Office of Homeland Security**

- \$** The cabinet-level Office of Homeland Security should be authorized by Congress and the Director should be given budgetary authority over all federal personnel and programs related to the domestic protection of the nation.
- \$** The Office of Homeland Security must be structured to work directly with mayors in support of their leadership roles and responsibilities in both their cities and their regions.

- \$ A permanent commission consisting of mayors, police chiefs, fire chiefs, local emergency managers, and local public health officials should be established immediately by the Director of Homeland Security. This commission is needed to advise on the restructuring of the federal-local partnership with the goal of strengthening domestic safety and security. It is essential that at this time of national crisis, direct lines of communication and assistance be established among the Office of Homeland Security, federal agencies and local governments

### **Reimbursement for Heightened Security**

- \$ Of the approximately \$10 billion federal anti-terrorism budget identified by the Office of Management and Budget, only 4.9 percent is allocated to state and local first response activities. And of this limited amount, most is provided to the states, bypassing America's cities and major population centers. As the front line defenders of homeland security and as first responders to terrorist attacks and threats, America's cities have been incurring extraordinary costs. To ensure that heightened security can be maintained, a new flexible local security block grant should be established under the direction of the Office of Homeland Security. Block grant funds could be used for additional training for police and fire personnel, communications and rescue equipment, and security measures to protect airports, waterways, utilities, public transit and other public infrastructure.

### **Federal-Local Law Enforcement**

- \$ With nearly 650,000 police officers, cities stand ready to work with federal agencies to make the nation as a whole safer and more secure. Accomplishing this requires a new protocol governing the coordination of federal and local law enforcement. This protocol must establish a new 24/7 system of communication between all federal public safety and local law enforcement agencies, with much more detailed intelligence being provided to local law enforcement.
- \$ The federal government must dramatically increase the protection of our borders through the deployment of new technologies and at least triple the current number of U.S. Customs, INS and Border Patrol officers, with officers assigned commensurate with the volume of cross-border traffic. To increase security in tunnels and on bridges across borders, the practice of reverse customs inspections should be implemented. With this practice, vehicle inspections are conducted *prior to* using a tunnel or bridge to cross a border.

### **Transportation Security**

- \$ Airport security legislation should be enacted to federalize airport security screening, move toward the goal of scanning all baggage for explosives, provide additional support and flexibility to airports to help stabilize airport finances, assist dislocated workers and businesses, and reimburse airports for increased security costs.
- \$ Supplemental resources should be provided to secure and strengthen the nation's surface transportation networks B local bus and rail transit systems; inter-city rail systems, including

high-speed rail development; bridges, highways and streets B by assisting local and state agencies to increase security personnel, deploy technology and rehabilitate and expand facilities, commitments that will also directly stimulate the nation's economy.

- \$ Increased emphasis should be placed on additional security measures to reduce the vulnerability of the nation's port facilities and systems. This includes the expansion of federal capacities to ward off potential threats to vessels and ports, and a partnership of port authorities and related federal, state, local and private agencies designed to bolster their ability to protect landside terminals and intermodal facilities.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

- \$ Flexible funding should be provided to increase the ability of local governments to strategically plan for and respond to emergencies. Funds could be used for full-time disaster coordination, construction and retrofitting of local command and control centers, training of first responders, and to meet disaster equipment needs. The number of local Urban Search and Rescue Teams should be increased and all teams should be fully equipped.
- \$ Resources are needed to strengthen the local public health infrastructure, coordinate training efforts for public and private sector health care personnel, and develop adequate and secure communication and data analysis systems to ensure coordinated implementation of public health disaster preparedness plans. It is critically important to have adequate national and regional stockpiles of vaccines and therapeutics that are readily available to metropolitan centers to permit quick responses to biological attacks, and a rapid response testing network that provides highly accurate on-the-scene determinations for biological and chemical agents.
- \$ There must be communication system inter-operability to ensure clear communication within and among city departments and among federal, regional, state and local entities responding to disasters. There must be vehicles for communication with the public to alert them to potential threats and provide them timely information on the status and effectiveness of response efforts. Alternative communication vehicles should be available in the event of power outages or other events that disable the primary communication mechanisms.
- \$ Effective preparedness efforts require significant community involvement, and community representatives should be involved in the development of emergency response plans. The public should also be educated in basic lifesaving techniques so that bystanders can provide assistance to those injured until help arrives.
- \$ The federal government should immediately establish a national research and development program for advanced monitoring, detection, and screening technologies for the nation's water systems; provide funding for immediate water system security assessments; and assist local governments in preparedness planning and training to ensure appropriate responses in the event of an attack.

## **Economic Security**

- \$ A prerequisite to economic security for the nation is help for the people who have been hurt by the economic fallout of the terrorist attack, those whose jobs have been lost in the economic downturn that accelerated following the attack. There is an immediate need for direct worker assistance including expansion and extension of unemployment insurance benefits, funding for job training programs, free or low-cost health insurance for low income families, and health insurance subsidies for unemployed workers.
  
- \$ There is an immediate need for a program of strategic public investment that will modernize the nation's infrastructure in order to improve productivity, competitiveness and security. Investments would be made in local infrastructure projects that are already planned and can be started quickly. These could include: traffic system enhancements, transit projects, high-speed rail projects, Amtrak system improvements, repairs to roads and bridges serving metropolitan areas, and water security development projects.
  
- \$ Any tax provisions should be short term **B** 12 to 18 months **B** and directly targeted to stimulating the economy. Examples include: lifting the cap on state and local tax exempt bonds to spur stalled development; doubling the allocation of low income housing tax credits to advance housing construction; and a tax credit for low and moderate income families to purchase computers to boost technology literacy.