

## Looking Outward: U.S. Homeland Security beyond the Borders

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### ABSTRACT

The security of the United States *homeland* has an important *international* dimension. This oxymoronic statement is what led the author to write this article about homeland security education. While many courses recognize the transnational nature of terrorist threats, there appear to be no courses that focus on the practical as well as conceptual issue of how well do U.S. homeland security policies and programs developed and implemented by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) include international activities that support our security needs at home.

The message of this article is that any such course of study, particularly at the graduate level, should include a course on how the DHS handles its international responsibilities as the large cabinet department established a little over a decade ago to lead U.S. homeland security policies and programs. Suggestions for course topics and student exercises are presented for educators interested in designing curriculum that addresses this issue.

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### INTRODUCTION

Students in the homeland security field may not easily accept what seems like an oxymoronic statement — that the security of the United States *homeland* has an important *international* dimension that includes but extends beyond concerns over international terrorism. Former Secretary of Homeland Security Napolitano, in an appearance before a Senate Committee in 2012, explained:

To most effectively carry out our core missions — including preventing terrorism, securing our borders and enforcing immigration laws, and protecting cyberspace — we partner with countries around the world. This work ranges from strengthening cargo, aviation, and supply chain security to joint investigations, information sharing, and science and technology cooperation. Through collaborations [we...] leverage the resources of our international partners to more efficiently and cost-effectively secure global trade and travel, in order to ensure that dangerous people and goods do not enter our country. (p. 2)

The open international environment has also led to increasing U.S. cooperation with foreign partners in preparing for and dealing with major natural disasters and accidents.

The goals and objectives of U.S. homeland security cannot be effectively accomplished without foreign cooperation. Educators need to ensure that students studying homeland security and related subjects understand the nature and importance of international dimensions in order to fully prepare graduates for jobs in the government and private sector — where there are needs to think broadly and critically about current and future issues in homeland security. Students not only need increased professional training in conceptual and analytical aspects, but also in developing practical skills for dealing with international issues and foreign partners.

Many course offerings on homeland security and related subjects at graduate and undergraduate levels recognize the transnational nature of terrorist threats and a few compare how homeland security is conducted by different nations. However, there appear to be no courses covering how the international environment shapes U.S. homeland security policies and programs, not only the international aspects of countering terrorist, but addressing the broader international dimensions of homeland security as noted above.

From a pragmatic perspective, students would benefit from exposure to how the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) deals with the international aspects of homeland security. As the third largest cabinet department established a little over a decade ago, DHS is responsible for developing and implementing U.S. homeland security policies. In doing so, DHS works with other federal agencies, state and local governments, cities and communities, nongovernmental organizations, interested citizens, and the private sector — the so-called Homeland Security Enterprise (HSE). By extending the HSE beyond our borders, DHS is also responsible for developing and coordinating U.S. international homeland security activities.

Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to (1) present the key features of the international environment as it affects U.S. homeland security, (2) summarize the range of international activities undertaken by DHS, (3) demonstrate the apparent absence of available courses on the broad international dimensions of U.S. homeland security policies and programs, and (4) propose a model curriculum for a graduate level course on this subject and how international elements might be introduced into appropriate undergraduate offerings.

**Homeland Security and the International Environment.** How well and in what ways the U.S. seeks to accomplish its homeland security goals and objectives is a function of the international environment — a phenomenon that is complex, changing, and difficult to characterize. Global terrorism will remain a threat in the foreseeable future. International terrorist groups have overseas safe havens and training facilities to plan and prepare for attacking U.S. targets and moving both material and human capabilities into the U.S. to further develop and execute their objectives. Expressed more broadly, “the U.S. is heavily reliant on linkages among the international systems carrying people, products, and information that are vulnerable to the severe consequences of disruption caused

by a natural or manmade disaster, unintentional human error, or deliberate acts of terror” (McCormick Tribune Foundation, 2007, p. 2).

The first Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) contains a table summarizing key features of the international environment that affect the security of our homeland and shape U.S. homeland security policies and programs. While details may have changed, this table remains relevant to the current and future environment, as shown in Table 1 (Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2010, iii).

**Table 1. Threats, Hazards, and Long-Term Global Challenges and Trends**

THREATS AND HAZARDS	GLOBAL CHALLENGES & TRENDS
High-consequence weapons of mass destruction	Al-Qaeda related and global violent extremism
High-consequence and/or wide-scale cyber attacks intrusions, disruptions, and exploitations	Economic and financial instability  Sophisticated and broadly available technology
Pandemics, major accidents, and natural hazards	Dependence on fossil fuels and the threats of global climate change
Illicit trafficking and related transnational crime	Other drivers of illicit, dangerous, or uncontrolled movement of people and goods

Given the international environment, the QHSR presents U.S. homeland security goals and objectives in the form of five basic missions that need to be accomplished in the face of a set of diverse and evolving threats, hazards, and other events with potentially significant adverse consequences. This document does not dwell on international activities and only presents a few examples in discussing the missions (DHS, 2012, pp. 3–18). No analytical links are made between international activities and the QHSR missions.

For the purpose of this discussion, following are brief comments by the author on the international dimensions of each QHSR mission:

- Mission 1: Prevent terrorist attacks by disrupting planning activities and intercepting attacks before they can cause damage.* International activities play a key part in the success of this multipronged and critical mission. Activities range from intelligence exchanges to agreements on what materials are to be defined as dangerous to joint efforts to develop ways of safeguarding critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks and threats from natural disasters and accidents.

- *Mission 2: Securing and managing our borders.* International activities are absolutely essential in connection with securing our contiguous northern and southern land borders. They are equally essential to ensuring the safety of passengers and cargo moving across borders worldwide by air and also by sea.
- *Mission 3: Enforcing and administering our immigration laws.* International cooperation is vital to the success of this mission when it comes to such issues as extradition, visas, and other aspects of our national immigration policies. If the U.S. adopts a program for comprehensive immigration reform, international support for any new legislation or procedures will become even more important.
- *Mission 4: Safeguarding and securing cyberspace.* Cyberthreats are, by definition, transnational. Cooperation with other like-minded nations is needed to thwart and respond to cyberattacks that emanate from foreign soil and threaten the U.S. at home or interests abroad.
- *Mission 5: Ensuring resilience to disasters.* International support with men and material can at times be necessary to deal with major disasters affecting this nation, including states and territories located outside the continental U.S. Conversely, U.S. assistance and cooperation to other nations can be vital in dealing with foreign incidents of major proportions involving natural disasters or terrorism.

**Nature of DHS International Activities.** The Homeland Security Act gives DHS responsibility for “information and education exchange with nations friendly to the United States in order to promote sharing of best practices and technologies relating to homeland security (2002).” More specifically, congressionally mandated international activities for DHS:

span all major DHS mission areas, including transportation, visa and traveler, cargo, and port security [...as well as] cooperation in thwarting organized criminal activities that can link to terrorism, reaching air safety and border control agreements, working together to secure the global supply chain, sharing best practices on critical infrastructure protection, exchanges of policies and programs to deal with cyberthreats emanating from beyond our borders, and stationing officials in foreign countries on programs devoted to ensuring the security of our homeland (Office of Inspector General [OIG], 2008, p. 5).

There is no comprehensive recounting of all such activities organized by DHS component, subject matter, and overseas partner. To do justice to this topic would require a book length study by a team of researchers. To impart a sense of this pattern, however, from its earliest days, DHS has concluded many international homeland security agreements with a wide range of foreign nations — Canada and Mexico, the European Union (EU), and specific countries in Europe, Latin America, the Asia-Pacific region, and the Middle East (DHS, 2013). Such

activities encompass joint statements or declarations on agreed principles, exchanges of information, formal negotiated agreements, periodic consultations to discuss homeland security issues of common concern, and deploying personnel overseas to intercept threats before they can arrive in the U.S. At times, these initiatives are done in conjunction with other federal agencies.

DHS deploys substantial resources in foreign countries to carry out activities involving counterterrorism, border protection, maritime and aviation security, immigration, and law enforcement — always seeking to facilitate legitimate trade and travel. As of May 2013, DHS has reportedly stationed “about 1,800 employees in almost 80 countries to help [...] thwarting terrorist threats while also combating transnational crime and other activities” (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2013, p. 11). DHS has spent an estimated \$450 million last fiscal year to support international programs and activities. Additionally, DHS provides specialized training and technical assistance to help other nations strengthen their homeland security capabilities which, in turn, helps safeguard U.S. security.

DHS cooperative programs have come under criticism. Experts in the field recommended a few years ago that the Secretary of Homeland Security “ensure that her policy priorities recognize the important role international cooperation plays in U.S. security efforts, and ... formalize the ability of DHS to promote international cooperation” (McNeill & Diem Nguyen, 2009, p. 1). A relatively recent report by GAO offers many recommendations for improving the performance of the DHS Office of International Affairs (OIA) and proposes actions to better ensure that the DHS international footprint aligns with its policy priorities and resources (GAO, 2013). In response, Secretary Napolitano reaffirmed the importance of OIA helping achieve the goal of “One DHS” as it applies to constructing a more unified and coordinated set of international programs (GAO, 2013, p. 9). One of the goals in the latest Department of Homeland Security Strategic Plan is to “[s]trengthen and unify DHS international engagement [...] through actions] to improve the Department’s international interactions (DHS, 2012, p. 28).” Examples of such actions include:

mechanisms to promote DHS-wide international coordination and collaboration, an attaché program to improve support at U.S. missions abroad, and program to provide personnel assigned overseas information about the nature and purpose of working out of country before they arrive at their posts (GAO, 2013).

Nevertheless, despite efforts to bring foreign cooperation under more central control, the major DHS components and directorates — given their size, budgets, access to the Secretary, and Congressional connections — still tend to drive most international agreements — often but not always coordinating with the OIA. References are made in the latest DHS Annual Report to the need to “[d]evelop and execute mechanisms for all components to implement the DHS International Strategy and Regional Engagement Plans and put procedures and policies in place for the coordination of international travel, training, agreements, and other engagement” (DHS, 2012, 28).

DHS would be better positioned to manage international cooperation if Congress finally approved upgrading the head of the Office of Policy were to be upgraded from Assistant Secretary to Undersecretary for Policy — with the empowerment to lead, coordinate, and oversee the Department's international activities (Heyman & Carafano, 2004).

**Available Homeland Security Courses.** Stimulated by the 9/11 event, large numbers of colleges and universities in the U.S. now offer hundreds of degrees and certificates in homeland security and areas either labeled homeland security or clearly connected to the field of homeland security, such as emergency preparedness, homeland defense, or counterterrorism. A number of institutions offer programs in more traditional fields such as political science and sociology with concentrations in homeland security.

To gain an understanding of course offerings, the author turned to the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) database of almost 400 colleges and universities that offer “degree or certificate programs in Homeland Security, Emergency Management, Emergency Preparedness, Terrorism, or Cyber Security” (CHDS, 2013a). Searching this database exposed hundreds of rather diverse course offerings with content in psychology, weapons of mass destruction, biotechnology, public safety, disaster management, crisis management, law enforcement, crime scene and forensics paralegal studies, interagency government issues, team building, culture and diversity, strategic planning, terrorism as it affects school safety, narcotics as a homeland security issue, intelligence methods, transportation security, information security, public health, justice and public safety, and information management.

This data search did not find any courses on the international dimensions of U.S. homeland security. He did discover the CHDS Masters Program course on comparative governments for homeland security (CHDS, 2013b). This course seeks to draw lessons for U.S. policy from other countries' homeland security approaches (Morag, Jones, & Smith, 2013). While offering valuable information for potentially helping formulate U.S. strategies, however, this course does not address the author's view of the need for a course focused on why and how U.S. homeland security policies and programs function in the international environment through outreach and cooperation with other nations.

In addition to searching for individual courses, the author discovered numerous efforts during the past decade to develop a national consensus among educators on a core homeland security course of study, adapted for undergraduate, graduate, and even postgraduate use. However, research found that no consensus has been reached on a standardize core curriculum and many educators argue that the field of homeland security has still not matured enough for a common core to be established (Gordon & Bellavita, 2006; Pelfrey & Kelley, 2013). More importantly for the purpose of this article, the debates and discussions that have taken place over the years on this issue, including a conference on a model academic curriculum, have not

addressed the need for and content of courses on the international dimensions of homeland security (Naval Postgraduate School, 2009).

**Curriculum Recommendations.** To show educators and students alike what might be included in a graduate level course on the international dimensions of homeland security, a set of learning objectives as well as an illustrative course outline are presented below. Also discussed are examples of research projects students might be required to conduct and relevant readings.

Learning objectives for a course on the international dimensions of homeland security “should describe what students should know or be able to do at the end of the course that they couldn't do before, . . . supporting the overarching goal of the course, [and serving as] the thread[s] that unites all the topics that will be covered and all the skills students should have mastered by the end of the semester” (University of Oregon, 2014). These objectives are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2. Learning objectives for international homeland security.**

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Understand the key features of the evolving global homeland security environment.
Appreciate how the global environment affects U.S. homeland security strategies.
Gain a broad view of the nature, patterns, and management of DHS's international activities.
Acquire insights as to how this course can assist students in entering the workforce and both private and public sector.

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It is worth underscoring the value of exposing students to the inescapable fact that there will always be differences among parts of DHS leading to unavoidable stove piping and bureaucratic warfare. Whether students join the research and teaching communities or assume positions in government or industry, they would benefit from appreciating what might be called “the bureaucratic politics” of homeland security with DHS as the example (Kahan, 2013a).

**Suggested course content.** Programs leading to master's degrees in homeland security and directly related fields should include a full course shaped by the learning objectives in Table 2. The outline of a suggested course is presented in Table 3. Included is an in-class exercise to demonstrate the interaction between substance and bureaucracies during negotiations. The students could simulate a U.S. team and a team of foreign representatives seeking to negotiate a new homeland security accord or update an existing agreement. Preplanning would be required. The structure of such an exercise could include a simple tabletop drill and should be conducted with breakout sessions allowing each team to regroup.

Undergraduate courses of study should find ways of including only the highlighted materials in one or more courses on homeland security.

**Table 3. Graduate Curriculum: International Dimensions of Homeland Security**

<b>Session 1</b>	<p><b>Why this course is important.</b> International dimensions of homeland security are significant for understanding U.S. policies and programs. They also have significant implications for employment and career progression.</p>
<b>Session 2</b>	<p><b>The evolving global environment.</b> Has to do with global terrorism as well as a host of evolving activities and interactions among nations on a range of homeland security issues.</p>
<b>Session 3</b>	<p><b>International elements of U.S. homeland security strategy since 9/11.</b> Creation of DHS as an extremely large and diverse cabinet department and its responsibilities beyond the borders.</p>
<b>Session 4</b>	<p><b>Session 4: Implications of global environment for U.S. homeland security.</b> Agreements with foreign nations and other cooperative and outreach measures help support our policies and programs.</p>
<b>Session 5</b>	<p><b>Thrust of DHS international activities.</b> Overall nature of what this entails and how it is organized and managed Examples of specific activities and programs.</p>
<b>Session 8</b>	<p><b>How foreign nations view homeland security.</b> Key similarities and differences. Implications for U.S. policies and programs.</p>
<b>Session 9</b>	<p><b>Improving international dimensions of U.S. homeland security.</b> Need for strategy that can be effectively executed by DHS as more unified agency.</p>
<b>Session 10</b>	<p><b>In-class simulated negotiation exercise — Part I.</b> Introduction and first round.</p>
<b>Session 11</b>	<p><b>In-class simulated negotiation exercise — Part II.</b> Second round and hot wash (i.e., evaluation/lessons learned).</p>
<b>Session 12</b>	<p><b>Career choices and professional development.</b> How international perspectives can help in public and private sector. Post graduate possibilities.</p>

■ For use in undergraduate homeland security courses.

Note that the material covered in Session 8 represents an overview of the type of material covered in the CHSD comparative government course, mentioned earlier. There is no reason why that program should not maintain this course, with consideration given to adding an additional course along the lines of the above curriculum, perhaps giving students flexibility to select either one or possibly both, depending upon their interests.

**Research projects.** For graduate programs, there are a number of student research projects for early assignments leading to a well-documented paper at the end of the course. Suggestions include:

- *Discovering mechanisms for DHS to advertise and support its international homeland security activities, consistent with overall U.S. homeland security and national security policies.* The first QHSR in 2010 centers on how DHS coordinates with the entire HSE, but for unexplained reason fails to discuss the international dimensions of homeland security. Students could research and make recommendations on whether and to what degree materials on international dimensions of homeland security are contained within the most important, strategic level documents. If this material is nonexistent or insufficient, students could make recommendations for how DHS can best fill need to reach Congress and the public.
- *Exploring the annual DHS Budget in Brief showing the requested international activities budget for each organizational unit.* Making these funding levels visible is a vital link to the way DHS presents its budget requests, which have been traditionally organized by funding accounts for the various organizational units, with no breakouts of international programs (DHS, 2013, pp. 208-214).
- *Investigating the idea of DHS being given resources and responsibilities for undertaking international security assistance and related programs similar to those managed by the State and Defense Departments as a means of furthering U.S. homeland security objectives.* Specific suggestions might include creating “a formal, integrated education and training program [... and establishing] a security assistance sales, lease, and grant program that allows the Department to assist countries in obtaining equipment, support, and financing for homeland security functions (Carafano & Weitz , 2007, p. 4). These represent creative ideas that need to be studied but seem to have been ignored by both DHS and Congress.

**Readings for graduate course.** Graduate program instructors could use the references for this article as the basis for reading assignments. These not only serve as sources for material discussed, but also include five additional references that can be used in a graduate course (see Appendix for additional references). Undergraduate courses that touch on international homeland security issues might usefully require a few short, directly relevant readings from this list.

**Thesis.** For attaining a Master’s Degree, a thesis is ordinarily needed. One idea for the subject of such a thesis is an analytic effort to assessing DHS international activities based on the international dimensions of the five QHSR homeland security missions discussed earlier to evaluate current activities and develop a prioritized roadmap for future initiatives. However, the performance measures employed to gauge how well the goals and objectives are being met do not assess the efficacy of international activities. Furthermore, GAO finds that DHS’s International Engagement Plan, which describes how programmatic activities abroad align with the five missions outlined in the QHSR, “does not establish clear and specific strategic priorities for resource deployment abroad” (GAO, 2013, p. 39).

Students could develop their own assessment method for evaluating the extent to which the scope and substance of DHS cooperation with various groups of international partners is judged to be excellent, acceptable, or failing in reinforcing or extending each QHSR mission. However, advisors might consider allowing a few students to collaborate in refining and applying a heuristic approach outlined in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Assessment Matrix for International Activities**

PARTNERS	MISSIONS				
	Prevent terrorist attacks	Securing & managing our borders	Enforcing & administering immig laws	Safeguarding and securing cyberspace	Ensuring resilience to disasters
Mexico & Canada	B	A	C	B	A
Europe — EU, nations	C				
Rest of Latin America	A				
Asia-Pacific Region	B				
Middle East	B				
Africa	C				
International — UN, other	B	C	B	A	B

**RESULTS OF ACTIVITIES ASSESSMENT**

*Grades indicated are purely illustrative*

For each cell in this matrix a summary of the missions supported by key international activities with each group of partners would be developed, along with a qualitative justification for the grade assigned, where

- “A” means cooperative efforts with the designated partner have made significant contribution to the success of a given mission;
- “B” means some work needs to be done in improving cooperative support with the partner for a mission; and
- “C” means that a particular mission is supported in only limited ways by international cooperation, and priority should be given in future to filling gaps and developing good scores and essential balance across the missions.

Substantial research, including interviews, would be necessary. Students can be assigned to research each country groupings. When horizontally combined, an overall grade for each group can be formed using the standard method for averaging. An overall grade can also be developed for the emphasis placed on each mission through averaging the grades in the columns. Weak spots can be identified for partners and missions, and recommendations for improvements can be made. A credible thesis would be produced from this effort.

## CONCLUSIONS

U.S. homeland security strategy is composed of a substantial array of international activities that support policy and program execution. Hundreds of courses are available at graduate and undergraduate levels at educational institutions across the country, many of which discuss the threat of global terrorism. Additional offerings need to include courses dealing with how other nations see homeland security in order to inform U.S. approaches. Courses dealing with multi-faceted international dimensions of homeland security from a practical U.S. perspective also need to be developed.

This article proposes that graduate programs, and to some extent undergraduate programs, in homeland security contain courses that expose students to the international elements of U.S. homeland security policies and programs. Attention would not only be given to the transnational nature of terrorist threats, but more specifically to the need to secure our borders, make air and sea transportation safe, protect the global supply chain, and guard our critical physical and cyber assets. It would also demonstrate that U.S. homeland security policy is increasingly driven by the growing need for international cooperation in the face of many natural disasters and accidents.

All students completing this coursework would learn the benefits of greater international engagement by the U.S. in seeking to safeguard our security. Undergraduates would be only briefly exposed to this issue. Graduate students would be given material with more scope and depth. They would be in a position to critically examine the international accomplishments of DHS in its first decade

of existence through its many cooperative activities with dozens of nations and entities over the entire globe, and grasp the internal bureaucratic politics involved in DHS efforts to move vigorously on international issues.

In sum, it is hoped that educators who design and teach undergraduate and graduate homeland security courses, as well as students interested in this field of study, will see value in the suggestions represented in this article for raising awareness of the international aspects of U.S. homeland security and how this can result in avenues for research as well as job prospects and career advancements.

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## APPENDIX

### Additional references for use in graduate courses

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