

U.S. Homeland Security

Newsletter

North America

BAKER & MCKENZIE

August 2009

Homeland Security Updates

Employers of H-1B and L-1 Workers: Be Prepared for Unannounced USCIS On-Site Audits

DHS' Revamped Site First to Follow New Social Media Directives

Witnesses: E-Verify Can't Detect ID Theft

Secretary Napolitano Releases Report on Department's Progress Fulfilling 9/11 Commission Recommendations

Bomb Testing Lab Strengthens Aviation Security

Report: US Immigration Raids Violated Rights

Gitmo Delayed 6 Months

DHS to Spend Up to \$389 Million On Emergency Communications

Five Sept. 11 Terror Suspects Boycott Hearing at Guantanamo

Secretary Napolitano Announces 60-Day Review of Homeland Security Advisory System

New York Edict on Immigration Enforcement

IG: Secure Border Initiative Lacks Effective Oversight

Obama Administration Calls on Nation to Begin Planning and Preparing for Fall Flu Season & the New H1N1 Virus

Homeland Security: Preliminary Results Show Protective Service's Ability to Protect Federal Facilities is Hampered by Weaknesses in its Contract Security Guard Program

Anti-Counterfeiting Enhances Patient Safety

6 Considered Threats Kept Licenses for Aviation

www.bakernet.com

Baker & McKenzie LLP
815 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006-4078

Homeland Security Updates

Employers of H-1B and L-1 Workers: Be Prepared for Unannounced USCIS On-Site Audits

August 4, 2009

US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) has enhanced its benefits fraud program to encompass a broader scope of audits for employers across the United States who sponsor foreign workers for visas. The audits typically involve a random, on-site visit that is deliberately unannounced. Inspectors will request site inspections and visits with sponsored visa workers, and require proof that the worker is in fact employed according to the terms of an approved visa petition.

USCIS is acting pursuant to administrative authority which requires consent from the employer to allow inspections across the location or meetings with individual employees. A best practice is for employers to designate certain leaders in their Immigration Compliance arena - whether that be with the General Counsel's office or Human Resources - to guide individual site HR managers as they "host" these inspectors. Collaboration to confirm that sponsored visa holders are in fact employed by the company is useful, as the inspectors need to report back that they verified that the inspected company is in compliance, but this confirmation can typically be accomplished by meeting with HR and provision of a recent payroll confirmation.

Baker & McKenzie is providing guidelines and training to organizations as they prepare for such on-site audits. In addition to identifying personnel to be responsible for responses at each site, employers should review their compliance protocols for visa holders and ensure that current petitions and I-9 records are up to date. *Baker & McKenzie*

[\[View Article\]](#)

DHS' Revamped Site First to Follow New Social Media Directives

July 22, 2009

The Department of Homeland Security relaunched the new website; becoming the first agency to follow the White House directives. NextGov reports, "President Barack Obama's aides have been urging agencies to add interactive components to their Web sites, such as videos and blogs." *NextGov*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Homeland Security Drops Satellite Snooping

Health and Human Services Announces Advanced Development Contract for New Way to Make Flu Vaccine

Study Finds Immigration Courtrooms Backlogged

General Aviation Presents Limited Security Threat

DHS Announces Nearly \$1.8 Billion in Fiscal Year 2009 Preparedness Grants

Secretary Napolitano Swears in Homeland Security Advisory Council Members

Latest Delay to E-Verify Prompts Doubts About Programs Future

FBI Planning Bigger Role in Terrorism Fight

Obama Merges Homeland, National Security Staff

U.S. Asks Firms to Make Swine Flu Vaccine

Obama Endorses Indefinite Detention Without Trial for Some

In Dueling Speeches, a National Security Debate

Supermax Prisons in United States Already Hold Terrorists

Report Citing Veteran Extremism is Pulled

Coast Guard Issues Maritime Security Directive 104-6

US Rejoins UN's Human Rights Forum

DHS Begins Deploying Technology Component of Its Virtual Fence

Obama's Budget Eliminates New Funding for Nuclear Detection

New York City Streamlining 911 Call Taking Process

Ready or Not, Katrina Victims Lose Temporary Housing

Swine Flu Cases in U.S. Surge to 642

Terror Suspects Slip Past FBI Watch List

Information Security: Cyber Threats and Vulnerabilities Place Federal Systems at Risk

Lawyer's Letter Counters Torture Report

Evaluation Shows Significant Improvement in Local Hospitals' Disaster Preparedness

A More Perfect Union of ID Management Schemes

Obama Keeps Some Bush Secrets

F.B.I. and States Vastly Expands DNA Databases

Witnesses: E-Verify Can't Detect ID Theft

July 22, 2009

It has been discovered that the Homeland Security's E-Verify system does not detect fraudulent activities such as ID theft. Alice Lipowicz writes, "The Internet-based E-Verify system allows employers to check Social Security numbers for their employees and prospective employees to determine whether the numbers are valid and the employees are therefore eligible to work. However, it is not designed to detect borrowed or stolen Social Security numbers." *Federal Computer Week*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Secretary Napolitano Releases Report on Department's Progress Fulfilling 9/11 Commission Recommendations

July 22, 2009

The Department of Homeland Security states, "The report details the progress the Department has made on a range of 9/11 Commission recommendations-providing examples of new policies, initiatives and grants while reflecting DHS' focus on enhanced science and technology, efficiency and fiscal responsibility and reinvigorated coordination with state, local, tribal and international partners." *Department of Homeland Security*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Bomb Testing Lab Strengthens Aviation Security

July 22, 2009

A U.S. Government employee tests the security by creating an improvised bomb that appeared to look like a stack of DVD's. Jeanne Meserve and Eric Marrapodi state, "Patrick O'Connor is part of a team of researchers trying to improve current bomb detection technologies and develop new ones at the Transportation Security Laboratory in Atlantic City. Their goal is to secure aviation from terrorists." *CNN*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Report: US Immigration Raids Violated Rights

July 22, 2009

Immigration agents violated the constitution by entering homes of immigrants without consent. Deepti Hajela writes, "Latinos made up a disproportionate number of the people arrested who were not the stated targets of the raids, and many of their arrest reports gave no basis for why they were initially seized, said the report, which was based on data from raids in New York and New Jersey." *NewsDay.com*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Gitmo Delayed 6 Months

July 21, 2009

Joseph Curl writes, "President Obama on Monday extended by six months a task force charged with determining how terrorism suspects should be interrogated, held in custody or handed over to other countries, putting in jeopardy his promise to close the military detention facility at the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, by January."

The Washington Times

[\[View Article\]](#)

Local, State Agencies Lack Resources to Ensure Food Safety

New Interrogation Details Emerge

Report: Police Exceed Rules on Immigration Questions

\$250M Effort to Secure Port Lags

Officials Say U.S. Wiretaps Exceeded Law

GAO: Dead People Can Still Get Passports

Illegal Immigrants Dispersing

IG: CBP Didn't Give Auditors Enough Info on Passenger System

Report Concludes Internal E-Mail Compromised Airport Security Test

Obama Follows Bush Policy on Detainee Access to Courts

CDC Reports Progress in Foodborne Illness Prevention Has Reached a Plateau

DHS Announces Nearly \$970 Million In Preparedness Grant Final Allocations

Pistachio Recall Signals Tough Stance on Safety

U.S. Aid Delays in Drug War Criticized

Secretaries Napolitano and Espinosa Announce Agreement on Mexican Repatriation

3 Detained in Afghanistan Can Take Challenges to U.S. Court

The Myth of 90 Percent: Only a Small Fraction of Guns in Mexico Come From U.S. April 2, 2009

TSA's Secure Flight Begins Vetting Passengers

Napolitano to Review Satellite Imagery Program

DHS Seeks Info on Common Operational Picture

Delegates at UN Forum Seek to Strengthen Nuclear Security

Obama Outlines Afghan Strategy

Hezbollah Uses Mexican Drug Routes Into U.S.

It's the Drawing Board for Real ID

DHS Watchdog Recommends Steps to Improve Immigration Benefits Processing

FBI's Most Wanted Lists Get High-Tech Makeover

White House to Keep Agencies' Focus on Terrorism

DHS to Spend Up to \$389 Million On Emergency Communications

July 16, 2009

Over the next five years, there will be a number of contractors assisting the Department of Homeland Security with national security communications. J. Nicholas Hoover wrote, "Under the terms of the contract, Booz Allen Hamilton, General Dynamics, SAIC and SRA International will provide scientific, engineering and technical support to the National Communications System, an interagency group that's responsible for some cybersecurity and coordinates national security and emergency preparedness communications."

Information Week

[\[View Article\]](#)

Five Sept. 11 Terror Suspects Boycott Hearing at Guantanamo

July 16, 2009

Carol Rosenberg reports, "All five alleged co-conspirators in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks boycotted a pretrial hearing Thursday morning, frustrating prosecutors and denying kin of victims a chance to see the men in the flesh." *The Miami Herald*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Secretary Napolitano Announces 60-Day Review of Homeland Security Advisory System

July 14, 2009

The Department of Homeland Security reports, "Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano today announced the formation of a task force to conduct a 60-day review of the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS). The mission of the task force is to assess the effectiveness of the system in informing the public about terrorist threats and communicating protective measures within government and throughout the private sector." *Department of Homeland Security*

[\[View Article\]](#)

New York Edict on Immigration Enforcement

July 11, 2009

Local police agencies influenced by the federal government provide full focus on any threat to public safety. Anna Gorman writes, "The announcement aims to clarify a controversial program that deputizes police to turn over suspects or criminals to immigration authorities for possible deportation. Normally police do not enforce federal law." *Los Angeles Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

TSA: More Gate Searches in Store for Fliers

Auditors: FEMA Acquisition Files Are A Mess

Unspent Funds For Train Safety, Security Make N.J. Lawmakers Furious

GAO: Fake IDs Yield Passports

U.S. Won't Label Terror Suspects as Combatants

IG: Secure Border Initiative Lacks Effective Oversight

July 10, 2009

Katherine McIntire Peters writes, "Short staffed and under pressure to implement the Homeland Security Department's high-profile program to improve border security known as the Secure Border Initiative, the Customs and Border Protection agency has made extensive use of contractor support services. So much so that contractors are doing inherently governmental work in violation of federal regulations, the department's watchdog said." *Government Executive*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Obama Administration Calls on Nation to Begin Planning and Preparing for Fall Flu Season & the New H1N1 Virus

July 9, 2009

The fall flu season is approaching and the Obama Administration is encouraging everyone to get prepared for the flu shot. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports, "The Obama Administration sent a strong message to the nation today that it is time to start planning and preparing for the fall flu season and the ongoing H1N1 flu outbreak and that the federal government is prepared to commit resources, training, and new tools to help state and local governments and America's families get ready."

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

[\[View Article\]](#)

Homeland Security: Preliminary Results Show Protective Service's Ability to Protect Federal Facilities is Hampered by Weaknesses in its Contract Security Guard Program

July 8, 2009

The U.S. Government Accountability Office reports, "To accomplish its mission of protecting about 9,000 federal facilities, the Federal Protective Service (FPS) currently has a budget of about \$1 billion, about 1,200 full time employees, and about 13,000 contract security guards. This testimony discusses GAO's preliminary findings on (1) the extent to which FPS ensures that its guards have the required training and certifications before being deployed to a federal facility, (2) the extent to which FPS ensures that its guards comply with their assigned responsibilities (post orders) once they are deployed at federal facilities, and (3) security vulnerabilities GAO recently identified related to FPS's guard program." *U.S. Government Accountability Office*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Anti-Counterfeiting Enhances Patient Safety

June 2009

EMD Serono has taken proactive steps towards an innovative solution to strengthen and improve patient safety. Kimberly Thomas writes, "EMD Serono created a cross-functional team, including corporate security, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)/trademark, product security, quality assurance, government affairs and legal, and held a workshop in July 2008 for the U.S. launch of global anti-counterfeiting initiatives." *IPR Center Report*

[\[View Article\]](#)

6 Considered Threats Kept Licenses for Aviation

June 25, 2009

Six men who were either suspected or convicted of crimes that pose a threat to national security, were spared of the revocation of their aviation licenses. Matthew L. Wald writes, “The two agencies appeared to be unaware that the men were among the nearly one million people licensed as pilots, mechanics and flight dispatchers. They were identified by a tiny family-owned company in Mineola, N.Y., demonstrating software it developed to scrub lists of bank customers for terrorism links.” *The New York Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Homeland Security Drops Satellite Snooping

June 24, 2009

The Department of Homeland Security prefers to continue using satellite surveillance for natural disasters as opposed to domestic-terrorism. Audrey Hudson writes, “Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano reached the decision to shutter the program after a five-month review and discussions with law enforcement officials and members of Congress who said it would trample civil liberty rights.” *The Washington Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Health and Human Services Announces Advanced Development Contract for New Way to Make Flu Vaccine

June 23, 2009

The Department of Health Human and Human Services reports, “HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced today that the department will pursue advanced development of new way to make influenza vaccine. The work will be done by Protein Sciences Corporation, Inc., of Meriden, Conn., under a new \$35 million contract. The contract could be extended up to five years at a total cost of approximately \$147 million.”

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

[\[View Article\]](#)

Study Finds Immigration Courtrooms Backlogged

June 17, 2009

A study shows that immigration cases have been delayed due to the courtroom backlog. Julia Preston writes, “The report, by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, a nonpartisan group that analyzes data about federal government performance, found that the shortage of judges had contributed to a 19 percent increase in the backlog of cases since 2006 and a 23 percent increase in the time it takes to resolve them.”

The New York Times

[\[View Article\]](#)

General Aviation Presents Limited Security Threat

June 17, 2009

Katherine McIntire Peters writes, “The Homeland Security Department’s inspector general said Wednesday the national security threat posed by general aviation is ‘limited and mostly hypothetical.’” *Government Executive*

[\[View Article\]](#)

DHS Announces Nearly \$1.8 Billion in Fiscal Year 2009 Preparedness Grants

June 16, 2009

The Department of Homeland Security reports, “U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano announced today nearly \$1.8 billion in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) preparedness grants designed to help states, urban areas, tribal governments and non-profit agencies improve their readiness by enhancing protection, prevention, response and recovery capabilities for all disasters. Secretary Napolitano was joined by FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate in announcing the grants.” *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Secretary Napolitano Swears in Homeland Security Advisory Council Members

June 5, 2009

The Department of Homeland Security reports, “Comprised of experts from state, local and tribal governments, emergency and first responder communities, academia and the private sector, HSAC provides recommendations and advice directly to the Secretary of Homeland Security. Of the 16 members sworn in today, 10 are new to HSAC and six were re-appointed. The Council is chaired by former CIA and FBI Director Judge William Webster.” *Department of Homeland Security*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Latest Delay to E-Verify Prompts Doubts About Programs Future

June 5, 2009

Gautham Nagesh writes, “The Homeland Security Department announced this week it would delay until September implementing a rule requiring federal contractors to verify that new hires are eligible to work in the United States, the fourth time the Obama administration has postponed the requirement.” *NextGov*

[\[View Article\]](#)

FBI Planning Bigger Role in Terrorism Fight

May 28, 2009

Josh Meyer writes, “The FBI and Justice Department plan to significantly expand their role in global counter-terrorism operations, part of a U.S. policy shift that will replace a CIA-dominated system of clandestine detentions and interrogations with one built around transparent investigations and prosecutions.” *Los Angeles Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Obama Merges Homeland, National Security Staff

May 26, 2009

President Obama implements new national security staff in the White House to focus on homeland security and counterterrorism issues. Kellie Lunney writes, “The move is designed to “end the artificial divide” between those in the White House working on homeland security and national security, Obama said in a statement. The group will report to James L. Jones, the president’s national security adviser.” *Government Executive*

[\[View Article\]](#)

U.S. Asks Firms to Make Swine Flu Vaccine

May 23, 2009

The federal government has intervened and requested a swine flu vaccine that will immunize people. David Brown and Rob Stein write, “The order, announced by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, is part of a \$1 billion investment in immediate production and testing of vaccine against the newly emerged strain of the H1N1 flu virus. Further orders for potentially hundreds of millions of doses of vaccine are expected.” *The Washington Post*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Obama Endorses Indefinite Detention Without Trial for Some

President Obama has announced that there will be a number of detainees from Guantanamo Bay held indefinitely without trial. Peter Finn writes, “Some human rights advocates criticized Obama for adopting the idea that some detainees are not entitled to a trial. Others said the president was boxed in by cases inherited from the Bush administration in which possible prosecution had been irretrievably compromised by coercive interrogation.”

The Washington Post

[\[View Article\]](#)

In Dueling Speeches, a National Security Debate

May 22, 2009

President Obama and former vice president Cheney shared words regarding the fight against terrorism. Scott Wilson and Michael A. Fletcher write, “In an extraordinary set of speeches, the still-new president, who refers often to the problems he inherited from his predecessor, and the previous administration’s most forceful spokesman laid out their positions just minutes apart in locations separated by barely a mile. The virtual debate touched on Congress and the courts, interrogation tactics and truth commissions, and competing assessments of the nation’s post-Sept. 11 history that are currently informing the debate in Washington over how best to balance public safety and civil liberties.”

The Washington Post

[\[View Article\]](#)

Supermax Prisons in United States Already Hold Terrorists

May 22, 2009

There have been significant debates regarding the transfer of Guantanamo Bay detainees to federal prisons. Carrie Johnson and Walter Pincus write, "In news conferences, speeches and debates this week, lawmakers from both parties, as well as the director of the FBI, have sounded alarms about moving Guantanamo Bay detainees to federal prisons, where they could launch riots, hatch radical plots or somehow be released among the populace." *The Washington Post*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Report Citing Veteran Extremism is Pulled

May 14, 2009

A rightwing extremism report will be retracted and rewritten after it has been improperly released. Audrey Hudson writes, "The report was shared with state and local law enforcement officials nationwide via the department's internal Web site on April 7, angering Republican lawmakers and military veterans who said it unfairly stereotyped veterans." *The Washington Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Coast Guard Issues Maritime Security Directive 104-6

May 12, 2009

The United States Coast Guard reports, "The U.S. Coast Guard issued a maritime security directive Monday in response to the rise in piracy in the waters of the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa and in light of recent pirate attacks on U.S. flagged vessels."

United States Coast Guard

[\[View Article\]](#)

US Rejoins UN's Human Rights Forum

May 12, 2009

The United States acquired a seat on the United Nations' top human rights organization. Howard LaFranchi writes, "But the US election to the 47-seat Human Rights Council was overshadowed by the election of several countries - including Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Cameroon, and China - that human rights organizations often cite as violators of their own citizens' rights." *The Christian Science Monitor*

[\[View Article\]](#)

DHS Begins Deploying Technology Component of Its Virtual Fence

May 8, 2009

Jill Aitoro writes, "The Homeland Security Development has begun installing a series of networked towers armed with sensors and cameras to monitor a stretch of the U.S. - Mexican border in Arizona." *NextGov*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Obama's Budget Eliminates New Funding for Nuclear Detection

May 7, 2009

Spencer S. Hsu writes, "Congress has forced DHS's Domestic Nuclear Detection Office to hold off on new purchases, and Obama declined to request funds to buy equipment under DNDO beyond the \$153 million Bush obtained last year." *The Washington Post*

[\[View Article\]](#)

New York City Streamlining 911 Call Taking Process

May 7, 2009

New York City is implementing a process to streamline emergency calls. Elaine Rundle writes, "Under the old process, when someone called 911, a police department call taker would get the person's information and determine what type of incident he or she was reporting. If it pertained to a fire, a conference call was initiated with the fire department and the same information was repeated. Then the fire department representative would forward the information to a dispatcher who would deploy the appropriate response."

Government Technology

[\[View Article\]](#)

Ready or Not, Katrina Victims Lose Temporary Housing

May 7, 2009

Katrina victims are not receiving any funds dedicated to aid property owners. Shaila Dewan writes, "Though more than 4,000 Louisiana homeowners have received rebuilding money only in the last six months, or are struggling with inadequate grants or no money at all, FEMA is intent on taking away their trailers by the end of May. The deadline, which ends temporary housing before permanent housing has replaced it, has become a stark example of recovery programs that seem almost to be working against one another." *The New York Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Swine Flu Cases in U.S. Surge to 642

May 7, 2009

Within days, swine flu surged throughout the United States. The Washington Post reports, "The number of confirmed U.S. cases of swine flu surged by 60 percent with infections reported in three more states. Forty-one U.S. states are now reporting confirmed cases of the H1N1 virus." *The Washington Post*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Terror Suspects Slip Past FBI Watch List

May 7, 2009

The F.B.I. watch list has been so flawed that some people on the list managed to cross over to the United States. Ben Conery reports, "That the FBI continues to fail to place subjects of terrorism investigations on the watch list is unacceptable." *The Washington Post*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Information Security: Cyber Threats and Vulnerabilities Place Federal Systems at Risk

May 5, 2009

Information security is highly important to businesses or organizations that rely on computer systems. The Government Accountability Office reports, “Cyber threats to federal information systems and cyber-based critical infrastructures are evolving and growing. These threats can be unintentional and intentional, targeted or nontargeted, and can come from a variety of sources, such as foreign nations engaged in espionage and information warfare, criminals, hackers, virus writers, and disgruntled employees and contractors working within an organization.” *Government Accountability Office*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Lawyer’s Letter Counters Torture Report

May 4, 2009

Top CIA lawyer claims that his position in interrogating tactics after 9/11 has been misrepresented during a Senate hearing. Kara Rowland writes, “Jonathan Fredman said he was trying to tell top Guantanamo officials that legal uncertainties surrounding the word “torture” meant that interrogators needed clear and specific guidance rather than having to figure it out themselves in individual cases.” *The Washington Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Evaluation Shows Significant Improvement in Local Hospitals’ Disaster Preparedness

April 23, 2009

Hospitals now show significant improvement in the even of a disaster. The United States Department of Health and Human Services report, “The center was charged with conducting an independent evaluation of the HHS Hospital Preparedness Program and the program’s impact on health care preparedness for mass casualty disasters. The program was established by the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act of 2006 after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to improve hospitals’ preparedness for all types of disasters.” *U.S. Department of Health & Human Services*

[\[View Article\]](#)

A More Perfect Union of ID Management Schemes

April 21, 2009

William Jackson writes, “The formation of a new umbrella organization to promote interoperability between existing identity management schemes was announced April 20 by a number of groups working in that industry space. The new organization will be called the Kantara Initiative, from the Swahili word for “bridge,” which also has roots in the Arabic word for ‘harmony.’” *Government Computer News*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Obama Keeps Some Bush Secrets

April 19, 2009

The Obama Administration has modeled the Bush Administration in keeping key details of an F.B.I. computer database a secret. Michael J. Sniffen, of the Associated Press writes, "President Barack Obama's Justice Department quietly told a federal court in Washington last week that it would not second-guess the previous administration's decisions to withhold some information about the bureau's Investigative Data Warehouse."

Washington Examiner

[\[View Article\]](#)

F.B.I. and States Vastly Expands DNA Databases

April 18, 2009

Solomon Moore reports, "Law enforcement officials are vastly expanding their collection of DNA to include millions more people who have been arrested or detained but not yet convicted. The move, intended to help solve more crimes, is raising concerns about the privacy of petty offenders and people who are presumed innocent." *New York Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Local, State Agencies Lack Resources to Ensure Food Safety

April 17, 2009

The Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Agriculture and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are struggling to obtain resources to prevent foodborne illness. Lyndsey Layton writes, "The analysis describes a fractured collection of food safety professionals all trying to do the same thing -- prevent illness from contaminated food -- but their efforts are hampered by weak coordination, poor communication, varying abilities, inconsistent methods and a lack of federal leadership."

The Washington Post

[\[View Article\]](#)

New Interrogation Details Emerge

April 17, 2009

New details emerge regarding interrogation tactics. Carrie Johnson and Julie Tate report, "Authorities said they will not prosecute CIA officers who used harsh interrogation techniques with the department's legal blessing. But in a carefully worded statement, they left open the possibility that operatives and higher-level administration officials could face jeopardy if they ventured beyond the boundaries drawn by the Bush lawyers."

The Washington Post

[\[View Article\]](#)

Report: Police Exceed Rules on Immigration Questions

April 15, 2009

According to cases studied by students of the Seton Hall University School of Law, New Jersey Police officers have been taking advantage of their authority against immigrants. Michael Matza writes, "The findings, contained in a report by the Seton Hall University School of Law, conclude that police exceed their authority by questioning individuals involved in even minor infractions." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

[\[View Article\]](#)

\$250M Effort to Secure Port Lags

April 15, 2009

The ports are not technologically prepared for the six year, \$250 million antiterrorism effort to secure the ports. Thomas Frank writes, "Truckers, deckhands and others requiring access to secure areas at ports paid \$132 apiece for the high-tech ID cards that have their fingerprints embedded in them. But the Homeland Security Department, which is overseeing the program, says it still lacks fingerprint readers that can be used reliably in harsh weather." *USA Today*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Officials Say U.S. Wiretaps Exceeded Law

April 15, 2009

The interception of private e-mails and phone calls went beyond the law. Eric Lichtblau and James Risen report, "The legal and operational problems surrounding the N.S.A.'s surveillance activities have come under scrutiny from the Obama administration, Congressional intelligence committees and a secret national security court, said the intelligence officials, who spoke only on the condition of anonymity because N.S.A. activities are classified. Classified government briefings have been held in recent weeks in response to a brewing controversy that some officials worry could damage the credibility of legitimate intelligence-gathering efforts." *The New York Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

GAO: Dead People Can Still Get Passports

April 14, 2009

The Government Accountability Office reports that it is fairly possible to fraudulently obtain passports using the names of dead people. Alice Lipowicz reports, "GAO's report is the latest in a series of inquiries into passport fraud conducted in the past four years. From July 2005 to August 2008, GAO identified 112 individuals who fraudulently obtained U.S. passports using the birth certificates of deceased Americans."

Federal Computer Week

[\[View Article\]](#)

Illegal Immigrants Dispersing

April 14, 2009

Illegal immigrants have been spreading out throughout the United States. Stephen C. Fehr reports, “The estimated 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States are settling in states such as Georgia and North Carolina where relatively few lived 20 years ago.”

Stateline

[\[View Article\]](#)

IG: CBP Didn't Give Auditors Enough Info on Passenger System

April 13, 2009

Alice Lipowicz writes, “The Customs and Border Protection agency did not provide enough information to Homeland Security Department auditors to enable them to conduct a full review of CBP’s largest passenger information database for privacy and security compliance, according to a report from DHS Inspector General Richard Skinner.”

Federal ComputerWeek

[\[View Article\]](#)

Report Concludes Internal E-Mail Compromised Airport Security Test

April 13, 2009

Gautham Nagesh reports, “A Transportation Security Administration official compromised the covert testing of airport security screeners by sending out an e-mail about the testing and did not report the compromise, according to a report by the Homeland Security Department’s inspector general.” *NextGov.com*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Obama Follows Bush Policy on Detainee Access to Courts

April 11, 2009

Obama has decided to lead by Bush’s example by not allowing United States legal rights to those who have been incarcerated by U.S. troops in foreign prisons. *The Washington Post*

[\[View Article\]](#)

CDC Reports Progress in Foodborne Illness Prevention Has Reached a Plateau

April 9, 2009

According to a 10 state report, the most common foodborne illness has not changed much over the past 3 years. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention state, “Each year, the current data is compared to the previous three years and the period from 1996 to 1998, the first three years of surveillance. The FoodNet population is similar to the U.S. population and therefore provides reliable information on the incidence and trends of foodborne illness in the United States.” *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*

[\[View Article\]](#)

DHS Announces Nearly \$970 Million In Preparedness Grant Final Allocations

April 8, 2009

The Department of Homeland Security reports, “The Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency announced today final allocations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Preparedness Grants for 10 federal grant programs, totaling nearly \$970 million in federal funding to assist state, local and tribal governments and private industry in strengthening community preparedness. Awards will be made on a rolling basis over the summer.” *The Department of Homeland Security*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Pistachio Recall Signals Tough Stance on Safety

April 6, 2009

The second largest processor of pistachio agreed to recall all products in 2008. Gardiner Harris and Andrew Martin of The New York Times write, “With the warning, the administration signaled that it was substantially changing the way the government oversees food safety. Food-handling practices that in the past would have resulted in mild warnings may now lead to wide-ranging and expensive recalls, even before anyone becomes ill from contaminated food.” *The New York Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

U.S. Aid Delays in Drug War Criticized

April 5, 2009

The U.S. government has not touched much of the \$1.4 billion dollars that was approved towards fighting drug trafficking in Mexico. William Booth and Steve Fainaru claim, “In June, Congress appropriated \$400 million to assist Mexico under the first installment of the Merida Initiative, which was signed into law by President George W. Bush.”

Washington Post

[\[View Article\]](#)

Secretaries Napolitano and Espinosa Announce Agreement on Mexican Repatriation

April 3, 2009

The United States and Mexico have reached an agreement on the expedited and humane repatriation of Mexican nationals. The Department of Homeland Security states, “The agreement consists of 30 Local Arrangements for the Repatriation of Mexican Nationals, which have been reached all over the United States by DHS, the Mexican National Migration Institute and the Mexican Consulates located within the jurisdiction of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol sectors. As of today, all necessary Local Arrangements have been signed.”

Department of Homeland Security

[\[View Article\]](#)

3 Detained in Afghanistan Can Take Challenges to U.S. Court

April 3, 2009

Del Quentin Wilber and Karen DeYoung writes, “A federal judge ruled yesterday that three detainees at a U.S. military prison in Afghanistan may challenge their confinement before a U.S. court, handing the Obama administration one of its first legal defeats on a claim of executive power.” *The Washington Post*

[\[View Article\]](#)

The Myth of 90 Percent: Only a Small Fraction of Guns in Mexico Come From U.S. April 2, 2009

The current statistic on the United States’ involvement in supplying guns to Mexico, is inaccurate. William La Jeunesse and Maxim Lott write, “The fact is, only 17 percent of guns found at Mexican crime scenes have been traced to the U.S. What’s true, in a clarification of the statistic used by her own agency’s assistant director, is that over 90 percent of the *traced* firearms originate from the U.S.” FoxNews.com

[\[View Article\]](#)

TSA’s Secure Flight Begins Vetting Passengers

March 31, 2009

The Transport Security Administration reports, “The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced today the implementation of the Secure Flight program, which shifts pre-departure watch list matching responsibilities from individual aircraft operators to TSA and carries out a key recommendation of the 9/11 Commission. To date TSA has assumed the watch list matching responsibility for passengers on domestic commercial flights with four volunteer aircraft operators and will add more carriers in the coming months.” *Transport Security Administration*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Napolitano to Review Satellite Imagery Program

March 30, 2009

Alice Lipowicz writes, “Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano will review her department’s controversial National Applications Office (NAO), which is designed to use imagery from the country’s spy satellites for domestic security and law enforcement purposes. *Federal ComputerWeek*

[\[View Article\]](#)

DHS Seeks Info on Common Operational Picture

March 30, 2009

Ben Bain writes, “The Homeland Security Department is seeking advice from industry on how to improve its national Common Operational Picture (COP), which is used to provide situational awareness for federal, state and local officials during disasters.”

Federal ComputerWeek

[\[View Article\]](#)

Delegates at UN Forum Seek to Strengthen Nuclear Security

March 30, 2009

UN News Centre reports, "Delegates from more than 90 countries began a three-day meeting in Vienna today to assess seven years of global efforts to improve the protection and control of radioactive material, and to discuss ways to strengthen nuclear security."

UN News Centre

[\[View Article\]](#)

Obama Outlines Afghan Strategy

March 28, 2009

President Obama implements new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Karen DeYoung writes, "Elements of the Obama plan to 'disrupt, dismantle and defeat' al-Qaeda in Pakistan and vanquish its Taliban allies in Afghanistan also struck notes from the past. More U.S. troops, civilian officials and money will be needed, he said. Allies will be asked for additional help, and local forces will be trained to eventually take over the fight. Benchmarks will be set to measure progress." *The Washington Post*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Hezbollah Uses Mexican Drug Routes Into U.S.

March 27, 2009

Hezbollah is using the same strategies that Mexican drug lords use to smuggle shipments into the United States. Sara A. Carter writes, "The Iran-backed Lebanese group has long been involved in narcotics and human trafficking in South America's tri-border region of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil. Increasingly, however, it is relying on Mexican narcotics syndicates that control access to transit routes into the U.S." *The Washington Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)

It's the Drawing Board for Real ID

March 27, 2009

The DHS will rethink the Real ID system because it is too expensive and not accurate. Allan Holmes writes, "DHS will be going 'back to the drawing board,' to figure out whether an enhanced driver's license is feasible, Napolitano said, but in the meantime the existing law will intentionally remain on the back burner." *Nextgov.com*

[\[View Article\]](#)

DHS Watchdog Recommends Steps to Improve Immigration Benefits Processing

March 26, 2009

Katherine McIntire Peters writes, "Management shortcomings at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Homeland Security Department agency responsible for administering immigration benefits, have undermined efforts to eliminate the backlog of benefit applications, according to a new report by the department's inspector general."

Government Executive

[\[View Article\]](#)

FBI's Most Wanted Lists Get High-Tech Makeover

March 26, 2009

The FBI has implemented a new high-tech program in efforts to capture those on the wanted list or watch list. Jamie DeLoma writes, "It has designed interactive iPhone-looking posters that bloggers and MySpace and Facebook users can embed on their pages to showcase the bad guys." *FoxNews.com*

[\[View Article\]](#)

White House to Keep Agencies' Focus on Terrorism

March 25, 2009

David Johnston and Neil A. Lewis writes, "The Obama administration's decision to maintain current levels of national security staffing comes as officials acknowledge, as Mr. Mueller did in his testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee, that the shift of agents to counterterrorism and intelligence duties after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, has seriously complicated other efforts. Those include demands for resources to combat corporate and financial fraud and a deadly drug war across the border with Mexico."

New York Times

[\[View Article\]](#)

TSA: More Gate Searches in Store for Fliers

March 18, 2009

Thomas Frank reports, "A new, more aggressive effort by airport screeners aims to halt randomly selected passengers for a security check just before they step onto their departing plane." *USA Today*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Auditors: FEMA Acquisition Files Are a Mess

March 16, 2009

Alice Lipowicz reports, "Contracting documents are in disarray at the Federal Emergency Management Agency's headquarters office, with the agency unable to find two-thirds of the files requested during a recent audit." *Federal ComputerWeek*

[\[View Article\]](#)

Unspent Funds for Train Safety, Security Make N.J. Lawmakers Furious

March 16, 2009

Funds that were allocated to the improvement of safety in NJ Transit, Amtrak, and New York City subways, are not being spent. Bob Braun writes, "Of \$127.8 million, only \$8.2 million -- 6 percent -- was spent. The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the spending, is consistent. In 2007, \$262.9 million was appropriated by Congress -- that means it was raised through taxes -- for grants for security." *NJ.com*

[\[View Article\]](#)

GAO: Fake IDs Yield Passports

March 16, 2009

It is becoming very easy to obtain fake passports using a fake ID. Alice Lipowicz writes, “Terrorist or criminals can exploit gaps in the system to obtain genuine U.S. passports based on false or stolen identities, GAO said in a report posted on the Web on March 13.” *Federal Computer Week*

[\[View Article\]](#)

U.S. Won't Label Terror Suspects as Combatants

March 13, 2009

William Glaberson writes, “in a much anticipated court filing, the Justice Department argued that the president has the authority to detain terrorism suspects there without criminal charges, much as the Bush administration had asserted. It provided a broad definition of those who can be held, which was not significantly different from the one used by the Bush administration.” *The New York Times*

[\[View Article\]](#)