



Protecting America from outside the beltway

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My first book, [Homeland Security and Federalism: Protecting America from Outside the Beltway](http://www.amazon.com/Homeland-Security-Federalism-Protecting-America/dp/1533374260/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8) (http://www.amazon.com/Homeland-Security-Federalism-Protecting-America/dp/1533374260/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8) (with a Foreword by the Honorable Edwin Meese III), is now available in paperback and the timing couldn't be better. When the book first came out, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Daesh) did not exist. Over the last few years, the threat from Daesh has grown significantly as the group acquired more territory, funding, and fighters.

That threat became a tragic reality in Paris, San Bernardino, and Brussels. Yet, while our threat environment has evolved, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) remains a slow-moving, dysfunctional entity.



(http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/RTS6XST_obama_oval-e1464202478110.jpg)

US President Barack Obama is briefed on the Paris attacks, November 13, 2015. REUTERS/White House.

With the rise of Daesh, this book uses the principle of federalism to present a compelling case that the best way to protect America from terrorists is to get power out of Washington's federal bureaucracy and back in the hands of governors, mayors, and the countless men and women serving on the front lines in our communities.

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'Homeland Security and Federalism' discusses why federalism is so critical to our domestic security. It then takes the reader from the streets of Ismailia, Egypt in 1921 to New York City on September 11, 2001 and from America's colonial period to the inner workings of the DHS to show what worked historically and why the approach taken after September 11 failed to heed the bright lessons of history on how best to protect our nation against this new threat. After asking where are today's federalists who will push back on Washington's power grab, the book develops a rational risk model to guide where our limited resources should be allocated that will lead to less pork and more protection. The book then systematically builds the case that states and localities are uniquely suited to lead our efforts on terrorism preparedness, disaster management, illegal immigration, counterterrorism, and community resiliency. A series of case studies highlights best practices from outside the Beltway that vindicate the role of federalism in solving America's complex challenges.

In this newest edition, I detail what I got right and wrong since the book first came out. As for what I got right, I believe my criticism of how many cities received terrorism funds and the federalization of natural disasters by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have been justified since the book's publication. On the former, the list of cities had grown to 63 cities by 2010. The reality is that many of those cities had very little risk of a terrorist attack. Thankfully, DHS has reduced the number of cities down to 29 in the most recent round of funding.

On the latter issue, the number of FEMA declarations that trigger financial and other resources to states exploded during Bill Clinton's Administration and grew every presidential term since, reaching a stunning 242 declarations in 2011. I am delighted to report that the number has [come down substantially during Barack Obama's second term](https://www.aei.org/publication/will-obamas-luck-with-natural-disasters-continue/) (<https://www.aei.org/publication/will-obamas-luck-with-natural-disasters-continue/>) and will mark the first decline in declarations during a presidential term since Reagan's first term. On both issues, I served as the lone voice demanding reforms.

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Meanwhile, my prediction that "a future in which the federal government knows who is in America as citizens or visitors and who is employed in America is not far off" was, unfortunately, wrong. We still have millions of people crossing America's porous border, overstaying their visas, and using false documents to gain employment and secure government benefits - nor do we appear anywhere closer to knowing who they are. I also failed to cover cybersecurity and its importance in our fight against terrorists adequately. I've begun to remedy that omission in my recent AEI writings on the [weakness of European security](https://www.aei.org/publication/what-we-do-and-still-dont-know-about-the-paris-attack/) (<https://www.aei.org/publication/what-we-do-and-still-dont-know-about-the-paris-attack/>) and the [need for a national commission on terrorists' use of technology](https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/National-commission-on-terrorists-use-of-technology-is-needed.pdf) (<https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/National-commission-on-terrorists-use-of-technology-is-needed.pdf>).

Overall, I stand by my assessment that it was a mistake to create the DHS in the first place, and in my recent writing have argued that Congress should [eliminate](https://www.aei.org/publication/why-we-should-eliminate-the-department-of-homeland-security/) (<https://www.aei.org/publication/why-we-should-eliminate-the-department-of-homeland-security/>) it and move its various pieces to departments and agencies where greater efficiencies exist.

To get a better understanding of the problems we face in securing the homeland, I humbly submit that this short, detailed book is a good start. All proceeds from sales are being donated to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Foundation.

Learn more: [Will Obama's luck with natural disasters continue?](http://www.aei.org/publication/will-obamas-luck-with-natural-disasters-continue/) (<http://www.aei.org/publication/will-obamas-luck-with-natural-disasters-continue/>) | [Consolidate Domestic Intelligence Entities Under the FBI](http://www.aei.org/publication/consolidate-domestic-intelligence-entities-under-the-fbi/) (<http://www.aei.org/publication/consolidate-domestic-intelligence-entities-under-the-fbi/>) | [Giving states and localities a voice in Washington](http://www.aei.org/publication/giving-states-and-localities-a-voice-in-washington/) (<http://www.aei.org/publication/giving-states-and-localities-a-voice-in-washington/>) | [National security policy development](http://www.aei.org/multimedia/national-security-policy-development/) (<http://www.aei.org/multimedia/national-security-policy-development/>)

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