

Promoting Resilience to Terrorism

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Abstract

Although we have made significant gains in our ability to thwart terrorist attacks, the stark reality is that we cannot prevent them all. Our next best strategy is to minimize the losses of the attacks that do occur. One approach is to enhance *economic resilience*, or the ability of the economy to continue to function after assets have been damaged or critical resource flows have been disrupted. Ways to accomplish this include: greater reliance on own sources of critical input supply (e.g., distributed electricity generation), increases in inventories, conservation, input and import substitution, business relocation, and making up lost production at a later date. The potential for resilience is high, due to the motivation of businesses and individuals to survive. At the same time, experience is limited and opportunities are not always well understood. However, the situation is improving by the professionalization of the concept through the emergence of the “business continuity” industry and DHS efforts to disseminate information on “best-practice” methods.

This presentation will define economic resilience, show how it can be measured, and report on studies of its effectiveness. I will also discuss future research priorities and a new project on the topic that involves researchers at five DHS university centers

I will also identify ways to enhance resilience, as well as how to avoid the erosion resilience in a catastrophe. A major emphasis will be the relatively low cost and broad applicability of resilience in comparison to other strategies. Resilience is truly a worthy *second line of defense* against terrorism.