

The National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets

President George W. Bush adopted The National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets February 2003.¹ In it President Bush stated,

. . .this document identifies a clear set of goals and objectives and outlines the guiding principles that will underpin our efforts to secure the infrastructures and assets vital to our public health and safety, national security, governance, economy, and public confidence. It provides a unifying structure, defines roles and responsibilities, and identifies major initiatives that will drive our near-term protection priorities. Most importantly, it establishes a foundation for building and fostering a cooperative environment in which government, industry, and private citizens can work together to protect our critical infrastructures and key assets.

The National Strategy adopted eight guiding principles among which were to “Encourage market solutions whenever possible; compensate for market failure with focused government intervention” which states in pertinent part,

Protecting our Nation’s critical infrastructures and key assets requires a broad spectrum of possible government actions, including: improving understanding and awareness of the current threat environment; providing threat indications and warnings; investing in research and development; transferring pilot technology; exploring various forms of financial incentives; and taking targeted regulatory action, where appropriate. Through this Strategy, the federal government strives to encourage proactive, market-based protective solutions. Many of the critical infrastructure sectors are currently highly regulated, and additional regulatory directives or mandates should only be necessary in instances where market forces are insufficient to prompt the investments necessary to assure critical infrastructure and key asset protection.

[Emphasis added]

In the section, Organizing and Partnering for Critical Infrastructure and Key Asset Protection, the Strategy sets out the responsibilities of the Federal Government, State Governments and the Private Sector. In the section on Private-Sector Responsibilities the Strategy emphasized,

The lion’s share of our critical infrastructures and key assets are owned and operated by the private sector. Customarily, private companies prudently engage in risk management planning. They also invest in

¹ The entire National Strategy for The Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets can be found at, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/pcipb/physical.html>

security as a necessary component of their business operations and to assure customer confidence. In the present threat environment, the private sector remains the first line of defense for its own facilities. Consequently, private-sector owners and operators should reassess and adjust their planning, assurance, and investment programs to accommodate the increased risk presented by deliberate acts of terrorism.

Securing Critical Infrastructure

The section of the strategy entitled “Securing Critical Infrastructure” discusses the Energy Infrastructure,

Almost every form of productive activity—whether in businesses, manufacturing plants, schools, hospitals, or homes—requires electricity. Electricity is also necessary to produce other forms of energy, such as refined oil. Were a widespread or long-term disruption of the power grid to occur, many of the activities critical to our economy and national defense—including those associated with response and recovery—would be impossible.

Electricity Sector Challenges

The electricity sector is highly complex, and its numerous component assets and systems span the North American continent. Many of the sector’s key assets, such as generation facilities, key substations, and switchyards, present unique protection challenges.

Building a less vulnerable grid represents another option for protecting the national electricity infrastructure.

We no longer assume that terrorists are incapable of undertaking a devastating physical attack on our homeland and infrastructure base. In fact, given the creative and adaptive nature of our terrorist adversaries, we can expect future strikes to be even more sophisticated in terms of capability and synchronization. Ironically, the very nature of our free society greatly enables terrorist operations and tactics, while, at the same time, hinders our ability to predict or prevent terrorist acts or mitigate their effects. Given these realities, the imperative to implement the comprehensive national physical protection strategy outlined in this document is most pressing.

We must . . . build and foster a partnership among all levels of government, as well as between government and the private sector.

We must act together now—through aggressive leadership at all levels inside and outside government—to build on this shared cooperative spirit and carry out the implementing activities endorsed in this document. Our

desired end state is the protection of our most nationally critical infrastructures and assets; timely warning and protection of those infrastructures and assets that face a specific, imminent threat; and a collaborative environment in which all stakeholders can effectively and efficiently carry out their respective protection responsibilities.