

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

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Prevention, remediation, and
recovery will always fall short

Reduce the size of the targets

- Concentrations of populations in risky areas
- Concentrations of hazardous materials
- Concentrations of private organizations in our critical infrastructure

Power, telecommunications, chemicals, transportation, Agriculture, food processing, etc.

Population concentrations are a result of both local and federal policies

Critical infrastructure protection is national in scope but largely controlled by private business

This depends upon the electoral system—which is flawed

- Senate is unrepresentative
- Electoral College unrepresentative
- Congressional elections distorted by business financing
- Campaign financing reforms ineffective

Restrictions on lobbying

- Elected representatives
- Agencies and agency heads

Court rulings are critical

- They favor private property rights over community rights
- They prevent states and localities from setting higher standards than federal ones
- They limit the right to sue corporations and government agencies

Suits to redress externalities

- Accidents
- Pollution
- Environmental issues: Wetlands, settlements, population concentrations
- Reliability and security in telecommunications (e.g. Internet)

Much could be done through liability suits

- These would bring the insurance industry into the problem
- If Microsoft could be sued for unreliable or insecure products they would take notice
- More effective than trivial agency fines

Some examples of the regulatory problem

- Millstone nuclear plant
- Chemical plant safety
- Voluntary emissions reductions
- Hazardous rail cars

All-hazards approach

- Privileges terrorism over natural and industrial disasters
- Many terrorist expenditures not all-hazards
- Terrorist threat exaggerated for political purposes

Will further calamities help?

- 9/11 response not encouraging
- Katrina response not encouraging
- More specific disasters that focus upon an industry may be more effective

- Nuclear power plant accident
- Mad cow disease outbreak
- A few chemical plant explosions
- Contamination of milk silo
- Yearly massive power outages
- Massive Internet attack
- More hurricanes and floods

Some hopeful signs

- The number of regulatory agencies has increased steadily in the last 100 years (FDA, OSHA, NIOSH, FAA, etc.)
- The number of public interest and watchdog organizations has grown
- The Internet has increased information for those who care, and increased donations from non-business sources

We need a focus on

Reducing the size of the targets

- of nature's wrath,
- the industrial accident,
- and the terrorist's Jihad