Preface

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Homeland security represents an unprecedented challenge to American business and the economic sinews of the Western World. Even individual businesses stand to be impacted in ways they do not expect and have never before experienced.

The problem is that while past wars and economic disturbances have affected the economic environment through trade, markets, the availability of resources and so forth, the new domestic threat could destroy the very ability of companies and economies to operate at all.

Terrorist attacks and massive natural catastrophes can disrupt or destroy production facilities, skilled workers, key leaders, capital worth, insurance support, business partners, essential suppliers, delivery systems, and even the all-important customer base. And the threat of widespread disaster can prompt burdensome government action (or over-reaction) that impacts business as much as an actual attack.

These challenges require new understanding of the new interconnected world, new ways of thinking about the business environment, and new concepts that envision security as a benefit provider, and not just a necessary cost. We must think of ways to make security pay, even as we better understand the risk of ignoring the problem, and the foolishness of thinking someone else will solve it for us.

But where do we start? The challenges seem overwhelming:

- How can an individual business mitigate the impact of a multi-billion dollar storm, or a massive earthquake?
- How can a business contribute to preventing attacks that may cascade to threaten its existence?
- How can business leaders protect their most precious assets from disruption and destruction?
- How should they respond – both as citizens and as corporate entities, with responsibilities and liabilities?
- And how can they recover as quickly as possible at the minimum cost – and maybe with additional benefits?

Well, we can start with the voice of experience. Today's American business leaders are not the first to face the danger of massive domestic disruption through natural or man-made disasters. Many global companies have been meeting this challenge for years, and have developed sophisticated systems and facilities to protect themselves. Many American business leaders dealt first hand with the challenge of the 9/11 attacks and the massive destruction of Hurricane Katrina. Some are stronger for the experience; some are not. All have lessons to learn if we will listen.

And all these experiences taken together suggest theories, backed by real-world

experience, that we can use to shape our readiness and our success for the future. We can use these voices of experience to great benefit.

We ignore them at our peril.