

Abstract

Diploma thesis “U.S. Homeland Security: Reality or Myth? Domestic Counterterrorism post-9/11” examines the change in U.S. domestic counterterrorism policy after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. More specifically, it focuses on the U.S. government’s reorganization, which led to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. As outlined in this thesis, the homeland security agenda was aimed at unifying the U.S. efforts to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reducing America’s vulnerability to terrorism, and minimizing the damage and recovering from attacks that do occur. This thesis sets out to answer two interconnected questions: (1) whether the proposed homeland security agenda led to an efficient and unified system of U.S. domestic counterterrorism measures based on enhanced information sharing; and (2) why, in spite of the unique opportunity created by the 9/11 attacks, a comprehensive reorganization of the U.S. government to create a coherent homeland security agenda did not materialize. Throughout this thesis, it is argued that an efficient U.S. government reorganization was obstructed by three main factors. First, the change was obstructed by the organizational nature of the government agencies. Second, the reorganization was hindered by the “rational choices” of the U.S. leadership (both the president and the legislators). Third, the information sharing aspect of the new homeland security agenda was strongly shaped by democratic principles and the core beliefs of U.S. citizens regarding civil liberties.