

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

**“Homeland Security”**: An unprecedented title coined by the Bush administration, a title that might be used in some European nation, not the U.S.A. What happened to words like “nation” or “republic”? I don’t like the title and the organization makes me nervous. As a result of the infamous “Nine Eleven” incident, Homeland Security was formed in Two Thousand Two to protect the States from terrorist activity. The organization presently includes One Hundred Eighty Seven federal agencies and departments including the U.S. National Guard, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement, U.S. Secret Service, Transportation Security Administration, the fourteen agencies that constitute the Intelligence Community and the Civil Air Patrol. In Two Thousand Two, this new organization was declared a new Cabinet Department and became part of the Executive Branch. So, we now have a huge organized group to fight and prevent terrorism supposedly making our nation safer from within. Comforting? Only to a point! Question: What kind of terrorism is covered here? There are many and they are varied. In Two Thousand Four the question was answered and to me, it is scary. The Department formed a National Incident Management System (NIMS). Here is the scary part: NIMS is flexible because it is applicable to any incident regardless of cause, size, location or complexity. Think about it: any gathering by any group for any reason could be classed as an incident at the whim of the U.S. Executive Branch. In the past few weeks, caravans of new, never before seen military style equipment is on the road in various areas of the United States. Black fully armored Humvees, bearing Homeland Security markings, are training with the National Guard, FEMA and police. Homeland Security has also taken possession of Two Thousand Five Hundred very heavily armored vehicles, never before used inside the U.S. According to pictures that I have seen, some of these vehicles contain markings such as “Special Response Team”, “Homeland Security”, “Immigration and Customs Enforcement” and “Police/Rescue”. When I couple this information with the report of Homeland Security’s purchase last year of Four Hundred Fifty million rounds of ammunition, I get an uneasy feeling. That is One Hundred Thirty Nine million rounds more than the total population of the United States. Will this information be more comforting if the President of the United States is of a particular political persuasion? In my book: absolutely not. There is too much power vested in the Executive Branch and, sooner or later, I think that the nation will suffer from it. Our freedoms are precious and seem to be dwindling as the days go by. I would be extremely happy if I am totally wrong about what I have said today.

Fred Nelson for Community Comment.