

THE NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURES: THEIR RISKS AND DEPENDENCIES

We rely upon our infrastructure systems to provide dependable, affordable, and effective services and support for a very broad range of activities. Without them, society, including the economy, national defense and health and welfare of our people, would be critically crippled. And, of course, the United States would no longer attract foreign investment, let alone be able to retain its own industry. Among the most important infrastructures in the United States are: electric power; communications and information; transportation; water supply; a host of governmental services; and the environmentⁱ. The current high level of functionality and relatively low cost of these infrastructure services and support is at risk from a bevy of conditions and forces ranging from ordinary wear and tear, to natural disasters, to purposeful and large-scale attack. In this talk we will summarize the strengths and benefits the nation derives from its infrastructures and discuss some of the major risks they now face.

ⁱ This is by no means an exhaustive list. There are many more infrastructures (for example, health care, food and agriculture, banking and finance, etc.) and their exclusion from this abstract does not imply they are any the less important.