

HOMELAND SECURITY ALERT

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The new Department of Homeland (gag) Security, searching for ways to justify its enormous budget, has issued a warning to all Americans to stock up on duct tape and plastic sheeting to protect themselves against biological attacks. Loyal citizens have been urged to rush to their local hardware stores and purchase several rolls of the sticky material along with a roll of thin plastic. They are then to tape their windows and doors, purchase enough food for three weeks and retreat to a family room to wait out the threat.

At a press conference, the new director of the Department of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge was asked how people who could not afford duct tape should cope. He responded that the department would issue duct tape stamps and was setting up special centers where citizens whose tax returns for last year fell below \$50.00 would be issued coupons that could be redeemed at any of the nation's Ace Hardware Stores or Home Depots. (It has also been learned that both Ace Hardware and Home Depot were among the 100 largest contributors to President Bush's campaign). Apparently Mr. Robinson had it wrong when he told Benjamin to go into plastics. He forgot to add duct tape. Known colloquially as duck tape, the silvery material has hitherto been used primarily to tape up packages and suitcases. Now that it will be required equipment for everyone, we can expect to see the nation's largest corporations rushing into the business and setting up duct tape factories in every Third World country not on the nation's terrorist list. We have learned that Time-Warner, eager to make up its huge losses, has purchased land on the island of Pago-Pago where the locals will be asked to manufacture duct tape in quonset huts left over from World War II. Instead of cash, they will be paid in Spam.

Citizens interviewed after Secretary Ridge's press conference confirmed that they felt safer, knowing that they were getting their survival directions from the new agency. Mr. Ridge has promised that there will be daily instructions issued to the public as the likelihood of a terrorist attack increases from orange alert to day-glo pink. All public

institutions will be forced to comply and money that was formerly allocated to school lunches and textbooks will now be redirected to the purchase of duct tape and sheet plastic for all K-12 schools. Children will be given left-over K rations from the Viet Nam war which the Army has found to be a good way of writing off its surplus inventory. Where Americans once had good cause to fear terrorists, they can now rest assured that with Secretary Ridge at the helm and survival instructions pulsing through the media like adrenalin in a triathlon athlete's bloodstream, there will be nothing to worry about.

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