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The latest New York security scare: federal grants

DHS announced federal grants for port and transit security Thursday. Some say New York security got less, but it actually received more, when stimulus funds are included, the White House says.



A New York Police Department canine officer patrols a subway corridor in New York, Thursday. Accusations of plans to drastically cut security funding for mass transit and ports in New York were being hurled, Thursday. The White House responded stating that while grants will be reduced, overall funding will be increased by \$47 million the stimulus package is included in the calculation.

Bebeto Matthews/AP

By Ron Scherer, Staff writer / May 13, 2010

New York

Accusations flew Thursday that the Obama administration had cut more \$50 million from New York's 2010 funds for port and transit security. The Obama administration begged to differ.

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On Thursday, the Department of Homeland Security announced \$790 million in federal grants for fiscal year 2010. These grants go toward port and transit security in the United States overall. Based on the grants alone, New York saw a decrease in its funding.

In the wake of the Times Square bombing attempt, US Rep. Peter King (R) of New York termed the apparent decrease a "slap in the face." US Sen. Charles Schumer (D) of New York blamed bureaucrats at the Department of Homeland Security. Rick Lazio, the front-runner for the Republican nomination in the New York governor's race, lashed out at Andrew Cuomo, the state attorney general and likely Democratic candidate for governor, for not saying anything.

They're all wrong, the White House says: There was no cut in funding for these programs. Instead, according to the White House, New York security will actually realize a funding increase of \$47 million for 2010. That's after some \$100 million from the stimulus package is added in.

"In fact, one out of every three recovery dollars for transit and port security went to NYC, making them the largest recipient in the country," writes Nick Shapiro, assistant White House press secretary, in an e-mail.

According to Mr. Shapiro, funding for port and transit security grants in the US will rise 14 percent in 2010, after the stimulus funds are taken into account. The increase is even higher for New York – 24 percent more funds over 2009.

Indeed, America's ports remain vulnerable, Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D) of New York said earlier this month. He is an expert on port issues.

Congress has already passed a law requiring that by 2012, every shipping container coming to New York be scanned electronically before it enters the US. The Department of Homeland Security has already indicated it is likely to miss that deadline, Representative Nadler says.

On Thursday, Nadler joined US Rep. Nita Lowey (D) of New York in a letter to Rep. David Price (D), chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, urging him to "adequately fund programs that will benefit the most at-risk urban areas."

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who frequently says that New York does not get its fair share of antiterrorism funds, refused to point a finger. Instead, his press secretary says, he called President Obama's chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, to remind him of New York's pressing needs.

The brouhaha comes as Mr. Obama is due Thursday evening in New York for a fundraiser. Many of the city's politicians will be in attendance, and Obama will be thanking some of New York's police and firefighters for their professional response to the Times Square bombing attempt.

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