

CAN'T WE CALL THIS "COUNTER-TERRORISM PREPAREDNESS"?

Jared Bernstein (whose blog I still recommend) has responded to his 2-day PEPCO power outage by posting the crummy infrastructure report card the US got in 2009:

Check out the 2009 Report Card from the American Society of Civil Engineers: **Aviation D**

Bridges C

Dams D

Drinking Water D-

Energy D+

Hazardous Waste D

Inland Waterways D-

Levees D-

Public Parks and Recreation C-

Rail C-

Roads D-

Schools D

Solid Waste C+

Transit D

Wastewater D-

America's Infrastructure GPA: D

Estimated 5 Year Investment Need: **\$2.2 Trillion**

Bernstein's take (channeling Atrios) is that fixing all this infrastructure ought to be a good way to get 20 million people back to work.

But fixing just about every single one of these infrastructure problems is also a way to make our country more resilient to terrorism. Bridges? Dams? They make attractive terrorist targets, particularly if they're already crumbling. Drinking water? Another vulnerability to terrorist attacks. Rails? We know Osama bin Laden was reviewing plans to derail trains (as it crossed a bridge—this one's a twofer).

So can't we start fixing this stuff and, rather than calling it stimulus, call it "counter-terrorism preparedness"? There's no way, of course, the idiots in DC would support 2 trillion of stimulus, but their willingness to keep funding multiple wars in the name of terrorism—to the tune of trillions—show they might do so if we can give it a national security spin.

And between us? If we fixed things like levees and energy plants, we'd also be more resilient to things like earthquakes and climate change. Mind you, if Republicans found out about that, it'd be enough reason to defund it. So we'll just keep that part a secret between us.