

Testimony of

The Honorable Orrin Hatch

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Thank you Mr. Chairman. First, I want to commend you for focusing this Committee's attention on the most critical issue facing our nation today: securing our homeland to protect America from further terrorist attacks. Throughout our country's history, our people, its leaders, and Congress have demonstrated time and time again that when we work together - when we harness the full energy and commitment of our country - we can overcome any adversity or any enemy. The tragic events of September 11 have united this country and challenged our country once again to face down the threat of terrorism.

I join with you, Mr. Chairman, in a spirit of bipartisanship which Congress has demonstrated since the horrific attacks of September 11, to consider the President's proposed Homeland Security Department. Because there appears to be wide agreement, both in the Administration and in Congress, there should be a single, unified Cabinet-level department whose primary mission is to protect our homeland, I am confident that working together we will succeed in enacting legislation to create a new Department of Homeland Security this year.

This Committee has much to offer in this area. After the tragic events of September 11, members of this Committee and Congress worked tirelessly to provide the Attorney General with the tools necessary to fight terrorism worldwide and protect our country; specifically, we passed the PATRIOT Act, a critical set of reforms needed to unleash our government's ability to detect and prevent terrorist attacks. Since then, we have examined other issues of significance in our country's war against terrorism - we have reviewed the FBI's reorganization plan; we have presented and considered a workable plan for restructuring the INS; and we have reviewed other significant organizational and operational issues that have arisen. Against this backdrop, we must now turn our attention together to consider carefully the creation of the new Department of Homeland Security.

At the outset, I want to welcome Governor Tom Ridge, President Bush's Homeland Security Advisor. Since his swearing in on October 8, 2001, less than one month after the terrorist attacks on our country, Governor Ridge has worked with an unwavering determination to protect our homeland. I want to commend you, Governor Ridge, on your efforts to improve our nation's security and your dedication and courage in tackling these most difficult issues in a time of crisis. You have accomplished much. While there is much more to do to ensure the safety of our country, I am comforted by your leadership. You and the President have been steady beacons of hope for all Americans, and I want to thank you again for your accomplishments. We were privileged to hear your views when you came here in May to brief the Senators on your proposals to consolidate border control.

The proposed creation of the new Homeland Security Department is a massive task. Not since 1947, when President Truman reorganized our defense and security agencies, has this country

faced a reorganization of this scale. But today we face a significant new threat, one far different than post-World War II communism; today we face the danger of numerous, well-financed, terrorist groups - not just Al Qaeda, but many others - who will stop at nothing to cross our borders and attack our institutions, infrastructures, people and freedoms with weapons of all types.

The Administration's proposal to create a new Homeland Security Department is the next logical step in our country's war against terrorism. It is apparent in reviewing the Administration's proposed legislation that Governor Ridge and his team conducted a thorough study of various proposals that experts, commissions, academics, and members of Congress have prepared through the years to address deficiencies in our national security.

While the president's proposal to create a new Homeland Security Department is certainly a necessary first step, it is not the end of our country's mission. No one expects to achieve the end goal of an efficiently operating homeland security department overnight. There may well be areas of debate or issues we in Congress need to save for another day. Certainly, however, there are areas where we share a common view.

First, in the aftermath of September 11, we recognize that it is essential that we improve our intelligence gathering and analysis capabilities - within and among our federal, state and local agencies. The Administration's proposal makes it clear that the Secretary of the new Homeland Security Department will have the primary, but not sole, responsibility for coordinating terrorist-related threat information. The Secretary will be responsible for analyzing threat information from various agencies, assessing the vulnerability of our nation's infrastructures, and developing a long-term plan to protect our infrastructures.

As a so-called "consumer" of terrorism intelligence, the new Department will fuse and analyze information from many different sources, including the FBI, CIA, NSA, INS, DEA, and Customs Service, as well as other federal, state and local agencies. A critical responsibility of this new Department will be ensuring interagency sharing and coordination. After all, various federal, state and local agencies are essential players in our country's fight against terrorism. The new Department's responsibility to coordinate with all of these agencies to protect our homeland will be mind-boggling. It is an awesome task, but one which must be tackled. I believe the President's proposal furthers this critical goal.

Second, regardless of the final structure of the new Department, we all agree that it is essential that reforms within the FBI and CIA continue. Both the FBI and the CIA are in the process of making internal changes that will improve their ability to collaborate and coordinate with the new Department. We are familiar with the substantial reforms FBI Director Robert Mueller has instituted within the Bureau. Under his able leadership, I am confident that the effectiveness of the FBI, and its intelligence capabilities in particular, will be much improved. The process certainly will take time because it hinges on technological improvements that cannot occur overnight.

Similarly, reforms within the new Department's component agencies must also continue. We are well-aware of the role INS plays in enforcing this country's immigration laws and administering

services. Implementing critical reforms at the INS undoubtedly will improve the overall effectiveness of the new Department.

Finally, we all recognize that the war against terrorism cannot be won simply by reorganizing government agencies into a new, more effective Department of Homeland Security. It is essential that we tap into the resources and expertise of America's private sector. I am encouraged by Governor Ridge's efforts to enlist the aid and expertise of America's businesses to enhance our nation's security, and I am committed to making sure that the new Department is able to receive the uninhibited advice and counsel from our business leaders. It is private businesses which own and operate most of our infrastructure - our telecommunications, energy and financial systems. Our government cannot effectively fight this war against terrorism without their support. We must arm our agencies with the best technologies available, and our private sector is a critical player in this process, as it has been in our national defense and military.

Congress must act and must do so quickly and carefully without political gamesmanship. Our task is too important; we cannot afford to sacrifice our country's safety in the process. The threat of terrorist attacks on our homeland, as well as abroad, is here to stay. Our response to this threat requires a singleness of focus. All of us in government have a duty to do all we can to protect the American people from future terrorist attacks.

I look forward to your testimony today Governor Ridge, and to working with you, the members of this Committee, the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, and our colleagues in both chambers to accomplish this task this year. We rallied last year to enact the PATRIOT Act. I am confident that if we continue to work in a bipartisan, bicameral manner, we can do the same here, and in this Congress, enact legislation to create a new Department of Homeland Security.

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