

Testimony of
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Since September 11, 2001, a great deal has been done to respond to the newly perceived threat to the American Homeland. The Council on Foreign Relations Task Force was created to assess progress and point to further required actions. The focus was on near-term, high payoff actions that could be accomplished at an acceptable cost. The Task Force's co-chairs stated when this report was released that: "A year after September 11, America remains dangerously unprepared to prevent and respond to a catastrophic terrorist attack on U.S. soil."

As the foreward to the report states: "...given the stakes - potentially the loss of thousands of innocent American lives and the mass disruption of American's economy and society - there are things we must be doing on an emergency basis to reduce our vulnerabilities here at home."

The Task Force report did not think about or place political blame for what has not been done to prepare our nation against terror attacks. Instead its goal was to create a necessary sense of urgency and to help get the necessary things done. This Task Force lays out a series of recommendations that should help guide the nation's efforts in the weeks and months ahead."

The report addresses six issue areas and has recommended actions in each area. They are:

1. Tap the eyes and ears of local and state law enforcement officers in preventing attacks; make first responders ready to respond.
2. Make trade security a global priority
3. Set critical infrastructure protection priorities
4. Bolster public health systems
5. Remove Federal Government obstacles to partnering
6. Fund, train and equip the National Guard to make homeland security a primary mission.

In my testimony I will focus primarily on issues areas one and six