

Testimony of
The Honorable Orrin Hatch

May 8, 2002

Mr. Chairman, I would like to start off by welcoming Deputy Attorney General Thompson and Director Mueller, and thanking them both for taking the time to appear before us here today.

Those of us who have been intimately involved in the war on terrorism are well-acquainted with the remarkable service that these two gentlemen have provided to this country since September 11th. However, there may be people present in the hearing room, or watching these proceedings on C-Span, who are not closely acquainted with the inner workings of the Justice Department or the FBI.

To those people, I simply wish to say that there are no two individuals in the federal government who have worked more tirelessly, or more effectively, to help to ensure that the events of September 11th will never be replicated.

In the days immediately following September 11th, as the enormity of what had occurred began to sink in, I think it is safe to say that many of us wondered if our lives would ever be the same - if we would ever be able to regain some semblance of normality.

Many people around the world predicted that America's reaction would be to turn inward - that we would become a closed and defensive society.

It is now clear, that those predictions have not come to pass. Make no mistake, we have not forgotten the events of September 11th, and we maintain our unshakeable resolve to undertake any sacrifice that will be required to bring to justice those who are responsible.

But the terrorists have not succeeded in changing our daily way of life. We remain the world's most open, most free society. Our civil liberties have not been eroded in any meaningful fashion. With the exception of those heroic members of our armed forces who have been mobilized and sent overseas to confront this threat, the greatest inconvenience most of us face in our daily lives is longer waits at metal detectors before boarding an airplane or entering a government building.

At the same time, we have regained a large measure of the security we felt prior to the events of September 11th. True, we no longer bask in the naive notion that we are immune from terrorist attack on American soil. But our naivety has been replaced, not with fear, but with a healthy and appropriate sense of alert.

In my opinion, the response of the Department of Justice and the FBI to the September 11th attacks has, in large measure, been responsible for our success in regaining our sense of security without the sacrifice of our precious civil liberties.

Since September 11th, the Justice Department and the FBI have moved in a thoughtful, measured fashion to improve the capacity of our law enforcement institutions to detect and prevent terrorist

activity. They requested appropriate tools from the Congress, with which to fight terrorism - tools that were largely provided by Congress with the passage of the Patriot Act. Director Mueller, in coordination with the Justice Department, also moved on self-initiative, as he promised at his confirmation hearing, with appropriate Congressional consultation, to reorganize the FBI to devote a greater share of their resources to anti-terrorist activities, and to cooperate with other segments of the federal government, and with local and state law enforcement agencies, participating in the war on terrorism.

Our law enforcement institutions have emerged from this crisis more efficient, more focused, and more effective.

Attorney General Ashcroft set the tone of the DOJ's response not long after the September 11th attacks when he said that the Department can no longer afford to be all things to all people. Instead, he said, the lives of our citizens will depend on the Department doing fewer things, but doing those things exceptionally well.

I believe the Department and the FBI have risen to the challenge laid down by the Attorney General. I am amazed, in particular, that Director Mueller has been able to accomplish such wide-ranging reforms within the FBI, given the fact that, during his entire tenure as Director, he has been charged with leading the response to the September 11th attacks.

I am confident that the FBI and the Department of Justice are moving in the right direction. I look forward to hearing the testimony from the witnesses today, and to continuing to work with the Department and the Bureau to assist them in their essential mission of protecting our citizens from harm.

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