

Testimony of

The Honorable Orrin Hatch

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I want to begin by thanking Senator Feinstein for holding this important hearing. She and Senator Kyl have shown great leadership in the areas of terrorism and homeland defense. Well before the attacks of September 11, both Senators focused this Subcommittee's efforts on our nation's internal security. In 2000 and 2001, the Subcommittee held a number of hearings that carefully analyzed reports generated by experts, including those prepared by the Hart-Rudman Commission and the Gilmore Advisory Panel.

I also would like to welcome all of the distinguished guests who are with us here today to review and evaluate the Administration's proposed legislation to establish a new Department of Homeland Security. Senator Rudman and Governor Gilmore, I want to thank you especially for your valuable service in this area. As a result of your hard work and dedication, we have a much greater understanding of the vulnerabilities of the agencies that are charged with protecting our homeland.

There is little question that the comprehensive studies of the Hart-Rudman Commission and the Gilmore Advisory Panel have provided a framework from which more recent proposals have been generated. The Administration has made clear that in fashioning its proposal, it carefully reviewed, and indeed borrowed from, reports prepared by these commissions.

Although the Hart-Rudman and Gilmore Commissions reached different conclusions about how we best attack the threat of terrorism on our homeland, both emphasized that mass-casualty terrorism directed at the United States was a growing and serious concern. And both recognized the deficiencies in our homeland security before the magnitude and immediacy of the threat facing our country was apparent. Indeed, in February 2001, the Hart-Rudman Commission released a report in which it concluded that a direct attack against U.S. citizens on American soil was likely during the next quarter of a century.

The Bush Administration's proposal to create a new Department of Homeland Security most closely resembles that recommended by the Hart-Rudman Commission, and is the Administration's latest step in fashioning a coherent, functional national strategy for combating terrorism. Like the Hart-Rudman model, the Administration's proposal includes a single national homeland security department, headed by a Cabinet-level secretary, that combines critical homeland security agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Coast Guard, the Customs Service and the Border Patrol into a single department. But, without question, important differences between the two remain.

We face a tremendous challenge in attempting to consolidate and redefine the various federal entities that play a role in securing our homeland. To establish the most effective and efficient

organizational structure to face continued and growing threats, we need your expertise, and we will consider your recommendations seriously.

While I have the utmost confidence that Congress will act expeditiously to examine the Administration's proposal and reform our homeland defense structure this year, it is an ongoing process that will not occur overnight. As we continue to work in the Judiciary Committee and the Senate, and with the House to refine the organization of our homeland defense structure - this year and in the future - we welcome, indeed invite, your recommendations.

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