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THE NEW AGENDA FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

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President George W. Bush has taken an important early step to improve the nation's security by establishing an Office of Homeland Security (OHS) as a Cabinet-level position. The critical need for central coordination was demonstrated by the failure of various departments and agencies of the United States government to collect and evaluate information that could have led to the detection and arrests of terrorists before their attack on September 11.

The OHS's success will depend on its authority and its role in the Administration. President Bush's choice to head the office, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, will need to coordinate the activities of a variety of agencies, including federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities; the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS); the Department of Justice and U.S. Marshals Service; the Department of Defense; the intelligence community; and the National Guard. He will need significant power over agency policies, operations, standards, and budgets for homeland defense as well as the full support of the President.

The OHS's primary mission should be to achieve greater security at home while preserving the civil liberties guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. At present, Congress supports instituting a new body to coordinate homeland defense efforts. In fact, many Members are calling for the OHS to be turned into a permanent agency.

Homeland Security and Defense of the United States. Since September 11, it has become clear that the nation's critical infrastructure must be protected from terrorists. The government must orga-

nize itself to intercept those who would harm the United States before they enter the population and to identify those who have already "burrowed in."

The nation must be safe from, and be prepared to react to, many potential threats in addition to air terrorism, including nuclear, biological, and chemical attacks from non-state agents; organized computer attacks against vital networks; destruction or disruption of critical infrastructure such as power plants; and attempts to disrupt the U.S. financial system or financial flows.

The potential for such devastating non-traditional attacks demands increased vigilance and strengthened protective and investigative measures. According to a recent study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, "250 pounds of anthrax spores, spread efficiently over the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, could cause up to 3 million deaths, more than from a one-megaton hydrogen bomb." A crippling attack on the nation's rail and telecommunications infrastructure (in addition to its serious economic and societal consequences) also could impair the nation's ability to respond. Reservoirs could be poisoned. Power plants, especially nuclear power plants, are

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vulnerable to attack. Containers loaded with weapons of mass destruction could enter U.S. ports. Thus, for a limited period, it may be necessary to expand the powers of investigative authorities and even to augment them with trained military personnel.

Ensuring Security. The President and Governor Ridge should pursue the following objectives while ensuring that civil liberties are protected:

- **Begin** immediately to review regulations that limit the ability of the Department of Defense to cooperate with other federal, state, and local law enforcement or intelligence organizations. Congress is drafting legislation to remove obstacles to greater information sharing between the intelligence community and civil law enforcement entities. Where necessary, new legislation should foster greater exchange of information and operations.
 - **Direct** the Justice Department to ensure that the Federal Bureau of Investigation, INS, and Marshals Service work from common databases. Also ensure that visa requests at embassies are screened and lift restrictions prohibiting immigration officials from consulting with an applicant's home country regarding suspected terrorist links. Information sharing will enhance the ability of immigration officials at airports and other points of entry to intercept suspected terrorists. When a common database is created, grant some access to American consular offices abroad to make it more difficult for suspected terrorists to obtain a visa.
 - **Direct** the Attorney General and the INS to forge links with state and local authorities to investigate aliens who overstay their visas for possible terrorist activity, as provided for in the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.
 - **Enhance** port security to ensure that crews of ships entering the United States are not members of terrorist cells and that containers do not contain weapons of mass destruction.
 - **Strengthen** border security with the National Guard or military reserves. The President
- should also direct the Secretary of State to work with Canada and Mexico to institute parallel security measures.
 - **Pair** federal law enforcement personnel with trained military counterintelligence agents from the Department of Defense and use their expertise in collection, analysis, counterintelligence, and investigations to help make up for FBI manpower shortages.
 - **Screen** all airport and airline employees who work on the tarmac or inside the security cordon. Use polygraph examinations with narrow questions regarding affiliation with any terrorist organization as a screening and investigative tool.
 - **Provide** for security by local authorities for power stations, water reservoirs, and rail lines. When applicable, particular attention should be paid initially to the clutch points on which the large regional grids rely.
 - **Put** armed air marshals on all domestic and international flights. At least in the near term, include marshals on all flights and assign staff to the program from other federal law enforcement agencies as feasible.
 - **Direct** the Department of Transportation to study security in foreign airports servicing the United States to determine which airports terrorists are most likely to use to gain access to the United States. Particular attention should be paid to flights originating from countries or airports with recognized security deficiencies.

Conclusion. The war against terrorism requires a good offense and an effective defense for the American homeland. The established bureaucratic order must be broken apart by the new Office of Homeland Security so that glaring security gaps can be filled quickly and a comprehensive strategy for homeland defense can be devised while keeping civil liberties intact.

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