The New Homeland Security: Challenges for a Great Nation

The horrific events of September 11th have renewed our commitment to freedom and to defending our nation against the evils of international terrorism. We are taking stronger steps to protect our homeland. A few years ago, we established a President's Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection and we had begun to examine potential areas of vulnerability within the public and private sectors in such key areas as electric power distribution, emergency services, transportation, and the Internet.

Now, our nation faces the great challenge of engaging and defeating international terrorism while we rapidly build our defenses here at home. Homeland security requires unprecedented cooperation and communication within the Federal government. It requires a multifaceted approach to achieve the goals and objectives set forth by the President. We need to bring together the seasoned professionals of the law enforcement and intelligence communities, military services, and civil agencies. State and local governments and the American people will also be called upon to work together in this new global war on terrorism.

Previously, physical security and cyber-security activities within Federal agencies and private sector enterprises were separated organizationally with little coordination between the two entities. Clearly, we are now poised, under the most capable leadership of Governor Tom Ridge, Richard Clarke, and General Wayne Downing to establish a new, more integrated approach to protecting our nation's critical infrastructures. The new multifaceted approach to homeland security must provide an integrated solution with various contributing components—from guards, guns, and gates to a range of security technologies available for information systems and networks.

Recognizing information technology security as a key component within the enterprise "security chain" is an important concept that must be understood by CEOs and managers at all levels. Finding the appropriate mix of cyber-security and physical security solutions and implementing them in a cost effective manner remains a top priority for public and private sector enterprises. Now, more than ever, the challenges of homeland security require a true partnership between government and industry—from conducting cutting edge research and development in information technology security to developing voluntary information technology security standards, testing programs and best practices for our information systems and networks. Investing in the security of our nation's critical infrastructures and the key technologies that comprise the systems and networks within those infrastructures, will pay great dividends in the future for all of our citizens.

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