

HOMELAND SECURITY:
INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS

Secretary Tom Ridge

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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Homeland Security Program**

Good morning, welcome. Thank you for joining us today. I'm David Heyman, I run the homeland security program here at the center.

This morning we want to engage in a discussion on international dimensions of homeland security. If there's anything we learned from the September 11th attacks it's that terrorism is a transnational endeavor. The 9/11 attackers conceived of their plans in the Philippines, planned in Malaysia and Germany, recruited from Yemen and Saudi Arabia, and trained in Pakistan, the United States, and Afghanistan.

If terrorism does not stop at our borders, then homeland security must reach past our shores as well. The melting of borders and merging of domestic and foreign interests means we must forge new partnerships at home and abroad. If over the past couple of years homeland security has been primarily inward focused, today it must now also embrace the international dimensions of security.

Similarly, I would add the military has been primarily outward focused. It must also provide greater support at home.

To discuss these issues in the broader international dimensions of homeland security we are very pleased to welcome Secretary Ridge with us this morning, and to welcome him, John Hamre, the President and CEO of CSIS.

John Hamre, CSIS President and CEO

Good morning. Welcome to all of you. I'm delighted you're here.

I just experienced one of those very interesting ironies about Washington. When you're important people like all of you you walk in the front door and you take an elevator right down. If you're a foreign minister we'll reserve an elevator and bring you down. But if you are Governor Ridge you have to come in through the trash dumps. He's so important that security demands you come in through the trash. [Laughter]. Only Washington would do it like this. So I apologize. We're just slightly late, but the security gave us a little bit of direction here at the end.

Welcome to all of you. This is an important morning for us. First, to welcome back Governor Ridge who has been a very very strong friend of us but such an important figure here in Washington these last three years. I asked him, is it Secretary Ridge or Governor Ridge? He said I kind of prefer Governor. I think that's probably a subliminal message about how frustrating it is to be a Cabinet Secretary and how much fun it is to be a Chief Executive Officer back in Pennsylvania. [Laughter]. He did such a distinguished job.

Of course his whole career has been one of enormous public service. He started off, drafted into the Army, became a sergeant,

fought with great valor being awarded the Bronze Star in Vietnam. Came back -- Again, served distinguished positions throughout government and of course now lifted up these last three years to this most important role for the United States. We're grateful for that. And Secretary, I'll speak for all of the people here who want to say how much we appreciate the personal sacrifice we know that it's entailed that you've been willing to lead our country in this area. We do really greatly appreciate it.

He's here this morning to talk about a very important dimension. Homeland security unfortunately to the average American connotes a rather parochial perception of what the nature of the problem is. That it's in our homeland and that you can just put up fences and walls and barriers. Of course with today's patterns of tourism and transportation and commerce, sharing of information through global networks, homeland security really has to start with the most sophisticated internationalism. That's how we're going to secure the homeland.

Governor Ridge in his last gift to us here in public life before he steps down is going to take a very important mission to Europe and start opening up this new perspective and avenues for us.

So we're grateful he's here. We thank you for the service, Secretary, that you've given to America and we hope that you will continue to be active in public life. But this is a very important new step today and we're grateful that you're here. Thank you, sir.

[Applause].

Tom Ridge

Thank you.

John, thank you very much. David. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

It is true as of February 1st I'll be able to walk through the front door. That's a good thing. [Laughter]. It's a much-abused reference for those who enter public service and then leave it, but I am reminded from time to time, particularly by my children, that there will be a point in time when I get into the back seat and the car doesn't move. That means I've got to get out and get in the front seat and move it myself. [Laughter].

I do thank you again, John and David, for the opportunity to share a couple of thoughts with you publicly today prior to just going over to Europe for a couple of days and back on Saturday to complete some of the work that we began a couple of years ago and actually hopefully to set the stage for my successor to continue to build on the international relationships that we've been I think fairly successful in establishing during the two years of the department.

I'm honored to join you today for a very important discussion about the role of international cooperation in homeland security. I'm very pleased, John, that it's taking place at the center. A place where great thinkers put ideas into action.

For 40 years this organization has put the issues of our day through the crucible of debate and in doing so you open the realm of possibility for politicians and policymakers to really help shape the world. Yours is important work -- work that we need now more than ever. We need dedicated thinkers to help shape the discourse and to define the way ahead as

we confront the menace of international terrorism.

The tragic events of 9/11 obviously were the opening sally in a new chapter of terrorism. That dark day forever changed our nation and also illustrated to the entire world the scope and scale of which terrorists are now capable. Subsequent attacks in Madrid, Basilan, Bali, Jakarta, Istanbul, Baghdad, et cetera, have hammered home that what once was the purview of individual nations is now the responsibility of every nation that stands on the side of hope and liberty.

The scourge of global terrorism requires the strength of a global response and the means to confront the terrorist threat rests in our ability to engage the world community, work together multilaterally, and foster healthy dialogue and strategic cooperation among allies.

As we've seen with the recent tsunami disaster, when tragedy strikes its impacts are felt far and wide. The loss of so many lives -- mothers and fathers and children gone in an instant. It is a powerful reminder. A reminder that we are indeed one people. That at the end of the day our differences do not outweigh the humanity that defines us and binds us, and that the most effective course to protect our citizens and our homelands is the course that we pursue together.

Something that I will always remember as Secretary was the impact of the very first question that was asked of me at the very first town meeting I ever held with my employees as Secretary of Homeland Security. As a matter of fact we held this first town meeting with several hundred employees before we officially opened the front door.

A gentleman stood up, approached the microphone and asked -- this is the first question, the first town meeting -- "What are the international implications of homeland security?"

Now I certainly expected the first question to be about pay or benefits or cultural changes or the integration of procurement and IT. That wasn't it. Instead I was confronted by someone who was looking over the horizon, as you might say here. This person already had an intuitive understanding not only of the reach of our organization but the importance of international partnerships. And even as we set out a national strategy to prevent, detect and response and recover from acts of terrorism, we knew instinctively that there was an international need, responsibility, and opportunity as well.

We had an opportunity to build relationships that would prove mutually beneficial to the protection of people and economies. Within the national strategy as we outlined domestic security priorities it became clear that our efforts to secure America would not succeed without international cooperation.

We realize that homeland security is more than just the integration of our nation. It's about the integration of nations. The notion that we are all more secure in solidarity, working together in a unified effort versus a patchwork of unilateral actions. It is because of our work together with the international community that we have been able to travel, I think, a fairly lengthy distance in a very short period of time.

Before the department even opened its doors I traveled to Brussels and London to begin our formal outreach to the European

community. I see my friend Dr. Falkenrath who was working with us in the White House at the time at NSC, joined us on that trip. What began as a fruitful bilateral and multilateral discussion has now resulted in positive outcomes and I think significant security achievements. Over the past two years a remarkable record of accomplishment has been achieved. But again I remind you we didn't achieve it by ourselves. We couldn't have achieved it without the help of our allies.

In the area of maritime security we've made marked progress with programs such as the Container Security Initiative. During that first trip, in fact, the Container Security Initiative existed only as a pilot in Rotterdam where U.S. Customs inspectors were working together alongside our allies to target and to screen cargo.

Now since that time the United States and the European Union have signed an agreement to expand CSI throughout the European community and to increase cooperation and mutual assistance on other Customs matters.

So what began in Rotterdam as a bilateral initiative has now grown to include 33 other locations around the world, ports through which about 88 to 90 percent of the shipping containers flow on their way to the United States. We couldn't have done it without the acceptance of our employees, mutual understanding of the role to work together to secure commercial shipping, without the cooperation of other countries and their leadership.

In addition, efforts to secure the vast global shipping industry that was once isolated and scattered are now coordinated under the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code developed by the

International Maritime Organization and put in place this July. At the very heart of that debate and discussion over the past couple of years, actually I believe the entity that drove the international community to this set of standards has been the United States Coast Guard which is a part of the Department of Homeland Security.

For the first time ever this international effort establishes one world standard for ship and port security. It helps to create a culture of security at ports around the world and mandates specific security improvements and safeguards.

On a daily basis we share information with other governments about a variety of threats that clearly help us work together and remain ahead of our creative and very determined enemy.

From a personal perspective through the work and negotiations during my time as Secretary there are two specific accomplishments we've made in the international arena that have also provided valuable lessons learned.

During the holiday period of 2003, you may remember it, we came into possession of intelligence that terrorists might attempt to take over several international flights and therefore at my direction we issued emergency aviation requirements. Quite frankly, I erred in going directly to the airlines rather than to the governments. There was a point in time where there was a little confusion and uncertainty because of our reach to the airlines rather than to the governments. However, a positive security outcome did result. The creation of a 24-hour civil aviation point of contact network to facilitate similar communication in the future.

Yet perhaps more important was the lesson we took away from that experience, that the primary means of communication must be government to government. We gain a greater understanding of the value and the necessity of international partnerships we'd been working so diligently to build with our friends.

The second lesson was learned during our negotiations with the European Union to address mutual privacy concerns governing the transfer of sensitive passenger name records, data on flights between Europe and the United States. Another lesson learned. Even though we may have differences of opinion, the starting place to resolve these differences is often closer than we think.

Americans care about privacy just as deeply as Europeans do, and while the negotiations were intense and lasted several months the ultimate PNR agreement that emerged reflects the shared value both Europeans and Americans place on civil liberties. Having access to the PNR data will facilitate the entry of legitimate travelers and expedite the entry of the vast majority of visitors who travel throughout the world without any malicious intent or evil design. But it will also help identify people who could pose a threat to passengers on the flight or to the security of countries. And yet this measure of security will not come at the expense of personal privacy.

To ensure that the privacy protections we put in place are sufficient in the coming months the United States and the European Union will conduct our first joint review of how we use the PNR in our counter-terrorism efforts.

So let me be clear. All of the additional security capabilities that we are building have not, can not and will not ever come at the expense of our fundamental values or individual liberties.

We should never underestimate our commonality, the collective commitment to freedom that propels our sense of urgency to come together, debate complex issues, and work together through difficult decisions. As we draw closer together and build bridges to one another those partnerships build barriers to terrorists and eliminate the gaps our enemies could otherwise exploit.

Obviously we must continue to chart our way forward. The way forward in many ways will be more of the same. Relationships must continue to get stronger, information sharing must become even more transparent and swifter, public communications must be improved, emergency response protocols must be owned, and the latest scientific and most advanced technologies must continue to be sought out, utilized, and then shared for the work of science and technology knows no bounds and the more we can strengthen the sharing of ideas and best practices, the better off the international community will be.

To that end, common international standards of biometrics must be developed, and the sooner the better.

Biometrics is a remarkable, tremendous technological tool the use of which cannot only accurately identify and cross-check travelers and potential terrorists before they enter our countries, but biometrics also provide increased travel document security and guard against identity theft. We've already seen through our U.S. Visit

Program that biometric information can provide an additional layer of security while at the same time bring travelers across our borders with both greater ease and greater convenience.

Since the beginning of this year the U.S. Visit has processed more than 17 million legitimate passengers, and since the program began more than 370 criminals and immigration violators have been stopped at our borders.

More recently we've established a Registered Traveler Program that provides frequent travelers an opportunity to voluntarily provide -- to voluntarily provide biometric information as well as some background personal information that can be used to perform a security check against law enforcement and terrorist watch lists. We've got the five pilots running. People give us finger scans, an iris scan, a little background information. We use that to confirm their identity, a quick background check, and there's no secondary screening for these individuals.

We're in the business of managing the risks. You cannot possibly eliminate the risk but you can make reasonable judgments based on information that you have and information that is voluntarily provided to you. The more we can go to that approach and then focus our human and technological resources on people that we don't know anything about, I think frankly the safer not only commercial aviation will be, but the safer the country will be.

As I said before, we use that fingerprint and iris scan. I've actually enrolled in the program myself, although I do expect in the near future to be standing in line with a

large cup of coffee waiting to get through. [Laughter]. But I know while I'm standing there the people at the TSA and Admiral Stone are working very hard not only to improve security but also to continue to make improvements in providing courteous and professional security coverage of all those people and all that baggage that we've put on board our airplanes.

The program has been widely popular and successful, and frankly one of the reasons I'm going to Europe is to launch a similar program of an international version at Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands. Again, if we can get the world community engaged in a common standard using biometrics, I think we open the door for not only greater security but greater cooperation.

In spite of these initial successes with biometrics, we must mutually produce a set of international standards for capturing, analyzing, storing, reading, sharing, and protecting the sensitive information in order to ensure maximum interoperability between systems and maximum privacy for our citizens.

Moving forward we must also remain aware of other agendas beyond homeland security that need to be addressed in this ongoing conflict. Dismantling the terrorist threat is not possible unless we make the necessary investments to better understand, to root out, and to stop terrorism at its source. We must work to understand how terrorist groups form, how they operate, what's their motivation, how do they target, how do they grow, how do they sustain themselves, what takes a moderate Muslim and pushes him or her to become an extremist -- someone willing to give up their lives and abandon everything

they have spent a lifetime to work on regardless of where they live in a country? Military writers since Sun Su in "The Art of War" in China have been talking about the need to understand and know your enemy. We need to make some investments in that ourselves, and there's another extraordinarily important arena for the international community to cooperate within.

These are important questions and that's why earlier this week we allocated \$12 million to establish our fourth Homeland Security Center of Excellence at the University of Maryland to study the behavioral and social aspects of terrorism. If we do not address the cause that fuels this barbaric and merciless movement, then we cannot stop the cycle of young boys and girls who are at this moment being indoctrinated in hate and manipulated into acts of terror.

The way ahead holds immense undertakings yet it is paved with, in my judgment, limitless opportunities. We can see our way toward a future of security and peace but only if we do so together with our allies in the international community.

John Maynard Keynes once said, "Ideas shape the course of history." And throughout history the great ideas of one age do not always survive the new. In just this past century we have witnessed the rise of subversive ideas -- Nazism, fascism, communism -- and we have also lived to see their defeat. A defeat won by those who clung to a far different idea. An idea that has weathered the storms and endured through centuries and thrives today. An idea that brings hope to the oppressed, light to the dark places of the

world, and comfort to all those who live under its watch.

For freedom is a conquering ideal. It is the idea that shapes our history, the cause that strengthens our resolve, and the place from where we all start. So as we press onward, our course stretches out ever clear before us, but our touch point is ever fixed toward the hope of a future of prosperity, security and peace. Until that day dawns we will not rest and we will not waiver and we will not relent in the fight against international terrorism. By working together across all nations that share a love for liberty, I'm confident that we will triumph.

I want to thank again CSIS for the opportunity to share these few thoughts with you and those who support your work. Thank you very much.

[Applause].

David Heyman

We're now going to take questions from the audience, and start with Arneau. We'll take a few questions then the Secretary has to go. Please wait for the microphone. This is being transcribed.

Audience

Arnaud de Borchgrave, Mr. Secretary. Charter member of your advisory council, currently Director of Transnational Threats at CSIS.

A careful reading of the 16th, 17th and 18th message from bin Laden since 9/11 would seem to indicate that your efforts have been so effective that he's decided to refocus his efforts on the Middle East, especially U.S. interests in the Middle East, getting the U.S. out of Iraq and

undermining the Saudi regime. Is that the conclusion of your intelligence advisory?

Tom Ridge

I certainly like the first part of the conclusion that you -- [Laughter] -- but I think it would be somewhat illusory to suggest that anything other than there may have been a strategic decision during a particular period of time to concentrate most of their efforts in a particular part of the world, but because they are also strategic actors and because we know that ultimately undermining the U.S. economy and frankly trying to organize, plan for, and pull off a similar catastrophic series of events is still a very high priority for bin Laden and al-Qaida.

So while I would like to say that what appears to be the primary focus now, I don't think we can lose sight of the fact that at the end of the day the United States and our economy and our way of life is still their primary target and we can't be any less vigilant because the level of intelligence that speaks specifically about us over the past couple of months has been reduced. We can't afford to luxuriate around such a wonderful notion. We still have a lot of work to do.

Audience

David Silverburg with HS Today magazine.

I know you'll be meeting with Mr. Chertoff and of course giving him a lot of advice and so forth, but what advice that you would give to him, what main points that you could share with the public would you tell him as he takes the reins?

Tom Ridge

I think it would be better if I waited to share it with Michael first. [Laughter]. I suspect he'd appreciate that as well.

But I would tell him that he's got an extraordinary workforce, that since 9/11 I think have, they themselves have realized because their family and friends have realized how important their day-to-day work is to the security of their community and country. I just don't think too many people in this country on September 10, 2001 paid too much attention to the folks at Customs or Legacy INS or the baggage screeners or the passenger screeners, and people didn't think too much about those folks working hard down along the borders of Mexico and Canada. We didn't think too much -- I mean it's not that we were in a position to not appreciate what they were doing, we didn't realize the value of what they did and how important it was for them to be empowered not only with training but with more and better technology to do their job even better than they'd done before.

So I do have, I hope Mike agrees that we turn over a very strong foundation and a very clear way ahead about integrating the business lines, procurement IT. We've certainly started that process. IT integration is one of the most important things we need to continue to do. It's well on its way but it's still a couple of years until we get everything together the way we want it. We are moving on to a single personnel system. We basically redesigned the human resource package so that management has a little bit more flexibility to move people around depending on the need of the department but also down the road. Developing a pay for performance system with the employees. I have some organizational recommendations I'm going to make to him, but I'd rather reserve the

specifics until I can have that conversation with a very very accomplished lawyer who enjoys a terrific reputation for strong intellect, great energy, great work ethic, and I look forward to working with him. I know a lot of people on my leadership team look forward to working with him as well.

Audience

Pontus Jarborg, Counsel General at the Embassy of Sweden.

Mr. Secretary, you talked about the need of balance. I've also heard Secretary Powell talking about secure borders and open doors which is a difficult balance to strike. We have read in the press and we have a case at the embassy right now with a person who finds himself knocked from going on an airline because his name resembles someone who is on a watch list. How does a person set about clearing his identity? Where would he turn? This person is then out of pocket because of tickets lost, et cetera. Thank you.

Tom Ridge

That's a very appropriate question because as we share information, as we consolidate a lot of information that we have that previously was out among the different agencies and come up with a watch list that we want to use to protect commercial aviation and the passengers on those planes and our country, we do run into these common names and we try as aggressively and as quickly as we can at the airport to resolve the differences, to enable the individual to get on the plane. But unfortunately the cases are not always resolved in such a timely and easy fashion. There is a very specific process. There are toll-free numbers and information given

out to anyone that unfortunately is caught in that particular situation. We're mindful of it. We're working as hard as we possibly can to go through the list and to eliminate the confusion based on similar names.

That gives rise to the use of biometrics. If people would give us their finger scans or their iris scans. As the world, as we move in that direction and take advantage of technology and come up with common standards, we wouldn't have to rely on name or background information at all. We could actually rely on biometrics and the technology that would clearly distinguish one person from another.

So we are mindful that we still are pressed to do a better job. We try to do a better job every day, but it's just one more reason that the world community, hopefully in time, and sooner rather than later, moves quickly to adopt common standards.

I for one believe if we're going to ask the rest of the world to put fingerprints on their passports, we ought to put our fingerprints on our passports. I mean you can go out to the rest of the world and say we'd like to engage you in this discussion. We'd like you to consider doing these things. I think you're in a much better position to discuss issues if you have made the commitment to getting them done yourself.

Now culturally, historically, there are a lot of reasons that some countries are averse or very reluctant to give people finger scans. We understand that. But I think through not only the discussion but reassuring that the use will be limited, access will be limited, and the benefits are quite obvious, we could get the world to move more quickly toward a common international standard, and I think we

ought to take the lead, and that's one thing I'll say publicly. I think one of my recommendations to Mike is be aggressive, go after ten fingerprints on the passport. It's a lot easier to negotiate with your allies if you've already done what you're asking them to do.

Audience

Debra Parkinson with Senate Homeland Security Committee.

Mr. Secretary, I've had conversations with individuals in your department who have suggested possibly needing a foreign service in DHS similar to the State Department, as opposed to sending staff members over on an ad hoc basis. I'm wondering if you can comment on whether you think that that's an appropriate course of action.

Tom Ridge

We do have several hundred people assigned, obviously because of legacy responsibilities around the world. What we have done and we're in the process of doing is identifying a single person who can work with the diplomatic corps through the embassy, basically as our lead attaché. Someone that knows the broader, someone to whom the Ambassador or other people can go to to get questions answered with regard to the department's mission and how that country or some one citizen within that country can engage us. So I really don't think we want to build up another diplomatic corps. Frankly, it would be to our benefit if the State Department had a few more people in the consular affairs offices so they could deal with the passports more quickly. So we don't need more people. I'll put in a plug for the State Department. I think they

could use a few more people to process these visas.

There's a lot of concern, and somebody mentioned open door, secure borders. In working with Secretary Powell and Attorney General Ashcroft and Director Mueller we've begun to make some significant changes in visa policy, how we do the background check, trying to move things along, expedite the process. But I've been to enough embassies around the world to know that in many instances our ability to respond quickly is because of the physical limitations and the number of employees, men and women, the State Department has.

So we really don't need to have that. We will take advantage of the skilled people that we have within our department. But if we're going to move things along, frankly I'd put a plug in for the State Department having a few more folks overseas that could work with us.

Audience

[inaudible] Consular of the Slovak Embassy in Washington, D.C. Nice to meet you.

You mentioned that you are going to Europe for some negotiation, and we know that also Mr. President Bush is going to Europe and also to my country, Slovakia, so we are happy for that.

I would like to know if you will have a chance also to discuss in Europe and maybe in Slovakia also the questions of European immigration policy. Immigration policy with the European Union and particularly with some countries and visa waiver program. Thank you.

Tom Ridge

We are going to, one of the stops will be in Brussels. We've got some work to do there and some announcements to make. One of the other lessons learned as Secretary of the Department is the very important but somewhat complex relationship the United States has with the European Union as it grows, it grows from 15 to 25. We've had several initial discussions about the visa waiver program. That is a program around which there are very specific requirements set by the Congress of the United States, again showing the complicated nature of the relationship. Within the European Union the nations agree that no policies directed toward the European Union will be viewed as discriminatory. So if you have a group of countries within the European Union that are visa waiver countries and a group of countries that are not, it's viewed as a discriminatory policy, it creates some concern within the EU.

On our side it's not a unilateral action that we can take. Any change in visa waiver policy has to be done through the Congress of the United States. So that just highlights, I think, the importance of maintaining day-to-day contact with the European Union and the continued discussions that I've had for two years, we'll have when I go there, and I'm confident my successor will have as well.

By the way, I think you probably know that I've got some deep roots in your historic country. I think my great grandfather was from Bratislava. They said he worked, he was a public employee. I just hoped as a Republican he wasn't a tax collector. [Laughter].

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much.

[Applause].

David Heyman

Mr. Secretary, Governor, John Maynard Keynes may have been the ideas that shaped society; however the most important, you have been intimately associated with homeland security and the idea for America, and we thank you for your service.

[Applause]. # # # #