

Remarks by Secretary of Homeland Security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Homeland Security Strategy Forum

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Renwick Gallery

Secretary Chertoff: I want to thank the Center for inviting me. I hope that you don't all wake up tomorrow with the evidence of my biohazard. I want to thank Greg for that introduction. I want to thank Dr. Hamre for his very thoughtful remarks. And I do have to observe that sitting in this wonderful room, I'm reminded of our headquarters on Nebraska Avenue. This room is everything that that headquarters is not.

Mr. Heyman: Well, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, and happy birthday to your Department. I'd like you to think of all of us as part of your think tank for the evening, and I think -- I'd like all of you folks who have joined us today to think of us just sitting in the Secretary's living room and having a chat with him. I'm sure it's probably a little bit bigger than this, but -- as Secretary, you should have a big living room.

So this is an anniversary, of course. Ten years ago, in fact, Osama bin Laden issued his declaration of war. And we did not respond perhaps in kind until four or five years later. And now five years since then we have responded. And there was no prediction of -- five years forward when we have Osama bin Laden captured, would we all see the war the same way, the Europeans and Americans?

As we think about the next five years, there's probably no one who has done more thinking about this than you. So I want to just start with your vision of what might the world be five years from now.

Secretary Chertoff: If you can all hear me, I guess I'd begin by --

Mr. Heyman: Can you hear him?

Secretary Chertoff: I guess I'd begin by observing that I think although bin Laden is clearly, as we speak now, the individual whose hostile intent is the greatest -- who's working most regularly to carry out terrorist activities against the United States, he is by no means the total picture. When we look at the issue of extreme, violent Islamism, we are talking about a series of groups, and a movement, in some respects -- a movement that has tried to get toeholds and succeeded in getting toeholds in certain geographical

locations; a movement that has attempted to exploit the global architecture of communications finance to travel; a movement that as an ideology empowers and which it attempts to disseminate; and then also has certain vulnerabilities in the movement because its ideology also creates openings for a counter-argument, a counter-narrative, which I think we're beginning to now start to think a little bit more about in a strategic way.

So the reason I say this is because I think if tomorrow bin Laden dropped dead, that would not be the end of this issue. This is not an al Qaeda problem; this is a problem within a movement. And in the larger sense, it's really a problem with the kinds of challenges that the 21st century will present for the safety and security of people in countries all over the world, because the leveraging of technology gives smaller and smaller groups greater capability to inflict a degree of consequence that used to require a nation state, so that we can't view our security as simply being, you know, either we make war at the Defense Department against other nation states, or we arrest people. There's this vast and increasing middle range of conflict that is more than crime but isn't classical set-piece battle. I think that's the space which we occupy, at least domestically, over the next five years and probably beyond.

Mr. Heyman: You know, there's been a lot of discussion in terms of where that space is. Some debate that, you know, this is crime and intelligence, and some use the word "war." And perhaps you're saying it's somewhere in the middle there. How do you distinguish, given the fact that technology really is allowing individuals to, in some sense, have war-like actions, the difference between a Columbine and a Virginia Tech, what we saw in Jerusalem, Beslan? In two of those of cases, we call them terrorists. In two of those cases, we say these are crazy, delusional kids. And yet the technology to do more and more of that is really at the hands of many. If you grab onto an ideology, bin Laden from 10 years ago, we are at war. So where do we follow in that spectrum?

Secretary Chertoff: Now that's a really interesting question. At one end of the spectrum, when we talk about international terrorism, I think that has implicit in its sum notion that you have a network, that it spans a number of nations, that it is -- it may not have the capability, but it seeks to obtain the capability to fabricate weapons of mass destruction, or to strike at the architecture of the 21st century. And then as you move down the spectrum to people who are ideological soul mates, homegrown radicals, and then the individual lone wolf, that's when you start to get into this gray area.

And I think you're quite right, David, that in some ways, we have to be careful not to let our definition of terrorism become too broad. I mean, when I talk about terrorism, when most of us talk about terrorism, I think we mean international terrorism. It doesn't mean we're not worried about home-grown radicalization, as it's inspired by international terrorism, or a network with international terrorism. But as we get into smaller and smaller units, and particularly when we get to the individual lone wolf, then it really does become hard to distinguish between the person who killed the students at Virginia Tech and the person who might do the same thing simply because they read something on the Internet about bin Laden and that happened to appeal to their psychology.

So there's never going to be a precise line, but I do agree that we need to be careful we don't get mission creep when we so broaden terrorism that everything is terrorism, in which case nothing will be terrorism.

Mr. Heyman: Okay, so let's stick with the international terrorists, which is your primary focus. And in that case, today the language and the definition is that we're at war with these terrorists. All wars come to an end. And in my observation of the discussions on the war on terrorism, there is no conception of what the end-state will be. What will the world look like? How will we know it's over?

Secretary Chertoff: Well, you know, I've wrestled with this; I think a lot of people have wrestled with it. And the closest analogy I've been able to find is with the Cold War. We describe the Cold War as a war. I grew up in the Cold War; I'm old enough to remember what it was like. It didn't necessarily have a projected end; we didn't know when we were winning. In fact, the collapse of the Soviet Union came very quickly, and at least to my mind, unexpectedly. So I think it's the nature of ideological wars that they don't have any end.

Then I would actually take it further. And I'm not enough of a historian to get detailed about it, but I wonder if you go back over history over the last several centuries, and you go back over the various -- you know, the Hundred Years War, the 12 Years War, the 9½ Years War, whether these also weren't at some level ideological wars that went over a long period of time, where people were fighting over their conceptions of the role of the church versus the role of the secular leadership, or different visions of what the dominating religion ought to be, Catholic versus Protestant.

So it may actually be that war has always been ultimately an ideological struggle, and we tend to be too narrowly focused on when it really heats up, but that if we actually stand back, we see it as a kind of a wave that gets hotter or cooler, but really is powered largely by ideological or philosophical issues.

Mr. Heyman: And in the Cold War, whether the ideology -- of totalitarianism, communism -- we saw and we believed the narrative was that they were taking over the world, and our counter-narrative was we were going to contain them. And yet in the international terrorism regime, I don't think at this point we've come up with a counter-narrative, and perhaps in the next few years we will.

From my point of view, the counter-narrative that I'd like to see evolve is a notion that hey, you guys out there, you're hurting Islam, you're not helping it. And I'm wondering if you've done some thinking on what we should be saying in terms of our own -- let's call it end-state, containment, whatever it is you want to call it.

Secretary Chertoff: Well, I think this is an issue that -- as I go around, when I was in Europe to speak at academic institutions, this seems to be an issue people come back to. It's often presented as de-radicalization, but I believe that -- I think it's really not just de-

programming the individual, but it is coming up with a theory of how you counteract the ideology of Islam.

Part of the challenge is it is not something that we can do overtly. It's the nature of the ideology of these extremists that we are by definition illegitimate in arguing about what the right interpretation of Islam is. And therefore it is a narrative that has to come from within the community itself.

Now, the good news is if you've read the paper in the last six months, a succession of prominent Arab Muslim scholars have started to condemn bin Laden. And if you read his public statements -- and everybody always reads them like, is there an embedded threat? I always read them to see what is he trying to do, what is on his mind. Is he broadening his -- trying to broaden his appeal? Is he mixing his message? Is he defensive? And I think it'd be an interesting study to look at all of his messages over the last couple of years.

And, you know, my intuition is that there is a quality of defensiveness, in some respects, particularly when he deals with the accusation that he's indiscriminately killing innocent Muslims. There is a -- he had his public statements some months ago where he basically tried to get at the head of every parade. I mean, whether it was globalization or economics, he was going to march to the head of it. You know, that kind of dilution of a message is actually, in my mind, a sign of ideological weakness.

So I don't mean to suggest that he's shuffling off the stage. But I do think that he is not Superman, and that if we're careful, there is a way to push the counter-narrative. But a lot of it has to come from the community itself. It can't be government -- Western governments talking to Arab governments or Middle Eastern governments.

Mr. Heyman: If we take the example of yesterday and the last few weeks, where we have the republication of the Danish cartoons and the potential release of the Dutch film, where they tear up the Quran, that's the expectation -- you know, we don't understand, I think -- maybe you do, maybe folks around here do -- we don't understand the impact that that has on the religious community that this -- you know, the Muslim community. But we feel so strongly about the right to speech, the right to say what you want, and we've lived throughout that. And now bin Laden's message is, I'm going to get you for that. What's the balance there -- as a lawyer, as a judge?

Secretary Chertoff: In Europe, you see the Europeans are much more willing to proscribe what they call hate speech, or things of this sort that they regard as inflammatory. That's actually something they do in other areas as well. We really don't do that.

There's no question though -- on the one hand, we don't want to censor ourselves. I mean, there was a story in the paper recently about a woman who, I guess, was teaching - - I forget where, exactly, but she had named like a pet animal --

Mr. Heyman: Oh, yes --

Secretary Chertoff: Yes, Mohammed or something, and that was very -- it was not meant to be offensive.

Mr. Heyman: Sudan, I think.

Secretary Chertoff: Yes, I think it was Sudan. It was not meant to be offensive, and yet they were going to --

Mr. Heyman: The kid named it. It was her kids, yes.

Secretary Chertoff: Right, that's right. So we don't want to get into a realm in which we have censorship directed from caves in Waziristan, where they tell us what we can say or not say. On the other hand, there's no question that we damage ourselves, and it's important -- I think there the President has really from the very beginning had been very strong on this, that we make a special effort to talk about how what we are dealing with is not Islam, or it's not mainstream Islam, but it is a culture-sect.

And I've spent a lot of time talking to Muslims -- whether they're intellectual leaders, students, foreign leaders -- and I asked them, how do you describe all this? And, you know, some of them actually do use the word "jihad," or some use the word "takfirism," which is a very specific set of doctrines that are quite extreme in Islam. But I agree, if we don't -- we do ourselves a lot of damage if we indiscriminately let this become a platform for people to engage in racism.

Regrettably, this tendency arises in other areas too. You know, if I digress for a second, one of the areas that I'm very focused on is the border. We actually have a great relationship with Mexico, and Mexico is really doing more maybe than it's ever done before to get control of these organized criminal gangs, which are a threat to them, but ultimately a threat to us. And then yet I can open up, you know, a newspaper, or I can see a blog, or I can turn on the television, and hear people really attack Mexico and try to suggest Mexico is our enemy and the Mexicans are trying to invade us. And, you know, I just wish we could remember that we should favor our friends and go after our enemies, not go after our friends and favor our enemies. I fear we have a little bit of a confusion.

Mr. Heyman: You talk about border security. Looking down the road, we have a world that you've described with international terrorism, where ideology is playing a dominant role, where the technology may go to the lone wolf, but the people may be organizing (inaudible). Do you see, five years down the road, our homeland security enterprise in a different way, in some shape, or form? Do you -- let's assume, for example, all the authority and no politics and resources -- is there a vision down the road?

Secretary Chertoff: Yes, very much so. I think that -- you know, people associate Homeland Security as equal to counter-terrorism. There's no question that counter-terrorism is the number one priority. But I would say, over the last three years, I have a

conception that Homeland Security has the responsibility at a national level to protect the security and safety of the American people. And that's not just against terrorists, although that's clearly something we're concerned about. But it also involves natural hazards. It may well involve major organized criminal groups, if there comes a time that those become -- you know, continue on the trajectory that some of them are on. And we do this by protecting our borders, sea and land and air; trying to organize ourselves so that our critical infrastructure is identified and protected; and then building a capability to respond and mitigate, which tends to give you a little bit more flexibility on the prevention side.

So to me, if tomorrow terrorism ended, which of course it won't, there would still be plenty to do to integrate all of these capabilities, because we still have the danger of pandemic flu, which I do not have, but it's out there. We have the, you know, the possibility of natural disasters. We have cyber-threats, which we're now beginning to focus on. And all of these issues are really a part of the same strategy, which is: prevent, protect and respond.

Mr. Heyman: There's an underlying sort of concept that's been repeated, I think, by the leadership. The President, I think, mentioned it at your birthday party, the Department's birthday party. And that's the idea that the terrorists -- the bad guys have to be right once; we have to be right a hundred percent of the time.

And, you know, we talked about mitigation and resiliency and those kinds of concepts. It seems to me that the notion that we have to be right a hundred percent of the time sends the wrong message; that we have to have flawless security. And I don't think that's possible, and I don't think convincing people that that's the direction we're headed, and anything short of that is a failure, is helpful, particularly because it gives people the notion that also the government is going to take care of you. So I'm wondering if that's a concept that is going to evolve.

Secretary Chertoff: It probably should. I mean, I always try to say, and I think I said from the very beginning --

Mr. Heyman: I couldn't find a quote with you saying that, actually.

Secretary Chertoff: No, I didn't say that, but what I've tried to say is that we can't guarantee everybody against every risk at every moment in every place. We have to balance the risk, and I think that's really the approach we've tried to take. I think the observation about they only have to be right once is part of a fuller statement, which is, you know, we've got to try to drive that number of successes down as far as possible. We have an obligation on ourselves, as well, in how we react to this.

It is -- you know, there's a -- a dangerous thing to do in a country sometimes, which was not done by the 9/11 Commission, to their great credit, which is we ignore a problem because it's hard, it's expensive, it's -- may never come about, so why should I spend money on it now, because maybe I won't get credit for it, so let somebody else spend

money. And then as soon as the thing happens -- well, this is how we deal with this; let's lynch somebody, we'll punish them, and have a blood-letting, and then we're done, and now -- and we'll probably also do a lot of extreme expenditure of money, and then a few years later we'll retract it and we'll start all over.

The 9/11 Commission, to its credit, did not -- and they were criticized for this -- did not simply say, okay, we found five guys that we're going to punish, and then that's it, it's taken care of. What they weren't successful in doing -- or it's not clear they'll be successful in doing -- is presenting a recipe for future action that we will execute with the passage of time.

And the worry that I have is that many of the measures that they argued for, which everybody seems to think were very smart, are now beginning to be essentially backsliding, because with the passage of time, we go from what you would say as paranoid or hysterical to complacent. And I'd like very much to see us in the middle with a disciplined idea of what we have to be worried about, not necessarily things that are going to happen next week; high-consequence things, things that we should be investing in now, because in five years when the thing comes to fruition, we have to be in a position to deal with it. And if we wait until it becomes an imminent threat, then it's going to be way too late.

Mr. Heyman: Boy, that's a very difficult -- that seems to be one of the hardest challenges because you've got -- when you look at this, you've seen a whole poll of Americans basically don't think threats -- no threats are going to be in their backyard; it's not going to happen. There is not a concern. In fact, people still don't have water for 72 hours and those types of things.

I mean -- and you've said this in a number of your speeches your -- I think one of your number one concerns is complacency. I think as threats don't materialize, and as we continue to say they will materialize, there's a disconnect there between what our leadership is saying and what people are seeing. And complacency is inevitable. What's the counter to that?

Secretary Chertoff: It's very hard to -- this has been the hardest challenge, I think, from a public communications standpoint. I think we try to be careful in saying, you know, when we see an elevation of the strategic threat, that it's not imminent, it's not necessarily something is going to happen this week or the next week or the next month, but it means strategic (inaudible) over a period of time if there's a greater threat.

I hate to take potshots at the media, but often the media -- it's either got to be, the house is on fire now, or we don't want to talk about it. And so they actually drive very much at you a "Bush cries wolf" mentality. Everything gets tamped up in television, and then when it doesn't come to fruition, it's "Oh, you see, they fooled us again."

I think we actually do a pretty good job of being disciplined in our own communications; trying to be more modulated. It is the devil of a time to get that actually out into the

public without having it chopped up or manipulated by the press. So we've done -- we've started to think of alternative things. We've tried blogging. I've met with bloggers.

Mr. Heyman: I've read your blog.

Secretary Chertoff: And we're trying -- I'm trying to find a way to get out of needing to convince the press to give a sober message, and getting in there directly myself. To be honest, one of the reasons I do programs like this is because the more thoughtful people that do take a modulated point of view, the greater the chance we can get the public in general to kind of understand that we're not being hysterical, but we're also not being indifferent.

Mr. Heyman: And I think it would be interesting to hear some folks here because I do think complacency is a great challenge. Perhaps if there was greater investment, not from a personal level, that people felt that their own safety and security and the safety and security of their families and brothers and sisters around the country were based upon their own actions, it would make a difference. And you have to -- after Katrina, I think you said some very, I think, spot-on comments about the notion that, you know, the government is not going to be there all the time, and you've got to take care of yourself so that we can help the less -- the more vulnerable people.

There's a number of challenges to getting work done in Washington. And I read your remarks up at Harvard, which I'm sure everyone else has read, but for the people -- few people who haven't, I wondered if you could just talk about them, because complacency is one problem, but we have some, as you say, structural problems that are hard to accomplish. And I think we need to think through these problems.

Secretary Chertoff: I'm sure what I said and what I'm going to say will not be a surprise to anybody. I'm like everybody else, I've come to Washington in a policy-making job, and I discovered what everybody else in these jobs has also discovered about structural problems.

Thinking back over the experience over the last three years, I saw three major problems to getting the government to move forward on difficult, long-term, somewhat inconvenient measures that would raise our level of protection against either natural disasters or terrorism.

And in ascending order of difficulty, the first is anecdotalism. An anecdote always trumps a policy. When you, you know, are dealing with a complicated policy like immigration, like, say, with economics, or -- and security all wound up, and you're trying to put together a complicated package, as we did when we tried to get the immigration bill passed last year, all you need to do is get an anecdote and that dominates the story. The anecdote is either the illegal alien who, you know, killed a bunch of schoolchildren -- that's one anecdote. Or on the other side it's the poor family that's divided because we're enforcing the law and they have to go back to a place that they haven't been in for 20 years. You know, it's important to be aware that these policies have an impact on real

people, but when anecdotalism dominates the discussion, then you can't actually begin to look at the policy because you become overwhelmed with a series of individual stories.

The second is commonplace, is "Not in My Backyard." Everybody wants fence, but they don't want it in their backyard, they want it in the other guy's backyard. Actually, they don't even want it in the other guy's backyard. I got sued by a guy in the Southwest border not because we wanted to build fence on this land, but because we were building fence in the adjoining property, and that was causing the illegal aliens to come onto his property. And he wanted us to tear that down because by protecting his neighbor, we were disadvantaging him. So, you know, that is a -- and frankly, members of Congress who represent constituencies are acutely sensitive to that "Not in My Backyard" issue, and you get pulled in all kinds of different ways.

The hardest one is "Not in My Term of Office," which you probably know I accredited Howard Kunreuther of University of Pennsylvania for. And that is the idea that we should not do anything hard if the pay-off does not come during my term of office. This is the musical chairs theory of government, which is, as long as I'm out of the (inaudible) when the music stops, it's not my problem.

And that's why, for example, we don't -- I mean, that's to me really the lesson of Katrina. It was decades during which the levees degraded, the wetlands degraded. And no one invested in that because there were other things people wanted to put the money in, some of which actually made it worse, and that's because no one knew when, if ever, the levee would break. It was a classical musical-chairs moment. And I think that's the third structural problem.

Mr. Heyman: There's actually some -- a couple, I think, of the committee staffers here who perhaps will be interested in speculating if, down the line, they could convince their bosses for long-term investments in line items that would just sort of -- every five years you can look at. Maybe that will be the vision of the future.

Randy, I wonder if I could call on you. I know I'm putting you on the spot on this, but as we're talking about public interest versus self interest, and the need for individuals and communities to step up, I know you've done some thinking about that, and I wonder if you would join in the discussion.

Question: I would actually like to ask another question, if I can.

Mr. Heyman: You can, it's all right.

Question: Thank you, David -- because 10 years ago I said at a conference, something like this, at the Army War College, and Dr. John Hamre was up at the stage. And at that time we were referring to this field as homeland defense, what would eventually become homeland security. And he was trying to get us to think about it in a strategic perspective, like we're doing here tonight. And he said our problem is, is that our government is designed vertically in all of our processes and structure and everything.

And he says the challenges we'll face in the next century, referring to the 21st century at that time, is horizontal.

I'm trying to think what improvements we've made in the past 10 years in that. And I'll give you a specific area I'd like you to focus on, which is bioterrorism, which, if those who haven't seen it, the National Defense University just recently released their strategic perspective they put out every year, and they clearly define in there as bioterrorism as by far the number one threat this country faces in terms of homeland security. How are we doing at integrating that horizontally?

Secretary Chertoff: I'll tell you what we're doing. It's a very, as you point out, it's very challenging because we have a distributed power structure in this government. The question I get asked most often by members of Congress when we're doing a new strategy is, who's in charge? Well, I have to say, well, no one's in charge. Even the President can't tell a governor -- I mean, the President can take the National Guard away from a governor, but the President can't tell a governor, you must do this. He has no legal authority to do that.

So we have in the Department tried to come up with a model that involves what we call coordination, and that means you bring everybody together, you build a plan, you try to get everybody to buy into the plan, you then -- everybody has roles and responsibilities -- you then train to the plan, you exercise to the plan, and if the event occurs, then everybody has a plan to work off. This is a kind of a version of the incident management system that they use in emergency management; it started out in California. The idea there is that even though you will not have command and control over everybody, everybody is synchronized because they all know what everybody else's role is going to be.

That frustrates a lot of people because you do run the economic risk of the free-rider who's not going to -- you know, the one public official who is not going to invest in what's necessary to do his or her part of the activity, because they figure someone else will take care of it. But, you know, that's -- I mean, since we have to be integrated, at least in a planning sense, doing this kind of collective activity seems to be the best way to get there, given our nature of government. But it seems invariably to frustrate people. And government is the only place where, I use the polite word, "sewage," flows uphill -- because the blame always goes higher up.

You know, I will tell you, the situation where a President is blamed for something, and -- you know, the tools were not his to use, puts that President in a tough position about how directive you are versus how collaborative you are.

Question: I think the federal government gets an A for push pack and putting that whole concept together and having them ready to go if they had to be delivered to a community. Most communities get D's, or lower scores in being able to -- and that could make such a huge difference in removing bioterrorism from a weapon of mass destruction if we had that system in the communities.

Secretary Chertoff: Well, there's no question -- and one of the issues -- one of the hardest issues in a public health is -- I mean, obviously I share -- a good deal of that responsibility is in another Department -- but the public health system in this country is very widely distributed and fragmented. Even state public health leaders do not necessarily control their county public health officials. So you -- and this is where this issue of "Not in My Term of Office" comes in. You've got to convince all of these public health officials that it's in their interest to spend some time and some precious resources, stockpiling or preparing a contingency plan for distributing.

You know, some things we could do, and I think is -- we're trying to build this into our planning, and I think is -- in the next administration, I hope they'll continue doing this -- is to see when we can kill two birds with one stone. If we can find a way, for example, to assist people in building capabilities that are useful day to day, but that also have a possibility of being used in a surge situation, then we can actually begin to move people in that direction.

Mr. Heyman: But people are busy in their lives, and the notion that they have a shared responsibility for securing and providing safety for their communities is -- you know, falls somewhere way below the "don't forget to pick up the kids," and "return the movie," and all of that stuff. Do we have to somehow define the social compact in which individuals play and the government plays with each other?

Secretary Chertoff: No, I think it'd be a very interesting idea to look at a couple of things that historically happened that moved people to become responsible. For example, recycling. Everybody recycles -- pretty much everybody recycles. And that is an individual activity. I mean, I don't think they come around and check their garbage. If you threw your -- all your plastic stuff in the regular garbage, I don't think they would find and arrest you.

But, you know, partly what it was, was kids. We got the schools to really get the kids interested in this. And then the kids, they're like little relentless propaganda machines. They nag you to death. And something that we would try to do, and are trying to do, with Sesame Street and some of the other outlets that deal with children, in a very low-key way, not over-complicating this, is to say, look, if there's an emergency here's some stuff you need to have. And we've done some funny public messaging that shows that people may think they have a plan, but everybody in the family turns out to have a different idea of what the plan is.

But I do think this is a -- and, you know, there's a -- this tends to get devalued as a government activity because it doesn't involve spending a lot of money. No politician is going to come back and say, I've got a big grant, because it's not coercive, so you don't -- it doesn't look like we're being really tough and hard, and it's not heavily regulated, and so it doesn't look like the government is doing anything. But I actually think, you know, we could do a huge amount to take some of the hay off the haystack if people have certain basic medical things.

Now, we're looking at the question now, could you tell people to buy certain kinds of medical antidotes for certain kinds of things, and lock them in the cupboard; and whether they would, in fact, obey and keep it -- that would be a huge benefit. But then you worry about the duct tape thing with Tom Ridge, where I have to say the news media did a great disservice to the country, because whether you believe that duct tape is particularly efficacious, the message was, it's not cool to be prepared; only kind of weenies think about having stuff in the house to prepare. But the new -- I've seen newsmen, when they were in a situation where they didn't get the water or something like that that they thought they (inaudible), they were pretty upset. So the media needs to step up on this.

Mr. Heyman: We're actually doing some work looking at some of the examples of what other folks are doing in other countries. And the Israelis have an interesting strategy on media that they're just now developing; it hasn't really been implemented, sort of tested a little bit. It's actually to take media who cover attacks, terrorist attacks, and to run them through exercises; simulations on computers where there's booms and all sorts of things, and let them be you, and let them make the decisions. And the preliminary results are that they're much more likely to report in a way that's helpful.

Secretary Chertoff: That's a good idea. We've included the media in exercises but it's really been where they play the media. I mean, the idea that maybe we let them play the decision-maker would be a very humbling experience.

Mr. Heyman: Yes, very humbling.

Question: Mr. Secretary, MI-5 in the U.K. has said that some 200 plots that they've uncovered track back to Pakistan; 9/11 was indeed thought up, and then planned, or plotted, in that same area. You have a new Afghan government today -- I mean, Pakistani government today, whose top ministers say that they want to sign a peace agreement with Taliban that would keep them where they are in the tribal areas on the border, which would mean the end of hostilities in that part of the world; in other words, really legalizing the privileged sanctuaries of both al Qaeda and Taliban. What do we do about this? And I notice that everything tracks back to Pakistan, but Pakistan wasn't even mentioned this evening.

Secretary Chertoff: Well, I actually often do mention Pakistan. This is a -- could potentially be a big problem. You know, there's been an uneven performance over time, with respect to the frontier areas, and as the National Intelligence Estimate last year made clear, probably the biggest downside development in terms of the strategic picture with al Qaeda was the fact that they have gotten breathing space in the frontier area in the last couple of years they didn't have before.

There are, by the way, some negatives that they've suffered. I think that their losses in Iraq were a real blow to their prestige. But I would say, you know, once Pakistan, there's going to be tremendous interest on the part of this government in continuing to make sure that they do not allow a safe haven to develop in Waziristan, because that is the area where a lot these -- not all of them are alive, but are still trained and directed. And

another issue we have to be careful is we need better and better information, which we are getting, about how people are coming in and out of Waziristan. So -- I mean, that's the other part of this.

But I think this is going to be front -- you know, once they have a government, it's going to be front and center on everybody's agenda dealing with Pakistan.

Mr. Heyman: As we look towards the future, I would put on the table the idea that -- well, given what (inaudible) just said about, you know, everything sort of comes from that region, what about the idea of the restored Afghanistan -- the tribal areas in Waziristan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan? If we look at those areas and do not allow the Taliban to come back, take out their training camps, drain the swamps, so to speak -- that's our end-state. What does the world look like?

Secretary Chertoff: That would certainly be -- in terms of al Qaeda, that would certainly be a terrific blow to them. It might be the collapse of al Qaeda. However, for example, it wouldn't deal with Hezbollah, which many people believe, actually, in terms of capability, is a much more capable terrorist organization, although one that is much more controlled; it's not as fluid as al Qaeda is. And, you know, you have al Qaeda in Maghreb, you have al Qaeda in Somalia, but it would certainly be -- and if you map this as a war, it would be a very, very big step forward.

Mr. Heyman: I'm trying to put some boundaries around this because when you start including Hezbollah and Hamas and --

Secretary Chertoff: I think that -- you know, it's going to be -- I actually think the Cold War is a pretty good analogy. You know, we tend to look at the fall of the Wall as the moment in time that the Cold War ended. Certainly in terms of the Soviet Union, that was -- you know, that was the fall of the Soviet Union.

But then other things happened at other times. I mean, Cuba still is a relic, although not a very powerful relic. China began to move itself in a different direction. I guess I'm coming back to the notion that a war is broader than just a hot struggle on a field of battle. I guess -- Clausewitz says, "The war is politics is by other means." I think it is where you have transnational actors and nation states who are contending about really the fundamentals of existential fundamentals, whether it's ideology or existence.

And that's what differentiates it from crime. Criminals are not interested in ideology, they're not interested in defeating a state. They actually like the state because they can exploit it. I mean, they may -- people can commit crimes in a war, but the key difference between a war, even like an ideological war, the Cold War, is that there the adversaries are contending about fundamental existential issues.

Mr. Heyman: You see, I liked your analogy with the Wall because I do think frankly if there is an analogy to be held in this -- the Wall coming down, it's the Federally

Administered Territories and -- you know, if that area becomes, you know, good for you and I to go touring in a visit --

Secretary Chertoff: That would certainly be a huge step forward.

Question: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. If you apply your five-year (inaudible) to border security, look ahead five years, basically we're in a situation where border security, particularly the border of Mexico, were not the politically sensitive issue it is today, what would have had to happen to make that the case? In other words, what are the critical elements and strategic plans to lower risk at the borders to a manageable level?

Secretary Chertoff: What has to happen is -- and we tried to get this done last year, is -- we do need to build an array of tools at the border: people, technology and infrastructure. But you also have to account for the largest element that brings people to cross the border, which is the fact that they're being offered jobs in the United States, because that's 80 percent or more of what's bringing people in. If you could get that legalized and channeled and visibly, then stopping the 20 percent or 15 percent of the criminals or drug dealers would be a much easier job. We'd have more ability to focus on them. We would -- the infrastructure, which allows them to blend in, would dry up.

We were not able to get that because there were people who could not abide the legalization element, even for the temporary workers let alone the people who were here. And I think frankly it's because maybe people have gotten cynical about 30 years of promises that weren't carried out.

So we kind of decided after that failed that if we did nothing else with the tools available to us we were going to make a down payment on the credibility of the government in doing their job, which is why we have been putting a lot of effort on the border. And we've seen results, measurable results. Every quarter measured in a number of different ways the flow has gone down although, mind you, we still get illegals coming in through regular ports of entry, and overstaying; we have people coming in the maritime domain. So this -- it's going to be very difficult simply with brute force to end this problem.

Now some people don't want to take "yes" for an answer. There are some people who do not want -- will never admit that we're making progress because they've got a vested interest in keeping the pot boiling. But I do think and I hope that if we can meet the goals we've set for ourselves over the next year, then we have a reasonable case to go back to the American people and talk about dealing with the other elements that would help us have a really strategic approach to transforming the problem.

Mr. Heyman: Sticking with border security, there's a couple of unconventional thoughts that have been germinating for some time on our northern border. I had a discussion today actually with some of the folks from -- some of the military folks from Canada who were down here looking to see what they should do in the next five years. What would you think about the idea of some more harmonized policies between the U.S. and

Canada, taking all of those resources we have to protect that we put in place to protect the border, and getting rid of them and having a common perimeter of defense?

Secretary Chertoff: We can do that in certain respects. For example, we have proposed to them that on the issue of general aviation. We're embarking on a program now to make it to do more screening of international overseas private flights, which I happen to believe is actually a much more likely way to bring a nuclear bomb into the U.S. than putting it in a container. And I said to the Canadians, look, if you have the same protocols, we won't ever have to worry about private planes coming from Canada into the U.S.; we'll just have a common perimeter.

There are some areas where it's harder because there are just some legal differences. The Canadians are much more constrained legally than we are in terms of certain things. The Canadians historically have not only admitted but have actually actively sought, as asylees, people that we would not admit to be permanent residents of the U.S. So it would probably require a pretty fundamental alteration of the way the Canadians do some of their activities.

And what would make it more complicated is it's not just a matter of an agreement, because the Canadian Supreme Court could unravel something, so we have kind of like -- it would be like a Gresham's law of security. The country with the courts that were the most unfriendly to security measures would lower the security of everyone overall.

So I think there are some areas where we are doing that, but I think it's -- it will be tough, given the different legal systems, to achieve the true (inaudible).

Mr. Heyman: Tough, but is it a good idea?

Secretary Chertoff: I mean, in theory it would be a great idea if we could be sure that entering -- that the approach to security in Canada's capability was equal to the United States, but that would require -- I don't even think that's even possible theoretically, given their constitution and their charter, which is different from ours. And, you know, it's -- what that would do is it would create a vulnerability in the northern border, and what would happen is we'd be protecting people from flying directly in here. Well, Andrew Speaker is the perfect example. This is the lawyer with TB. I mean, this is not a trained terrorist. Even he figured out the easiest way to get in is fly to Canada and drive down.

Mr. Heyman: We have a Canada expert who wants to ask a question. Chris?

Question: We are one month away from the North American Leaders Meeting in New Orleans, and I know Canada and Mexico are important partners in a unique way. How happy are you with the security and prosperity process, and what should we expect out of New Orleans, in terms of (inaudible)?

Secretary Chertoff: I think it's a great process. I think we have a -- it's a great forum for us to do what David said: balance security and trade issues. I think that we will -- I'm

hopeful we'll have some concrete, additional things we can do as part of this process. I should say, by the way, Canadians are tremendous partners and friends with us. They really do a great job.

There's a kind of a weird Internet-based fantasy that this is really the stalking horse for the North American Union, which will result in a giant superhighway going from Mexico to Canada, and we'll all be using pesos. And actually, last year, I think the (inaudible) actually were joking about this in front of the press. But you can get on the Internet; you will find people who are really whipped up about this, so.

But I will say, a lot of the conversations that we had at our meeting in our level earlier this year was about NAFTA; concerns that there's hostility to NAFTA, a failure to recognize that NAFTA is a huge economic benefit to us, and also, by the way, a good way to stop illegal immigration because you build up Mexico.

I mean, why free trade has become a kind of a whipping boy is a mystery to me. If I could give one last plug for Colombia, I mean here is a country which is our staunch friend, has made enormous strides in fighting against an enemy that has succeeded in merging drug-dealing and terrorism, and instead of showing them love, we're making it difficult for them, and we're giving fodder to people like Chavez to say, you see, the Americans are really not your friends. That goes back to the point of -- some of this stuff you do hear really hurts our security.

Question: I wanted to ask you about a threat from another corner, and that is cyber security. And it is -- I would love to get your thoughts on why this has bedeviled us for such a long period of time, particularly at the federal level. You know, maybe it's your third category of structural problems, that it's just too hard to solve "in my term" and therefore, you know, I'm not really going to be serious about addressing it.

There seems to be a lot of movement about it. Clearly, today's announcement about Rod Beckstrom taking over a leadership position at DHS seems promising. He seems to bring a very promising kind of background for the mission and whatever the task might be.

And that was my question, really, is, what is his task? And the question that bedevils you with some of us, who's in charge, setting aside the federalism issues? But at the federal level, how will he relate with all of the other folks within DHS and the rest of the government that has "cyber" in their title or in their mission statement?

Secretary Chertoff: I think you're right, this has bedeviled us for a long time. It's bedeviled us even before my time because it was -- and when I came onboard, I asked the question, what was the value added? What does the government bring to the table? You know, we're not the best software inventors in the world.

I have to be careful because there's very little I can say. I became convinced, and I think the President became convinced when we launched this last year, that there was a real

value added, and that we did have a way now to really move forward and bring something to the table that would be tremendously enhancing.

You got to break the world into two parts. There's the federal world, non-military; and then there is the civilian world. The civilian world is very tough because we're all in horror of replaying, you know, some of the stress that we've gone under with other kinds of programs involved in communications where you want to say, oh you just want to sit on the Internet and watch everything. We don't want to do that, and I think that we all agree that in the end, the model for the private sector is going to have to be a voluntary model. We're not going to make them stuff. They may want -- they may choose to.

In the federal domain, I think what we do want to do is get a better sense of -- a better control over what's coming in and coming out in terms of the nodes or the access points. And then we could use some of our tools and capabilities to be much quicker in preventing some of the things that we have been experiencing in the past and might experience in the future.

We deal with a set of separate authorities. DOD has certain authorities. DHS has certain authorities. Those are probably the two big dogs in this. And then DOJ, you know, has a role as well, and then of course the DNI also. And Rod's going to have -- you know, he's going to have to set up the government structure. It's going to be a coordinated structure because you're going to need to respect everybody's authorities, but bring them together and allow them to work collaboratively, which is what I described earlier as our incident management system.

We do this because I think otherwise not only are there legal problems, but I don't know that people would be happy with the Department of Defense beginning to look like it was one world, the civilian world. And nor should we at DHS be trying to do force protection for DOD.

So, you know, I don't think we're going to have a hundred players, but we will have three or four players. The center is designed to bring them together collaboratively in a way, for example, we do in the National Counterterrorism Center and other centers, where we're trying to bring people together in real time so that we can communicate with each other. And that's probably (inaudible) what I can say in a public setting.

Question: Thus far there has not been a loose nuclear weapon from Russia or Pakistan or other countries, but in the future of course that's a terrible concern. How do you see this system of layered defenses, if you will, that the U.S. has tried to construct from the Nunn-Lugar program in Russia to the very active work that the domestic nuclear detection office has done, and the layers in between? Do you think that's promising?

Secretary Chertoff: I think this is an issue which -- you know, this is a big threat, but not a next-week threat. The capability of fabricating a nuclear -- is very low. It doesn't exist very much on the war with terrorism. So theft is obviously the most likely thing.

Most countries actually do a pretty good job of guarding their stuff. But one of the reasons we worry about proliferation in nation states, particularly irresponsible nation states, is that we worry that someone might slip a nuclear weapon to somebody.

So the first part of this is what we're doing overseas in Russia, in Nunn-Lugar, what DOD is doing with the proliferation security initiative, all of which was designed to stem the flow of nuclear material and potentially nuclear weapons around the world. That's where we -- you know, the furthest act.

More specifically, we have a system of layers for tracking what might potentially be a nuclear bomb if it came into the United States. If it came in by ship and it goes through one of our ports where we have mega ports or where we're putting scanning equipment in, that would give us a tip if we can do that. Our intelligence, our information, about the shipment, can be a critical element in deciding if we have to take a closer look at somebody. And then of course we now have essentially 100 percent radiation scanning at the ports so that while it's not a perfect solution, that really moves a lot in the way forward.

So it's a combination of intelligence, intelligence-driven selection, and some automatic screening that is our layers. And we even have a "secure the city" effort designed to see whether we can detect nuclear material moving into the city.

Now, I've only given you a little piece of the picture because I've given you the piece having to do with maritime cargo. For reasons that are still a little mysterious to me, maritime cargo became the poster boy for the issue of nuclear bombs being smuggled into the country, although I've got to tell you, for the life of me, if I had a -- if I have a nuclear bomb, a precious resource to a terrorist, I would not put it in a container so the longshoremen can throw it around and stuff like that. I would rent a private plane and I would fly that sucker from wherever I had built it over the United States, and when I was about to land, I'd detonate it. That's just my view of what the easiest -- where the most vulnerable path is.

So with less visibility, we have now got a program in place this year to raise the screening standards for a private aircraft coming in from overseas, including ultimately having them -- have their fixed-based operator before they take off -- having us go through the radioactive detection. We also have a small boats strategy to address the possibility that someone might take a nuclear weapon on a small boat and try to smuggle it in.

So we're taking a look at all of the three dimensions of how someone might bring something like that in, and we're trying to ensure we've nailed all of those. It's going to take a few years to finish the process, but that's okay because I don't think it's a next-year problem. But if we don't finish it, then we could have a problem in five or 10 years.

And let me just finish with this pitch: Each of these things I'm talking about is going to irritate or inconvenience somebody. So even though the -- I had a senior executive, a

very high-level executive, from a jet-leasing company personally come to me and tell me he worries about this on private jets. I've gotten a letter from the Business Jets Association saying, oh no, you can't do this; oh it's terrible, it's going to make life difficult. And this comes back to my first point: If everybody who doesn't want to pay a little extra money or have a little extra inconvenience, if I listen to all of those people, in 10 years we would be no further than we were on September 10th.

And that to me is ultimately the critical issue for Homeland Security. We need to listen to people, we need to balance, but in the end there will be some hard decisions that will require some money and some effort. And if we don't do it, then how are we going to look at ourselves in the mirror in 10 years and say we didn't do it because some group complained about it?

Mr. Heyman: I agree with you, and I share your concern about general aviation. As you know, we did some work on this a few years ago. And, you know, the nuclear -- I think -- I commend your work on this, because I think that that pathway is one that we need to shut down. The nuclear pathway and threat is one we've certainly paid a lot of attention to. Manny talks about the bio one. That threat obviously can materialize anywhere, and it's very easy. Have you thought about -- to what extent have you thought about, perhaps, a Select Agent role abroad in trying to get -- as part of our international partnerships? We've got a number of different things we're trying to do.

Secretary Chertoff: I think we are looking at that. We are looking at whether -- and we've had discussions about whether we can get other countries to look at these issues, and to regulate these Select Agents.

Now, many of these biological weapons you can fabricate using pretty -- if you have the know-how, it's not hard to find the base materials. And you're quite right, it would be very hard to stop someone from smuggling it in. That's an area, though, where, if you look at the spectrum, responsibility plays a major role.

Anthrax, you know, is not -- I mean, we've had an anthrax attack. You can deal with anthrax with CIPRO if you know you've been exposed to it. So there our emphasis is on detection, to treat, and how would we map -- if it was -- if someone was going around with a (inaudible), how would we map that? And that involves a combination of intelligence, physical detectors, and we need to get to the next generation of bio-detectors so we -- they're quicker and they turn around more quickly.

And here's where we get the public health people: clinical data. Now we have a fusion center called the NBIC, National Biological -- I think Intelligence or Integration Center, which is designed to do that. It's designed to -- we're still in the formative period -- it's designed to join biological data from detection and clinical data and regular intelligence so we can -- they could help a decision-maker characterize something quickly as a harmless thing or an attack. That's where we have to put our emphasis.

Mr. Heyman: And I think on distribution, once you figure it out, how do you get it to the -- once you figure out where the plume is, so to speak, how do you get people --

Secretary Chertoff: Right, and so here's the question. You know, the public health people traditionally have a model. They don't want to give you drugs if you haven't been examined by a doctor. Moreover, there's always the worry about the side effect.

So this is a classic problem of American policymaking, particularly when the lawyers get into it. Are people going to worry that if it is an emergency we have to push a lot of CIPRO out, that they're going to get sued because, you know, that the half of percent that had a negative reaction will sue? Now, most of us would rationally like to think that if you can save 99.5 percent of the people at the risk of half a percent, that's kind of a no-brainer. But our American legal system does not function like that. So that's a problem. You've got to deal with that issue.

Mr. Heyman: I'm going to get -- we're going to get maybe one more question and then I'm going to ask the final question and get you back to your chicken soup.

Question: Mr. Secretary, you have applied a principle of risk management as a way to find an appropriate balance between uncertain risks and limited resources. What have you learned about how that process works in government in the last three years? What were your starting principles, and what's changed or evolved in your thinking?

Secretary Chertoff: Well, in terms of my thinking changing, I think I have tended to be -- over time to view consequence as the weightiest of the principles because it's the most immutable. Vulnerability you can affect because as you enhance your capabilities, you lower your vulnerability. So I tend to start with consequence.

What have I learned? I've learned that everybody -- I knew this before, but I've lived it -- everybody views the risk in their backyard as the only risk that matters, so when we get into the issue of how do we distribute money, I don't believe all the money should go to the top five or six cities, because I don't think that's where all the risk is, but we think most of it ought to go there, and then some of it ought to go into, you know, the next 30. And yet I get confronted by people in city number 150 or 200 and they say, well what about my city; well, we have this here, we have that here? And they're right; you know, there is a limitless amount of risk out there.

I think we are much better now than we were, much better, three years ago in being disciplined about actually calling the risk as we see it, even if there's pushback. I think we've done it with the urban grants, which are now essentially proportionately where I think the right thing is. Also, with respect to the critical infrastructure, we've narrowed the critical infrastructure in the top tier stuff down to like about a thousand or maybe a little bit more nationwide -- which is about right; it's the stuff that you would expect it to be.

I have a pitch which I've started to make sometimes on the infrastructure front that we ought to have a similar program for rehabilitating our infrastructure, in terms of natural disasters and just collapse. I mean, we ought to take the thousand most important, nationally significant bridges, tunnels, dams and levees and say, over a period of 10 years or 15 years, the life of these things, we're going to put a certain amount of money in to rehabilitate them and make sure that they remain solid. And that would require that we have some capabilities -- (inaudible) -- some ability to take an issue of funding that out of the normal pork cycle, and just put a certain amount of money in capital, a rehabilitation fund. That's what almost everybody does if you have a house. You don't, you know, spend all the money on vacation; you put a certain amount everyday to deal with things. So that's, I think, where I'd want to think about risk.

Mr. Heyman: I think that's a terrific idea, recapitalizing our infrastructure, build it to be secure when you do it, worry about the long-term threat. Those of you who are staffers here can pick that up --

Secretary Chertoff: But remember, you've to pick your --

Mr. Heyman: Prioritize.

Secretary Chertoff: If everybody says, what about me, then it's going to get out of control.

Mr. Heyman: So we've talked about vision, we've talked about policy, strategies, ideas. But people make the difference. You're the longest-serving Secretary we've ever had of any Secretary that has ever done Homeland Security -- and we have obviously a strategic vulnerability coming up with the transition. What is your advice to the next Secretary? What do they need to know on day one?

Secretary Chertoff: Well, I hope, first of all, that -- and we're going to try once things shake out in the campaign to see whether we can do some briefing, the way DOD has done for homeland security people in the campaigns. And then once you have an election and a new President, that person should designate a few people to start the process of transition to interface with us, including -- you know, we've tried to reduce a lot of what we've done to doctrine and written plans and strategies. We've populated our major operating functions at the second or third level of career people. But there's no better way to get a feel for it than to actually live through an exercise.

So what I'd love to do like at the beginning of January of next year is -- if the next President has a leadership team in place to deal with this issue, is take them through a half-a-day exercise so they get some idea of what they might face on January 21st.

The thing that Congress could do is -- you know, when I came, I was the fourth, I think, confirmed senior person at the Department of Justice on September 11th, 2001, and that was months into the administration. So, you know, we were depopulated when we were attacked on September 11th. I think Congress has an obligation to confirm the major

national security leadership team as quickly as possible. We should not be in September with two people in a department who are presidential appointees and home alone. So that's what Congress would do.

Mr. Heyman: And what about your own personal experience? What would you pass on to your successor?

Secretary Chertoff: I would pass on this. The essence of this job -- it probably differs from other Cabinet positions, in this sense: We probably deal with more individual Americans day in and day out, and more governors, day in and day out, and more international actors, day in and day out, as a totality, than any other department. Some departments do more international stuff, but they don't do governors. Some do maybe as many governors, but they don't do international. We have more stakeholders and interested people out there than any other single department because we have such a broad scope.

I would say the lesson I've learned is -- you have to make a decision early on that once you listen and you set your priorities and you determine what the right thing to do is, that you will not get shaken by the fact that there will be strong and vigorous complaining and opposition about what you do.

This is not a job for someone who has difficulty making decisions. It's not a job for someone who is looking to be popular because they've got their eye on the next job, because you are inevitably going to irritate people if you do things that are hard. If you make everybody happy, it's likely because you're not doing any -- you're giving everybody the money that they want, you're not requiring anybody to do anything, and you're not moving the ball down the field. So I think -- I would say you need to understand what you're getting into.

But if you want to do that, you're prepared to spend four years or however many years, to really try and get this done, A, I do think you'll be able to look back and see that there is a lot that's been accomplished. I can look back and I can tell you that in three years, I'm amazed at some of this stuff that wasn't there before, that we've gotten done. And secondly you'll never meet a group of people to work with.

One thing about this Department is there is -- you know, I know I've seen the morale stuff and I understand there is all kinds of issues with money and things, but -- and our building, but in terms of people who are dedicated to the mission and believe what they do is important, I think there is less disagreement and dissent and dissatisfaction than in any other department I can see of any great size. So it's a tough job, but it's a rewarding job.

Mr. Heyman: And the easiest transition would be if you were to stay on. Would you stay on?

Secretary Chertoff: I think that -- I think the next President would -- should and would want to get somebody with a fresh vision. I'm always willing to help. But I think -- you know, you do -- I was U.S. Attorney for four years, and when the time to leave that came, I thought that was good. I mean, I thought I -- if someone had said, would you stay for eight years, I think I would have said no; I don't think you should be U.S. Attorney for eight years. You need to get fresh blood.

Mr. Heyman: Well, you referenced last year in a speech Winston Churchill, and you talked about his extraordinary characteristics that you admire: his exceptionally clear-eyed and tough-minded leadership, and that he fought all his life against complacency. I suspect you said this because you share a lot of those traits. And we thank you.

Secretary Chertoff: Thank you.

Mr. Heyman: We thank you for your service.

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