



# **Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing on the President's Proposal for a Terrorism Threat Integration Center**

## **Statement of Ranking Member Joe Lieberman**

**February 14, 2003**

Madam Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing on one of the more important offensives in the war against terrorism, the consolidation of information regarding terrorist threats received daily from an array of sources available to our government. The intelligence disconnects that, in part, led to the September 11th terrorist attacks are an embarrassment that should never have happened in the first place, and we must never allow them to happen again. I appreciate your leadership, Madam Chairman, in calling this hearing - the first, I believe, on the President's State of the Union proposal to overcome some of our intelligence failures. This is a matter for which urgency is required.

I also want to join you in welcoming our witnesses - Senator Rudman, Governor Gilmore, Mr. Smith and Mr. Steinberg - who are no strangers to this Committee - and thank them for once again taking the time to share their expertise and inform us. I am disappointed that we will not hear from an Administration representative today. And I hope we will hear more details on the President's proposed Terrorism Threat Integration Center very soon. There is no time to spare on this matter.

We are now in the midst of a code orange, high terror alert. That combined with warnings from the Directors of the FBI and CIA that another terrorist attack could occur within our borders as early as "this week"—along with official suggestions that citizens create safe rooms in their homes and stock supplies of food and water—has understandably created widespread anxiety throughout the nation. We must take this moment to allay fear and instead galvanize our government and motivate all Americans to help make our country safe again. Creation of an effective intelligence analysis center is a vital step in that direction.

The disastrous disconnects among our intelligence agencies - the culture of rivalry rather than cooperation, turf battles rather than team work - that have plagued the intelligence

community have been well-documented. For some time now, many of us have been advocating for a central location in our government where all the intelligence collected by the various agencies that make up the intelligence community, as well as open-source information, and information collected by state and local law enforcement, can be brought together and analyzed, synthesized, and shared.

The idea is to "connect the intelligence dots," to create a full picture, so that we can understand what our adversaries are up to before their plans are carried out. Last year, as part of the homeland security bill, this Committee approved the creation of such an office. We were aided in our work by the support of Senator Specter, as well as the co-chairs of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Senators Richard Shelby and Bob Graham. In fact, after investigating the September 11th attacks, the Senate and House Intelligence Committees called on Congress and the Administration to use the authority Congress provided in the Homeland Security Act to establish an all-sources intelligence division within the Homeland Security Department.

Here are the exact words from the Intelligence Committee's December 12, 2002, bipartisan report - and I quote: "Congress and the Administration should ensure the full development within the Department of Homeland Security of an effective all-source terrorism information fusion center that will dramatically improve the focus and quality of counter terrorism analysis and facilitate the timely dissemination of relevant intelligence information, both within and beyond the boundaries of the Intelligence Community." End of quote.

The Committee went on to lay out several criteria for this analysis center. Among other things, it said the center should have timely access to all counter-terrorism information, including raw data, as needed; that it should have the authority to task the intelligence community to gather specific information; that it should integrate the information to identify the nature and scope of the threat; and that it should maintain effective channels of communication with federal agencies outside the intelligence community, as well as with state and local authorities.

I and others, including senators on this Committee, had proposed something very similar six months earlier. The Administration opposed this approach, arguing that the Department of Homeland Security's role should be limited to analyzing intelligence primarily to protect critical infrastructure. The final Homeland Security legislation created a division within the Department that would be a central location for all threat information while also protecting the critical infrastructure.

Now, the Administration has wisely proposed the threat integration center we have fought for all along. The good news is that we now have consensus on the need to create an all-sources intelligence analysis center - although the President would have it report to the

Director of Central Intelligence rather than the Secretary of Homeland Security.

But we have not been provided sufficient detail and have a growing list of questions. The Administration, for example, needs to tell us how this proposal differs substantially from what is already contained within the Homeland Security Act, and why it has chosen not to implement the law, as written. It needs to tell us how the so-called T-TIC - as an entity reporting to the Director of Central Intelligence - will overcome the institutional rivalries to information sharing that has already hindered the Counter terrorist Center at the CIA, and other agencies in the intelligence community - from becoming truly all-source intelligence analysis centers.

It must answer questions about the center's role, if any, in the collection of domestic intelligence, and about the wisdom of expanding the role of the Director of Central Intelligence in domestic intelligence.

The Administration needs to let the Congress know why the center's director should not be confirmed by the Senate. I am also interested in understanding what the center's role will be with respect to disseminating intelligence analysis to other federal agencies and to state and local law enforcement, and how it proposes to collect information from them. There are many questions about the proposed budget, the number of analysts it will have, and the Administration's time table for getting the center up and running.

Again, madam chairman, thank you for holding this hearing, and for moving expeditiously to examine what is one of the most important issues we face in shoring up our homeland defenses. Thank you.

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