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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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Radio Address by the President to the Nation

The Cabinet Room

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THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Nearly nine months have passed since September the 11th, and America is leading the world in a titanic struggle against terror. The first and best way to secure America's homeland is to attack the enemy where he hides and plans, and we are doing just that.

We have also concluded that our government must be reorganized to deal most effectively with the new threats of the 21st century. So I have asked the Congress to join me in creating a single, permanent Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security, with an overriding and urgent mission: securing the American homeland, and protecting the American people.

The Department of Homeland Security will unite essential agencies that must work more closely together, among them the Coast Guard and the Border Patrol, the Customs Service, Immigration officials, the Transportation Security Administration, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Employees of this new agency will come to work every morning knowing that their most important job is to protect their fellow citizens.

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The Department of Homeland Security will be charged with four primary tasks. This new agency will control our borders and prevent terrorists and explosives from entering our country. It will work with state and local authorities to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies. It will bring together our best scientists to develop technologies that detect biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, and to discover the drugs and treatments to best protect our citizens. And this new department will review intelligence and law enforcement information from all agencies of government, and produce a single daily picture of threats against our homeland. Analysts will be responsible for imagining the worst, and planning to counter it.

What I am proposing is the most extensive reorganization of the federal government since the 1940s. During his presidency, Harry Truman recognized that our nation's fragmented defenses had to be reorganized to win the Cold War. He proposed uniting our military forces under a single Department of Defense, and creating the National Security Council to bring together defense, intelligence, and diplomacy. President Truman's reforms are still helping us to fight terror abroad, and now we need similar dramatic reforms to secure our people at home.

Only the United States Congress can create a new department of government, so I'm asking for your help in encouraging your representatives to support my plan. We face an urgent need, and we must move quickly, this year, before the end of the congressional session.

All in our government have learned a great deal since September the 11th, and we must act on every lesson. We are stronger and better prepared today than we were on that terrible morning. And with your help, and the support of the Congress, we will be stronger still.

Thank you for listening.

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