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President to Propose Department of Homeland Security

 [Press Secretary's Morning Conversation with Reporters](#)

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The President's most important job is to protect and defend the American people. Since September 11, all levels of government have cooperated like never before to strengthen aviation and border security, stockpile more medicines to defend against bioterrorism, improve information sharing among our intelligence agencies, and deploy more resources and personnel to protect our critical infrastructure.

The changing nature of the threats facing America requires a new government structure to protect against invisible enemies that can strike with a wide variety of weapons. Today no one single government agency has homeland security as its primary mission. In fact, responsibilities for homeland security are dispersed among more than 100 different government organizations. America needs a single, unified homeland security structure that will improve protection against today's threats and be flexible enough to help meet the unknown threats of the future.

The President proposes to create a new Department of Homeland Security, the most significant transformation of the U.S. government in over a half-century by largely transforming and realigning the current confusing patchwork of government activities into a single department whose primary mission is to protect our homeland. The creation of a Department of Homeland Security is one more key step in the President's national strategy for homeland security.

Immediately after last fall's attack, the President took decisive steps to protect America -- from hardening cockpits and stockpiling vaccines to tightening our borders. The President used his maximum legal authority to establish the White House Office of Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Council to ensure that our federal response and protection efforts were coordinated and effective. The President also directed Homeland Security Advisor Tom Ridge to study the federal government as a whole to determine if the current structure allows us to meet the threats of today while anticipating the unknown threats of tomorrow. After careful study of the current structure -- coupled with the experience gained since September 11 and new information we have learned about our enemies while fighting a war -- the President concluded that our nation needs a more unified homeland security structure. In designing the new Department, the Administration considered a number of homeland security organizational proposals that have emerged from outside studies, commissions, and Members of Congress.

The Department of Homeland Security would make Americans safer because our nation would have:

- One department whose primary mission is to protect the American homeland;
- One department to secure our borders, transportation sector, ports, and critical infrastructure;
- One department to synthesize and analyze homeland security intelligence from multiple sources;
- One department to coordinate communications with state and local governments, private industry, and the American people about threats and preparedness;
- One department to coordinate our efforts to protect the American people against bioterrorism and other weapons of mass destruction;
- One department to help train and equip for first responders;
- One department to manage federal emergency response activities; and
- More security officers in the field working to stop terrorists and fewer resources in Washington managing duplicative and redundant activities that drain critical homeland security resources.

The Organization of the Department of Homeland Security

The Department of Homeland Security would have a clear and efficient organizational structure with four divisions:

- Border and Transportation Security
- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Countermeasures
- Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection

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