

President Discusses Dept of Homeland Security in Radio Address

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Radio Address by the President to the Nation

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. This was a productive week in the war against terror, both at home and abroad. Congress returned to Washington with renewed energy and a commitment to make progress on key issues. Members of the House and Senate reached a crucial agreement to create a new department of homeland security. With Congress' vote on the final legislation, America will have a single agency with the full-time duty of protecting our people against attack.

This new department will focus and unify responsibilities that are now spread among dozens of government agencies. The Customs Service, the INS, the Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Transportation Security Administration and many others will report to the new secretary of homeland security.

The department will significantly improve our ability to protect our borders, our coasts, and our communities. It will pool together the best intelligence information and coordinate our response. The new department will help develop the technology America needs to detect and defeat chemical, biological, and nuclear threats. And under the agreement reached this week, I will have the authority and flexibility to move people and resources to where they are needed without bureaucratic rules and lengthy labor negotiations.

This compromise is the result of months of hard work and negotiation, and it will take additional time to put the agreement into place. The threat of terror will be with us for years to come, and we remain resolved to see this conflict through to its end.

In the department of homeland security, we'll have good people, well-organized and well-equipped, working day and night to oppose the serious dangers of our time. Now that we have reached broad agreement on a homeland security bill, I look forward to signing it into law as soon as possible.

We're committed to defending the nation. Yet wars are not won on the defensive. The best way to keep America safe from terrorism is to go after terrorists where they plan and hide. And that work goes on around the world.

The United States is working with more than 90 countries to disrupt and defeat terror networks. So far we have frozen more than \$113 million in terrorist assets, denying them the means to finance their murder. We've cracked down on charities that were exploiting American compassion to fund terrorists. We have captured and interrogated thousands of terrorists, while others have met their fate in caves and mountains in Afghanistan. We've deployed troops to train forces in the Philippines and Yemen, the former Soviet Republic of Georgia, and other nations where terrorists have gathered. We're sending a clear message to the enemies of freedom, no terrorist will escape the patient justice of America.

To win the war on terror, we're also opposing the growing threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of outlaw regimes. This week, the dictator of Iraq told the U.N. he would give weapons inspectors unrestricted access to his country. We've heard such pledges before and they have been uniformly betrayed. America and the world are now watching Saddam Hussein closely. Any act of defiance or delay will indicate that he is taking the path of deception once again, and this time the consequences would be severe.

Our goal is not merely the return of inspectors to Iraq; our goal is the disarmament of Iraq. The dictator of Iraq will give up his weapons of mass destruction, or the United States will lead a coalition to disarm him.

Our war against terrorists and their supporters is advancing on all fronts. We're moving aggressively to protect our people and to oppose a great threat to the peace of the world.

Thank you for listening.

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