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**ATTORNEY GENERAL ASHCROFT OUTLINES**

**MOBILIZATION AGAINST TERRORISM ACT**

WASHINGTON, D.C. Attorney General John Ashcroft today presented the Mobilization Against Terrorism Act to Congress. Appearing before the House Judiciary Committee, Attorney General Ashcroft outlined the comprehensive legislative initiative which will redefine the antiterrorism effort while protecting civil liberties. The purpose of the legislation is to provide the President and the Department of Justice with the tools and resources necessary to disrupt, weaken, thwart, and eliminate the infrastructure of terrorist organizations, to prevent or thwart terrorist attacks, and to punish perpetrators of terrorist acts.

"The danger that darkened the United States of America and the civilized world on September 11 did not pass with the atrocities committed that day," said Ashcroft. "It requires that we provide law enforcement with the tools necessary to identify, dismantle, disrupt and punish terrorist organizations before they strike again. Terrorism is a clear and present danger to American's today."

The proposed legislation seeks to combat terrorist activity on several fronts. Title I enhances the Department's capacity to gather intelligence necessary to combat terrorist organizations who increasingly employ sophisticated modes of global communications. Existing wiretap authority and procedures have not kept pace with the development of modern technology or the mode of operations of international terrorist organizations. Since current wiretap authority is often restricted to specific property as opposed to allowing law enforcement to follow suspects, current authority is inadequate for investigative personnel to monitor terrorist agents and associates. These proposals update the law to the technology. Terrorist offenses necessitate and justify comprehensive intelligence gathering.

Title II enhances the authority of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to detain and remove suspected terrorists by expanding the definition of terrorists to include those who lend support to terrorist organizations. The ability of terrorists to enter the United States and operate within the country is the obvious prerequisite to their capacity to inflict damage on citizens and facilities. These proposals protect the integrity of the United States borders without sacrificing the ability to welcome law-abiding visitors and legal immigrants.

Title III proposes changes to enhance prosecutors' ability to disable terrorists organizations through the legal process. The proposal amends current law to encourage investigation and prosecution prior to successful completion of a devastating terrorist attack. Terrorism should be considered no less than murder and the elimination of the statute of limitations on terrorist acts is reflective of these sentiments. In addition, this legislation provides for alternative maximum sentences, up to life, for the commission of terrorist acts, giving judges the ability to punish terrorists commensurate to their crimes. A number of other proposals are designed to punish or deter those who would assist terrorists and their organizations through concealment of their activities or their members. The lending of support that works to further terrorist organizations and to perpetuate terrorist attacks is expressly criminalized. In these specific changes to the law of crimes and criminal procedure, the constitutional rights of the accused are respected.

Title IV aims at the financial infrastructure of terrorist organizations whose sophisticated operations require substantial financial resources. Often such resources

are provided by those not directly responsible for terrorist acts. These proposals will cripple the capacity of terrorist organizations to finance their illegal activities through criminal and civil forfeiture of resources. In addition, criminal liability is specifically imposed on those who knowingly engage in financial transactions involving the proceeds of these acts.

Title V authorizes emergency operations in response to the September 11 attacks and assists the Attorney General in providing support and relief to the victims. These proposals provide the Attorney General greater discretion and authority to disburse funds with regard to rewards to be offered in connection with crimes of terrorism.

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