

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**THE HONORABLE THOMAS E. WHITE
INTERIM DOD EXECUTIVE AGENT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY**

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ON THE ROLE OF DOD IN HOMELAND SECURITY

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ON THE ROLE OF DoD IN HOMELAND SECURITY**

Mr. Chairman, Senator Warner, and distinguished members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you in my role as the Interim Department of Defense Executive Agent for Homeland Security. Mr. Chairman, I'll make a brief opening statement and then respond to any questions the Committee may have.

Before I begin, I'd like to make one thing very clear. The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review, published last month, restores the defense of the United States as the Department's primary mission. Put another way, homeland security is job one for the U.S. military – and it has our full attention. I want to assure the members of this Committee – and the American people – that we will spare no effort in our endeavor to protect this nation from aggression.

The attacks of 11 September, and since, prove beyond doubt that terrorism is a permanent part of our future. Our traditional response to terrorism has been to organize around crisis management and consequence management functions – with the former being an activity managed by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, while the latter is principally accommodated by the Director of Military Support within the Department of the Army.

In my opinion, that construct no longer works. It is far more useful to view homeland security as an overarching effort that includes two simultaneous and mutually supporting functions.

First is homeland defense – a DOD-led task involving protection of the United States in every dimension – land, sea, aerospace, and protection from computer network attack. The fighter aircraft flying combat air patrols over Washington and New York City under the operational

control of CINC NORAD are a prime example of the homeland defense mission.

Second is civil support – where DoD provides assistance to a lead federal agency which can range from the FBI for domestic counter-terrorism tasks to Health and Human Services for biological attacks. Key to this effort is a layered approach beginning with local and state “first responders,” progressing through deployment of state-controlled National Guard units, and then finally to application of federal assets – including unique DoD capabilities on an exception basis.

Above all, homeland security demands a comprehensive approach to accommodate evolving threats and the reality of finite resources. Properly focusing on this complex mission and providing the coordination necessary for joint and interagency integration requires a reorganization of DoD efforts. From my perspective, there are three fundamental tasks that must be accomplished if we are to be successful.

First, DoD must consolidate its efforts to enhance the coordination of policy, planning, and resource allocation responsibilities that relate to homeland security. By focusing our efforts, we can avoid gaps and duplication in capabilities while dramatically improving responsiveness.

Second, we must develop operational solutions for the future. Currently, the military responsibilities for homeland security are assigned to the unified commanders on an interim basis – pending revision of the Unified Command Plan.

I’ll defer operational details to the other members of this panel, but I want to emphasize a key point. As we look to the future, apportionment of forces must be balanced between meeting warfighting requirements abroad and the need to defend America at home. This is a threshold event with profound implications for our military.

Last, we must improve the interagency coordination process to guarantee timely and efficient cooperation among the many federal, state, and local organizations that have homeland security responsibilities. I have already met with Governor Ridge and assured him the Department will fully assist his office in revamping homeland security planning from the bottom up. While doing so, DoD will continue to focus on its broad and critical responsibilities: defending our Nation against acts of war and terrorism; providing capacity to respond to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive events, whether intentional or unintentional; and supporting lead agencies in the event of natural disasters.

The victims of a disastrous event do not necessarily distinguish between whether the event was the result of the actions of non-state terrorists, or state actors engaging in war, or an unfortunate accident. What matters to the American people is the knowledge that our homeland is secure against any and all threats.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This concludes my statement and I look forward to the Committee's questions.