



State of the Union? Leading Bipartisan Group of Statesmen Agree: America is Still Dangerously Vulnerable

Washington, D.C. – (January 26) Former Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-IN) and Former Sen. Warren Rudman (R-NH), co-chairs of the Partnership for a Secure America, today announced released of a bipartisan set of national security priorities for 2006 focused on the continuing threat to the American homeland.

In advance of the President’s State of the Union Address, the statement highlights the urgent need in two areas: Securing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and preventing their transit into the United States; and building our nation’s homeland defense and emergency response capabilities.

“Both priorities are critical to the safety and security of the American people, and must not be neglected as we continue to prosecute the war in Iraq,” said Rudman.

“While progress has been made in these areas, our nation is still dangerously vulnerable,” said Hamilton. “Homeland security must be a higher priority for the President, Congress, and the country. In order to succeed, we must set clearer priorities for how we prevent, protect against, and respond to terrorist attacks.”

“We know that terrorist organizations are actively seeking weapons of mass destruction. We also know that the best way to stop them is by cutting off their supplies at the source,” said Rudman. “Unfortunately, our efforts in this area continue to be dwarfed by the magnitude of the threat.”

The Partnership for a Secure America (PSA) is a not-for-profit organization created to foster bipartisan, consensus driven, national solutions to the major national security and foreign policy challenges facing our country. Twenty-one former high ranking foreign policy officials – both Democrats and Republicans – endorsed today’s statement.

The full text of the statement is attached below. More information about the Partnership for a Secure America and these issues can be found at www.psaonline.org.

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Statement: America Still Dangerously Vulnerable

While the war in Iraq remains at the center of America's agenda, we must not lose sight of the ongoing terrorist threat to the American homeland.

Two areas warrant our urgent focus as our leaders consider national security priorities for the New Year, and the President prepares for the State of the Union address:

First, a nuclear, chemical or biological weapon in the hands of a terrorist remains the single greatest threat to our nation. While progress has been made in securing these weapons and materials, we are still dangerously vulnerable. In the coming year we must:

- Elevate to the highest priority our efforts to secure loose nuclear materials at their source, including substantially increased resources for the Nunn-Lugar program and the elimination of counterproductive congressionally imposed certification requirements;
- Strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty and other arms control regimes;
- Make the security of dangerous pathogens and technologies a leading issue in bilateral and multilateral forums;
- Strengthen the Proliferation Security Initiative and other multilateral efforts to detect nuclear materials in transit;
- Invest in technologies and capabilities to detect nuclear materials crossing America's borders, particularly through cargo containers; and
- Increase efforts to secure chemical facilities that use, produce or store toxic materials.

Second, more than four years after September 11th, we are not nearly as prepared as we must be to respond at home to another massive terrorist attack. In the coming year we must renew our commitment to homeland defense by:

- Allocating homeland security funds on the basis of risk, not politics;
- Providing part of the broadcast spectrum for public safety purposes as soon as possible;
- Adopting a unified incident command system so that someone is clearly in charge at the scene of a disaster;
- Reinvigorating FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to make it a world class emergency response operation;
- Improving cooperation between federal, state, and local governments; and

- Setting priorities and making hard choices about how we will protect our critical infrastructure and transportation system.

Addressing these urgent and pressing needs demands Presidential leadership and bipartisan Congressional support. As we continue to prosecute the war in Iraq, we must not lose sight of the highest priority of government: the safety and security of the American people.

Warren Rudman US Senator (R-NH) 1980-92

Lee Hamilton US Congressman (D-IN) 1965-99, Vice Chair, 9/11 Commission

Madeleine Albright Secretary of State 1997-2001

Howard Baker US Senator (R-TN) 1967-85

Warren Christopher Secretary of State 1993-97

Slade Gorton US Senator (R-WA) 1981-87, 1989-2001, Commissioner, 9/11 Commission

Gary Hart US Senator (D-CO) 1975-87

Rita Hauser Chair, International Peace Academy 1992-present

Carla Hills US Trade Representative 1989-93

Richard Holbrooke Ambassador to UN 1999-2001

Nancy Kassebaum Baker US Senator (R-KS) 1978-97

Thomas Kean Governor, New Jersey 1982-1990, Chairman, 9/11 Commission

Anthony Lake National Security Advisor 1993-97

Richard C. Leone President, Century Foundation 1989-present

Robert McFarlane National Security Advisor 1983-85

Donald McHenry Ambassador to UN 1979-81

Sam Nunn US Senator (D-GA) 1972-96

William Perry Secretary of Defense 1994-97

Thomas Pickering Undersecretary of State 1997-2000

Ted Sorensen White House Special Counsel 1961-63

John C. Whitehead Deputy Secretary of State 1985-88

Frank Wisner Undersecretary of State 1992-93