

**Opening Statement for Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing
Senator Joseph I. Lieberman
September 13, 2004**

Madam Chairman, under your leadership over the past month and a half, the Governmental Affairs Committee has held a series of very productive hearings on the 9/11 Commission's recommendations to fundamentally reform our intelligence community.

I want to thank you again for the way you have undertaken this important task. Nothing we can do is more important and you have approached this matter with the urgency and thoroughness it requires.

As events this month in Russia and Israel – and the 9-11 commemorations of this past weekend – have shown, terrorists hope to weaken our resolve with their attacks. But they're wrong. They have turned our will to iron.

I welcome our distinguished witnesses: Secretary of State Colin Powell and Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge. I thank you both for your service to our country in these extraordinary and difficult times.

This is our seventh full committee hearing since the Commission's recommendations were released. We have proceeded deliberately and a consensus is emerging that we need a National Intelligence Director with strong budget and personnel authority to make sure our enormous investment in intelligence gives us the national security we need.

Last week the President added to the momentum by calling for a National Intelligence Director along the lines recommended by the Commission. He said he "intends to give the NID full budget authority over the National Foreign Intelligence Program appropriation and the management tools necessary to successfully oversee the intelligence community."

Though there have been improvements in cooperation among intelligence agencies since September 11, the intelligence community has still not achieved the unity of effort – the "jointness" – we have in our armed forces.

That is why budget and personnel authority are needed by the NID. As we have heard from many witnesses, there is a direct link between budget authority and the probability the NID will forge the unity of effort our intelligence community must have in order to defend our country against terrorism and other threats.

I am heartened by the fact that there is also a growing consensus that we need to establish a National Counterterrorism Center, and other centers, along the lines recommended by the Commission, to better target our efforts in critical areas.

The 9/11 Commission's recommendations will have an important impact on the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State.

Under the intelligence restructuring proposed by the commission, the Department of Homeland Security's Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection Directorate will be a key part of the National Intelligence Program and its budget will be under the control of the National Intelligence Director.

I'm anxious to hear Secretary Ridge's comments on that proposal.

The commission also envisions DHS playing an important role in a new information sharing network by ensuring that state and local governments – and the private sector – are brought into this network.

Besides these proposals, under the Commission's recommendations, DHS would lead the effort to design a comprehensive screening system to improve border security; set standards for issuing birth certificates, drivers' licenses and other forms of identification and screen all air passengers for explosives.

Foreign policy also plays a significant role in our fight against terrorism. The State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) is an important part of the intelligence community with a reputation for quality intelligence analysis.

In its report, the Commission has proposed that INR remain outside the National Intelligence Program and that its budget not be subject to the NID's authority. I'd like to hear Secretary Powell's thoughts on this.

The Commission also pointed to the importance of countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan in our struggle, and called on us to make long-term commitments to the future of both countries. They said we must openly confront problems in our relationships with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – and that we must build a relationship based on other interests besides oil.

Most importantly, the Commission called on us to focus on winning the battle for the hearts and minds of the majority of Arabs and Muslims who just need to know there is hope for a better future.

The American people look to us for security. The world looks to us for leadership. We will disappoint none and inspire all.

Thank you Madam Chairman.