

Statement of Senator Susan M. Collins

Nomination of the Jane Holl Lute to be Deputy
Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

March 26, 2009

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I join the Chairman in welcoming Jane Holl Lute to our Committee today as we consider her nomination to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. It is a credit to her that Mayor Bloomberg has taken the time to introduce her today and that she has strong support from our nation's first responder organizations.

The Deputy Secretary of DHS wields considerable power over the day-to-day operations of the Department. The Deputy has historically played an important role in

the management of the Department – from acquisition policy to personnel management. These management responsibilities are in addition to many other challenges associated with the operation of a Department with 210,000 employees and the mission to secure our borders, protect our nation’s critical infrastructure, and to help prevent, prepare for, and respond to all hazards.

Last year alone, the Department spent more than \$14 billion in contracts for goods and services. The Department has faced significant challenges in many of its major acquisition programs, particularly in information technology programs. These acquisitions will need immediate and frequent attention from the Deputy Secretary to get them on track.

Senator Lieberman and I have been strong advocates for reforms that have resulted in greater competition,

accountability, and transparency to federal contracting. Strong management, however, is also required.

Ms. Lute has experience dealing with a troubled acquisition process, such as the intensely criticized one at the United Nations. I will be asking her about this experience, including whether a non-competitive award requested by the U.N. Department of Field Support could have been avoided through better planning.

From her time at the National Security Council and the U.N., Ms. Lute also has experience resolving interagency conflicts within the U.S. government and disputes between foreign governments and other stakeholders. If she is confirmed, Ms. Lute will need all these skills, and more, as she attempts to forge consensus and close collaboration among the Department's components. She will have to ensure that

the Department's views and equities are forcefully represented in interagency negotiations with the dozens of departments and agencies that play a role in our nation's homeland security efforts.

The protection of our nation's critical infrastructure from emerging threats will also be an important priority for the next Deputy Secretary. Among the significant challenges in this area are the need to enhance security at the nation's biological laboratories and throughout our cyber-infrastructure. Laws that I co-authored to improve the security of seaports and chemical facilities will need to be reauthorized during this Congress.

The next Deputy Secretary will also play a key role in the Department's emergency preparedness efforts. The Deputy must have a close collaborative relationship with the FEMA Administrator, so that FEMA continues to work

well within DHS to ensure that as a nation we are prepared for the next major disaster, whether natural or man-made. Planning, training, and exercising are important areas in which DHS has made much progress but still has more work to do. The Deputy Secretary must also ensure that its many partners at the state and local level and in the private sector are fully involved with DHS initiatives.

I look forward to working with the Secretary and the next Deputy Secretary to continue to strengthen the Department.

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