

**Opening Statement of
Senator Susan M. Collins**

**“Charting a Path Forward: The Homeland Security Department's
Quadrennial Homeland Security Review and Bottom-Up Review”
July 21, 2010**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on the need to establish clear priorities for the Department of Homeland Security, the federal entity created to help protect our country from terrorism and other threats. As has been stated many times, if you try to protect everything, you end up protecting nothing. So, it is incumbent upon the Department – particularly when budgets are tight – to set detailed priorities to improve the preparedness and security of our nation.

The Department’s Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) was a good first attempt to outline strategic homeland security missions and goals.

Yet, the Department acknowledged that the QHSR was incomplete, so it conducted a follow-on review. This assessment, known as the “Bottom-Up Review” (BUR) was intended to set priorities for security initiatives and reorganization at the Department.

While I appreciate the Department’s effort to undertake such a comprehensive analysis, the results are disappointing. Indeed, the two reviews simply don’t compare to the level of planning and analysis that goes into the Quadrennial Defense Review and supporting documents.

For example, in the QDR and the Navy’s shipbuilding plan, the Department of Defense outlines specific measurable goals – such as a 313-ship Navy. The 30-year shipbuilding plan includes a force structure, construction plan, funding assumptions, and specific articulation of risk inherent in the force projections.

By comparison, the QHSR and BUR amount essentially to high-level strategy documents that provide little in the way of concrete goals or the actions needed to achieve them.

For example, the reviews set some DHS goals to eliminate unnecessary duplication, to decrease operational inefficiencies, and to promote cyber security. But, without specific, measurable plans, how does Congress hold the Department accountable for meeting these goals?

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In these documents, the Department highlights the critical need to address the threat of a cyber attack and indeed lists cyber security as one of its five strategic “pillars.” Nevertheless, the President’s budget request for fiscal year 2011 cut the Department’s cybersecurity budget by \$19 million. How can the Department shoulder even the general responsibilities of an entire “pillar” while cutting the associated budget? The documents do not explain this contradiction, nor outline how the Department plans to do more with less.

As co-author with the Chairman and Senator Carper of comprehensive and bipartisan cyber security legislation, I am disappointed that these reviews do not identify the authorities and resources that DHS will need to enhance its cyber security capabilities. The legislation this Committee approved last month would fill that gap.

The BUR also fails to provide any specificity on how the Department will reduce its overreliance on contractors. I have raised this concern with the Secretary repeatedly. A recent Washington Post investigation revealed that “six out of 10 employees” at the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis are from private industry. This is on top of the revelation that an astonishing 50 percent of the DHS workforce are contractors. This is unacceptable.

While contractors play an important role in augmenting the federal workforce, they cannot displace it. But what does the DHS report say? Simply that “DHS will continue to build on [contractor conversion] efforts at an even more aggressive pace” That is not a plan; it’s a platitude.

Like a compass, the QHSR should aid the Department in aligning its budget requests with homeland security priorities. And, in turn, these priorities would help Congress evaluate the President’s budget requests against measurable goals.

The reviews that the Department has presented to Congress accomplish none of these tasks - they do not include a budget plan for the Department nor assess how the organizational structure can better meet the national homeland security strategy.

The QHSR also slights the strategic threat posed by violent Islamist extremists by refusing to call that real and present danger what it is. This is ironic considering that the introduction to the QHSR discusses the Christmas Day attack - an attack conducted by a violent Islamist extremist.

The Review does not reference “violent Islamist extremism” or any variation of that phrase in the entirety of its 108 pages. And it refers to

“homegrown extremists” only once. That is astonishing given the alarming increase in the number of homegrown terrorist plots last year. In sharp contrast, the October 2007 *National Strategy for Homeland Security* uses the word “Islamic” 15 times and the word “homegrown” eight times.

The BUR fails to describe how the Department will confront the threat of home-based terrorism. If DHS does not acknowledge the nature of the threat or explain how the Department intends to counter it, Congress and the American people cannot judge how the Department’s counterterrorism efforts are reflected in its budget and priorities.

I look forward to hearing from the Department’s Deputy Secretary about how more concrete and actionable plans will be developed. Such planning is necessary to improve the efficiency of Department operations and to build sensible budget plans. Only then will the time and effort spent on these reviews pay dividends in the form of a usable roadmap to better protect the American people.