

**RESTRUCTURING GOVERNMENT
TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE MILLENNIUM**
SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing today on the challenges facing our government in the new millennium. I hope this will be the first of several hearings that will discuss how we should respond to the rapid changes our nation is undergoing -- changes brought about by technological advancements, by our expanding and increasingly global economy, and by the new and more diverse threats to our nation and our world. In order for our government to respond best to these new challenges, we will have to rethink its structure and organization.

I am pleased that the Comptroller General is here today to talk about his plans for ensuring that the General Accounting Office can meet the American public's needs during this period of dramatic change. I hope he will also give us his thoughts on the "Government for the 21st Century Act," which Chairman Thompson and I re-introduced yesterday.

In the last century, America made stunning progress on many fronts, like the near universal ascent of automobiles, major breakthroughs in civil rights, and understanding the structure of DNA. We also suffered through some dark developments: two World Wars, virulent diseases such as AIDS, and the creation of new hazards to our lives and our environment that have sometimes been the unfortunate price of advancement.

We know that the 21st Century will offer its own set of breakthroughs and threats. And just as our society was profoundly influenced by technology in the last century, we know the changes of the new millennium will be driven even more powerfully by technological advancements. These advancements will have a major impact on America, some of which we can anticipate but much of which we probably cannot.

We now have an opportunity at the beginning of this new century, to look at the architecture of our government and make adjustments, if necessary, to improve its ability to respond to these challenges in the most streamlined, cost-efficient way. The Commission that will be established under the "Government for the 21st Century Act" is designed to consider these questions.

We must also continue to implement reforms previously passed by Congress, such as those required by the Government Performance and Results Act, that will help convert agencies into high-performing organizations with clearly defined missions and results-oriented management. These efforts will help agencies make better use of their resources and respond more capably to the issues they face.

I know that the General Accounting Office has been instrumental in evaluating agencies' progress in implementing these reforms and that GAO is also looking inward to determine whether its current structure is designed to meet Congress' needs into the future. The agency's strategic plan, which we will be discussing today, identifies many of the challenges that will confront government in the coming years and sets out a plan for how to deal with them. So, I am pleased GAO is focusing on these questions to help us remain effective in the future and I look forward to the Comptroller General's thoughts on these issues.