

## **Tough and Smart on Homeland Security**

### Preventing Attacks and Protecting Americans at Home

*A Message Memo by the Third Way National Security Staff*

#### **The Message:**

George Bush and a conservative Congress have talked tough, but they have failed to take some of the most basic steps to secure us against a future terrorist attack.

I will fight for a tough and smart new strategy to prevent future attacks and protect us at home.

#### **Offering a New Plan**

*I believe we need to be tough about preventing another attack, and that means good intelligence and cooperation with security partners. We also need to be smarter about building a strong defense at home, both to allow Americans to go about their daily lives without fear and to deter the criminals who would attack us.*

*When elected to Congress, I will:*

#### **1. Prevent Threats from Reaching Our Shores**

##### **Problem:**

Thanks to the Bush Administration's inept and arrogant policies, there may be even more terrorists today with the desire and the means to attack the United States than there were before 9-11. At the same time, Bush still hasn't built a 21<sup>st</sup> century intelligence capability to stop these attacks.

##### **Solution:**

Work with security partners all over the world to collect, share, and act on information about criminals planning attacks and improve the capacity of our intelligence agencies to share information. Improve the FBI's ability to conduct terrorism investigations.

##### **Policy:**

*Build up our human intelligence collection and recruit more intelligence operatives who speak Middle Eastern and Central Asian languages. Raise the quality and standing of the FBI's national security workforce. Create the means and incentives for agencies to share information and provide oversight of these efforts. Improve intelligence cooperation with global security partners.*

## 2. Enact the Recommendations of the 9-11 Commission

### **Problem:**

The bi-partisan 9-11 Commission gave us the best lesson plan we could want for building our national defense. But George Bush, Dick Cheney and their allies in Congress flunked the test — even though they have spent \$40 billion on homeland security, they have no plan. Instead they have dragged their heels on adopting the Commission's recommendations, just as they tried to block the creation of the Commission in the first place. In December 2005, the Commission said it was "very disappointed" in Administration and congressional progress on protecting Americans at home — giving 14 "D" or "F" grades on a 17-item report card.

### **Solution:**

Enact the 9-11 Commission recommendations with a sense of urgency. If we follow these recommendations, we will be far more successful at securing targets in the US, keeping the terrorists out, and preventing another attack. If the worst case scenario does happen, these recommendations will strengthen our ability to withstand a crisis and respond effectively.

### **Policy:**

*Adopt the recommendations of the 9-11 Commission, with particular emphasis on improving the following: border security; the protection of all modes of passenger and cargo transportation, including port security; the Incident Command System, our domestic command and control system during a crisis; our intelligence collection and the sharing of information among agencies; and an assessment of our critical infrastructure.*

## 3. Put Competence Over Cronyism

### **Problem:**

I'm not sure why George Bush put the head of the Arabian Horse Association in charge of FEMA, but the people of the Gulf Coast paid the price. This Administration has spent \$40 billion on homeland security and can't even help one city. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita made it brutally clear that the Bush Administration and Congress do not take homeland security seriously, putting political hacks in charge of key government functions, starving these agencies of resources and attention, and even attempting to sell off the ownership of our ports without taking security into consideration. As a result, this country has lost ground in our ability to protect our borders and respond to crises.

### **Solution:**

Put the professionals back in charge and turn the Department of Homeland Security into an agency that is actually functional, with a clear mission and

competent leadership. Congress and the Administration must be smart about spending homeland security dollars where they're needed and exercising oversight to make sure the US government is up to the task.

### **Policy:**

*Staff DHS with seasoned professionals and give them a coherent national strategy and streamlined bureaucracy. Make the National Response Plan more than a piece of paper — ensure all Federal, state, and local governments know and train their role in the plan. Distribute homeland security dollars according to risk assessments, particularly of systems most vulnerable to attack, such as ports and transit systems. Increase the size of the regular military force and bring the National Guard home.*

## **Criticizing Bush and the Congressional Majority**

The Bush Administration has chosen to use frightening rhetoric instead of taking the tough actions that will keep us safer.

***We saw in New Orleans that this Administration is not competent when it comes to keeping us safe, even with advance warning about a disaster.***

- They have spent \$40 billion and still failed to create a homeland security system that can actually respond in a crisis.
- They have failed to protect our borders from illegal immigrants seeking jobs, let alone from terrorists seeking to do us harm.
- They have failed to set up airplane passenger and cargo screening systems that work efficiently.
- They have failed to safeguard the security of our ports.
- They have failed to make sure intelligence agencies can talk to each other.
- They have failed to find security solutions that maintain our safety and protect our privacy.

***In the face of an enemy constantly on the move, the leaders of this Congress have chosen business as usual — pork and politics — over serious reform.***

- They aren't doing their job of oversight — anyone who flies knows that the Transportation Security Agency is a mess.
- Important reforms in the intelligence community still sit on the shelf.
- They haven't done enough to make sure our first responders have the tools they need, such as radio access to the public airwaves.

## Responding to Attacks

### **Attack:**

*Liberals are weak on homeland security and won't keep us safe.*

### **Response:**

We've had five years of tough talk and color-coded scare tactics from President Bush and his team in Congress, but they have failed the test here at home. They have spent \$40 billion, trying to be all things to all people without a plan. Instead, they have missed the chance to fully reform our intelligence services. They have failed to make sure law enforcement and first responders can communicate. They have favored special interests over safety at our nation's ports and critical infrastructure. They have put cronies in charge of key security agencies. And we saw after Hurricane Katrina how poorly the reorganized Department of Homeland Security functions in a crisis.

### **Attack:**

*It's liberals like you who stand in the way of real progress on homeland security, with your attachment to unions and old-fashioned ways of working.*

### **Response:**

This Administration said that it would bring a revolution to how government protects us — but when Hurricane Katrina hit, they were still drawing lines on organizational charts. I want our homeland security workforce to be flexible and adaptable, and I expect it to be well-qualified, decently-paid, and loyal. Right now, thanks to Congress and this Administration, we still don't have the workers we need or the leadership from the top that we deserve.

### **Attack:**

*You sound like you want terrorists to attack America.*

### **Response:**

Thanks to the hard work of law enforcement, military and intelligence forces, and diplomats, America has been safe. If there is another attack someday, it certainly won't be because progressives have been critical of the Administration. Karl Rove and other political hacks have used 9-11 for political gain for five years now and we deserve better. This Administration talks a lot about making America safer — I'll actually take the tough actions and make the smart investments that will keep America safe.