

Congressman Ron Paul U.S. House of Representatives July 23, 2002

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY- WHO NEEDS IT?

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Homeland Security, who needs it? Mr. Speaker, everyone agrees the 9-11 tragedy confirmed a problem that exists in our domestic security and dramatized our vulnerability to outside attacks. Most agree that the existing bureaucracy was inept. The CIA, the FBI, the INS, and Customs failed to protect us.

It was not a lack of information that caused this failure; they had plenty. But they failed to analyze, communicate, and use the information to our advantage.

The flawed foreign policy of interventionism that we have followed for decades significantly contributed to the attacks. Warnings had been sounded by the more astute that our meddling in the affairs of others would come to no good. This resulted in our inability to defend our own cities, while spending hundreds of billions of dollars providing more defense for others than for ourselves. In the aftermath, we were even forced to ask other countries to patrol our airways to provide security for us.

A clear understanding of private property and an owner's responsibility to protect it has been seriously undermined. This was especially true for the airline industry. The benefit of gun ownership and second amendment protections were prohibited. The government was given the responsibility for airline safety through FAA rules and regulations, and it failed miserably.

The solution now being proposed is a giant new federal department, and it is the only solution we are being offered, and one which I am certain will lead to tens of billions of dollars of new spending.

What is being done about the lack of emphasis on private property ownership? The security services are federalized. The airlines are bailed out and given guaranteed insurance against all

threats. We have made the airline industry a public utility that gets to keep its profits and pass on its losses to the taxpayers, like Amtrak and the post office. Instead of more ownership responsibility, we get more government controls.

Is the first amendment revitalized, and are owners permitted to defend their property, their passengers, and personnel? No, no hint of it, unless you are El Al airlines, which enjoys this right, while no others do.

Has anything been done to limit immigration from countries placed on the terrorist list? Hardly. Have we done anything to slow up immigration of individuals with Saudi passports? No, oil is too important to offend the Saudis.

Yet, we have done plenty to undermine the liberties and privacy of all Americans through legislation such as the PATRIOT Act. A program is being planned to use millions of Americans to spy on their neighbors, an idea appropriate for a totalitarian society. Regardless of any assurances, we all know that the national ID card will soon be instituted.

Who believes for a moment that the military will not be used to enforce civil law in the near future? Posse comitatus will be repealed by executive order or by law, and liberty, the Constitution, and the republic will suffer another major setback.

Unfortunately, foreign policy will not change, and those who suggest that it be strictly designed for American security will be shouted down for their lack of patriotism. Instead, war fever will build until the warmongers get their wish and we march on Baghdad, making us even a greater target of those who despise us for our bellicose control of the world.

A new department is hardly what we need. That is more of the same, and will surely not solve our problems. It will, however, further undermine our liberties and hasten the day of our national bankruptcy.

A common sense improvement to homeland security would allow the DOD to provide protection, not a huge, new, militarized domestic department. We need to bring our troops

home, including our Coast Guard; close down the base in Saudi Arabia; stop expanding our presence in the Muslim portion of the former Soviet Union; and stop taking sides in the long, ongoing war in the Middle East.

If we did these few things, we would provide a lot more security and protect our liberties a lot better than any new department ever will, and it will cost a lot less.