

And so far the Democrats in Congress have not drafted a bill I can sign. We've worked hard and in good faith with the Democrats to find a solution, but we are not going to put our national security at risk. Time is short. I'm going to ask Congress to stay in session until they pass a bill that will give our intelligence community the tools they need to protect the United States.

Thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. at the J. Edgar Hoover FBI Building. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007

August 3, 2007

Today I signed into law the "Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007." This legislation builds upon the considerable progress we have made in strengthening our defenses and protecting Americans since the attacks of September 11, 2001. In the largest restructuring of our Government since World War II, we created the Department of Homeland Security to better coordinate the protection and response capabilities of our Government. The Director of National Intelligence leads a restructured intelligence community that is better able to uncover, understand, and counter threats from terrorists. To implement the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, I have issued numerous Executive orders, Presidential directives, and national strategies. I have also signed into law the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, the PATRIOT Act, and other important pieces of legislation.

I am pleased that the legislation I signed today protects Americans from being unduly prosecuted for reporting activity that could lead to acts of terrorism. I also appreciate the steps taken to modernize the Visa Waiver Program, particularly the additional security measures, but I will continue to work with Congress to advance our security and foreign policy objectives by allowing greater flexibility to bring some of our closest allies into

the program. I will also continue to work with Congress to ensure the workability of the cargo screening provisions in a way that increases our vigilance on homeland security while ensuring the continuance of vital commerce. And I appreciate the willingness of Congress to remove several provisions that had previously generated concern.

There is still other work to be done. I continue to believe that Congress should act on the outstanding 9/11 Commission recommendations to reform the legislative branch's oversight of intelligence and counterterrorism activities, which the Commission described as dysfunctional. While this legislation does not heed the Commission's advice, I hope Congress revisits the issue soon.

I also believe it is important to recognize the urgent need for Congress to pass legislation to modernize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, a decades-old law that should be updated to address changes in communication technology while protecting the civil liberties of our citizens. The Director of National Intelligence has stated unequivocally that without this change in the law, we will continue to miss significant amounts of information that we should be collecting to protect against potential terrorist attacks.

Congress should also continue to strive to better target grant dollars to cities and States based on risk. This legislation makes some progress, but it also authorizes billions of dollars for grants and other programs that are unnecessary or should not be funded at such excessive levels. I will not request this excessive funding in my 2009 budget request.

I thank members of both parties in Congress who worked on this legislation, and I appreciate the willingness of members to strengthen provisions we believed would have weakened our security. Leaders in Washington should never forget that our most important duty is to protect the American people. I will continue to work with the Congress to ensure we are doing everything we can to keep our Nation safe.

NOTE: H.R. 1, approved August 3, was assigned Public Law No. 110-53.