

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 9, 2002

Dear Chairman Lieberman:

Thank you for your April 2 letter to Assistant to the President for Homeland Security Tom Ridge. The President and the Administration respect the important role played by the Congress with regard to homeland security, and appreciate your interest in and work on this vital issue.

The Administration is committed to meeting Congress' legitimate needs for information with respect to homeland security. For that reason, senior Administration officials, including members of the President's Cabinet and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, have testified before Congress on homeland security matters on numerous occasions since Governor Ridge became the President's advisor on October 8, 2001. These departments and agencies with operational and budget authority will continue to work with and testify before the Congress.

In addition, Governor Ridge has personally participated in over thirty-five meetings on Capitol Hill. Collectively, he and his staff have been involved in over one hundred meetings with members of Congress and their staffs on homeland security and budgetary matters. The Governor will continue to work closely with Congress, including the relevant Committees, in a manner consistent with this practice. In fact, during the next two weeks, he will be participating in a number of Congressional meetings, including one with the House Government Reform Committee and another with the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House Appropriations Committee and its subcommittees.

Your letter asks for an Administration official to testify on "how to organize the federal government to promote homeland security" and proposed legislation. The Administration would be pleased to assist the Committee's consideration, and Mitchell E. Daniels, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, is available to testify on Thursday.

Your letter specifically asks, in addition, for Governor Ridge to testify. Governor Ridge and his staff have already offered -- and remain available -- to brief you and the Committee this week, or as otherwise appropriate on homeland security issues, including this organizational issue, in a public setting.

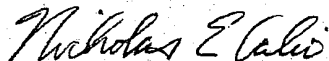
As to formal testimony, however, as Chief of Staff Card and I have informed Senators Byrd and Stevens, this Administration will adhere to the same policy that Presidents of both parties have long followed and that Congress has long respected: The President's immediate White House advisers and staff, such as Governor Ridge, ordinarily do not testify before Congress on policy matters. This principle has long applied to Presidential advisors such as the Chief of Staff, the Counsel, the National Security Advisor, and other immediate advisors of the President such as Governor Ridge. This principle of separation of powers protects the confidentiality of the President's relationship with his White House advisors and the President's ability to employ

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advisors who can devote their attention to assisting and advising the President as the President sees fit.

Finally, the Office of Homeland Security is transmitting, under separate cover, answers to the extensive questions previously sent to Governor Ridge by you. The answers to those multi-part questions are directly related to issues to be raised at the hearing. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Nicholas E. Calio
Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Chairman
Committee on Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510-6250