

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS,  
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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## **Statement of Rep. Christopher Shays September 22, 2004**

The *Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (“the 9/11 Commission”) gave us the first comprehensive, objective analysis of what went so tragically wrong that day three years ago. A unanimous Commission called for reflection and reevaluation, saying, “The United States should consider *what to do* - the shape and objectives of a strategy. Americans should also consider *how to do it* - organizing their government in a different way.”

Today, we respond to that call for a dialogue on the national strategies and tactics required to meet, and defeat, the threat of radical Islamist terrorism.

Prior to September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, this Subcommittee heard testimony based on the work of the three national commissions on terrorism – Bremer, Gilmore and Hart-Rudman – citing the need for a dynamic threat assessment and the lack of any overarching counterterrorism strategy. Later, we were told the 2002 *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, the 2003 *National Strategy to Combat Terrorism* and other high-level policy statements addressed the need for a post-Cold War security paradigm that replaced containment and mutually assured destruction with detection, prevention and, at times, preemptive action to protect the national security of the United States.

The Commissioners now ask us to consider whether those strategies adequately reflect the harsh realities and hard choices they confronted on our behalf.

To a large extent, they do. Current policies and spending guidance mirror many Commission recommendations on disruption of terror networks abroad and protection of Americans at home.

But the 9/11 panel seeks greater strategic clarity in characterizing the threat. "Terrorism" is a tactic, not an enemy. A "war against terror" targets an incorporeal emotion. The Commission argues for a strategy based on a realistic assessment of the threat posed by radicals perverting religion, Islamists, whose motivations, goals and capabilities can be estimated, analyzed and countered.

And the Commission looks for a far sharper strategic focus on public diplomacy to supplant the toxic ideology of hatred and death that seeks both global and generational reach. They believe underutilization of the so-called "soft powers" of communication and persuasion leaves us without an effective long-term strategy to address the root causes of Islamist terrorism.

Strategy articulates a goal, a desired end state, a long-term objective achieved by artful orchestration of the means and ends of national power. But in the modern context, against a foe insidiously detached from the civilizing norms of statecraft, strategy must be as much process as product, more verb than noun. The key to modern security is dynamic strategic thinking, not a static strategic balance. The 9/11 Commission recommendations challenge us to strive for that new level of strategic vigilance.

We are grateful for the Commission's work, and for the contribution of the two Commission members testifying today. We look forward to their testimony, and that of all our witnesses.