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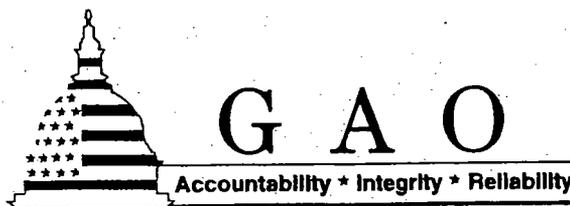
Testimony
Before the Committee on Government
Reform, House of Representatives

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9/11 COMMISSION
REPORT

Reorganization,
Transformation, and
Information Sharing

Statement of the Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General of the United States



Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

We at GAO applaud the efforts of the 9/11 Commission and the dedicated family members of the victims of that tragic day whose combined efforts have resulted in a definitive account of the past events, and a number of constructive recommendations for the future. The sorrow, loss, anger, and resolve so evident immediately following the September 11, 2001, attacks have been combined in an effort to help assure that our country will never again be caught unprepared. As the Commission notes, we are safer today but we are not safe, and much work remains. Although in today's world we can never be 100 percent secure, and we can never do everything everywhere, we concur with the Commission's conclusion that the American people should expect their government to do its very best.

GAO's mission is to help the Congress improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people. GAO has been actively involved in improving government's performance in the critically important homeland security area both before and after the September 11 attacks. For example, GAO issued over 100 reports on homeland security-related issues and recommended the creation of a national focal point for homeland security before the attacks. We have also been privileged to actively support this Congress and the 9/11 Commission through details of key personnel, testimony before the Congress and the Commission, and sharing our research, products, and experiences.

Just a few days after the tragic events of September 11, I testified about various challenges and strategies to address both our short- and long-term homeland security needs and outlined a framework for addressing our nation's efforts. I emphasized that we as a nation must find the best ways to sustain our efforts over a significant time period, and leverage our finite human, financial, and technological resources in ways that would have the greatest impact. At that time, I identified several key questions that our government needed to address in order to improve the security of the homeland:¹

1. What are our vision and national objectives to make our homeland more secure?

¹U.S. General Accounting Office. *Homeland Security: A Framework for Addressing the Nation's Efforts*, GAO-01-1158T (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 21, 2001).

