

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2006

LIEBERMAN: DHS FAR FROM BEING A WELL-OILED MACHINE

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Ranking Member Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., Wednesday issued the following statement in response to a Department of Homeland Security Inspector General report on management challenges facing the Department:

“The DHS Inspector General’s report, out today, is just the latest confirmation that Secretary Chertoff and the leadership at DHS must work even harder to integrate the Department’s component parts, get them to share information more readily, and ensure financial controls over the vast sums of money the Department is spending to protect the American people from terrorist attack or natural disaster.

“With 180,000 employees, the Department of Homeland Security is the third largest cabinet agency in the federal government and was born of the largest merger of federal agencies in half a century. No one expected that the Department would automatically work as a well-oiled machine. A merger of this size takes time, sometimes years, for all the various parts to work well together. And that is certainly the case for DHS.

“While the Department has clearly added to the security of the nation since the terrorist attacks of 2001, DHS continues to face major management problems, as we saw most recently during Hurricane Katrina.

“Legislation that Senator Collins and I developed to recreate FEMA has now been signed into law. That should be a good starting point toward improving many of the management challenges facing the Department. Furthermore, as incoming Chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Committee, I intend to monitor closely the Department's progress toward becoming the efficient and effective Department the American people need it to be.”