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LIEBERMAN, COLLINS CITE DHS PROGRESS, BUT MORE WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE

WASHINGTON – Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Joe Lieberman, ID-Conn., and Ranking Member Susan Collins, R-Me., Thursday, armed with a new status report on the Department of Homeland Security, said the Department has made progress in achieving some of its mission goals since it was established in early 2003 but has faltered in achieving others.

The new report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) entitled “DHS: Progress Report on Implementation of Mission and Management Functions” found that significant progress has been made to improve maritime security, a subject on which the Committee has spent a great deal of time. Only moderate progress has been made in areas such as aviation security and critical infrastructure protection, while DHS has failed to achieve a comprehensive strategy for an agency wide transformation. GAO also said the Department has not adequately involved the private sector in preventing potential attacks and its emergency preparedness and response capabilities are not yet sufficient for responding to man-made or natural disasters.

“The report confirms what many of us have believed,” Lieberman said. “First, that the Department has made important progress establishing programs and procedures that make us safer today than we were before the September 11 attacks. And, second, that there are also serious deficiencies at the Department that require more focused attention and resources than they have received to

date. My observation, confirmed by DHS and GAO, is that the Department is doing a better job in fulfilling its missions than it is in managing its internal operations.”

“That DHS should be a work in progress after only four years should be a surprise to no one,” Collins said. “It is however, disturbing to see ‘limited progress’ in four areas as critical as human-capitol management, information technology management, science and technology, and emergency preparedness and response. I am pleased that the report cites significant progress in the area of maritime security since our Committee has worked very hard on that issue. But nearly six years after September 11, 2001, four years after its creation, and two years after Hurricane Katrina, the Department must pick up the pace of its progress. GAO’s report should serve as a roadmap in this effort. With so much at stake and so many areas where progress is still required, America cannot settle for a mixed report card.”

GAO praised the Department’s efforts to improve aviation security, noting that DHS achieved 17 of the 24 performance expectations GAO identified in this area. The Department had moderate success in protecting the nation’s critical infrastructure, achieving four out of the seven GAO-identified expectations. For emergency preparedness, however, DHS failed to meet 18 of 24 expectations, achieving little or no success. The Department’s science and technology initiatives failed to achieve success in five of the six performance goals identified by GAO.

“We still have a long way to go before the many components of the Department work as an integrated whole,” said Lieberman. “The lessons of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina taught us that they must work together seamlessly to ensure a proper federal response that uses every tool available. I look forward to working with Secretary Chertoff to fix the flaws that GAO outlined in its report. The country deserves a Department that performs at the highest level.”

Click [here](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-454) (<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-454>) for a copy of the GAO report: