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THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Friday, September 9, 2005

Public Address by DHS Science & Technology Undersecretary Charles E. McQueary
To START and its affiliates

MCQUEARY: Good morning. I'm pleased to join you today to take part in a special event that is part of the University of Maryland's year-long celebration of its 150th year. Today Maryland's National Center for the Study of Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism is up and running and gathering steam to push into new areas of research that will contribute to a broader understanding of terrorism and how to combat it.

START marks an exciting new chapter for the Department of Homeland Security in our efforts to collaborate with the academic and research communities to address some of the most pressing challenges we face in detecting, preventing and responding to threats against the nation.

I'm delighted to be back here on the Maryland campus. I was last here in January with Tom Ridge when he announced the University as the home of the fourth Homeland Security Center of Excellence. One of the things I remember about that event is Tom Ridge's declaration that "Plenty of people have reasons to 'Fear the Turtle' — and it's about time the terrorists did, too." Because the Maryland START Center will help strengthen the nation's ability to understand the root causes behind acts of terror and the motivations of terrorists and those who enable them. And that is unwelcome news for terrorists. Because the more we know about the underlying factors that foment terrorism, the better prepared we are to fight and ultimately defeat it.

One of the reasons the Department decided to establish a Center of Excellence dedicated to the social and psychological aspects of terrorism is because this is a vital, often overlooked piece of the terrorism puzzle. It is an area that deserves close examination. Because the fact is: We do not fully understand the enemy we face today. The culture, lifestyle, belief system and practices of our adversary provide a stark contrast to our own.

In our pursuit of technological solutions to the problem of terrorism, we cannot exclude human factors solutions. We need to detect not only WHAT weapons terrorists may have at their disposal, but WHO is likely to utilize a WMD. The understanding of the targets of terrorism should not overshadow our investigation of the perpetrators of these acts — such analyses go hand in hand. START's work fills a vital need for the Science &

Technology directorate to better screen, detect, and prevent acts of terrorism through our understanding of terrorist group behavior, recruitment, and motivations.

In our quest for solutions, we must ask ourselves: Why do young men turn to violent extremism? What makes them want to kill large numbers of people in surprise attacks? Why are they so willing to die in the process? We have many questions, and not enough answers. START will help us advance our knowledge of the underlying causes of terrorism.

This gathering today brings together policymakers, first responders, and members of both the academic research and the intelligence communities to focus on the social and psychological factors that provide a springboard, if you will, for acts of terror.

The panel discussions that will follow my remarks are the beginning of a dialogue with key communities about START priorities and its research agenda. Getting a sense of stakeholder interests, requirements and related activities in START's area of focus is important. And establishing a process to continue our conversation is essential.

In the months ahead, we will develop an effective roadmap that addresses the many social and psychological considerations that must be part of this effort.

Each one of us brings different experiences and perspectives to the table. None of us have all the answers. But everyone here has something of value to contribute to this effort.

Before I conclude my remarks, I wanted to say a few words about the hurricane disaster that has captured the attention of the nation and the global community.

It is a long, difficult road ahead for the Gulf Coast communities that have been devastated by Hurricane Katrina — one that will be made easier by the support of the American people, nonprofit organizations, the business community, and federal, state and local authorities. The logistics, timing and adequacy of the federal, state and local government response to Katrina is something that will long be debated. But I want to assure you that DHS is fully committed to doing our part to assist state and local governments in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama and to help residents and businesses get back on their feet again.

The DHS mission is All Hazards, and it is our practice at the Science & Technology directorate to ensure that, wherever possible, the equipment and technology that we develop can be used to respond to natural disasters as well as well as intentional and accidental man-made disasters.

S&T staff dedicated to R&D in the area of critical infrastructure protection has been supporting the Gulf Coast relief effort. We have been providing subject matter expertise in areas that include emergency responder communications, evacuation logistics, hazardous biological materials disposal, and site preparation and rapid deployment of

mobile and modular shelters. S&T has also contributed modeling and simulation analysis in such areas as petroleum shortages and disease impacts.

Our staff includes engineers and scientists who have a broad mix of experience in biological detection, public health, and site contamination and infrastructure restoration and who stand ready to contribute technical and scientific expertise to the recovery effort in the weeks and months ahead.

In addition, many members of our staff are joining other DHS employees as volunteers to support FEMA in the relief effort.

Three days from now, we will mark the fourth anniversary of a defining moment in American history — September 11, 2001. I've often said that on 9-11 we did not become more vulnerable; rather, we became aware of our vulnerabilities. On that tragic day, the American people paid a heavy price. As long as we have adversaries in the world who are committed to disrupting and destroying our free and open society — and taking as many lives as possible in the process — we cannot let our guard down. Because we know that for terrorist, the greatest prize of all is a successful catastrophic attack against America.

Since 9-11, the nation has made great strides to better secure the nation in the air, on land and at sea. Yet we know that a great deal remains to be done. The nation faces major threats to our homeland. Threats that come in the form of a potential chemical, biological, radiological/nuclear, explosives or a cyber attack. And threats, like hurricanes and floods, that are acts of nature. It seems that August 29, 2005 — the date Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast — is destined to be another defining moment in our nation's history.

I am confident that with the help of our many partners — those of you here today — and our partners across the nation and the globe, we will continue to build our capabilities to combat terrorism and other disasters here and abroad... so that one day the world may be a safer place for all humanity. Thank you for your time.

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