

MARKLE FOUNDATION

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In Testimony to Senate Judiciary Committee

Markle Task Force Calls for Virtual Reorganization of Government to Strengthen National Security

Washington, DC, January 20, 2010—A plan for the “virtual reorganization of government” using the best technology to connect the dots and the best management know-how to get people working across agency lines can strengthen our national security and help meet the threat of terrorism, according to testimony submitted today to a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing by Zoe Baird, president of the Markle Foundation, and former Senator Slade Gorton, both of whom are members of the Markle Task Force on National Security in the Information Age. Senator Gorton also served on the 9/11 Commission.

“In the wake of the attempted Christmas Day attack on Flight 253, it is essential to distinguish between amassing dots and connecting them,” they told the Judiciary Committee in written testimony in connection with today’s hearing, entitled *Securing America’s Safety: Improving the Effectiveness of Anti-Terrorism Tools and Inter-Agency Communication*. “Information sharing is a means, not an end. The end goal is production of actionable intelligence derived from a form of collaboration that leads to insight and action.”

The Markle Task Force is composed of national security policymakers from every administration since President Carter, civil liberties advocates, and information technology experts. It has been working since 2002 to improve national security, issuing four separate [reports](#) and a number of supplemental [briefs](#). The recommendations of the Markle Task Force on information sharing were embraced by the 9/11 Commission and the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, and were enacted in the intelligence reform laws passed since the September 11 attacks. The most recent report, in March 2009, [Nation At Risk: Policy Makers Need Better Information to Protect the Country](#) (available at www.markle.org), urged the President and Congress to take swift action to ensure that policy makers have the best information available to confront a stark set of 21st century national security challenges.

The Markle Task Force is calling for immediate action to prepare America for the future by addressing the cultural, institutional, and technological obstacles that prevented the government from taking full advantage of information about the attempted Christmas Day attack. Specifically, the Markle Task Force offered five proposals to the Committee:

- strong sustained leadership from Congress and the President
- transformation of how government does business to create a decentralized information sharing framework that enables collaboration not only between computers but among teams of people
- development of “discoverability” so that relevant information can be discovered and located quickly and efficiently to facilitate quickly piecing information together
- discoverability should be combined with a standard of authorized use to determine whether a user is authorized to see information that has been discovered
- development of government-wide privacy and civil liberties policies for information sharing to match increased technological capabilities to collect, store, and analyze data

“Our enemies will continue to adapt,” the Markle Task Force members told the Committee. “The next attack may not come from the air. Improved information sharing is a long-term strategic tool that will allow the US to stay one step ahead of its enemies whether they are attempting to attack our critical infrastructure in cyberspace, deploy biological weapons, or smuggle explosives through airport security.”

A copy of the complete testimony submitted to the Judiciary Committee is available at www.markle.org, where you will also find the four reports of the Task Force on National Security in the Information Age, issue briefs, and current information on these issues.

The Markle Foundation works to realize the full potential of information and information technology to address critical public needs, particularly in the areas of health and national security. Markle collaborates with innovators and thought leaders from the public and private sectors whose expertise lies in the areas of information technology, privacy, civil liberties, health, and national security.

The Markle Task Force on National Security in the Information Age is a diverse and bipartisan group of former policymakers from the past six presidential administrations, senior information technology executives, and privacy advocates from both the public and private sectors. The Markle Task Force has recommended ways of improving national security decisions by transforming business processes and how information is shared. Its recommendations informed the 9/11 Commission Report and were subsequently included in two federal laws. Visit www.markle.org/markletaskforce to learn more about the Markle Task Force.

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