

MARKLE FOUNDATION

For Immediate Release

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New Report Released by the Markle Foundation Task Force on National Security in the Information Age

“Nation At Risk: Policymakers Need Better Information to Protect the Country”

**Nation still at risk of terrorist attacks because we are still unable to
connect the dots.**

Washington, DC, March 10, 2009 – A Markle Foundation report issued today says that the continued lack of information sharing between federal, state, and local agencies puts the US at risk of terrorist attack and emerging national security threats. At the same time, civil liberties are at risk because we don't have the government-wide policies in place to protect them as intelligence collection has expanded.

The findings are the work of the Markle Foundation Task Force on National Security in the Information Age, a bipartisan group of former policy makers and technology and national security experts. The report urges the Obama Administration to take swift action to ensure that policy makers have the best information available to confront a stark set of national security challenges including terrorism, instability from the global economic crisis, energy security, climate change, cyber security, and weapons of mass destruction.

“For all the nation has invested in national security since 9/11, we remain vulnerable to terrorist attack and emerging national security threats because we have not adequately improved our ability to connect the dots between intelligence gathering and threat protection.” said Markle Task Force co-chair Zoe Baird, president of the Markle Foundation. “We still don't know what we know about these threats.”

According to Markle Task Force member and former Senator Slade Gorton, “The sense of urgency on information sharing has diminished in the seven years since the 9/11 attacks. In addition, civil liberties are at risk because we don't have the policies in place to protect them as intelligence collection has expanded.”

The report recommends that President Obama and his administration provide sustained leadership on information sharing among all branches of government, including state and local entities. Further, Congress should increase the intensity of its efforts to provide the necessary oversight to protect the nation.

Markle Task Force Member and former General Counsel to the CIA Jeffrey H. Smith added, “To identify, understand, and respond to the threats we face, President

Obama and his administration should take the steps necessary to bring together fragments of information to create knowledge and improve decision making. Otherwise, we will remain at risk.”

Key Recommendations

Key recommendations of the report include the following:

- **The President must make information sharing a top priority** by establishing leadership that can manage and oversee implementation across government.
- To ensure confidence that the increased use of technological capabilities to collect, store, share, and analyze information is lawful and appropriate, **the President and Congress must develop government-wide privacy policies** that both empower and constrain government officials in how they use and handle information.
- All government information relevant to national security must be **discoverable** by those who need to have that information for their mission. Access to that information must be **authorized** based on their role, mission, and a predicated purpose, and **audited** to improve accountability and enhance information security.

About the Markle Task Force

Since April 2002, the Markle Foundation Task Force on National Security in the Information Age, a diverse and bipartisan group of experienced former policymakers from the Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton and Bush administrations, senior executives from the information technology industry, and privacy advocates, has recommended ways to improve national security decisions by transforming business processes and the way information is shared. Its recommendations informed the 9/11 Commission Report and were subsequently included in two laws.

Over the last few months, a Steering Committee of Markle Task Force members has interviewed numerous officials in the Executive Branch and the Congress on the state of information sharing in order to identify priorities for the new administration, which now includes several former Markle Task Force members.

More information about the Markle Task Force, including a full list of members, is available at www.markle.org/markletaskforce.

To download a copy of “**Nation At Risk: Policymakers Need Better Information to Protect the Country**” please visit www.markle.org or www.markletaskforce.org.

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