HOMELAND SECURITY EXPERTS GROUP (HSEG)

2022 HOMELAND SECURITY ENTERPRISE FORUM

WELCOME:

SECURITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Salamander Resort & Spa

Middleburg, Virginia

Monday, October 24, 2022

Opening Ceremony

 MR. WALKER: All right. Good afternoon, everyone.

 (Chorus of good afternoon.)

 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Jane. Welcome to the second annual Homeland Security Enterprise Forum. We're so delighted you're here today and we're excited about the conference in the next couple of days ahead. Today, we look forward to engaging with you and thought leadership around the most critical challenges related to our domestic national security.

 I am Rob Walker; I'm the Executive Director of the Homeland Security Experts Group. We are your hosts for this conference. And we look forward to your feedback and your thoughts on how we can all play a better and stronger role in security through partnership environment in Homeland Security.

 We gather this year close to the 20th anniversary of the passage of the Homeland Security Act of 2002. And in a moment, I'm going to invite Ms. Harman up to talk a bit about that in the formal welcome. But that was the act that created the Department of Homeland Security and the American experiment in Homeland Security Enterprise.

It codified it into our national psyche and into our National Homeland Security Systems. Many of HSEG's members were responsible for the foundation of that bill for the passage of it. And all of the members have worked throughout the years to mature and improve our way -- the way our nation approaches our domestic national security.

 Our mission at HSEG is threefold. To invigorate conversations, elevate above partisanship, and integrate solutions. And this forum helps us address all three of those facets. Last year, we had the privilege to host our inaugural forum and we heard your feedback on how to improve and engage more robustly across the enterprise. You asked for more opportunities to network. We've extended break times and lunchtimes. You asked for additional breakout sessions, we will host 14 this year across two different rounds. You asked to hear what was happening in the breakouts you did not get to attend. You'll get to hear from each of the co-chairs from all of the breakouts throughout Tuesday and Wednesday, on the high-level points that they discussed. You asked for more edgy content. The ability to extend this event by one extra night gave us the opportunity to put a marquee event on Tuesday. And we're proud to say that in partnership with Intelligence Squared U.S. Debates, we will host a debate on misinformation Tuesday night with four incredible debaters.

 To accommodate all of that, obviously, we had to extend the time. I know it's tough coming out to a place like the Salamander for 2-1/2 days. We appreciate your sacrifice.

 This event is meant to be a working conference. It's not meant to just get together to talk for talk sake. We are driving at as Jane reminds us constantly actionable recommendations. What is it that we can do in the next step to make the Homeland Security Enterprise better. We ask you to engage, present thoughtful questions, share your thought leadership to the breakouts and in the plenaries, and engage in our polling. Throughout our plenary sessions, you will see QR codes pop on the screen, each of the moderators of the plenary sessions have curated a survey for you to participate. They will get the results on the confidence monitor here and we'll fold that into their conversations throughout the next few days. Again, just scan the QR code with your mobile device and respond to the multiple choice polls.

 To the virtual audience I say welcome, it's good to have you with us as well. If you're not, you will be engaged too. You'll see on the web page where you're streaming this event, a Slido app. There you will have an opportunity to respond to the polls and ask questions to the moderators here, which I will curate and present to the moderators as the sessions go forward. To the in-person audience of course, Q&A will be available throughout most of the plenary sessions. We understand everyone will have a question for almost every plenary, but please be patient as we try to stick to the schedule.

 On the schedule, things are hectic and they have changed quite a bit. We appreciate your flexibility and understanding in that. The travel schedules of senior speakers throughout the conference have changed dramatically as we have approached the execution date. We have adjusted in every way that we can. So, if you are looking at the program journal, you're likely to see that the times, the flow of the plenary sessions have all changed. We will continue to update you through the website. And we will also provide print handouts each morning of the agenda for the day. So please, as you're coming back to appear here tomorrow morning, please grab a printed copy of that day's agenda.

 None of this would happen of course, without generous support and hard effort by a lot of folks. So, before we get too deep into this, I want to thank a few folks. First and foremost, I want to thank my partner and friend in this endeavor, Sarah Elzeini. Sarah, where are you? Thank you for all your efforts in outreach media communications and for your efforts in partnership building with our corporate sponsors. To our corporate sponsors, thank you. Of course, your financial support is critical to hosting at an event like this, in a venue like this, and for the extent that we are. But most importantly, your dialogue, your engagement, and your thought leadership are critical to how we continue to advance this enterprise.

 I'd like to thank our presenting partner, The Mitre Corporation. Yosry, where are you? Thank you. Looking from -- okay. I'd like to recognize our platinum and debate partner Intelligence Squared U.S. I'd like to thank them and recognize our Gold partners, American Airlines, the official travel airline of HSEF, CLEAR, Guidehouse, and Peraton; our Silver partners, AWS, Clarivate, Cornerstone, Google, Hidden Level, InfraGard National Members Alliance, Lockheed Martin, Microsoft Federal, Pangiam, SAIC and S2 Global; and our Bronze partners Accrete AI Government, GDIT, United Airlines, SEV1TECH, SIMS Software, Smiths Detection, and Whitney Strategic Services.

 And just so you know that it's not all the bigs that get to play in conferences like this. I'd like to thank also our startup small business and association partners, Airlines for America, Giant Oak, Logically and Instabase. Thank you all. And again, we look forward to engaging with you throughout the next few days.

 All right. Let's get started. I'd like to bring up for some formal opening remarks. One of the co-chairs of the Homeland Security Experts Group. You know her as the former congresswoman from California, the former chair of the House, Homeland Security Intelligence Subcommittee, the President Emerita of the Wilson Center, and a voice of reason and bipartisanship on all things security for the past 5 years or so. Is that right, Jane? I don't want -- Yes, yes.

 Please welcome to the stage, Ms. Jane Harman.

 (Applause)

 MS. HARMAN: Good afternoon and welcome. Rob is slightly taller than I am so, I hope you can hear me. I was trying to figure out what the 5 years meant that was trying to be nice, trying to be nice. I'm actually the great grandmother of the Homeland Security Department. And some of the great grandfather's are in this audience. And if you're not, you're remote hiding out somewhere. But it took a village to form a department after 9/11. And let me just give you some color about that before making a few other remarks.

 I was in the Congress for a long time, 17 years -- 17-1/2 years. Time slice when you're having fun. I went from that to the Wilson Center. And Rob you forgot that I have just become chair succeeding Michael Chertoff of Freedom House, which is the America's oldest Human Rights Organization. So, I'm very proud of that too. But at any rate, I was in Congress, it was Andy Card, chief of staff to George Bush. George Bush 43, who seemingly out of nowhere, proposed this giant department comprised of 22 departments and agencies in the government. All of which would form together to keep our country safe after 9/11.

 And it was a surprise to many of us who had thought that a coordinating office in the White House itself would be where the direction we would take. And here it was supported by the President. And we all decided, "Well, if the President will support this, we have to support this." And we did. And it was a big effort to get it passed by a bipartisan majority. I know that sounds like an oxymoron. And it was a big effort 2 years later to set up the Director of National Intelligence and coordinate our intelligence agencies by a large bipartisan majority, oxymoron number 2, but we did it. And what happened after that, not without bumps and starts, was and is, that America has not suffered another catastrophic attack since then.

 So, with all the depression, including mine about the upcoming election and the state of our politics, let's celebrate the fact that at the time a group of people in the United States Congress and outside worked together, together, to put the country first and set up some new organizations designed and to do that. And they have worked pretty well. Not perfectly, but pretty well.

 The first Homeland Security Secretary was and he is a lovely man named Governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania. He did a good job pulling this thing, large thing together. The second Homeland Security Secretary is sitting over there. And he is my adopted brother from another mother, Michael Chertoff. And we met when he was incoming as secretary, he had a very distinguished career before that on the Federal bench and in the Justice Department. But he was there and I was in my role in Congress. And we worked together and we still work together. And it is a huge honor for me to have shared the co-chair, the predecessor to this group, which was at the Aspen Institute and now to co-chair this group with Michael. So, Michael will appear a bit later and I think remotely. Am I giving away something I shouldn't say? No. It's okay. I'm very worried about classified material. But Ale Mayorkas will appear remotely Wednesday and Michael will moderate a conversation with him.

 But anyway, it's an honor to work with Michael. It's also an honor to work with Rob Walker and now The Mitre team. And I have to say, to watch this thing grow from last year to this year, next year I think we won't fit in the town of Middleburg, we'll have to move somewhere else take over Washington, D.C., maybe that's a good idea. And I have to congratulate you, Rob, I think we should all applaud the effort you've made, you personally, to build this organization.

 (Applause)

 So let me -- I think the one thing Rob didn't mention in his cosmic remarks was the title of this event, which is "Security Through Partnership." It has become clear over the years that government workers alone cannot keep our homeland safe. And that the relationships between the public and private sector are absolutely crucial. Most of the technologies in the private sector and the technology now is totally different than it was 20 years ago. And so, to make this group succeed and to make our homeland more secure, we absolutely need to leverage the talent in this room and outside this room, in the private sector. So, I do want to applaud, Rob listed them all, our private sector sponsors and the effort we are all making together security through partnership to make this a successful conference.

 Last comment, it is -- and this is personal from me. It is depressing to think that putting America first seems to be so hard. Our muscle memory is gone. And when you contemplate an election in 2 weeks, 2 weeks in this country and you think about what's going on in other countries around the world, good for the UK, they actually seem to have found a new leader pretty quickly. But when you think about this and you think about how much divides us, I hark back to the day that I started by talking about, which is when America was attacked and America responded.

 So, in that spirit, let us, in this room vow that we'll do whatever we can. This is certainly my vow, to use whatever talent we have. Even grandmothers still have some talent, just to tell you that. Whatever talent we have to add value to creating, recreating that sense of unity that we found in the ashes of the World Trade Center in the Pentagon over 20 years ago now.

 And thank you again, to all of you for wanting to be here, for wanting to work together, for wanting to find better, smarter bipartisan answers to the toughest problems. Welcome.

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