



**STATEMENT OF BOSTON MAYOR THOMAS MENINO,
PRESIDENT, U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS,
ON NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE**

July 16, 2002

“The nation’s mayors welcome the release of the first-ever national homeland security strategy. Governor Ridge has done an outstanding job seeking the input of mayors and keeping us informed. We appreciate his efforts and look forward to a continued close working relationship.

“The strategy calls for the streamlining of federal agencies into a Cabinet-level department, consolidation of the multitude of preparedness plans, an increased focus on border security and infrastructure protection, and the greater sharing of intelligence – all ideas that mayors have recommended and promoted.

“We are also pleased that the strategy specifically recognizes that cities across the nation are expending billions of dollars of previously unbudgeted resources to protect the homeland. But ten months after the horrific terrorist attack of 9/11, we are still awaiting federal assistance to support our efforts to ensure that cities are prepared for and can respond effectively to any emergency. We hope Congress will quickly approve funding that can be provided directly to cities, where it can be used most quickly and most effectively. Cities also need the flexibility to use this funding to help cover the massive cost of police overtime, which has strained many municipal budgets across the country.

“As stated in the strategy, cities are on the frontlines in our national effort to secure the homeland. That’s why it is critical that cities are provided with the direct resources they need.

“The federal-local relationship has been considerably strengthened since 9/11 and would only continue to improve under the President’s plan.”

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The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. The primary roles of the Conference of Mayors are to promote the development of effective national urban/suburban policy; strengthen federal-city relationships; ensure that federal policy meets urban needs; provide mayors with leadership and management tools; and create a forum in which mayors can share ideas and information.

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