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November 20, 2004

Thomas H. Kean and Lee H. Hamilton, former Chair and Vice Chair of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9-11 Commission) today released the following statement:

We want to congratulate the conferees upon the successful conclusion of the conference committee's deliberations. This conference report contains not only major reforms of the intelligence community, but significant measures to improve aviation and border security, and emergency preparedness and response. It addresses foreign policy, public diplomacy, and transitions between administrations. This bill implements a substantial portion of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations.

We want to thank all the conferees. We especially thank Senator Collins, Senator Lieberman, and Speaker Hastert. We thank President Bush for the attention and time he has given this important matter. We also want to recognize Congressman Hoekstra and Congresswoman Harman for their hard work. They did not give up. They refused to fail. This conference report is a testament to their dedication and effort. This conference report would not have been possible without their leadership.

We believe this is a good bill and a strong bill. We believe it will make our country safer and more secure.

We said that we would not support a bill unless it included a strong National Intelligence Director. This conference report includes the essential authorities necessary for the National Intelligence Director's success. It also creates a strong National Counterterrorism Center and an independent Privacy and Civil Liberties Board.

We understand that in the legislative process consensus is not possible without compromise. We also believe that the essential elements of the Commission's recommendations remain intact.

We are of the firm view that this conference report deserves the support of the House and the Senate. We urge the House and the Senate to clear this conference report for the President's signature.

Contact: Al Felzenberg
(202) 236-4878