



**Closing Statement – Mayors Summit on Emergency, Safety and Security
New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial, President, The U.S. Conference of Mayors
October 25, 2001**

This is a dispatch from the domestic front lines of our nation's war on terrorism. It is a call for a balanced national security and economic recovery package that will ensure victory.

We have concluded an unprecedented summit of mayors, police and fire chiefs, emergency response officials and public health professionals. Our deliberations over the past two days have produced a sweeping National Action Plan on Safety and Security in America's cities, a plan that begins with our strong support for an office of Homeland Security that has the kind of authority that is needed to focus federal resources on the frontlines of our domestic war on terrorism – that is, our cities.

Our plan recognizes that we are in a precarious position – a war in which both people within our borders and our troops on foreign soil are at risk. The plan also recognizes that we are facing the combination of an already weakened national economy, job layoffs and consumer anxieties created by the terrorist attacks, and rapidly rising public safety and security costs. This terrible combination threatens the ability of local governments to meet some of their most basic obligations.

America's cities have been incurring extraordinary security costs. If we are to maintain the level of security that we all believe is needed, a new flexible local security block grant must be created. This would provide us with the funds needed for additional training for police, fire and emergency response personnel, for communications and rescue equipment and for security measures to protect airports, waterways, utilities, public transit and other public infrastructure.

Central to our plan is a call for a new protocol to govern the coordination of federal and local law enforcement, a protocol which establishes a new and badly-needed system of communication among federal and local public safety and law enforcement agencies.

The plan covers transportation security in the air, on the ground, and on the water. And it calls for the resources needed to strengthen this nation's local public health infrastructure.

Finally, the plan recognizes that to achieve our ultimate goal of economic security, we must first achieve the goals of transportation security, emergency preparedness and coordinated law enforcement. It recognizes that there is an immediate need to help the people who have been hurt by the economic fallout of the terrorist attack, and an immediate need for a program of strategic public investment that will make this nation's infrastructure more productive, competitive, and secure.

While this nation's mayors have great respect for the President's leadership during this time of national crisis, after two days of deliberations with local public safety and health officials, we have concluded that we must, at this historic time, express our concerns with the proposed \$60 billion economic recovery package. It is a package, we believe, which fails to address the kinds of security needs we have identified during this summit and spelled out in our action plan. We believe the nation must have a balanced recovery plan that addresses both tax relief and security investments. We came into this meeting knowing that local governments cannot do everything that has to be done to defend the home front armed only with local resources.

The front lines in our cities are defended by 650,000 police officers and thousands more firefighters, emergency responders and public health professionals. To do the job, they need the kind of support that can come only from our federal government; they need the level of resources that is available only from our federal government.

Our summit concludes with a call for a balanced recovery package that meets real security and economic needs, a call for the Administration and Congress to act now to support the troops on the domestic front lines.