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THROUGH BIPARTISAN ACTION

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Top Democrats and Republicans Discuss Bipartisanship in National Security and Foreign Policy

Washington, DC--On the seventh anniversary of the attacks of 9/11, the Century Foundation and Partnership for a Secure America (PSA), a bipartisan group of leading foreign policy experts, today convened a roundtable to discuss how to best to encourage and foster bipartisanship on critical national security issues. Participants included PSA Advisory Board members former Undersecretary of State Amb. Thomas Pickering, 9/11 Commission Chair and former Governor Thomas Kean (R-NJ) and Mr. Ted Sorensen, former Special Council to President Kennedy.

All three participants commented on the shifts in Washington that have led to more partisanship on critical foreign policy issues. In the past, Governor Kean said, politicians "got to know each other pretty well across party lines."

"If you get that kind of relationship, its hard to be partisan," Kean said, adding that now "you can serve in the House for ten years and never talk to someone on the other side of the aisle."

"We don't have a lot of trust," Pickering said. "Both parties need to realize that they will be judged on their ability to create a modicum of trust."

Regarding opportunities for bipartisan action, Sorensen said, "The area that is the most important ... and I think the easiest ... is national security."

On Sept. 10, PSA released a WMD Report Card, examining U.S. Government programs to prevent nuclear, chemical, and biological terrorism. PSA gave the U.S. Government a "C". All three panelists stressed the need for both parties to put aside political maneuvering when focusing on these issues.

"The whole issue has to be elevated, and I think our leaders need to be talking about it," Kean said, referring to the threat of WMD terrorism.

"I don't think there could or should be a Democratic or a Republican position on nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists," Sorensen said.

Amb. Pickering added, "if there is a one-half of one percent chance of a nuclear weapon going off in your country, you want to be worried about it."

PSA was created in 2005 by former Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-IN) and former Sen. Warren Rudman (R-NH) to foster bipartisan, consensus driven solutions to the major national security and foreign policy challenges facing our country. More information on PSA, along with bios of our distinguished bipartisan Advisory Board, can be found at www.psaonline.org.

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