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# Statement by Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly on President's Executive Order Signed Today

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“Fourteen years ago on March 1, 2003, DHS was established. We did so as a nation because we needed to rethink our approach to homeland security. Many will recall the conclusions we reached then; that we needed to overcome a “lack of imagination” with regard to the threats we faced, and, second, that we needed to overcome our collective inability to take the dots of intelligence and arrange them into a more comprehensive picture of the threats posed to America and our way of life.

“Though much has changed since then, both in the world and at DHS, it is clear that Americans are not invulnerable to terrorist threats, and that our enemies will exploit our freedoms and generosity to harm us.

“The Executive Order signed today by President Trump will make America safer, and address long-overdue concerns about the security of our immigration system. We must undertake a rigorous review of our visa and refugee vetting programs to increase our confidence in the entry decisions we make for visitors and immigrants to the United States. We cannot risk the prospect of malevolent actors using our immigration system to take American lives.

“The Executive Order signed today is prospective in nature—applying only to foreign nationals outside of the United States who do not have a valid visa. It is important to note that nothing in this executive order affects current lawful permanent residents or persons with current authorization to enter our country. If you have a current valid visa to travel, we welcome you. But unregulated, unvetted travel is not a universal privilege, especially when national security is at stake.

“The Department of Homeland Security has worked closely with the Department of Justice, the Department of State, and the White House to create an executive order that addresses our information concerns while protecting the homeland and our citizens.

“The men and women of the Department of Homeland Security—like their brothers and sisters throughout law enforcement—are decent Americans of character and conscience. They are no less so than the governors of our states and territories, of our senators and members of the congress, of our city mayors and advocacy groups. They are sworn to enforce the laws as passed by the U.S. Congress and would be in violation of the law—and their sworn oaths—if they did not do so. We will continue to work closely with our operating components and across government to implement and enforce it humanely, respectfully, and with professionalism.

“I want to thank the President for his leadership on this issue and his steadfast support of DHS’ important law enforcement, security, and counterterrorism missions.”

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