



Message from the Attorney General

This report on the Department of Justice's performance during FY 2002 and plans for FY 2003 and FY 2004 serves as an important mechanism of accountability and measure of progress. I am pleased to present it to you.

The attacks of September 11th redefined the mission of the Department of Justice. Defending our nation and defending the citizens of America against terrorist attacks is now, and will remain, our first and overriding priority. In fulfilling this mission, we are devoting all resources necessary to eliminate terrorist networks, to prevent terrorist attacks, and to bring to justice those who kill Americans in the name of murderous ideologies.

On November 8, 2001, I announced a comprehensive review and wartime reorganization of the Department of Justice to meet our counterterrorism mission. Since that time, the Department has been making progress in eliminating duplicative functions; retargeting resources to counterterrorism efforts by refocusing our resources on frontline positions, especially within the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); and working to attract a diverse, high-quality workforce to the Department. Additionally, efforts to reorganize the FBI and the Office of Justice Programs are in progress.

Additional changes are underway to further enhance America's homeland security. This year, the Department will help facilitate the transfer of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to the newly created Department of Homeland Security. Already, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives has been transferred from the Department of the Treasury to the Department of Justice. This shift represents increased law enforcement integration and cooperation that is critical to the Department's mission.

The Department is also making progress in fulfilling the goals of the President's Management Agenda. Effective, efficient, and economic delivery of desired results is paramount to our reorganization efforts and the President's Agenda. The Department is working towards, and has already achieved success in, meeting the criteria for each item and maximizing accountability in all areas of operation.

In addition to our primary mission, the Department of Justice will continue to enforce vigorously federal laws; deter, investigate and prosecute federal crimes, including gun, drug and civil rights violations; incarcerate offenders; partner with state, local and community groups to prevent crime; and provide leadership and assistance in meeting the needs of crime victims.

We continue to strive for performance information that holds us accountable to our mission, measured in outcomes and results. Our mission is clear. As the President said, in this mission, "we will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail." May God continue to bless America.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Ashcroft". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Ashcroft