

## **Thomas J. Ridge, Co-Chair, Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense**

Secretary Ridge is currently Chief Executive Officer of Ridge Global, an international security and risk management advisory firm. He serves as co-founder of the strategic advisory firm, Ridge-Schmidt Cyber, an executive services firm that helps leaders in business and government navigate the increasing demands of cybersecurity. He is also a founding partner of the Ridge Policy Group, a full service government affairs firm with offices in Washington D.C. and Harrisburg, PA.

Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Tom Ridge became the first Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and, on January 24, 2003, became the first Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Before the events of September 11, 2001, Tom Ridge was twice elected Governor of Pennsylvania. He served as the state's 43rd governor from 1995 to 2001. Governor Ridge's aggressive technology strategy helped fuel the state's advances in economic development, education, health care, and the environment. After his first year at Pennsylvania State University's Dickinson School of Law, he was drafted into the U.S. Army, where he served as an infantry staff sergeant in Vietnam, earning the Bronze Star for Valor, the Combat Infantry Badge, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

After returning to Pennsylvania and to Dickinson, he earned his law degree and, later, became one of the first Vietnam combat veterans elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served six terms.