



**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Peter T. King (R-NY)
Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee**

*Counterintelligence and Insider Threats: How Prepared Is The Department of Homeland Security?
July 13, 2016*

Remarks as Prepared

Today we find our nation confronting a complex external threat picture that ranges from ISIS, al Qaeda and its affiliates, to traditional foes such as Russia, Iran and China. Earlier this year, the Director of National Intelligence said, “unpredictable instability has become the new normal and this trend will continue for the foreseeable future.”¹

Compounding this danger, there have been a series of appalling events over recent years involving trusted individuals working inside our government who damaged national security or committed tragic acts of violence.

Foreign intelligence services and transnational criminal organizations dedicate years of time and financial resources to develop an asset with the access that an insider like Bradley Manning, Edward Snowden, Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen possessed.

Information illegally released by Wikileaks and Snowden’s treacherous acts highlight the link between counterintelligence and the need to spot insider threats before they cause grave damage to national security and put lives at risk.

The Department of Homeland Security has recently experienced a number of troubling cases where trusted insiders have carried out violent acts or have been arrested for having unauthorized weapons at work.

- A DHS employee was arrested in early June when he was found carrying a gun inside DHS Headquarters. I understand that the case is ongoing and the individual’s intent is not yet known but the case does raise serious concerns. The public court documents definitely raise concerns that he may have intended “to commit an act of workplace violence.”²
- Yesterday there was another alarming case at DHS headquarters where a contractor was discovered with a gun. If reports are accurate, this is the second case in a little over a month of employees

¹ Director of National Intelligence (DNI) James Clapper, testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 2016 Worldwide Threats Hearing, February 9, 2016, official DNI Twitter account, available at: <https://twitter.com/odnigov/status/697145988406972420>

² Scott McFarlane, “Feds Investigating Whether Employee was Plotting Attack on Homeland Security Officials”, NBC News Washington, June 21, 2016, available at: <http://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/Feds-Investigating-Whether-Employee-Was-Plotting-Attack-on-Homeland-Security-Officials-383852591.html>

discovered through random checks with weapons. I know that the witnesses will agree that this requires immediate attention by the Department to protect its workforce.

- In May, Eulalio Tordil, an officer with the Federal Protective Service (FPS), murdered his wife and several other people.

The Subcommittee is holding this hearing to review DHS' counterintelligence and insider threat programs. With over 100,000 employees holding security clearances and significant responsibilities for the country's border, cyber and maritime security, DHS represents a prime target for the intelligence collection efforts of our enemies.

Unauthorized disclosures of classified information, whether deliberate or unwitting represent a significant threat to national security. The very nature of modern communications and the reliance on electronic data storage and transfer, as well as DHS' information sharing leadership role with State, local and Tribal partners, adds complexity to the challenge and requires thoughtful programs to educate employees to mitigate the threat.

The Subcommittee wants to hear how the Department is developing robust and holistic counterintelligence and insider threat programs to defend against threats both virtual and physical. We also seek to examine the partnerships DHS has developed within the agency and across the government to leverage best practices. We must determine what actions the Department can take to prevent these threats by proactively identifying and intervening when necessary to protect the DHS, its workforce and the country.

I would like to welcome our distinguished panel. Your input today is very valuable in showing that the benefits of strong counterintelligence and insider threat programs extend beyond the DHS enterprise, but to the workforce as well by preserving safety and security, and allowing DHS to fulfill its critically important homeland security mission.

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