



Committee on
HOMELAND SECURITY
Chairman Michael McCaul

Opening Statement

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**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Scott Perry (R-PA)
Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency**

“Assessing DHS’s Performance: Watchdog Recommendations to Improve Homeland Security”

Remarks as Prepared

Last month, the Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson, in a speech before the Wilson Center, said that regarding how his department conducts business and protects the homeland, “we are still finding our way, but we are headed in the right direction.” While I give Secretary Johnson credit for trying to improve relations with Congress, his statement and acceptance of mediocrity is very disappointing. The Secretary also made discouraging statements about recent border security legislation passed by this committee as “unworkable” and “impossible to achieve.”

As the Oversight and Management Efficiency Subcommittee, we must hold the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) accountable to the highest standards. Given that our national debt is over \$18 trillion and we face numerous threats - whether from radical jihadi terrorists intent on attacking us, to porous borders with a steady flow of illegal immigrants and drugs coming in to our communities - DHS must secure the homeland efficiently and effectively. Folks back home in Pennsylvania didn’t send me to Washington to watch their tax dollars be wasted on ineffective programs.

Testimony from our witnesses today is, then, so important. Watchdogs from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) safeguard taxpayer dollars from waste, fraud and abuse. Earlier this month, GAO released its “High-Risk List” of areas in the federal government most susceptible to mismanagement. Despite DHS’s hope that it will get off the list soon, areas related to DHS management functions, terrorism-related information sharing and cybersecurity continue to remain at high risk to fraud, waste, and abuse according to GAO’s 2015 report.

In addition, OIG releases an annual report on major management challenges facing DHS. The 2014 report identified nine broad areas where the department faces serious management and performance challenges. OIG also identified hundreds of millions of dollars in questionable costs and funds that could

be put to better use. Hundreds of recommendations by these watchdogs remain open and unimplemented by DHS.

Recent GAO and OIG reports also highlight specific dysfunctional programs where management failures continue at DHS, to include:

- Ineffective use of unmanned aerial systems at the border;
- Lack of a cybersecurity strategy for federal facility physical and access control systems;
- Failure to adequately manage DHS's headquarters consolidation project at St. Elizabeths;
- Mismanagement in processing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests; and
- Lack of a rigorous covert testing program for nuclear smuggling at the border.

These reports show serious deficiencies in how DHS secures the border, protects federal buildings from cyber attacks, and manages billions of taxpayer dollars. DHS must act on these and other recommendations to improve our homeland security.

Finally, I need to hear more from the Inspector General on a recent report where, in his opinion, TSA attempted to cover up embarrassing findings using its authority to classify information as sensitive. I'm concerned that TSA failed to provide a timely explanation to the IG report's findings regarding sensitive security markings. Although DHS has a responsibility to protect information that, if released, could harm our national security, DHS has no excuse to hide information from the American people simply to avoid embarrassment.

Secretary Johnson said that, "management reform is itself a homeland security imperative," however, DHS has a long way to go to reach its full potential. I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses on their recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of DHS and what the department is doing to address these concerns.

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