



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Worldwide Threats to the Homeland

November 15, 2022

Today, the Committee is holding its annual hearing to examine worldwide threats to the homeland. We are pleased to have Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, FBI Director Christopher Wray, and NCTC Director Christine Abizaid before the Committee once again.

Two years ago, the Committee convened its worldwide threats hearing during some of the darkest days of the pandemic. Last year, this panel testified before the Committee in the immediate aftermath of the attack on the U.S. Capitol. No matter the circumstances, the Committee and the American people have benefitted from the witnesses' frank assessment of the threats facing the homeland, both foreign and domestic.

More than 20 years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 — and 20 years this month since the Department of Homeland Security was established in law — we recognize the witnesses, their predecessors, and men and women of their agencies for their tireless efforts to prevent another 9/11-style attack. That said, we know that the threat posed by foreign terrorist organizations has not gone away. It has evolved and persisted, just as our efforts to combat it have. At the same time, domestic violent extremists now pose the greatest threat to our homeland.

The Biden administration has put new focus on combatting this rising threat, issuing the first-ever *National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism*, establishing a domestic terrorism analytic branch within DHS' Office of Intelligence and Analysis, and designating domestic violent extremism as a "National Priority Area" for homeland security grants. More work remains, as extremists are increasingly willing to engage in targeted violence, whether at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, a Walmart in El Paso, or a supermarket in Buffalo. I hope to speak to our witnesses today about their assessment of the current threat from terrorism and targeted violence and what their agencies are doing to protect the homeland.

Beyond terrorism, I remain concerned about cyber threats, particularly from Russia, China, and Iran. In response to these threats, the Biden administration has raised our cybersecurity posture by issuing an Executive Order on Improving the Nation's Cyber Security, leading global efforts to confront ransomware threats, and launching a groundbreaking public-private collaboration to help secure industrial control systems. I want to hear from our witnesses about how they assess the current threat to cyber and critical infrastructure, what progress we have made, and what more we can do.

Meanwhile, other homeland security challenges remain, like preparing for natural disasters, dealing with climate change, responding to the pandemic, securing our skies and waterways, addressing the increased number of migrants arriving at our borders, and protecting our very democracy and its institutions. Our discussion will undoubtedly touch on many of these issues today, and I look forward to a robust but respectful dialogue.

As the 117th Congress draws to a close, I also want to take a moment to reflect on the Committee's work over the last two years, because together we have accomplished a great deal. Today marks our 25th Full Committee hearing this Congress, and our Subcommittees have held more than 50 hearings — conducting oversight of some of the most pressing homeland security issues facing our Nation.

We enacted critical legislation — particularly in the area of cybersecurity — creating a mandatory cyber incident reporting framework, providing cybersecurity grants to State and local governments, and improving the Federal Government's visibility into malicious activity on industrial control systems. Historically, much of this Committee's best work and many of its greatest successes have been the result of strong bipartisan effort. That has certainly been true this Congress with the gentleman from New York, Mr. Katko, as Ranking Member.

Early in his time on this Committee, Ranking Member Katko became a leader and innovator on aviation security, and more recently, he has made his mark on the Committee's cybersecurity work. Perhaps most importantly, he was a true partner on efforts to stand up a commission to examine the January 6th Attack on the Capitol, putting country before politics. The Ranking Member and I did not always agree, but we agreed when we could. And when we disagreed, we tried not to be disagreeable about it. As he departs Congress, I want to thank him for his important work over the years on this Committee and, on a personal note, for his friendship. I wish him the very best in the new year and beyond.

Likewise, I want to extend my thanks to all Members for their work in the 117th Congress, and especially those who are moving on to other endeavors next year: the gentleman from Rhode Island, Mr. Langevin, the gentlewoman from New York, Miss Rice, the gentlewoman from Florida, Mrs. Demings, the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Malinowski, the gentlewoman from Virginia, Mrs. Luria, the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Meijer, and the gentlewoman from Texas, Mrs. Flores. Your contributions to the Committee's work this Congress and throughout your tenure are recognized and appreciated.

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