



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Examining the Operations of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis

December 13, 2022

Thank you to Subcommittee Chair Slotkin and Ranking Member Pfluger for calling today's hearing to examine the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A). And thank you, Under Secretary Wainstein, for joining us today.

At the Committee's annual Worldwide Threats to the Homeland hearing last month, we heard from the Secretary of Homeland Security, FBI Director, and Director of the National Counterterrorism Center that threats to the homeland have never been more complex. We heard that threats posed by domestic violent extremists continue to rise and those posed by foreign terrorist organizations have not gone away.

We also heard that state actors continue to engage in cyber operations that threaten Americans' safety and security. Just recently, a cyberattack on a power substation in North Carolina wiped out power for more than 45,000 people for days. As Chairwoman Slotkin mentioned in her opening remarks, the role of intelligence is more important than ever, because it helps us detect, deter, and defend against the myriad of threats we face today.

As an intelligence community member, I&A contributes to the mission of delivering information to help protect our country. I&A is an invaluable player, as it is the only intelligence community member that is tasked—by law—with passing intelligence information to State, Local, Tribal, Territorial, and private sector partners. Our State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial partners are on the ground in communities across the country, working daily to protect Americans from danger. And in many ways, private sector partners help support that critical effort. To do the best job possible, it is critical that those on the ground have the most reliable intelligence available.

Unfortunately, I&A has faced challenges that have raised questions about its ability to meet its mandate. I&A has struggled at times to identify specific analytic products and activities to best meet the needs of State and local partners. It has also historically had trouble disseminating products in a timely manner — Chairwoman Slotkin referenced a few instances in her opening statement — and there have been issues with the mechanisms through which the information has been shared. More recently, the Trump Administration sought to use I&A as a tool to push the former President's political agenda.

Today's hearing is an opportunity for Members to hear from Under Secretary Wainstein about his plans to "right the ship." Under his leadership, I&A already has taken important steps in the right direction — one of those being improving training for its employees. In October, I&A changed its new-hire onboarding and initial training program to align them in a more seamless experience.

The DHS Intelligence Training Academy (ITA) is also working diligently to ensure that before being assigned to their unit and beginning work, all new employees receive training on regulations surrounding:

- collection, retention, and dissemination of data, and
- protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.

Moreover, earlier this year the ITA developed a new, special learning module on identifying and defending against politicization. Having properly trained personnel is foremost in ensuring that I&A is well-positioned to meet its mission of delivering timely, useful information to State and local governments and the private sector. I look forward to hearing from Under Secretary Wainstein on any updates regarding improving I&A's training regimen, and I stand ready to work with the Under Secretary on legislation to ensure the preservation of the improvements made and that we continue to build on them.

As training is just one part of investing in the workforce, I also look forward to hearing about Under Secretary Wainstein's efforts to boost morale within the office, as unfortunately, I&A once again ranked near the bottom of the 2021 *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* list for subcomponents. I've said before that an agency's most significant asset is its people. When we properly invest in their well-being and professional development, mission-success becomes more attainable.

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