



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joint Hearing Statement of Border Security & Enforcement Subcommittee Ranking Member Lou Correa (D-CA)

Beyond the Border: Terrorism and Homeland Security Consequences of Illegal Immigration

September 19, 2024

I first want to take a moment and condemn the attempted assassination of former President Trump. There is no room for political violence in our democracy. As a member of the bipartisan House task force on the attempted assassination for Former President Trump, I am committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get to the bottom of what occurred and develop solutions to prevent this from happening to any of our presidential candidates. Again, there is no room for political violence in our democracy.

And now on to today's hearing topic. We must take the threat of terrorism seriously. The heinous terrorist attack of 9/11 is why the Department of Homeland Security was created, and ultimately why this committee was created. We all care deeply about preventing a similar terrorist attack from occurring on our soil, which is one of the reasons I serve on this committee.

We were reminded by the horrific October 7 attack by Hamas in Israel that terrorist organizations remain determined to attack us and our allies, no matter how sophisticated our intelligence and material capabilities may be.

To prevent future attacks, we must start with the facts. The word terrorism is thrown around a lot to fearmonger, so it's important we understand what defines terrorism. Terrorism involves the threat or use of violence by non-state actors to achieve political, economic, religious or social goals.

With this understanding, the data shows that most terrorist activity is conducted by U.S. citizens, not immigrants. Let me repeat: most terrorist activity is conducted by U.S. citizens.

In fact, a study by the Cato Institute found that, from 1975 to 2022, the number of people murdered or injured by terrorist attacks on U.S. soil by foreign-born, illegal immigrants was **zero**. Again, zero Americans have been injured or killed by terrorist attacks perpetrated by undocumented immigrants who entered through the southwest border.

However, DHS and the FBI regularly tell us that one of the greatest terrorism threats to our homeland is domestic terrorism. Sadly, we can highlight far too many instances of domestic terrorism and racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism that caused death and injuries in this country.

Just this past week, we've seen at least 33 bomb threats shut down schools in Springfield, Ohio. Elementary schools were evacuated – again – early this week. The Ohio State Highway Patrol has been deployed to monitor schools. This has been fueled by the former President, and some Members across the aisle, spreading baseless rumors about migrants eating much loved pets in the community.

Fortunately, there have not been any injuries yet. But the danger is real. Fearmongering for political purposes has very real consequences right now.

Yet, we have not had one hearing in this Committee during this entire Congress to address domestic violence or extremism. So, we are not minimizing the threat of terrorism. It is real and requires our focus. But we clearly need to defend against ALL terrorist threats that would harm Americans, foreign and domestic.

And yes, we have a challenge at the Southern Border. As I've said before, this is not just a "US" problem; this is a "WE" problem on a global scale. With the largest mass movement of people this world has ever seen, clearly, there are potential threats to our national security. And we must take action to prevent these threats from materializing.

Here in this committee General John Kelly, former Secretary of Homeland Security and former Chief of Staff to President Trump, would say, let me paraphrase him, "Homeland Security does not start or end at the border... if a threat reaches our border, we are too late."

We must increase our collaboration with global partners to stop threats **before** they reach our border. Homeland experts have continuously said our border should not be our first line of defense.

I am proud that we have already made progress on anti-terrorism measures through these partnerships. Since Biden's executive order took effect in June, temporarily suspending entry of noncitizens across the southern border, migrant encounters with Border Patrol have dropped by 55 percent – reducing the threat of bad actors from entering the country.

Yet, there is more to be done. We need more resources to deal with the situation at the border, address root causes of migration, and stop individuals who pose a threat to national security from entering the country.

I call on my Republican colleagues to work with Democrats to pass the bipartisan Senate border bill and expand legal pathways so CBP can focus its attention on threats at the border. We need additional resources, not less, to help DHS to achieve its mission.

I want to thank our witnesses for joining us today. I look forward to hearing your testimony regarding threats at the border and opportunities to strengthen our national security measures.

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