

TESTIMONY OF ADM James M. Loy

U.S. House Homeland Security Committee

September 29, 2021

Mr. Chairman/Ranking Member,

Thank you for including me in your Committee's look-back and ongoing oversight of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

As the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard on 9/11/2001, I joined the millions of my fellow citizens as we watched the events of that day unfold. The Coast Guard organized and led the maritime boatlift in New York Harbor that evacuated over 500,000 souls from Manhattan over the water to Staten Island and New Jersey. That day remains for me and for all Americans our generation's Pearl Harbor. I remember well the countless meetings that followed as we came to terms with the reality that the two great Oceans no longer provided any guarantee that America could not be reached by those intent on doing us harm. The resultant legislation creating first the TSA and then the Department of Homeland Security were announcements to the world that we had awakened to the new terrorism threats. The days that followed included the most significant executive branch reorganization since 1947.

Coordination with the Congress produced the Transportation Security Act outlining the establishment and shape of the new TSA. Where the FAA had heretofore been responsible for both the safety and security of commercial aviation, the new law called for the security elements to be the responsibility of the new TSA. Although centered on aviation for obvious reasons, the law mandated that the new agency focus on all modes of transportation. I was scheduled to retire from the Coast Guard in May, 2002, but was asked by Transportation Secretary Norm Mineta and President Bush to lead the standup of TSA. The following years at TSA and then DHS became the most challenging and gratifying years of my 42 years of public service. The legislation provided the roadmap and we set about to establish the agency. We solicited applicants for 60,000 positions at airports across the country. Those applicants were vetted, hired, trained and distributed to those airports in nine weeks. We allowed the reality of the standup process to shape and evolve the agency. We worked with all the major airlines, the trade organizations, the appropriate government agencies, foreign advisors and commercial vendors to design and outfit the thousands of checkpoints that would provide the physical security required by the law. I'll never forget the night of 12/31/2003 when I was able to report to Secretary Mineta that the airport on Guam had "gone green" which was our vernacular for gaining operational compliance with the law.

As in any endeavor of this magnitude, it required contributions from many to be accomplished well and on time. As is also the case in any endeavor, changes were made in policy and practice as I and my successors in the Administrator's chair led and managed the agency over the years.

Mr. Chairman, several things stand out to me as being deserving of the Committee's ongoing attention:

- Adequacy of the TSA's link to the Intelligence Community for threat analysis and evolution
- Adequate attention to ALL modes of transportation, not just aviation
- Constancy of focus on Response and Recovery as well as Preparedness and Prevention planning for dealing with any scenario that would interrupt transportation service

Mr. Chairman, we plank-owners at TSA are enormously proud of our time standing up and leading the agency. We coined the motto NEVER FORGET and just met together for the twentieth annual ceremony remembering the events of 9/11/2001. The staff and employees all renewed their oath of commitment to remain vigilant in their quest to keep America secure. I take no comfort in the fact that twenty years have gone by without another 9/11. We have to remain diligent and focus on today and tomorrow. This hearing is to me, a formal statement about how important that relentless diligence is and must remain. NEVER FORGET!