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Confronting the Rise in Anti-Semitic Terrorism, Part II

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Introduction

Chairman Rose, Ranking Member Walker, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for holding today's hearing on domestic terrorism and, in particular, the rise in anti-Semitic domestic terrorism.

Terrorists and perpetrators of targeted violence aim to weaken the very fabric of our democracy. The Constitution's guaranteed rights and privileges, including free exercise of religion, are integral to the American way of life. Anti-Semitism and similar ideologies of hatred for religious groups, and the violence perpetrated in its name, have a chilling effect on Americans' ability and willingness to openly exercise their most fundamental rights.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is committed to preventing and mitigating the impact of *all* forms of terrorism and targeted violence. DHS addresses the threat of domestic terrorism with the same gravity and seriousness that it gives to foreign terrorist organizations. To be clear, whether its origins are anti-Semitism, white supremacy, or something else, domestic terrorism of any form cannot and will not be tolerated in the Homeland. The Department stands committed to working with faith-based organizations (FBO) and other stakeholders to enhance our collective ability to prevent, protect against, and respond to attacks in our communities.

Over the past decade, DHS, the Department of Justice, and our state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) law enforcement partners have tried a variety of approaches to tackle the problem of targeted violence and terrorism originating from within the Homeland. We have learned that traditional law enforcement tools—such as investigations and prosecutions—are critical, but they alone cannot solve the problem.

We need to make it harder to carry out an attack and reduce the potential loss of life, as well as prevent individuals from mobilizing to violence in the first place. Achieving those objectives is beyond the Federal government's capability and role alone; we need a whole-of-society approach. DHS's role in this effort is to inform, equip, and empower the homeland security enterprise to enhance its capabilities. This means building meaningful partnerships and trust among many different actors in our local communities, including houses of worship, civic

organizations, government agencies, law enforcement, and others, and providing resources, training, and other assistance that bolsters their ability to protect themselves and prevent these attacks before they happen.

A New Approach

Since its creation in 2003, DHS has initiated numerous programs and activities to provide support to our SLTT and private sector partners across the National Preparedness System. The National Preparedness Goal is comprised of five Mission Areas: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery. Across four of these missions, DHS has supported our partners in steadily building core capabilities for decades. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—as the primary lead for the mitigation, response and recovery missions—has worked to hone the doctrine, policy, concept of operations, and training since the 1980s, while the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), which leads the protection mission, has been at it for 15 years. DHS is now bringing to scale the fifth mission—the prevention mission—to ensure that there is both a well-regarded set of baseline capabilities and the capacity to help state and local partners build these programs.

In September of last year, DHS released its *Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence* (referred to here as the “Strategic Framework”), which seeks to use all the Department’s resources to address these threats holistically. It also makes clear that the threat landscape is no longer dominated solely by foreign terrorist organizations; significant attention and effort are required to address domestic terrorism and the mass attacks associated with targeted violence.

The Strategic Framework contains four goals to counter terrorism and targeted violence:

1. Goal 1 – Understand the evolving terrorism and targeted violence threat environment, and support partners in the homeland security enterprise through this specialized knowledge.
2. Goal 2 – Prevent terrorists and other hostile actors from entering the United States and deny them the opportunity to exploit the Nation’s trade, immigration, and domestic and international travel systems.

3. Goal 3 – Prevent terrorism and targeted violence.
4. Goal 4 – Enhance U.S. infrastructure protections and community preparedness.

While these goals focus on some very traditional roles for the Department—information sharing, border security, and infrastructure protection—the Strategic Framework is novel in several respects.

First, it addresses not only international and domestic terrorism, but also targeted violence—explicitly stating for the first time in national-level strategy that these threats overlap and intersect, necessitating a shared set of solutions.

Second, the Strategic Framework lays a significant marker for DHS to step up its activities in the prevention space. The Department views prevention as key to addressing terrorism and targeted violence in the United States. Consequently, the Strategic Framework’s third goal—simply titled “Prevent terrorism and targeted violence”—calls for DHS to further the development of societal resistance to radicalization and ensure broad awareness of the threat of mobilization to violence. It also emphasizes locally based solutions. DHS will continue to support local efforts to develop and sustain prevention frameworks that ensure threat assessment and management approaches that assist law enforcement and the communities they serve to “off-ramp” susceptible individuals before they commit a crime or violent act.

Third, the Strategic Framework highlights the need to counter terrorists’ and violent extremists’ influence online. Witnesses on previous hearing panels discussed the role of online platforms in addressing the spread of violent extremist and other hate-filled content. The Department will continue to engage with our partners in the private sector, including Internet service providers and social media platforms, both directly and through broader initiatives such as the Global Internet Forum for Counterterrorism and the evolving framework found in the Christchurch Call to Action. We will also continue to support efforts by individual technology companies, non-governmental organizations, and civic partners through mechanisms like the digital forum for terrorism prevention and by supporting digital challenges that turn the tools terrorists and others use for malicious intent back on them.

Implementing the Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence

The Department is working aggressively to meet the goals it has set for itself, including working diligently to finalize an implementation plan for the Strategic Framework. The implementation plan will outline DHS's role in this space, which again is to ensure that our SLTT partners have the knowledge, tools, and resources required to address all of the missions contained in the Strategic Framework. Nowhere is this more critical than the need to bolster the protection and prevention missions within the United States to reduce the harms associated with terrorism and targeted violence fueled by anti-Semitism.

Protection

The Department's protection mission is integral to the Nation's counterterrorism efforts. The protection of infrastructure and people are therefore a vital component of the Department's Strategic Framework.

CISA is at the forefront of this work and is continuing longstanding efforts to partner with communities to enhance their safety and security. For example, CISA's Hometown Security Initiative provides direct, tangible support to harden public gathering locations. Leveraging its field personnel and program offices, CISA also shares threat information, including prominent and emerging tactics; conducts security and vulnerability assessments; and provides a wide range of training and exercises. In the last three fiscal years, CISA conducted 1,534 engagements with FBOs, primarily through its Protective Security Advisors (PSA). In Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 alone, CISA conducted 800 engagements with places of worship, progressively increasing its outreach annually since FY 2017.

CISA also provides a suite of resources that helps inform local decision-making. For example, CISA shares information aimed at reducing the impacts of an active shooter incident. This information focuses on suspicious behavioral indicators, potential attack methods, how to develop an emergency action plan, actions that may be taken during an incident to reduce its impact, and how to quickly and effectively recover from an incident. Since 2011, CISA has conducted more than 300 in-person Active Shooter Preparedness Workshops with 41,000 participants, nearly 975,000 people successfully completed the online training course, the

publicly available website has been viewed almost 4.5 million times, and PSAs conducted more than 5,000 active shooter activities (e.g., briefings, presentations, security walk throughs, and emergency planning sessions) directly with facilities. Many of these resources have been provided to FBOs. Following the tragic attack at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, members of the synagogue credited the training coordinated by CISA's PSA with saving lives.

CISA also maintains an exercise program that provides effective and practical mechanisms to identify areas for improvement, implement and evaluate corrective actions, and share best practices through discussion- and operations-based exercises. Scenarios are driven by the public and private sectors, and often focus on active shooters. As just one example, in April 2019, CISA partnered with the Secure Community Network to conduct a tabletop exercise with Jewish Community leaders from across the United States, law enforcement personnel, and interagency officials to work through how the community will share information and what actions they would take in the event of a threat.

Additionally, FEMA manages the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which provides more than \$70 million in grants annually to non-profit and faith-based institutions to protect infrastructure and houses of worship.

Prevention

The paths of terrorists and other violent actors are not linear. As witnesses on previous hearing panels have attested, anti-Semitic attacks in the United States demonstrate a variety of ideological drivers. As such, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to these attacks on FBOs. However, the factors that drive these individuals to violence are almost consistently observed by those who know them best. Families, friends, bystanders, and others who are concerned for the wellbeing of these individuals are critical to prevention, as they are often the ones who will recognize behavioral changes over time that may be indicative of radicalization and mobilization to violence.

Building local prevention frameworks that these bystanders can consult when they have concerns—especially before an individual has committed a criminal act—is the lynchpin of our prevention efforts. DHS is focused on ensuring that SLTT partners, social services, civil society

groups, the private sector, and other elements of the local homeland security enterprise are aware, informed, and capable of creating and maintaining local prevention frameworks. Baseline capabilities published by DHS will help states and municipalities understand what ingredients are needed in a framework and may help them identify existing resources that can be leveraged for prevention of terrorism and targeted violence. For instance, a suicide hotline, a case management system for school resource officers or existing protocols for community engagement on other issues can be a good start for a prevention framework and baseline capabilities will determine whether and how they fit. When consulted, these local prevention frameworks can work with individuals of concern and their support network of family and friends to prevent further progression towards violence and improve the odds of a more positive outcome for all involved.

The Department is already actively engaged in prevention activities. DHS currently provides information products to state and local partners that provide the latest understanding of the threat and how to prevent it. For 20 years, the United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) has been conducting research and training on the prevention of various forms of targeted violence. NTAC has traveled to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and 16 countries providing 1,188 training/briefings to approximately 160,000 members of federal, state, and local law enforcement, mental health professionals, teachers and school administrators, private industry, and other community stakeholders. NTAC's most recent publications included an operational guide for preventing targeted school violence, *Mass Attacks in Public Spaces – 2018*, which was released in July 2019, and the most comprehensive behavioral analysis of incidents of targeted violence at K-12 schools released in November 2019. Since 2011, NTAC has also provided 100 case or program consultations for community partners. The goal of NTAC's work is to help standardize the principles of threat assessment so our communities are better equipped to identify persons of concern, assess their potential for carrying out an act of targeted violence, and intervene before an act of violence takes place.

In recent years, DHS has also worked diligently to identify what works best to prevent terrorism and targeted violence. We have administered a grant program since 2016 to identify innovative programs and promising practices, delivered awareness trainings to audiences seeking

knowledge of the threat, engendered effective partnerships with the whole of society, and assisted practitioners across the country in building meaningful and effective prevention programs.

All of this preparatory work culminated in the April 2019 creation of the Office of Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP), the primary entity responsible for driving the prevention mission within DHS. From that starting point, we worked with Congress to share the Department's vision for prevention. Over the course of many hours of briefings across the Hill, we had several productive conversations on the best approach to this problem. We also pledged to develop a prevention strategy. In September 2019, we delivered on that promise with the publication of DHS's Strategic Framework, wherein Goal 3 outlines the DHS approach to prevention.

In December 2019, Congress provided funds to implement that mission through TVTP. We thank you for that investment. Because of this additional funding, DHS is well-positioned to begin achieving the goals laid out in the Strategic Framework. For example, with \$10 million in FY 2020 grant funding dedicated to the creation and expansion of local prevention programs, DHS will build on the promising practices and lessons learned from DHS's past and ongoing activities, with an emphasis on projects that will help our partners to build local capacity to prevent targeted violence and all forms of terrorism.

The Department is also expanding its ability to coordinate and deliver technical assistance. For example, TVTP's awareness briefing team is coordinating, updating, and expanding DHS's training offerings—including the Community Awareness Briefing, Community Resilience Exercise, and Law Enforcement Awareness Briefing (in partnership with the DHS Office for Civil Right and Civil Liberties and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers)—to meet the needs of our state and local partners, as well as the technology sector. A strategic engagement team is working with key stakeholders, including houses of worship; civic organizations; behavioral practitioners; law enforcement and other government officials; and others, to ensure the proper operation of prevention frameworks at the local level. Broader engagement seeks to amplify and support local prevention efforts.

Over the next year, the Department's top priority will be working with our state and local partners to issue baseline capabilities and build locally based prevention capabilities. To do that, we will leverage both the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program and a soon-to-be-launched nationwide field staff presence to provide technical assistance to those partners who have volunteered to work with us to develop these capabilities. With FY 2020 appropriations, DHS's field staff program can now expand over the next year to 12 regions across the country with the ability to deliver awareness briefings, convene key stakeholders required to collaborate on prevention frameworks, and identify existing resources that can bolster prevention efforts.

The Homeland Security Advisory Council Subcommittee Report on Preventing Targeted Violence Against Faith-Based Communities

Recognizing the impact that the threat of targeted violence and terrorism has on FBOs, at the suggestion of Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Rogers, then-Acting Secretary McAleenan directed the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) to stand up a subcommittee that would focus on how the Department can support FBOs to keep them safe, secure, and resilient. The HSAC subcommittee transmitted its findings and recommendations on preventing targeted violence against FBOs to Acting Secretary Wolf on December 17, 2019. We are grateful for the leadership of the subcommittee co-chairs, General John R. Allen, USMC (Ret.), and Paul Goldenberg, and for the valuable recommendations they provided. DHS leadership acted quickly to assess the Report's findings and identify areas where we could take action.

The encouraging news is that many of the subcommittee's recommendations will be addressed in the implementation plan for the Strategic Framework, which is now being finalized. The Implementation Plan is one of the Department's top priorities.

The Department continues to explore options to implement several of the top-tier recommendations in the Report. We concur with the Report's findings on the importance of having a designated lead within DHS who is responsible for coordinating security-related information, training, and engagement with FBOs. The Department is in the process of identifying the appropriate office and resources to support this requirement. The Department also

concur with the recommendation to establish a standing inter-faith advisory council to support the work of this newly established Director for FBOs. Such a council would enhance the Department's understanding of FBO security needs, streamline and increase our engagement with FBOs, and inform our responsiveness to threats of targeted violence. We look forward to sharing more details about the new Director for FBOs and inter-faith advisory council as they are formalized.

Lastly, we should note that several of the Report's findings focus on enhancing outreach efforts by state and local Fusion Centers, and on increasing awareness, training, and information sharing at the local level. In order to best address these recommendations, DHS must employ a multi-pronged approach that includes all state, local, federal, and non-federal partners, including state Homeland Security Advisors and state and local law enforcement. This approach should build upon DHS's mission to facilitate and enhance information sharing and analysis across the DHS intelligence enterprise, and with our SLTT homeland security partners. Furthermore, our approach should leverage DHS's field-deployed experts, such as the CISA's PSAs, TVTP's Prevention Coordinators, and DHS Intelligence and Analysis Field Intelligence Officers who engage with communities and provide vetted information, security assessments, and links to key resources and training. We look forward to engaging with Members of Congress to outline opportunities where we believe additional resources could help advance this important goal.

Conclusion

The Department recognizes there is a lot of work to do, and that the threat continues. It is unacceptable that anyone in the United States be made to feel afraid because of religion, race, or ethnicity, nor should anyone be fearful of attending a house of worship or school, or of visiting a public space. We are working expeditiously to ensure that DHS is postured to better prevent and protect against all forms of targeted violence regardless of the ideological motivation.

The Department is also seeking to build our prevention and protection programs to scale in the coming years. The President's FY 2021 budget request reflects this requirement, adding \$80 million to the prevention and protection missions. In addition to allowing expansion of hard infrastructure assessments and cyber security engagements, among others, this budget will permit CISA to expand its field forces to significantly improve its ability to meet regional

stakeholders' service demands, such as vulnerability assessments and recommendations for action; guidance and best practices for security and resilience; situational awareness products and briefings; active shooter and counter-IED products, training and tools; and workshops, exercises, and consultancy to affect a comprehensive approach to address the threat of targeted violence and terrorism. With the additional funds provided in the President's Budget, TVTP will enhance coordination of the overall prevention approach for the Department and expand provision of technical and financial assistance to SLTT partners establishing and expanding local prevention frameworks. Specifically, the President's budget will expand TVTP's regional coordinator program, enhance our efforts to engage with the technology sector to combat terrorist use of the Internet, and double the size of the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee to discuss the Department's efforts to combat domestic terrorism, in particular, by maturing the prevention and protection work of DHS. We look forward to answering your questions.