

*Statement of Ranking Member Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ)*

*Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency*

**Hearing “Unmanned Aerial Systems Threats: Exploring Security Implications and Mitigation Technologies”**

**March 18, 2015**

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I am very interested in hearing from Professor McNeal, an expert on the issue of drones, about the potential policy options available to mitigate and respond to the threats posed by the commercial availability of Unmanned Aerial Systems.

Additionally, I am eager to hear from Professor Humphreys regarding DHS’ efforts, since his last appearance before the Subcommittee, to respond to the security vulnerabilities associated with drones.

I am also looking forward to hearing from Mr. Roggero who will be able to better inform the Subcommittee about emerging technology that can be used to increase the safety of our airspace and our security posture as drones become increasingly integrated into our national airspace.

And lastly, I am pleased that Chief Beary, the President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, is appearing before the Subcommittee.

Although you are here to testify about the use of drones in law enforcement, I cannot forgo the opportunity to talk with you about an issue that is very important to me and my constituents.

That is, the recent report from the Department of Justice on policing in Ferguson, Missouri, which found that many predominantly African American neighborhoods are targeted in an effort to raise revenue for municipal functions. I want to thank you for the fine job you are doing, but this issue must be addressed.

Now, back to the subject of drones. Commercially available drones are becoming an increasingly popular purchase, with the drone market expected to grow \$84 billion over the next 5 years.

As the commercial drone market grows, so too does the threat that drones will be used by actors with ill intent. Drones can be purchased online, with prices starting as low as \$40, and they are fairly easy to assemble and learn how to operate. In many cases, it is easier to learn how to operate a drone than it is a model aircraft.

With drones being so easily accessible, we must consider the potential they have to be used as a mechanism to conduct an attack. Although we have not yet witnessed such an attack, we have seen how individuals operating drones have gotten extraordinarily close to at least one Head of State.

During a campaign rally in 2013, a drone, piloted by an opposition party supporter landed at the feet of Germany’s Chancellor, Angela Merkel. There have also been recent stories of mysterious drones flying over sensitive government assets, including the U.S. Embassy, in Paris and we are all familiar with the story regarding a drone landing on the White House lawn in January.

It does not take a wild imagination to envision what may happen if someone with malicious intent got their hands on a drone. This emerging threat requires a unified effort by the Department of Homeland Security in developing security plans for mitigation and response.

The Department of Homeland Security must conduct risk assessments to accurately determine the threat posed by drones.

In the absence of risk assessments and a measured approach, the Department will spend millions of dollars without knowing what the real threat is or how to defend against it.

Unfortunately, the Department of Homeland Security declined our invitation to testify before the Subcommittee to explain how they are working towards a Department wide strategy to address the issue at hand.

Even without the Department's testimony, I am confident that the panel of witnesses here today will help us better understand the threat posed by drones and the technologies available to address that threat.

Although drones are not the only avenue for conducting attacks, it is imperative that we leave the "bad guys" with fewer, rather than a whole universe of options.

We will narrow the threat picture by dealing with the security vulnerabilities posed by commercially available drones.