

*Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) Opening Statement*

*Full Committee Field Hearing on:*

*“Beyond Bin Laden's Caves and Couriers to A New Generation of Terrorists: Confronting the Challenges in a Post 9/11 World.”*

*Tuesday, September 8, 2015 at 9:00am*

Having this hearing at the 9/11 Memorial Museum is humbling and shows how far we have come from that terrible and sad day.

This city, 14 years later, has emerged from this tragedy stronger and united. The enduring spirit of the people of New York reflects the best of our country.

Since 9/11, we have changed policing and changed the way we engage our communities to prevent terrorist attacks. Law enforcement has become a community facilitator, engaging with all facets of the cities they patrol.

They do it at a time when federal funds for local law enforcement are shrinking because we cannot get our fiscal house in order.

In fact, funding for Homeland Security Grant Program has dropped significantly over recent years. For example, in FY 2011, Congress reduced funding to about \$1.9 billion. As a result of these cuts, 32 cities were eliminated from the UASI program. The following year, FY 2012, Congress appropriated only \$1.35 billion for these important grant programs.

Although grant funding was restored to about \$1.5 billion for FY 2013, sequestration further reduced the amount available to support State and local preparedness and response capabilities. Grant funding for FY 2014 and FY 2015 was level funded at \$1.5 billion.

I am interested in hearing how this kind of budget uncertainty has affected cities like New York. Beyond dealing with budget cuts, post-9/11 policing means engaging in the community and gaining their trust.

I am very sensitive to the fact that I represent one of the largest Arab-American communities in the United States.

It is critical that we do not profile, that we do not unduly harass and that we do not detain individuals because of how they look or their religion. I would like to hear from you, Commissioner Bratton, on how the NYPD engages communities, such as Muslim Americans?

Especially after it was revealed that plain clothes detectives went into Muslim neighborhoods to spy on that specific community, according to the New York Times. I understand that the NYPD dropped that program, but the relationship and trust with that community has been damaged.

I look forward to hearing from both panels and want to again thank the Chairman for having this hearing. We have come a long way since 9/11 and we have a ways to go, but America and especially New York has shown that we are resilient, we are strong, and we can heal.